

USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program (DLT)

Opportunity to Apply for Funding

The USDA begins accepting applications for funding under the DLT program on April 5, 2021. Applications must be received no later than June 4, 2021, to be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity.

- The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will promote equity and economic opportunity in rural America, specifically those that advance the following key priorities:
 - Containing the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Ensuring racial equity
 - Rebuilding our rural economy and
 - Addressing the climate crisis.
- Congress provided USDA Rural Development \$57 million in DLT funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. As it was authorized to do, the Agency applied \$18 million from FY 2021 to award projects from the prior fiscal year. Approximately \$44.5 million is available. This amount includes \$39.2 million in funds appropriated for FY 2021 as well as funds totaling \$5.3 million which were not awarded during FY 2020.
- The Agency also reserves the right to increase funding for applications should additional appropriations become available for the same purposes.

What does this program do?

This grant program helps rural communities acquire the technology and training necessary to connect educational and medical professionals with students, teachers, and patients in rural areas.

Who may apply for this program?

Eligible applicants that provide education or health care services through telecommunications facilities, include:

- State and local governmental entities
- Federally recognized Tribes
- Nonprofit organizations
- For-profit businesses
- Consortia of eligible entities

What is an eligible area?

The intent of the DLT program is to benefit rural areas with populations of 20,000 or less.

How may funds be used?

Grant funds may be used for:

- Audio, video and interactive video equipment
- Broadband facilities that support distance learning or telemedicine
- Computer hardware, network components and software
- Acquisition of instructional programming
- Acquisition of technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment

What kinds of funding are available?

Grants funds are awarded through a nationally competitive process. Funding is not currently available for DLT loans or loan / grant combinations.

What are some grant requirements?

- Awards can range from \$50,000 to \$1 million
- A minimum 15 percent match is required and cannot be from another federal source

How do we get started?

- Application windows for this program are announced through the national office on a periodic basis
- Program Resources are available online at rd.usda.gov (includes forms, guidance, certifications, etc.)
- Check back here or contact your General Field Representative for additional information

Who can answer questions?

Contact a General Field Representative that serves your area. Call (202) 720-0800 or email dltinfo@usda.gov.

What governs this program?

- Code of Federal Regulation: 7 CFR Part 1734

Why does USDA Rural Development do this?

The DLT program helps rural residents tap into the enormous potential of modern telecommunications and the Internet for education and health care, two of the keys to economic and community development.

NOTE: Because citations and other information may be subject to change, please always consult the program instructions listed in the section above titled “What Governs This Program?” You may also contact your local office for assistance. You will find additional forms, resources, and program information at rd.usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.