



Together, America Prospers: USDA Rural Development Telecommunications Programs

About USDA

Established in 1862 through legislation signed by President Abraham Lincoln

- **“The People’s Department”**
- Provides leadership in food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition and related issues
- Provides economic opportunity by:
 - ✓ Supporting innovation
 - ✓ Helping rural Americans thrive
 - ✓ Promoting agricultural production that better nourishes Americans
 - ✓ Promoting conservation, restoring forests, improving watersheds, and ensuring healthy, private working lands

USDA Mission Areas and Agencies

8 Mission Areas, each led by an Under Secretary, which are home to sixteen agencies

- ❖ Farm Production and Conservation
- ❖ Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services
- ❖ Food Safety
- ❖ Marketing and Regulatory Programs
- ❖ Natural Resources and Environment
- ❖ Research, Education, and Economics
- ❖ **Rural Development**
- ❖ Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs

About Rural Development

Mission: To increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all rural Americans

- More than **fifty loan and grant programs** that create opportunities in housing, business, and infrastructure
- Operates **three agencies** to provide access to capital for business development, infrastructure, and housing in rural communities of 50,000 or less:
 - Rural Business-Cooperative Service
 - Rural Housing Service
 - **Rural Utilities Service**

Rural Utilities Services (RUS)

USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) provides much-needed infrastructure or infrastructure improvements to rural communities. These include water and waste treatment, electric power and telecommunications services. All of these services help to expand economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for rural residents.

Rural Utilities Service Programs

- Water and Waste Disposal Loans and Grants
- Water and Waste Disposal Loan Guarantees
- Solid Waste Management Grants
- Circuit Rider Technical Assistance/Training
- **ReConnect Program**
- **Rural Broadband Direct Loans and Loan Guarantee (2018 Farm Bill)***
- Electric and Telecommunications Loans
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program
- Rural Energy Savings Program
- Distance Learning and Telemedicine
- **Community Connect Grants**

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Corporations
- Limited Liability Companies and Limited Liability Partnerships
- Cooperatives or mutual organizations
- States or local governments, including any agency, subdivision, instrumentality of political subdivision thereof
- A territory or possession of the United States
- An Indian Tribe, as defined in Section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. §450b)

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program

ELIGIBLE FUNDING PURPOSES

- To fund the construction or improvement of facilities required to provide fixed terrestrial broadband service.
- To fund reasonable pre-application expenses (i.e. 5 percent of award) and costs associated with the environmental review requirements on a reimbursement basis (up to 3 percent of the 5 percent pre-application expenses)
- To fund the acquisition of an existing system that does not currently provide sufficient access to broadband up to 40 percent of the requested award amount as a part of eligible 100 percent loan requests

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program – Funding Limits

100% Grant

For Alaska Native Corporations, Tribal Governments, Colonias, Persistent Poverty Areas and Socially Vulnerable Communities

Up to \$350M Available

Potential awardees must meet a 100 Mbps symmetrical minimum service requirement in all proposed service areas. The maximum award amount is \$35M, and no match is required. The applications are evaluated in a competitive process.

100% Loan

Up to \$150M available

Potential awardees must meet a 100 Mbps symmetrical minimum service requirement in all proposed service areas. The maximum award amount is \$50M, and the interest rate is set at a fixed 2%. The applications for this product are reviewed on a rolling basis and are not evaluated competitively.

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program – Funding Limits

Combo

Up to \$300M available

Potential awardees must meet a 100 Mbps symmetrical minimum service requirement in all proposed service areas. The maximum award amount is \$25M for the loan and \$25M for the grant, and the interest rate is set at the US Treasury Rate. The applications are evaluated in a competitive process.

100% Grant

Up to \$150M available

Potential awardees must meet a 100 Mbps symmetrical minimum service requirement in all proposed service areas. The maximum award amount is \$35M, and a 25% match is required. The applications are evaluated in a competitive process.

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program – Funding Limits

100% Grant

Projects serving areas where 90% of households lack sufficient access to broadband

Up to \$200M available

Potential awardees must meet a 100 Mbps symmetrical minimum service requirement in all proposed service areas. The maximum award amount is \$25M, and no match is required. The applications are evaluated in a competitive process.

ReConnect Loan & Grant Programs



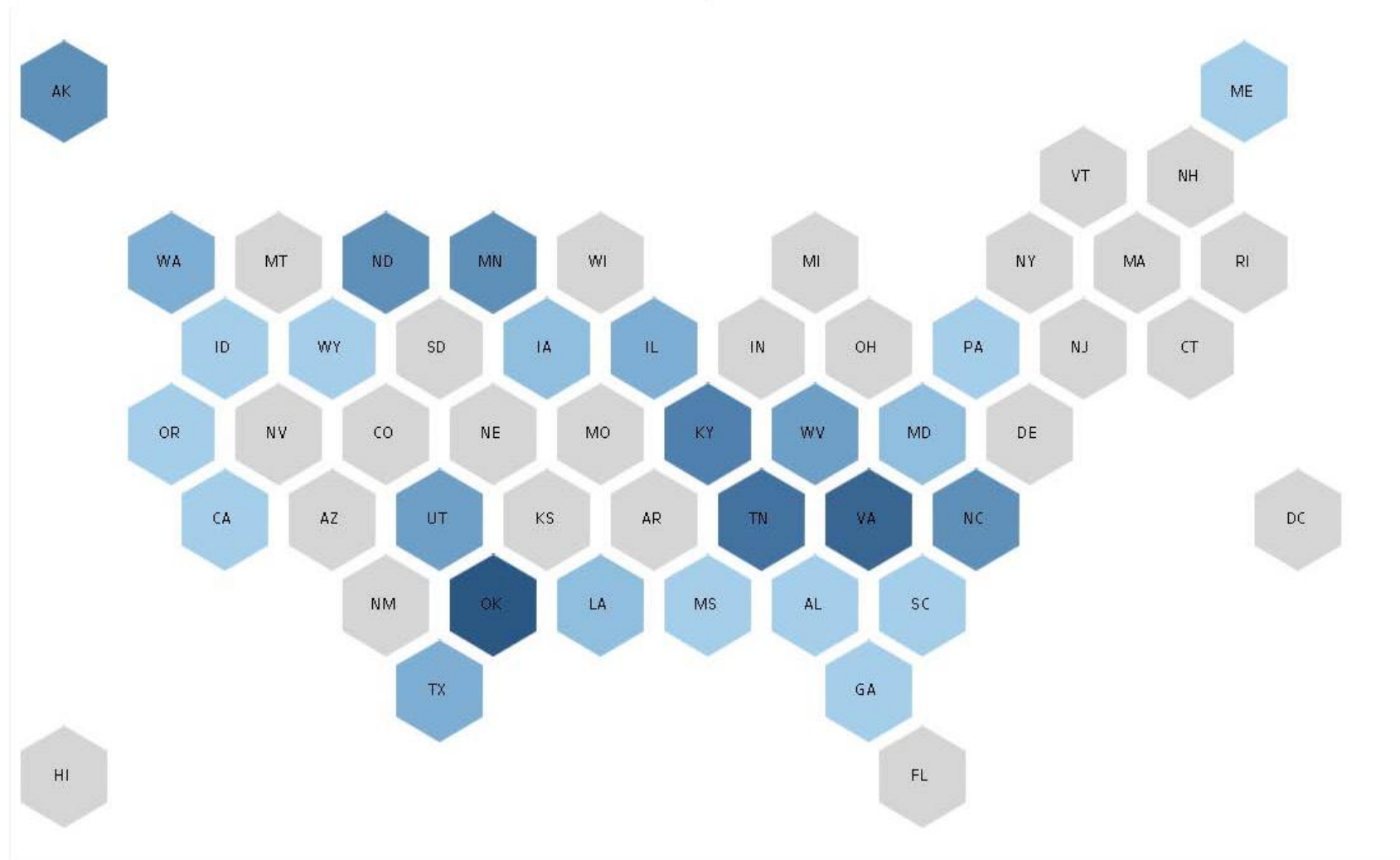
Community Connect Grants

- Helps rural communities extend access where broadband service is least likely to be commercially available
- Supports construction of broadband networks that provide service on a community-oriented connectivity basis in rural areas that lack any existing broadband speed of at least 10 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream
- Eligible applicants:
 - ✓ Incorporated organizations
 - ✓ Federally-recognized Tribes
 - ✓ State and local units of government
 - ✓ Any other legal entity, including cooperatives, private corporations, or limited liability companies organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis

Community Connect Grants

- Funds may be used for:
 - ✓ The construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, spectrum, land or buildings used to deploy broadband service for all residential and business customers located within the Proposed Funded Service Area and all participating essential community facilities
 - ✓ The cost of providing broadband service free of charge to the essential community facilities for 2 years
- Up to 10 percent of the grant may be used for the improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of a community center that provides online access to the public

Community Connect Grant Awards (FY13 – FY21)



Community Connect Program: At-a-Glance

More than



\$160 Million Awarded

Since FY 2013

More than



80 Grants Funded

Since FY 2013

Assisting over



100K Rural Residents

Since FY 2013

Contact Us

Assistance under USDA Rural Development programs is available to applicants in areas designated as “rural.” Under law, the definition of “rural area” is different for each program.

Contact the **Florida USDA Rural Development office** for more information.

Call (352) 338-3400 or go to: www.rd.usda.gov/fl-vi



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