U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Telehealth and Broadband Services

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Deputy Director
Office for the Advancement of Telehealth

Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People
The **Telehealth Broadband Pilot Program** assesses the broadband capacity available to rural health care providers and patient communities to improve their access to telehealth services.

The Office for the Advancement of Telehealth awarded approximately **$8 million to 2 organizations to support 4 states** (AK, MI, TX, WV).

The program is being implemented in **25 rural counties**.
Telehealth.HHS.gov is a trusted, timely, and one-stop resource for patients, providers, and researchers for everything they need to know about telehealth including:

- Best practice guides
- Funding opportunities
- Research
- Events
- Tip sheets
- Videos
HHS Telehealth Resources

Telehealth.HHS.gov
https://telehealth.hhs.gov/

Telehealth Resource Centers
https://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/

ProviderBridge
https://www.providerbridge.org/

Multi-Discipline Licensure Resource Project
https://licensureproject.org/

Rural Telehealth Research Center
https://ruraltelehealth.org/
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FCC PROGRAMS SUPPORTING TELEHEALTH

Adam Copeland
Associate Bureau Chief
Wireline Competition Bureau
Federal Communications Commission

* This presentation and its contents are for informational purposes only; the Commission’s rules in part 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations and the Commission’s previous Reports and Orders adopting those rules represent the binding rules and determinations of the Commission.
FCC BROADBAND FUNDING SOURCES

• Universal Service Contributions
  • High Cost (e.g., RDOF)
  • E-Rate (Schools and Libraries)
  • Lifeline (Low Income)
  • Rural Health Care
  • Connected Care Pilot Program

• Congressional Appropriations
  • Affordable Connectivity Program (preceded by the Emergency Broadband Benefit)
  • Emergency Connectivity Fund (Schools and Libraries)
  • COVID-19 Telehealth Program (Health Care)
RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

- 2 sub-programs:
  - Telecommunications Program – established in 1997, pays rural health care providers the difference between urban and rural telecommunications rates to ensure rural providers pay the same as urban counterparts.
  - Healthcare Connect Fund Program – established in 2012, provides a flat 65% discount on high-capacity broadband connectivity to individual rural health care providers and majority rural health care consortia.
    - HCF applicants may apply for multi-year (up to 3 years) contracts.
    - Consortia may apply for upfront costs to support network deployment.

- Funding Year 2021 Cap: $612,016,418 (adjusted upwards annually for inflation)
- FY 2022 Filing Window closes June 1, 2022
- More information:
  - FCC: https://www.fcc.gov/general/rural-health-care-program
  - USAC: usac.org/rural-health-care/
CONNECTED CARE PILOT PROGRAM

• Established in April 2020; up to $100 million of USF funding made available to support the delivery of advanced telehealth services outside of traditional medical facilities directly to patients at their residence or mobile location.

• Selected projects receive an 85% discount on eligible costs including patient broadband internet access, health care provider broadband data connections, other connected care information services, and certain network equipment.

• Application window ran from 11/6/20 to 12/7/20.

• FCC made 4 sets of project selections; as of March 2022, 107 pilot projects serving patients in 40 states + D.C. were selected with projects seeking over $98 million in funding.
  - FCC prioritized projects targeting low-income Americans or veterans.
  - Projects aimed at addressing maternal health and high-risk pregnancy, opioid dependency, mental health, public health epidemics, and chronic conditions were viewed more favorably as good candidates for telehealth.

• Program participants will file annual reports regarding their projects and a final report detailing their experiences with the Pilot Program.

• After the completion of the pilot (projects can run up to 3 years), the FCC will evaluate how Universal Service funding can best be used to support connected care.

• More information:
  - FCC: https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/telecommunications-access-policy-division/connected-care-pilot-program
  - USAC: https://www.usac.org/rural-health-care/connected-care-pilot-program/
COVID-19 TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

• Established in 2020 with $200 million in funding in the CARES Act; FCC adopted a Report and Order for “Round 1” in April 2020.
  • Applications were accepted from 4/13/20 to 6/25/20.
  • Final Round 1 awards issued July 8, 2020. Program funded 539 awards totaling $200 million ($185 million had been disbursed as of 12/31/21, with remaining funding rolled over to Round 2).

• 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act provided $249.95 million in additional funding; FCC adopted a new Report and Order for “Round 2” in March 2021.
  • Application window ran from 4/29/21 to 5/6/21.
  • Final Round 2 awards were issued January 26, 2022. Program funded 447 awards totaling over $256 million.

• Assists eligible health care providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by fully funding telecommunications services, information services, and consumer devices to provide connected care services.

• More information:
  • FCC: https://www.fcc.gov/covid-19-telehealth-program-invoices-reimbursements
  • USAC: https://www.usac.org/about/covid-19-telehealth-program/
INTERNET FOR ALL

FUNDED BY THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW
ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

KAREN HANSON, MBA
MAY16, 2022
"We'll make sure every single, every single, American has access to high-quality, affordable, high-speed Internet," Biden said during his speech. "When I say affordable, I mean it. Americans pay too much for Internet service. We're going to drive down the price for families who have service now and make it easier for families who don't have affordable service to be able to get it now."

-PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN
The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a once-in-a-generation investment in infrastructure and competitiveness

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

- Otherwise known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, a $1.2T bill passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021
- Largest ever investments in high-speed Internet, rail and transit, clean energy, and water
- Allocated funding to over 350 distinct programs across more than a dozen federal departments and agencies

This historic legislation will:

- Deliver clean water to all families and eliminate the nation’s lead service lines
- Ensure every American has access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet
- Repair and rebuild roads and bridges
- Improve transportation options and reduce greenhouse emissions
- Upgrade our nation’s airports and ports to strengthen our supply chains
- Make the largest investment in passenger rail since Amtrak’s creation
- Build a national network of electric vehicle chargers
- Upgrade power infrastructure to deliver clean, reliable energy
- Make infrastructure resilient against the impacts of climate change, cyber-attacks, and extreme weather events
- Deliver the largest investment in tackling legacy pollution in US history

Please see Build.gov for more details on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests ~$65B to ensure everyone in America has access to high-speed Internet

Goal is to build infrastructure that provides reliable high-speed Internet access to all Americans for today and tomorrow...

...with a focus on making high-speed Internet affordable and reliable so everyone can participate in the economy...

... and providing the resources needed to equitably expand the adoption and use of the Internet so everyone can experience the benefits.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests roughly $65B into high-speed internet efforts through 7 federal programs:

Administered by National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
- Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program ($42.45B)
- Digital Equity Planning, Capacity, and Competitive Grants ($2.75B)
- Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program ($2.00B)
- Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program ($1.0B)

Administered by other federal agencies
- Affordable Connectivity Program ($14.2B)
- Rural Broadband Programs at the Department of Agriculture ($2.0B)
- Private Activity Bonds ($0.6B)
NTIA will administer ~$48B through four programs that drive high-speed internet access, affordability, and adoption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadband Equity, Access &amp; Deployment Program</td>
<td>BEAD $42.45B</td>
<td>A program to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where we need it to and increase adoption of high-speed internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Equity Act</td>
<td>DIGITAL EQUITY $2.75B</td>
<td>Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable, high-speed internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tribal Connectivity Technical Amendments</td>
<td>TRIBAL $2.00B</td>
<td>A program to help tribal communities expand high-speed internet access and adoption on tribal lands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure</td>
<td>MIDDLE MILE $1.00B</td>
<td>A program to expand middle mile infrastructure, to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas.</td>
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</table>

FCC to administer $14.2B
For Affordable Connectivity Program, which replaced the EBB program

USDA to administer $2.0B
Via the Rural Utilities Service

Private Activity Bonds $0.6B
Authorizes State and local governments to use private activity bonds for rural broadband
BEAD program will provide ~$42.45B for infrastructure planning and implementation

Funding pool
$42.45B

A program to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where we need it to and increase adoption of high-speed internet.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Entities eligible to apply for this program include:
- All 50 States
- The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
- Other Territories: U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Example eligible uses of funds include:
- Planning for deployment of Internet
- Deploying or upgrading Internet
- Installing Internet in multi-tenant buildings
- Implementing adoption and digital equity programs
- Workforce and job training

ESTIMATED TIMELINE

Timeline approximate unless exact date specified

2022
NOFO live 5/13

2023
Letter of Intent
Due 7/18

Due 270 days after planning funds received

2024
Initial proposal

Due 180 days after new DATA maps and notice of fundings amounts issued

2025
Final proposal

Due 365 days after initial proposal approval

2026+

5-year plan

4-year implementation

Initial proposal

Final proposal
The Digital Equity Act created three programs to promote digital equity and inclusion:

- **State Planning**:
  - $60M formula funding program to develop digital equity plans
  - Developing digital equity plans; states must develop a plan to be eligible for state capacity grants.

- **State Capacity**:
  - $1.44B formula funding program to implement plans & promote digital inclusion
  - Making awards to other entities to help make digital equity plans.
  - Implementing digital equity plans and related activities
  - Providing digital literacy and digital skills education.

- **Competitive**:
  - $1.25B to implement digital equity and inclusion activities
  - Improving accessibility and inclusivity of public resources.
  - Facilitating the adoption of high-speed Internet.

**Funding pool**

$2.75B

Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.

**ESTIMATED TIMELINE**

- **Planning app**: 2023
- **1-year state planning**: 2023
- **State cap. app**: 2024
- **5-year state capacity implementation**: 2024
- **Comp. app**: 2025
- **4-year competitive implement.**: 2025
- **Timeline approximate unless exact date specified**

NOFO live 5/13 Due 7/12

Competitive Program launches within 1 month of first Capacity awards

Digital Equity Act created three programs to promote digital equity and inclusion.
Technical amendments and new funding will strengthen current Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

**Funding pool**
$2.00B

A program to help tribal communities expand high-speed internet access and adoption on tribal lands.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

New funding will be used for additional new grants and to fully fund grants from first round of awards

**Amendments to original program:**
- Relaxes time requirements of original program
- Allows infrastructure grantees to spend up to 2.5% of the total project cost for related planning, feasibility, and sustainability studies
- Preserves unused allocated funds for other Tribal broadband projects instead of reverting to the Treasury

**ESTIMATED TIMELINE**

Timeline approximate unless exact date specified
Middle Mile Grant Program will invest in the construction, improvement or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure

**Funding pool**

$1.00B

A program to expand middle mile infrastructure, to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

**Middle mile infrastructure refers to** the mid-section of Internet infrastructure that carries large amounts of data at high speeds over long distances and connects the "backbone" of Internet infrastructure to the "last mile", which connects to end users.

**Entities eligible to apply include a wide variety of entities**, incl. but not limited to government entities, utilities, companies, and non-profits that provide Internet services.

**Example uses of funds:**

- Construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment
- Engineering design, permitting, and work related to projects
- Personnel costs, including salaries and benefits
- Other costs necessary to program’s activities

**ESTIMATED TIMELINE**

- 2022: NOFO live 5/13, Due 9/30
- 2023: Rolling awards no earlier than 3/1
- 2024-2025: 5-yr deployment
- 2026+: Timeline approximate unless exact date specified

Source: California Department of Technology, "What is the middle mile"?

[Internet for All]
There are many ways stakeholders may get involved in the programs

**Telecom provider**
- Apply to be a BEAD subgrantee or apply directly for Middle Mile
- Note: Telecom providers may include government owned entities

**Community anchor institution**
- Benefit from BEAD funding for faster Internet
- Apply for Digital Equity competitive grant
- Advocate for community interests across programs

**Local government**
- Collaborate with state to develop Digital Equity plan and during BEAD planning
- Apply for a Middle Mile or Digital Equity capacity and competitive grants

**Community orgs**
- Serve as a thought partner as states design their outreach strategies
- Advocate for community interests across programs

**Individual**
- Participate in digital skill and literacy courses funded by programs
- Contact local reps for more information

**Tribal government**
- Coordinate, consult, and partner with states during BEAD planning
- Apply for a Middle Mile, Tribal Broadband, or Digital Equity capacity and competitive grants

Illustrative, non-exhaustive
Additional resources about the programs

1. Visit InternetForAll.gov for additional information on federal funding programs

2. Engage with your State or territory regarding their plans to improve high-speed Internet access

3. Submit questions to InternetForAll@ntia.gov

4. Attend future NTIA webinars, including program-specific application guidance webinars for applicants
USDA Rural Development Offices

- 4 Regions
- 47 State Offices
- 400 Area Offices
- 1 National Office in DC
Community Facilities Programs Overview

• Offers direct loans, loan guarantees and grants to develop or improve essential public services and facilities

• Eligible Purposes: Construct, expand, renovate, or improve essential community facilities
Community Facilities Programs

- Healthcare: $6.2 Billion
- Education: $3.6 Billion
- Public Buildings: $1.2 Billion
- Public Safety: $1.0 Billion
- Other: $0.5 Billion
Community Facilities Programs Overview: Who’s Eligible

• An applicant must be:
  • A public body
  • A not-for-profit organization
  • Native American tribe on Federal or State Reservations or other Federally recognized tribes

• Facility must be located in a town/city/village with a population:
  • Under 20,000 for a direct loan and/or grant
  • Under 50,000 for guaranteed loans.

• Projects must primarily serve rural residents residing in communities with a population:
  • Under 20,000 for a direct loan and/or grant
  • Under 50,000 for guaranteed loans.

• Applicant must be unable to finance the project from their own resources or through commercial credit at reasonable rates and terms.
CF Direct Loan Rates and Terms

- Interest rates currently at 2.5% (Interest rates change quarterly)
- 40-year term or useful life
- Adequate security to protect the interest of the Government
- Repayment ability
Community Facilities Programs Overview: Grant Programs

CF Regular Grants

- Limited grant funds available for the most-needy communities
  - Average grant obligated in FY21 was $42,000

- Grant funds cannot exceed 75 percent of the cost of project and authorized on a graduated basis

- Grant funding limitations are based on population and income, economic feasibility and availability of grant funds

- Projects are selected based on a priority point system. Points are assigned based on population, income and other priorities
Emergency Rural Health Care Grants
American Rescue Plan Act

This program provides up to $500 million in grant funding to help broaden access to COVID-19 testing and vaccines, rural health care services, and food assistance through food banks and food distribution facilities.

Funding was made available to eligible applicants through two tracks:

- **Track One: Recovery Grants** provide immediate relief to address economic conditions arising from the COVID-19 emergency. Grants range from $25,000 - $1 million.

- **Track Two: Impact Grants** advance ideas and solutions to solve regional health care problems to support the long-term sustainability of rural health. Grants range from $5 million - $10 million.

Applications accepted until funding no longer available

Deadline October 12, 2021; Applications no longer accepted

https://rd.usda.gov/erhc
Community Facilities Direct Loan Program Guidance Book for Applicants

Community Facilities Direct Loan Program Guidance Book for Applicants is a step by step guide to help applicants apply for a Community Facilities Direct loan.

This guide book outlines the application process, financial feasibility requirements, construction and closing of an essential community facility for small towns and rural areas.

https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/community-facilities-programs
Community Facilities Loans and Grants

ERHC Grant
Telehealth
Project Examples
Black Canyon Community Health Center Inc. (AZ) will use a $31,827 grant from USDA Rural Development to purchase equipment and make fiber-optic upgrades for telecommunications equipment. This will enable the health center to expand telehealth services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The center serves rural patients in underserved communities in Yavapai and Maricopa counties.
USDA Rural Development will invest a $868,500 grant to be used to purchase additional equipment and supplies for COVID-19 testing, personal protective equipment, a new ventilator and respirator, and further expand telehealth and remote care services, which will assist in reducing potential exposure and transmission. The funds will be used towards promoting and administering vaccines to current and future residents and staff, as well as increase testing.
USDA Rural Development will invest a $71,300 grant to be used to implement a telehealth program for McAlester Regional Hospital. McAlester Regional Healthcare Authority (MRHC) will create a telehealth program to provide a safe alternative way for patients to see doctors during the pandemic. The implementation of virtual visits will provide an alternative to coming into the hospital or clinic, while decreasing no show appointments. This is especially needed due to Covid and the desire to keep patients out of the hospital and clinics unless medically necessary and at the same time providing access to healthcare for those in rural areas. MRHC will use the grant funds to purchase 127 computers, program license and to hire a trainer/coordinator. The coordinator will provide technical support and training for the doctors and staff.
USDA Rural Development will invest a $191,300 grant to be used to assist Grady Memorial Hospital’s purchase of a wireless network. With the new wireless network and access points, the hospital will be able to increase connectivity and coverage to their parking lot pop-up clinic where vaccine administration and COVID-19 tests are performed. This includes the ability to facilitate telehealth interactive consults between the pop-up clinic and the clinicians inside the hospital. This investment will benefit the citizens in the rural area of Chickasha, OK.
USDA Rural Development invested a $1,000,000 grant into Page Memorial Hospital (PMH), a critical access hospital and sub-organization of the region's health care system Valley Health. The hospital is located in Luray, Virginia and primarily serves Page County. With this RD investment, the hospital will implement the following programs:

- Community Telehealth and Remote Infrastructure: Connects rural patients to already established Valley Health telehealth services and County of Page internet infrastructure (internet hot spots and other remote support).
- Remote Monitoring Equipment (RPM): A new program established to include services, equipment and devices for up to 100 patients over 3 years.
- Telehealth in schools: A pilot program connecting local public schools to a Valley Health telehealth network and will utilize remote devices and services purchased by Page County School System for access to network.
- Remote Area Medical (RAM) Clinic: A pop-up clinic to support the underinsured (2 events).
Contact Information

Contact your local USDA Rural Development office for more information.

https://www.rd.usda.gov/

https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program

https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/state-offices

Chad Parker ----- chad.parker@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
Funding Opportunities – Rural Utilities Service, Telecommunications Program

• **Mission of the Telecom Program:**
  “To expand rural business opportunity and rural quality of life with access to capital; improve infrastructure, broadband access and connectivity; and support workforce availability”

• **Focus Programs**
  - **Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program**
  - **Community Connect Grant Program**
  - **ReConnect Program (Loans, Grants, and Loan/Grant Combination**
Funding Opportunities – Rural Utilities Service, Telecommunications Program

- Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program
  - Competitive Grant Program
  - $57M available in FY2022

- Community Connect Grant Program
  - Competitive Grant Program
  - $35M available in FY2022
  - [https://www.rd.usda.gov/community-connect](https://www.rd.usda.gov/community-connect)
Funding Opportunities – Rural Utilities Service, Telecommunications Program

- ReConnect Program (Loans, Grants, and Loan/Grant Combination)
  - Currently Processing Applications for $1.1 Billion in available funding (window closed)
  - Approximately $2B available under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
  - Future funding window to open later this summer
  - https://www.usda.gov/reconnect
Funding Opportunities – Rural Utilities Service, Telecommunications Program

• Contacts
  
  • **General Field Representatives**
    
    • The Telecom Program maintains a staff of General Field Representatives (GFRs) stationed around the country. GFRs are an integral part of our outreach delivery system.

    • [https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/telecom-gfr](https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/telecom-gfr)

  • **Shawn Arner, Deputy Assistant Administrator – Telecommunications Program**
    
    • Email: shawn.arner@usda.gov
    
    • Phone: 202-720-0800