Community Connect Grants

What does this program do?
The grant program offers financial assistance to eligible service providers that will construct, improve, or expand broadband networks in rural areas.

Who may apply for this program?
Eligible applicants include:

- State and local governments
- Federally recognized Tribes
- Nonprofits
- For-profit corporations
- Limited liability companies

What is an eligible area?
Rural areas that lack any existing broadband speed as defined in the most recent funding announcement are eligible.

- The Broadband Mapping Tool provides guidance on rural areas currently eligible for Community Connect Grants

How may the funds be used?
- 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 Service Area
  - all participating critical community facilities (such as public schools, fire stations, public libraries, and public safety stations.)
- The cost of providing broadband service free of charge to the critical 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

Are there other requirements?
Other program requirements include:

- Documentation supporting the scoring criteria
- An executive summary of the propsed project
- Grantees must have legal authority to provide, construct, operate and maintain the proposed facilities or services
- Partnerships with other federal, state, local, private, and nonprofit entities are encouraged
- For additional detail see **7 CFR, 1739**

Matching funds of at least 15 percent from non-federal sources are required and can be used for operating costs.

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 **www.rd.usda.gov** (includes forms, guidance, certifications, etc.)

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Who can answer questions about this program?

- Email us at **community.connect@wdc.usda.gov**
- Contact our Loan Origination and Approval Division at (202) 720-0800
- Contact your **General Field Representative**

What governs this program?

- **7 CFR, Part 1739**

Why does USDA Rural Development do this?

The Community Connect program helps rural communities extend access where broadband service is least likely to be commercially available, but where it can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for people and businesses. The projects funded by these grants help rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the Internet for jobs, education, healthcare, public safety 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 **General Field Representative** for assistance. You will find additional forms, resources, and program information at **www.rd.usda.gov**. *USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*

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