

Dated: June 25, 2007.

Tim DeCoster,

Chief of Staff.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Announcement of Grant Application Deadlines and Funding Levels

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of funds availability.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency delivering the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Utilities Program, hereinafter referred to as Rural Development, announces its Community Connect Grant Program application window for funding during fiscal year (FY) 2007. In addition, RUS announces the minimum and maximum amounts for Community Connect grants applicable for the fiscal year. The Community Connect Grant Program regulations can be found at 7 CFR part 1739, subpart A.

DATES: You may submit completed applications for grants on paper or electronically according to the following deadlines:

- Paper copies must carry proof of shipping *no later than* August 13, 2007 to be eligible for FY 2007 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2007 grant funding.
- Electronic copies must be received by August 13, 2007 to be eligible for FY 2007 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2007 grant funding.

ADDRESSES: Application guides and materials for the Community Connect Grant Program may be found at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/commconnect.htm>. You may also request application guides and materials from Rural Development by contacting the appropriate individual listed in section VII of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice. Completed applications may be submitted either electronically or by mail.

To submit electronically, follow the instructions provided at <http://www.grants.gov> (Grants.gov).

To submit by mail, send your completed packet to Utilities, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 2870, STOP 1599, Washington, DC 20250-1599. Applications should be marked "Attention: Director, Broadband

Division, Rural Development Utilities Program."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kenneth Kuchno, Director, Broadband Division, Rural Development Utilities Program, U.S. Department of Agriculture, telephone: (202) 690-4673, fax: (202) 690-4389.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

Federal Agency: Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

Funding Opportunity Title: Community Connect Grant Program.

Announcement Type: Initial announcement.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.863.

DATES: You may submit completed applications for grants on paper or electronically according to the following deadlines:

- Paper copies must carry proof of shipping *no later than* August 13, 2007, to be eligible for FY 2007 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2006 grant funding.
- Electronic copies must be received by August 13, 2007, to be eligible for FY 2007 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2007 grant funding.

Items in Supplementary Information

I. Funding Opportunity: Brief introduction to the Community Connect Grant Program.

II. Award Information: Available funds and minimum and maximum amounts.

III. Eligibility Information: Who is eligible, what kinds of projects are eligible, what criteria determine basic eligibility.

IV. Application and Submission Information: Where to get application materials, what constitutes a completed application, how and where to submit applications, deadlines, items that are eligible.

V. Application Review Information: Considerations and preferences, scoring criteria, review standards, selection information.

VI. Award Administration Information: Award notice information, award recipient reporting requirements.

VII. Agency Contacts: Web, phone, fax, e-mail, contact name.

I. Funding Opportunity

The provision of broadband transmission service is vital to the economic development, education, health, and safety of rural Americans. The purpose of the Community Connect Grant Program is to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible applicants that will provide currently unserved areas with residential and community-oriented broadband transmission service that

fosters economic growth and delivers enhanced educational, health care, and public safety services. Rural Development will give priority to rural areas that it believes have the greatest need for broadband transmission services, based on the criteria contained in 7 CFR part 1739.

Grant authority will be used for the deployment of broadband transmission service to extremely rural, lower-income communities on a "community-oriented connectivity" basis. The "community-oriented connectivity" concept will stimulate practical, everyday uses and applications of broadband facilities by cultivating the deployment of new broadband transmission services that improve economic development and provide enhanced educational and health care opportunities in rural areas. Such an approach will also give rural communities the opportunity to benefit from the advanced technologies that are necessary to achieve these goals. Please see 7 CFR part 1739, subpart A for specifics.

This notice has been formatted to conform to a policy directive issued by the Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM) of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), published in the **Federal Register** on June 23, 2003. This Notice does not change the Community Connect Grant Program regulation (7 CFR part 1739, subpart A).

II. Award Information

A. Available Funds

1. *General.* The Administrator has determined that the following amounts are available for grants in FY 2007 under 7 CFR 1739.2(a).

2. Grants.

a. \$8.91 million in grant funding is available for award. Under 7 CFR 1739.2, the Administrator has established a minimum grant amount of \$50,000 and a maximum grant amount of \$1,000,000 for FY 2007.

b. Assistance instrument: Rural Development will execute grant documents with successful applicants appropriate to the project prior to any advance of funds.

B. More than one Community Connect grant cannot be awarded to the same project. Award documents specify the term of each award. Applications to extend existing projects are welcomed (grant applications must be submitted during the application window) and will be evaluated as new applications.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Who is eligible for grants? (See 7 CFR 1739.10.)

1. Only entities legally organized as one of the following are eligible for Community Connect Grant Program financial assistance:

- a. An incorporated organization;
- b. An Indian tribe or tribal organization, as defined in 25 U.S.C. 450b(b) and (c);
- c. A state or local unit of government; or

d. A cooperative, private corporation or limited liability company organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis.

2. Individuals are not eligible for Community Connect Grant Program financial assistance directly.

3. Applicants must have the legal capacity and authority to own and operate the broadband facilities as proposed in its application, to enter into contracts, and to otherwise comply with applicable federal statutes and regulations.

B. What are the basic eligibility requirements for a project?

1. Required matching contributions. (See 7 CFR 1739.14.) Grant applicants must demonstrate a matching contribution, in cash or in kind (new, non-depreciated items), of at least fifteen (15) percent of the total amount of financial assistance requested. Matching contributions must be used for eligible purposes of Community Connect grant assistance (see 7 CFR 1739.12).

2. To be eligible for a grant, the Project must (see 7 CFR 1739.11):

a. Serve a Rural Area where Broadband Transmission Service does not currently exist, to be verified by Rural Development prior to the award of the grant;

b. Serve one and only one Community recognized in the latest U.S. Census or the latest edition of a Rand McNally Atlas;

c. Contiguous areas outside the Community's boundaries that are not recognized in the U.S. Census or Rand McNally Atlas as a separate Community, can be included in the applicant's proposed Service Area.

d. Deploy Basic Broadband Transmission Service, free of all charges for at least 2 years, to all Critical Community Facilities located within the proposed Service Area;

e. Offer Basic Broadband Transmission Service to residential and business customers within the proposed Service Area; and

f. Provide a Community Center with at least ten (10) Computer Access Points

within the proposed Service Area, and make Broadband Transmission Service available therein, free of all charges to users for at least two (2) years.

C. See paragraph IV.C of this notice for a discussion of the items that make up a completed application. You may also refer to 7 CFR 1739.15 for completed grant application items.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Clarifications to requirements for FY 2007

1. Rural Development clarifies that the definition of "Critical Community Facilities" includes the mandatory Community Center.

2. For all funding commitments, including all matching fund commitments and commitments made by the applicant, that are required to complete the Project in addition to the Rural Development grant, evidence must be submitted demonstrating that funding arrangements have been obtained. This evidence must:

- a. Clearly state the name of the entity making the commitment;
- b. The amount of the commitment; and
- c. The purpose of commitment.

B. Where To Get Application Information

The application guide, copies of necessary forms and samples, and the Community Connect Grant Program regulation are available on the Internet or by phone as follows:

1. Information is available on the Internet at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/commconnect.htm>, or <http://www.grants.gov>.

2. For paper copies of these materials, call the Rural Development Broadband Division at: (202) 690-4673.

C. What constitutes a completed application?

1. Detailed information on required items can be found in the Community Connect Grant Program regulation (7 CFR 1739) and the Community Connect Grant Program application guide. Applicants are strongly encouraged to read and apply both the regulation and the application guide. This Notice does not change the requirements for a completed application for any form of Community Connect Grant Program financial assistance specified in the Community Connect Grant Program regulation. The Community Connect Grant Program regulation and the application guide provide specific guidance on each of the items listed and the Community Connect Grant Program

application guide provides all necessary forms and sample worksheets.

2. Applications should be prepared in conformance with the provisions in 7 CFR 1739, subpart A, and applicable USDA regulations including 7 CFR parts 3015, 3016, and 3019. In preparing an application, applicants must use the Rural Development Application Guide for this program which contains instructions and all necessary forms, as well as other important information. Completed applications must include the following:

a. *An Application for Federal Assistance.* A completed Standard Form (SF) 424.

b. *An executive summary of the Project.* The applicant must provide Rural Development with a general project overview.

c. *Scoring criteria documentation.* Each grant applicant must address and provide documentation on how it meets each of the scoring criteria detailed 7 CFR 1739.17.

d. *System design.* The applicant must submit a system design containing narrative specifics of the proposal, associated costs, maps, engineering design studies, technical specifications and system capabilities, etc.

e. *Scope of work.* The scope of work must include: Specific activities and services to be performed under the proposal; identification of who will carry out the activities and services; specific time-frames for completion; and a budget for all capital and administrative expenditures reflecting the line item costs for all grant purposes, the matching contribution, and other sources of funds necessary to complete the project.

f. *Community-Oriented Connectivity Plan.* The applicant must provide a detailed plan on how their project will connect community residents, businesses, and community facilities to broadband transmission services. (See the application guide for more information.)

g. *Financial information and sustainability.* The applicant must provide financial statements and information and a narrative description demonstrating the sustainability of the Project. (See the application guide for more information.)

h. *A statement of experience.* The applicant must provide a written narrative describing its demonstrated capability and experience, if any, in operating a broadband telecommunications system.

i. *Evidence of legal authority and existence.* The applicant must provide evidence of its legal existence and authority to enter into a grant agreement

with RUS and to perform the activities proposed under the grant application.

j. *Funding commitment from other sources.* If the Project requires funding from other sources in addition to the Rural Development grant, the applicant must provide evidence that funding agreements have been obtained to ensure completion of the Project.

k. *Compliance with other federal statutes.* The applicant must provide evidence of compliance with other federal statutes and regulations, including, but not limited to the following:

(i) 7 CFR part 15, subpart A—Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Agriculture—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

(ii) 7 CFR part 3015—Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations.

(iii) 7 CFR part 3017—Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement).

(iv) 7 CFR part 3018—New Restrictions on Lobbying.

(v) 7 CFR part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

(vi) Certification regarding Architectural Barriers.

(vii) Certification regarding Flood Hazard Precautions.

(viii) An environmental report, in accordance with 7 CFR 1794.

(ix) Certification that grant funds will not be used to duplicate lines, facilities, or systems providing Broadband Transmission Service.

(x) Federal Obligation Certification on Delinquent Debt.

3. *DUNS Number.* As required by the OMB, all applicants for grants must now supply a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying. The SF-424 contains a field for the applicant to use when supplying the DUNS number. Obtaining a DUNS number costs nothing and requires a short telephone call to Dun and Bradstreet. Please see the Community Connect Web site or Grants.gov for more information on how to obtain a DUNS number or how to verify your organization's number.

D. How many copies of an application are required?

1. Applications submitted on paper: Submit the original application and two (2) copies to Rural Development.

2. Electronically submitted applications: The additional paper copies are not necessary if you submit the application electronically through Grants.gov.

E. How and Where To Submit an Application

Grant applications may be submitted on paper or electronically.

1. Submitting applications on paper.

a. Address paper applications for grants to the Rural Development, Utilities Program, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 2870, STOP 1599, Washington, DC 20250-1599. Applications should be marked "Attention: Director, Broadband Division, Rural Development Utilities Program."

b. Paper applications must show proof of mailing or shipping consisting of one of the following:

(i) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service (USPS) postmark;

(ii) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the USPS; or

(iii) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.

c. Due to screening procedures at the Department of Agriculture, packages arriving via the USPS are irradiated, which can damage the contents. Rural Development encourages applicants to consider the impact of this procedure in selecting their application delivery method.

2. Electronically submitted applications.

a. Applications will not be accepted via facsimile machine transmission or electronic mail.

b. Electronic applications for grants will be accepted if submitted through the Federal government's Grants.gov initiative at <http://www.grants.gov>.

c. How to use Grants.gov:

(i) Navigate your Web browser to <http://www.grants.gov>.

(ii) Follow the instructions on that Web site to find grant information.

(iii) Download a copy of the application package.

(iv) Complete the package off-line.

(v) Upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov Web site.

d. Grants.gov contains full instructions on all required passwords, credentialing and software.

e. Rural Development encourages applicants who wish to apply through Grants.gov to submit their applications in advance of the deadline.

f. If a system problem occurs or you have technical difficulties with an electronic application, please use the customer support resources available at the Grants.gov Web site.

F. Deadlines

1. Paper applications must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than August 13,

2007 to be eligible for FY 2007 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2007 grant funding.

2. Electronic grant applications must be received by August 13, 2007 to be eligible for FY 2007 funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2007 grant funding.

G. Funding Restrictions

1. *Eligible grant purposes.* Grant funds may be used to finance:

a. The construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, including spectrum, to deploy Broadband Transmission Service to all participating Critical Community Facilities and all required facilities needed to offer such service to residential and business customers located within the proposed Service Area;

b. The improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of a Community Center that furnishes free access to broadband Internet service, provided that the Community Center is open and accessible to area residents before, during, and after normal working hours and on Saturday or Sunday. Grant funds provided for such costs shall not exceed the greater of five percent (5%) of the grant amount requested or \$100,000;

c. End-User Equipment needed to carry out the Project;

d. Operating expenses incurred in providing Broadband Transmission Service to Critical Community Facilities for the first two (2) years of operation and in providing training and instruction; and

e. The purchase of land, buildings, or building construction needed to carry out the Project.

2. *Ineligible grant purposes.*

a. Grant funds may not be used to finance the duplication of any existing Broadband Transmission Service provided by another entity.

b. Facilities financed with grant funds cannot be utilized, in any way, to provide local exchange telecommunications service to any person or entity already receiving such service.

3. Please see 7 CFR 1739.3 for definitions, 7 CFR 1739.12 for eligible grant purposes, and 7 CFR 1739.13 for ineligible grant purposes

V. Application Review Information

A. Criteria

1. Grant applications are scored competitively and subject to the criteria listed below.

2. Grant application scoring criteria (total possible points: 100) See 7 CFR 1739.17 for the items that will be

reviewed during scoring and for scoring criteria.

a. The rurality of the Project (up to 40 points);

b. The economic need of the Project's Service Area (up to 30 points); and

c. The benefits derived from the proposed service to the community residents, businesses, and critical facilities (up to 30 points).

B. Review Standards

1. All applications for grants must be delivered to Rural Development at the address and by the date specified in this notice (see also 7 CFR 1739.2) to be eligible for funding. Rural Development will review each application for conformance with the provisions of this part. Rural Development may contact the applicant for additional information or clarification.

2. Incomplete applications as of the deadline for submission will not be considered. If an application is determined to be incomplete, the applicant will be notified in writing and the application will be returned with no further action.

3. Applications conforming with this part will then be evaluated competitively by a panel of RUS employees selected by the Administrator of Rural Development, and will be awarded points as described in the scoring criteria in 7 CFR 1739.17. Applications will be ranked and grants awarded in rank order until all grant funds are expended.

4. Regardless of the score an application receives, if Rural Development determines that the Project is technically or financially infeasible, Rural Development will notify the applicant, in writing, and the application will be returned with no further action.

C. Selection Process

Rural Development selects applications based on those rankings, subject to the availability of funds.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Rural Development recognizes that each funded project is unique, and therefore may attach conditions to a project as part of the award. Rural Development generally notifies applicants whose projects are selected for awards by faxing an award letter. Rural Development follows the award letter with a grant agreement that contains all the terms and conditions for the grant. An applicant must execute and return the grant agreement, accompanied by any additional items required by the grant agreement.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The items listed in paragraph IV.B.2.k of this notice, and the Community Connect Grant Program regulation, application guide and accompanying materials implement the appropriate administrative and national policy requirements.

C. Reporting

1. *Performance reporting.* All recipients of Community Connect Grant Program financial assistance must provide annual performance activity reports to Rural Development until the project is complete and the funds are expended. A final performance report is also required; the final report may serve as the last annual report. The final report must include an evaluation of the success of the project. See 7 CFR 1739.19.

2. *Financial reporting.* All recipients of Community Connect Grant Program financial assistance must provide an annual audit, beginning with the first year a portion of the financial assistance is expended. Audits are governed by United States Department of Agriculture audit regulations. Please see 7 CFR 1739.20.

VII. Agency Contacts

A. *Web site:* <http://www.usda.gov/rus/commconnect.htm>. This Web site maintains up-to-date resources and contact information for the Community Connect Grant Program.

B. *Phone:* 202-690-4673.

C. *Fax:* 202-690-4389.

D. *Main point of contact:* Kenneth Kuchno, Director, Broadband Division, Rural Development Utilities Program, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Dated: June 21, 2007.

James M. Andrew,

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

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COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED

Procurement List; Addition and Deletions

AGENCY: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

ACTION: Addition to and Deletions from the Procurement List.

SUMMARY: This action adds to the Procurement List a product to be furnished by nonprofit agencies

employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities, and deletes from the Procurement List products and services previously furnished by such agencies.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 29, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, Jefferson Plaza 2, Suite 10800, 1421 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202-3259.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT COMMENTS CONTACT: Kimberly M. Zeich, Telephone: (703) 603-7740, Fax: (703) 603-0655, or e-mail CMTEFedReg@jwod.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Addition

On May 4, 2007, the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled published notice (72 FR 25244) of proposed additions to the Procurement List.

After consideration of the material presented to it concerning capability of qualified nonprofit agencies to provide the products and impact of the additions on the current or most recent contractors, the Committee has determined that the products listed below are suitable for procurement by the Federal Government under 41 U.S.C. 46-48c and 41 CFR 51-2.4.

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification

I certify that the following action will not have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities. The major factors considered for this certification were:

1. The action will not result in any additional reporting, recordkeeping or other compliance requirements for small entities other than the small organizations that will furnish the products to the Government.

2. The action will result in authorizing small entities to furnish the products to the Government.

3. There are no known regulatory alternatives which would accomplish the objectives of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48c) in connection with the products proposed for addition to the Procurement List.

End of Certification

Accordingly, the following products are added to the Procurement List:

Products

Binder, Loose-leaf:

NSN: 7510-00-281-6180—Black, 1' Capacity for 8½ x 11" sheets, Turned Edge.

NSN: 7510-00-530-8881—Black, 2' Capacity for 8½ x 11" sheets, Turned Edge.