Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program

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USDA, Rural Utilities Service
Loan Origination & Approval Division, Telecommunications
Telecommunications Program Organization

**Telecommunications Program Staff:**
- National Office staff:
  - Leadership
  - Loan and business specialists
  - Engineering review staff
- Field staff - General Field Representatives (GFRs)

**Rural Development State Office Staff:**
- Broadband Coordinators in RD state offices
In the 1930’s, the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) made financing available for electric cooperatives and other entities to bring electricity to rural communities that might otherwise not receive it.

Funding was provided for basic telephone service to ensure that rural residents and businesses received the same type of services as urban areas.

In 1949, the REA received authority to finance telephone service in recognition of its importance to rural communities.

Starting in 1995, all telecommunications networks financed were required to be broadband-capable.
RD Telecommunications Program
Loan and Grant Programs

• **Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program:** Loans to improve and build telecommunications service in rural communities (<5,000 population)

• **Distance Learning/Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program:** Loans and grants for providing Distance Learning and Telemedicine services to rural residents and anchor institutions

• **Community Connect Grant Program:** Grants for broadband service providers and others who offer broadband services in rural and remote areas (<20,000 population)

• **Rural Broadband Loan Program (Farm Bill):** Loans to build and upgrade broadband services in rural high cost areas (<20,000 population & not contiguous to urbanized areas >50,000)

• **Public TV Grants:** grants for rural public TV stations for the digital TV transition

More than $22 billion invested in rural America since 1949
Investment for Telecommunications and Broadband in Rural Areas

Current RD Telecom Program – Loan Portfolio: $4.6 billion
- Approximately $3.9 billion principal outstanding for Telecom Infrastructure Loan and Farm Bill Broadband Loan Program borrowers
- Approximately $0.69 billion principal outstanding for loans under the Broadband Initiatives Program (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009)
- Combining current portfolio with the still to be spent BIP loan funds, our portfolio under management approaches $6 billion

RD Telecom also manages $2.5 billion in grant funds
## RUS Telecommunications Programs
### FY 2014 and FY 2015 Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Level Funding ($ millions)</th>
<th>2014 Budget</th>
<th>2015 Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Infrastructure Loans</td>
<td>$690</td>
<td>$690.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband Loans</td>
<td>$34.5</td>
<td>$75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants</td>
<td>$19.3</td>
<td>$19.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Connect Grants</td>
<td>$10.4</td>
<td>$10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public TV Grants</td>
<td>$2.0</td>
<td>$2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program

Purpose and Definitions

DLT Grants are not just a way to obtain educational technology or medical equipment. The focus is on using the unique capabilities of telecommunications to connect rural areas to each other and to the world, thus overcoming the effects of remoteness and low population density.

Distance learning means a curriculum delivered via telecommunications and stresses the connection of students and teachers at remote sites.

Telemedicine means the delivery of health care from medical professionals at one site to patients at other sites via telecommunications. Telemedicine shows benefit to rural residents either in reduced travel or improved access to services.
The DLT Grant Program
Typical Projects

• Distance Learning:
  - Video-conferencing is the most common for distance learning including distance learning services to schools, colleges, universities and other institutions
    Including bridges, servers, cameras, projectors, etc.

• Telemedicine:
  - Visiting nurse links from patient homes to health professionals elsewhere
  - Tele-radiology
  - Tele-dentistry
  - Tele-psychiatry
  - Tele-pharmacy
  - Virtual ICU

• Projects can be a combination of distance learning and telemedicine (e.g. medical services and medical education)
DLT Grant Program

Eligible Applicants

Corporation or a partnership; tribal nation or organization; a state or local unit of government; a consortium; or other legal entity. For or not-for profit able to contract with the US Government. No individuals or sole-proprietorships.

Operate a rural community facility or deliver DLT services to entities that operate a rural community facility or to residents of rural areas at rates calculated to ensure that the benefit of the financial assistance passes through to such entities or to residents of rural areas.
The DLT Grant Program
Eligible Equipment

• This list is not exhaustive and does not convey automatic eligibility. To be eligible in full, items must be primarily for DLT eligible purposes.
  – Audio and video equipment
  – Computer hardware and software
  – Computer network components
  – Terminal equipment
  – Data terminal equipment
  – Interactive audio/video equipment
  – OEM or OEM-authorized warranties on eligible equipment up to the 3-year life of the grant
  – Inside wiring
The DLT Grant Program
Ineligible Costs

Grant funds cannot be used to purchase:

- Salaries and benefits of awardee
- Administrative expenses (overhead)
- Telecommunications transmission equipment
- Recurring costs, including telecommunications
- Medical equipment
- Equipment owned by telecom provider (LECs, CLECs, etc.)
- Duplication of facilities
- Costs incurred before the application deadline
The DLT Grant Program Scoring

Scoring: 230 Points possible in 8 scoring categories:

- Rurality (population density) – 45 points
- National School Lunch Program (economic need) – 35 points
- Leveraging (matching funds) – 35 points
- USDA-designated Empowerment Zones – 10 points
- Additional National School Lunch Program – 10 points
- Need for Services and Project Benefits – 45 points
- Innovativeness – 15 points
- Cost Effectiveness – 35 points
There is No SUTA provision, however there is ‘Special Consideration’
Projects that contain at least one end-user site within a trust area or a tribal jurisdictional area will gain 15 extra points if...
Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program

‘Special Consideration’

............... the applicant can document:

1) With a map that the end-user site is within the boundaries of the trust area or tribal jurisdictional area.

2) With a map identifying the geographical coordinates and physical address of the end-user site.

3) With some form of legal reference or written evidence that the area where the end-user site is located is a trust area or a tribal jurisdictional area.
Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program
‘Special Consideration’

Of the 65 awards that received FY14 funding, 29 were applicants that had received Special Consideration Points.
Click on the red envelope, enter your email address, and select your topics (all Telecom Programs, Community Connect, and/or DLT)
Distance Learning & Telemedicine
Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2015
June 4th and 10th, 2015
1:00 to 3:00 pm EST

Workshop Agenda
Introduction - Shawn Armer,
Director of the Loan
Origination and Approval
Division
Presenters
Randall Millhiser – Field Staff
Branch Chief
Deborah Jackson – Operations
Branch Chief
Scott Steiner – Engineering
Branch Chief
Q&A Session – Randall
Millhiser, Scott Steiner, and
Deborah Jackson

Audio Conference and WebEx Information
Due to the limited amount of seats available for each session,
interested parties must preregister with the RUS Loan
Origination and Approval Division. Seats for each session will be
reserved in the order in which the requests are received by the RUS.
To preregister, please contact Deborah Herndon or Gayle Buckner at
(202) 720-0800 or email: deborah.herndon@wdc.usda.gov and
gayle.buckner@wdc.usda.gov

The Audio Conference and WebEx information will be provided
prior to the scheduled workshop sessions.

Questions? Please contact the RUS at dlinfo@wdc.usda.gov
with any questions about these events.

The United States Department of Agriculture is an equal opportunity
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Contact Information

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1400 Independence Ave.
Washington, DC 20250

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RUSTelecomPrograms.html

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