

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Invites Comments on Final Rule to Expand Broadband Access in Rural America Under the ReConnect Program

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26, 2021 – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that USDA is seeking comments on a final rule to expand broadband service in rural areas by simplifying program requirements to make more companies eligible to participate in USDA's [ReConnect Program](#).

The rule will eliminate paperwork requirements and will shorten the application process. It also enables an applicant to submit a letter of credit as proof of its financial ability to complete a project. These changes are expected to enable more companies to participate in the ReConnect program, resulting in more broadband coverage in rural areas. The changes take effect April 27, 2021, at the end of a 60-day comment period.

The ReConnect Program offers loans, grants and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas that do not currently have sufficient access to it.

Comments must be submitted through <https://www.regulations.gov> by April 27, 2021. For additional information, see page 11603 of the February 26, 2021, [Federal Register](#).

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