



# ReConnect Evaluation Criteria

USDA RUS ReConnect Program



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Rural Development

# Agenda

- Evaluation Criteria
- Available Resources
- Q&A



# Evaluation Criteria



# Evaluation Criteria



Application  
101002147

Funding Type

50% Loan/50% Grant



Project	Service Area(s)	Network	Financials	Environmental	Evaluation Criteria	Licenses & Agre...	Certifications	Documents	Summary/Submit
Project Information NEPA Review Project Documents	Service Area(s) Information	Network Design Build-out Timeline and Milestones Capital Investment Workbook (CIW)	Local Network Services Revenue Competitor Service Offerings Depreciation Schedule	Construction Map Site/Route Descriptions Environmental Questionnaire Environmental Documents	Evaluation Criteria Evaluation Criteria Summary Evaluation Criteria Documents	Licenses & Agreements	Certifications Certification Documents	Manage Uploaded Documents	Summary/Submit

# Level of Existing Service (25 Points)

## Level of Existing Service

Does the applicant propose to build in areas that are not receiving service of at least 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream? <sup>\*</sup> ⓘ

☒ Yes ☐ No

How many households are located within the proposed project that do not have access to service of at least 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream? <sup>\*</sup>

Evidence 25 Mbps / 3 Mbps Service Does  
Not Exist




## Level of Existing Service (cont.)

### **Applicant will select YES or NO indicating participation in this category:**

- Applicant will be evaluated on projects proposing to build in areas not receiving service of at least 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. Input number of households within project.
- Documentation Required for Upload:
  - Applicants should identify areas in their PFSA's receiving service below the 25/3 threshold and the total number of households in that area.
  - Supporting evidence that 25/3 service does not exist for those households
  - Identify all existing providers in the PFSA and indicate the level of service being provided.

# Affordability (20 Points)

## Affordability

Does the applicant intend to offer at least one low-cost option to all households within the proposed funded service area? <sup>\*</sup> 

☒ Yes ☐ No

Evidence of Low-Cost Options



## Affordability (cont.)

### **What applicants need to provide as upload:**

- Documentation demonstrating broadband prices offered are affordable for their target markets
- Information for pricing and speed tiers to be offered
- Includes at least one low-cost option offered at speeds that are sufficient for a household with multiple users to simultaneously telework and engage in remote learning



## Affordability (cont.)

### **Resources and Conditions:**

- Participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program before award funds are disbursed will be enforceable under the legal agreement associated with an award.

# Local Governments, Non-Profits, and Cooperatives (15 Points)

## Local Governments, Non-Profits, or Cooperatives

Is the applicant a local government, non-profit, or a cooperative entity?\*

☒ Yes ☐ No

## Local Governments, Non-Profits, and Cooperatives (cont.)

- Applicants identify their entity type when creating their account and completing the Account Information section
- Documents uploaded in Account Documents section support the entity type selected
- Projects involving public-private partnerships where the local government, non-profit, or cooperative is the applicant can also receive these points
  - Applicants that are a subsidiary of a co-op but are a corporation or LLC are not eligible for these points.

# Labor Standards (20 Points)

## Labor Standards

Does the applicant commit to strong labor standards, consistent with Tribal Laws when the project proposes to build infrastructure on Tribal Lands?\*

☒ Yes ☐ No

Evidence of Applicant Commitment to  
Strong Labor Standards



## Labor Standards (cont.)

**Applicant will select YES or NO and upload a document include a description of whether and, if so, how the project will do all of the following:**

1. Incorporate strong labor standards
  2. Demonstrate compliance with and future compliance with labor and employment laws
  3. Plan to recruit and support an appropriately skilled, trained, and credentialed workforce (including by contractors and subcontractors)
- Section E(2)(v) of the August 4, 2022, Funding Opportunity Announcement has the details for all three




## Labor Standards (cont.)

- Commitment to strong labor standards that are consistent with Tribal Laws when the project proposes to build infrastructure on Tribal Lands
- Projects on Tribal Lands must follow Tribal Laws such as Tribal Employment Rights Ordinances to be in compliance with a ReConnect award, regardless of receiving points.
- To ensure implementation, a covenant will be added to the award documents for applicants electing to pursue points for labor standards

# Net Neutrality (10 Points)

## Net Neutrality

Will the applicant commit to following the Federal Communications Commissions rules regarding net neutrality? <sup>\*</sup> 

☒ Yes ☐ No

**Net Neutrality Supporting  
Documentation**



# Net Neutrality (10 Points)

## **Applicant chooses YES or NO and uploads:**

- A board resolution or its equivalent committing that the applicant's networks shall not:
  - 1) Block lawful content, applications, services, or non-harmful devices, subject to reasonable network management;
  - 2) Impair or degrade lawful Internet traffic on the basis of Internet content, application, or service, or use of a non-harmful device, subject to reasonable network management; and
  - 3) Engage in paid prioritization, meaning the management of a broadband provider's network to directly or indirectly favor some traffic over other traffic, including through use of techniques such as traffic shaping, prioritization, resource reservation, or other forms of preferential traffic management, either (a) in exchange for consideration (monetary or otherwise) from a third party, or (b) to benefit an affiliated entity.

# Wholesale Broadband Service (10 Points)

## Wholesale Broadband Services

Will the applicant commit to offering wholesale broadband services at rates and terms that are reasonable and Nondiscriminatory?\*

☒ Yes ☐ No

# Wholesale Broadband Service (cont.)

## **Applicant chooses YES or NO**

- Wholesale broadband services are those purchased for resale to end user customers
- Applicants should submit evidence that they are offering these services through an open access network.
  - Also include an explanation as part of the application executive summary
  - Should be supported by the Local Network Services Revenue – Other Revenue section of the application



# Rurality of PFSA - (25 Points)

## How points will be awarded:

- There are two possible ways an applicant can gain points for rurality:
  - Population densities of 6 or less as measured by the population of the PFSA(s) per square mile; **OR**
  - If each PFSA is located at least 100 miles away from a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants
- If multiple service areas are proposed, the density calculation will be made on the combined areas as if they were a single area and not the average densities
- Points for this criterion will be automatically calculated by the RUS mapping tool.

## Tribal Areas (15 or 10 Points)

### Based on project overlap with Tribal Lands Layers and Entity type:

- **Tribal Governments and Tribal entities**
  - For applicants that are Tribal Governments and tribal wholly-owned entities and, at a minimum, 75 percent of the geographical area of the PFSA(s) is to provide service on tribal lands, 15 points shall be awarded.
- **Non-Tribal Entities**
  - For non-tribal entities where at least 50 percent of the geographic area of the PFSA(s) is to provide service on tribal lands, 10 points shall be awarded.
- The score for Tribal Lands will be automatically calculated by the application system using the RUS mapping tool. Visit <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect> to view the Tribal Lands GIS layer in the RUS mapping tool.

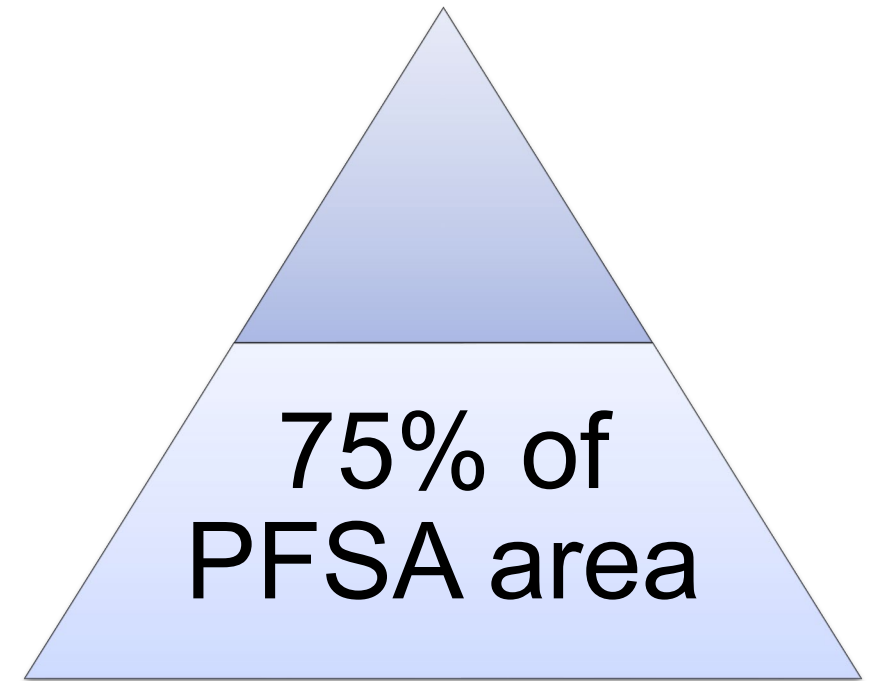
## Tribal Areas (continued)

- **Alaska Native Corporations and Alaska Native Tribal Governments**
  - For applicants that are ANCs or Alaska Native Tribal Governments and, at a minimum, 50 percent of the geographical area of the PFSA(s) is on Census Tribal areas in Alaska, 15 points shall be awarded.
- **Non-Tribal Entities**
  - For non-ANC or non-Alaska Native Tribal Government entities where at least 50 percent of the geographic area of the PFSA(s) is to provide service on tribal lands, 10 points shall be awarded.
- The score for Tribal Lands will be automatically calculated by the application system using the RUS mapping tool. Visit <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/service-area-map-datasets> to view the Alaska Census Tribal Areas GIS layer in the RUS mapping tool.

# Economic Need of the Community (20 Points)

## How points are calculated:

- 75 percent of the PFSA(s) are proposing to serve communities with a SAIPE score of 20 percent or higher.
- If no SAIPE data exists for the PFSA(s), the PFSA(s) will be determined to have an average SAIPE poverty percentage of 30 percent.
- Determined by using the United States Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program.
- **Points for this criterion will be automatically calculated by the RUS mapping tool.**




# Socially Vulnerable Communities (15 Points)

## Points are determined by:

- Applications where at least 75 percent of the PFSA(s) are proposing to serve Socially Vulnerable Communities (SVCs)
  - The points for SVCs will be automatically calculated in the application system.
  - A GIS layer identifying SVCs can be found at <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/service-area-map-datasets>.
- An SVC is defined as: a community or area identified in the Center for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index with a score of 0.75 or higher.
- For purposes of this FOA, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Virgin Islands, and Hawaiian Census Tribal Areas are considered to be Socially Vulnerable Communities.



# Evaluation Criteria Summary

<div> <b>Application</b> 101002147</div> <div>Funding Type 50% Loan/50% Grant</div>									
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# Evaluation Criteria Summary

EVALUATION CRITERIA	INPUT VALUES	SCORE
Does the applicant propose to build in areas that are not receiving service of at least 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream?	Yes	25 / 25
Does the applicant intend to offer at least one low-cost option to all households within the proposed funded service area?	Yes	20 / 20
Is the applicant a local government, non-profit, or a cooperative entity?	Yes	15 / 15
Does the applicant commit to strong labor standards, consistent with Tribal Laws when the project proposes to build infrastructure on Tribal Lands?	Yes	20 / 20
Will the applicant commit to following the Federal Communications Commissions rules regarding net neutrality?	Yes	10 / 10
Will the applicant commit to offering wholesale broadband services at rates and terms that are reasonable and Nondiscriminatory?	Yes	10 / 10
Rurality of Proposed Funded Service Area	11.09	25 / 25
Tribal Lands	0.00 %	0 / 15
Economic Need of Community	0.00 %	0 / 20
Socially Vulnerable Communities	0.00 %	0 / 15
Preliminary Total Score 2 Service Areas Considered		125/175

# Evaluation Criteria Documents



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101002147


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# Evaluation Criteria Documents

Evaluation Criteria Documents							<a href="#">Upload Additional Documents</a>
Section	Document Type	Description	File Name	User	Date/Time		
✓ Evaluation Criteria	EVIDENCE 25 MBPS / 3 MBPS SE...	Test document	Test document for uploads.pdf		Aug 25, 2022, 05:44 PM		

# Available Resources





# Available Resources

- **Register for upcoming events** <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/events>
- **Application Guide** [https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/ReConnect\\_Program\\_Application\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/ReConnect_Program_Application_Guide.pdf)
- **ReConnect website** <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect>
  - Fact Sheets & Frequently Asked Questions
- **Contact Us** <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/contact-us>
- **August 4, 2022 Funding Opportunity Announcement**
  - <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/08/04/2022-16694/rural-econnectivity-program>
- **Regulation** <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-02-26/pdf/2021-03443.pdf>
- **General Field Representative (GFR) & State Office**
  - <https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/telecom-gfr/all>
  - <https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>





Rural Development  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Agenda – September 15, 2022

<b>10:00 – 10:15 AM ET</b>	Opening Remarks
<b>10:15 – 11:45 AM ET</b>	Environmental Tab Part 1: Construction Map
<b>11:45 AM – 12:15 PM ET</b>	Lunch Break
<b>12:15 – 12:20 PM ET</b>	Welcome Back
<b>12:20 – 1:50 PM ET</b>	Environmental Tab Part 2
<b>1:50 – 2:00 PM ET</b>	Break
<b>2:00 – 3:00 PM ET</b>	Evaluation Criteria Tab
<b>3:00 – 3:30 PM ET</b>	Application Submission
<b>3:30 – 4:00 PM ET</b>	Open Q&A
<b>4:00 – 4:15 PM ET</b>	Closing Remarks