

# Introduction to the USDA & Overview of Rural Utilities Service Programs

**EVENT: GMA South Georgia Broadband Summit** 

LOCATION: Virtual

DATE: October 21, 2021

Presented by: Andrew E. Hayes



#### Funding for Rural Broadband

- Telecommunications
   Infrastructure Loan Program
- Rural Broadband Program
- Community Connect Grant Program
- ReConnect Loan and Grant Program



## Community Connect Grant Program

Funding Type	Rural Focus	Funding Thresholds	Matching Requirement	Broadband Service Speeds	How to Apply	When Applications are Accepted
Grants	Areas with populations ≤ 20K	\$100,000 - \$3,000,000	15% of requested grant amount	Broadband Service: <10/1 Mbps Broadband Grant Speed: ≥25/3 Mbps	Submit through the Community Connect Portal	Applications are not accepted at this time

Available Funding	Program Updates		
FY2019 \$33 million available	FY2019 12 grants approved: \$24.3 million/9 states impacted		
FY2020 \$29 million available in FY2020 after awarding 8 grants from FY2019 application cycle	<ul> <li>FY2020</li> <li>8 grants approved: \$15.7 million (from the FY2019 Application window)/7 states impacted</li> <li>No FY2020 application window due to regulation update</li> </ul>		
FY2021 \$35 million available	FY2021 Application window closed on December 23, 2020 73 Applications received: \$146.4 million		

http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants

### Community Connect Grant Program

Applications were submitted electronically through the new online application system.

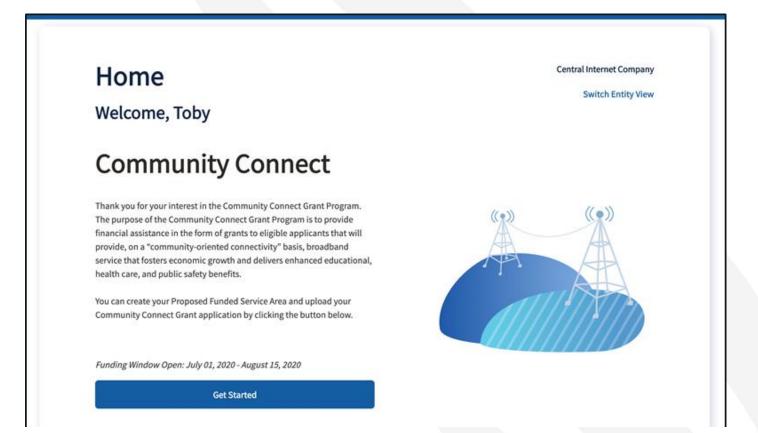
Resources are available on the website at: <a href="http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants">http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants</a>

#### **Contact Information**

Loan Origination and Approval Division

Email: <a href="mailto:community.connect@wdc.usda.gov">community.connect@wdc.usda.gov</a>

Call: 202-720-0806



### ReConnect Program

**Funding Thresholds** 

**Rural Focus** 

**Funding Type** 

			Requirement			are Accepted	
Loan/Grants/ Loan-Grant Combinations	Areas with populations ≤ 20K	≤\$50 million for loans & loan-grant combinations ≤\$25 for grants	For grant-only: 25% of requested grant amount	Broadband Service: <10/1 Mbps Broadband Buildout Speed: ≥25/3 Mbps	Submit through the RUS online application system	Applications are not accepted at this time	
Available Funding				Program Updates			
FY2019				FY2019 – "Round One"			
\$550 million available				146 Applications processed: \$1.4 billion			
				<ul> <li>78 100% Grant applications</li> </ul>			
FY2020				• 53 50/50 Loan/Grant applications			
\$655 million available in FY2020 (includes CARES funding)				• 15 100% Loan applications			
				<ul> <li>77 awards approved: \$663</li> </ul>	million/33 States imp	pacted	
FY2021				<u>FY2020</u> – "Round Two"			
\$635 million available				172 Applications submitted: \$1.57 billion requested			

**Broadband Service Speeds** 

**How to Apply** 

87 awards approved: \$674 million/35 States impacted

Matching

**When Applications** 

### ReConnect Program

"Rural eConnectivity Program" regulation has been published. Highlights of the new regulation include:

- Broadband speeds, funding limits, scoring criteria, and protected areas will be announced in Federal Register notices or Funding Opportunity Announcements when new application windows are opened
- If awarded, grant funds may be used for eligible preapplication expenses in the first advance request

See <u>7 CFR 1740</u> published in the <u>Federal Register</u> on February 26, 2021 for the regulation text.

### Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program

**Distance Learning** means the <u>real-time</u>, <u>interactive</u> delivery of <u>curriculum via</u> <u>telecommunications</u> and promotes the connection of students and teachers at remote sites.

- Provide educational programs, instruction, or information originating in one area, whether rural
  or not, to students and teachers who are located in rural areas; or
- Connect teachers and students, located in one rural area with teachers and students who are located in a different rural area.

**Telemedicine** is a <u>real-time, interactive, telecommunications</u> link to an end user from medical professionals at separate sites in order to exchange health care information for the purpose of providing improved health care services to residents of rural areas.

Benefits rural residents both in reduced travel and improved access to service

#### Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program

 https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunicationsprograms/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants

#### Rural Utilities Service Telecommunications Key Contacts

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