



Committed to the future of rural communities.

Rural Utilities Programs

Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program

The Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant ("Community Connect") Program provides grants to eligible applicants to establish broadband service in rural communities that are not currently served. The grants are provided on a "community-oriented connectivity" basis, meaning that broadband transmission service funded through the program must foster economic growth and deliver enhanced educational, health care, and public safety services.

Grant Program Features

Grant applications are accepted annually through a competitive process. The open season for applications is announced each year, usually in January, through a notice in the *Federal Register*. Applicants are required to provide a minimum of 15 percent in matching funds. Grant awards can range from a minimum of \$50,000 up to a maximum of \$1 million.

Eligibility Information

Who Is Eligible for Assistance?

Entities that are legally organized as:

- An incorporated organization;
- An Indian Tribe or tribal organization;
- A State or local unit of government;
- A cooperative, private corporation, or limited liability company organized on a for- or non-profit basis.

Who Is Ineligible?

Individuals and partnerships are not eligible.

What Are the Basic Eligibility Requirements?

Applicants must:

- Provide matching funds equal to 15 percent of the requested grant amount;
- Serve a rural area where broadband transmission service does not exist;

- Serve one and only one community recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau or Rand McNally;
- Deploy basic broadband transmission service free of charge for 2 years to all critical community facilities;
- Offer basic broadband transmission service to residential and business customers within the proposed service area;
- Provide a community center with at least 10 computer access points free of charge for 2 years.

What Are the Eligible Purposes for the Grant Funds?

- Construction, acquisition, or lease of facilities to deploy broadband to all critical community facilities, as well as residences and businesses in the proposed service area;
- Improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of a community center;
- End-user equipment to carry out the project;
- Operating expenses of up to \$250,000 for the critical community facility for the first 2 years;
- Purchase of land, buildings, or building construction;
- The open-season announcement may outline other specific criteria and/or limitations on funding.

Elements of Scoring:

- Rurality of the community: Up to 40 points
- Median Household Income: Up to 30 points
- Benefits derived: Up to 30 points

For More Information

For more information or to obtain an application packet, visit the Community Connect Web site at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/commconnect.htm>.

Or write to your local or State USDA Rural Development office (see the U.S. Government listing in your phone directory under U.S. Department of Agriculture), or the National Office at:

USDA Rural Development
Broadband Division
U. S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Room 2868,
So. Building
Mail STOP 1599
Washington, D.C. 20250-1599

Phone: (202) 690-4673
Fax: (202) 690-4389

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