BROADBAND FUNDING RESOURCE GUIDE

Compiled by Craig Settles

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There are over 25 Federal agency funding programs that help turn dreams into broadband and digital realities. Congress is pushing for over $100 billion in new funds for these agencies to deliver. The following information summarizes each program and can assist you in:

1. Learning how each program's funds are earmarked
2. Discovering if your organization is eligible
3. Contacting the correct agencies for application information and deadlines

About the author

Telehealth saved Craig Settles from a stroke, and he pays it forward by uniting community broadband teams and health care stakeholders through telehealth initiatives. He's a community broadband analyst and consultant assisting communities with broadband and telehealth planning. Visit www.cjspeaks.com for more information.

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Contact Information

ETI's contact info: 800-332-1078

Contact Email: info@etisoftware.com

Website: https://etisoftware.com/

Sponsored by

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC)

ARC is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local governments. Established by an act of Congress in 1965, ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair who is appointed by the President. Local participation is provided through multi-county local development districts.

The first three funding programs are block grants, meaning ARC uses a formula to determine how much money each of the 13 states can receive. The states then determine what types of projects they want to fund. The counties and cities make requests to the states and the states determine which projects to fund. The agency makes sure recipients meet ARC requirements.

ARC directly selects winners of the fourth program's grants. Most of the grant recipients are from areas in which there is no broadband available, so the goal is to use the money to build broadband to the home. Occasionally, jurisdictions request funds to support data centers and high bandwidth applications such as medical digital imaging. Every recipient must bring an organization to the table that will match the ARC grant. For example, if a city or county want to find a project that cost $50,000, ARC will bring $25,000 when the county or an organization within the county matches the $25,000.

The grants have to be awarded to the city, a county, or a nonprofit organization, the public must retain ownership of the assets.

Contact Information
Telephone: (202) 884-7700
Email: info@arc.gov
For questions on specific topic areas, please refer to the contacts listed on the ARC Offices and Staff page.

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Area Development

Overview

Each year ARC provides funding for several hundred investments in the Appalachian Region, in areas such as business development, education and job training, infrastructure (including broadband), community development, and transportation.

As per ARC's federal-state partnership model, funding via ARC's Area Development is first generated at the state level in each of the Region's 13 states. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact their ARC state program managers at www.arc.gov.

Purpose

Planning (e.g., feasibility) Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction) Broadband Adoption Digital Skills Training Public Computer Access.

Eligibility

Electric Utilities

Co-ops

Libraries

K-12 Schools

Higher Education Institutions

Hospitals State and Local Governments

Tribal Entities

Amount Available

FY 2020 $40,945,000

Contact Website

https://www.arc.gov

Contact Information

Telephone: (202) 884-7700

Email: info@arc.gov

For questions on specific topic areas, please refer to the contacts listed on the ARC Offices and Staff page.

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Central Appalachia & North Central / North Appalachia Broadband

Overview

The development of broadband communications networks is one of the best ways to equip communities with the basic "building blocks" essential for economic and community development. ARC is dedicated to continuing broadband deployment in distressed counties in Central Appalachia as well as funds for a program of broadband deployment in distressed counties in North Central and Northern Appalachia

Purpose

Planning (e.g., feasibility)

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Public Computer

Access

Eligibility

Electric

Utilities/Co-ops

Libraries

K-12 Schools

Higher Education Institutions and

Hospitals

State and Local Governments

Tribal Entities

Amount Available

$10 million allocated towards broadband deployment in distressed counties in Central Appalachia. $5 million allocated towards broadband deployment in distressed counties in North Central and Northern Appalachia.

Contact Website

https://www.arc.gov

Contact Information

Telephone: (202) 884-7700

Email: info@arc.gov

For questions on specific topic areas, please refer to the contacts listed on the ARC Offices and Staff page.

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ARC – Distressed Communities

Overview

ARC targets special resources to the most economically distressed counties in the region, using a measure of economic distress based on three economic indicators: three-year average unemployment rates, per capita market income, and poverty rates. ARC normally limits its maximum project funding contribution to 50 percent of costs, but it can increase its funding share to as much as 80 percent in distressed counties.

Purpose

Planning (e.g., feasibility)

Broadband

Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband

Adoption

Digital

Skills Training

Public Computer Access

Eligibility

Libraries

K -12 schools

Higher education institutions

Hospitals

State and local governments

Tribal entities

Nonprofit organizations

Electric utility Co-ops

Amount Available

$17,548,000

Contact Website

https://www.arc.gov/funding/ARCDistressedCountiesGrants.asp

Contact Information

For questions on specific topic areas, please refer to the contacts listed on the ARC Offices and Staff page.

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Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER)

Overview

POWER is a congressionally funded initiative that targets federal resources to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production. Within the POWER Initiative, $15 million is specifically available for broadband related projects.

Proposals are reviewed scored by ARC directly. Broadband used to create and retain jobs is particularly well reviewed. Communities whose proposals show innovative use of broadband will be received favorably, such as using broadband with telehealth to produce favorable healthcare outcomes.

Up to one-third of funds provided for the POWER FY20 program will be available to fund broadband deployment projects that enhance access to broadband services. Understanding that broadband deployment projects can be capital intensive, grant requests for deployment projects can be up to $2.5 million, with priority given to projects with evidence of leveraged funding for the overall project.

Purpose

Planning (e.g., feasibility)

Broadband

Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Public Computer Access

Eligibility

Libraries

K-12 Schools

Higher Education Institutions

Hospitals

State and Local Governments

Tribal Entities

Non-Profit Organizations

Electric Utilities / Co-ops

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding Amount $45 million

Contact Website

https://www.arc.gov/power

Contact Information

For questions on specific topic areas, please refer to the contacts listed on the ARC Offices and Staff page.

Department of Education

Overview

These grants are eligible primarily for K-12 schools, institutions of higher learning, and tribal entities. In some cases, local and state governments can be eligible recipients. The programs help recipients increase their self-sufficiency and expand their capacity to serve low-income students.

None of these grant programs specifically target broadband infrastructure or services, but in many cases, broadband is one of the uses for which recipient can use the funds. Be sure to meet with an agency representative determine what the allowable broadband costs maybe. Remember that eligibility is on a case by case basis.

As Broadband USA advises, "For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to broadband access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements."

Contact Information

800-872-5327 or 202-401-2000

press@ed.gov

Department of Education

Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions

Overview

This program helps eligible institutions of higher education increase their self-sufficiency and expand their capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability of eligible institutions. This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access.

The allowability of costs is always specific to a program and situation. For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to broadband access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as supplement not supplant, if it applies to program. We also note that, while funds under one of these programs can be used on broadband access, the programs' purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

Purpose

Broadband
Infrastructure
(e.g., construction)
Broadband
Adoption
Digital Skills Training

Eligibility

Higher education

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding Amount $18,320,000

Contact Website

https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iduesannh/index.html

Contact Information

(202) 453-6914

Department of Education

American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities

Overview

This program helps eligible institutions of higher education increase their self-sufficiency by providing funds to improve and strengthen the academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability of eligible institutions. This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access.

The allowability of costs is always a situation and program-specific factor. For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to broadband access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as supplement not supplant, if it applies to program. We also note that, while funds under one of these programs can be used on broadband access, the programs' purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

Purpose

Broadband

Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Eligibility

Higher education

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding Amount $36,633,000

Contact Website

https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iduesaitcc/index.html

Contact Information

(202) 453-6914

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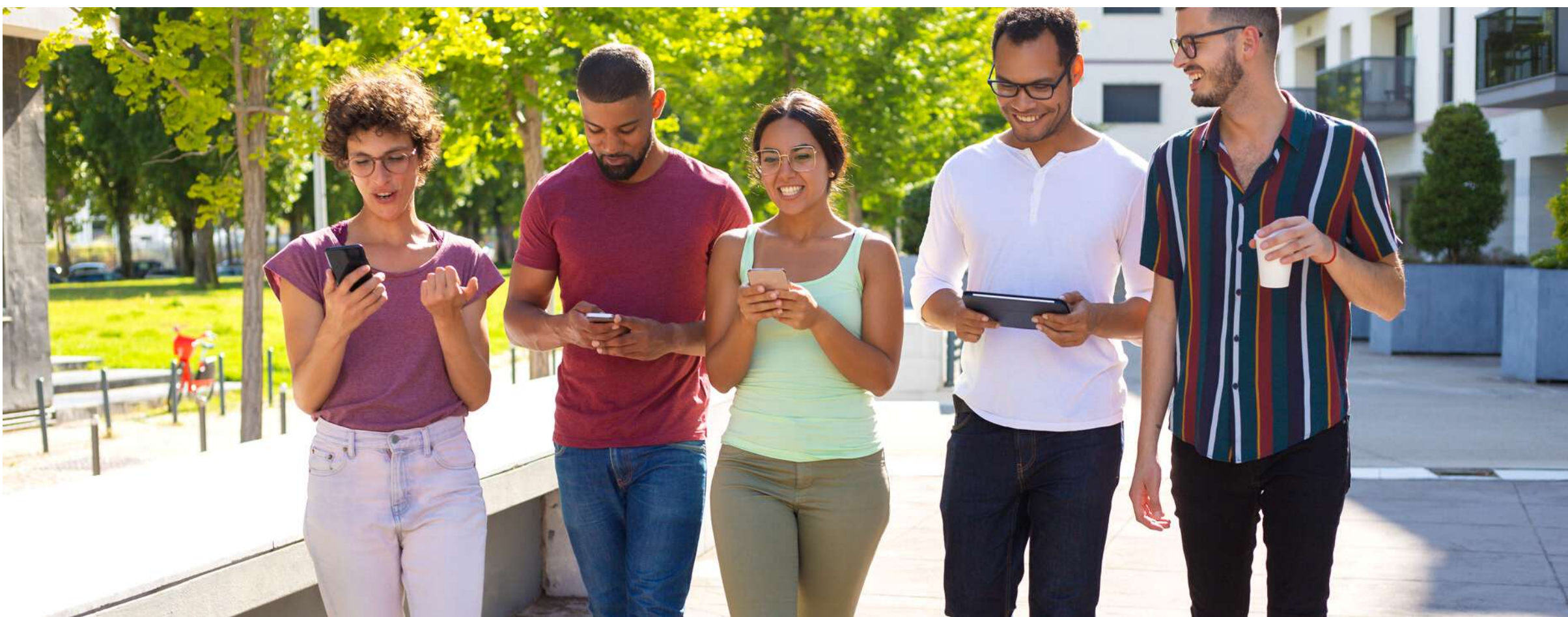
Department of Education

Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions

Overview

This program for institution of higher learning provides grants and related assistance to Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions to enable such institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve Asian Americans and Native American Pacific Islanders and low-income individuals. Creating or improving facilities for Internet or other distance learning academic instruction capabilities, including purchase or rental of telecommunications technology equipment or services.

This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access. The allowability of costs is always a situation and program-specific factor. For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to broadband access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as supplement not supplant, if it applies to program. We also note that, while funds under one of these programs can be used on broadband access, the programs' purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Mobile hotspots and mobile hotspot data plans

Eligibility

Higher education

Amount Available

$4,444,000

Contact Website

https://www2.ed.gov/programs/aanapi/index.html

Contact Information

Pearson Owens

Telephone: (202) 453-7997 / E-mail: pearson.owens@ed.gov

Department of Education

Native American-Serving Non-Tribal Institutions

Overview

This program provides grants and related assistance to Native American-serving, nontribal institutions to enable such institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve Native Americans and low-income individuals.

This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access. The allowability of costs is always a situation and program-specific factor. For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to broadband access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as supplement not supplant, if it applies to program.

We also note that, while funds under one of these programs can be used on broadband access, the programs' purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Mobile Hotspots and Mobile Hotspot Data Plans

Rural Recipients

Eligibility

Higher Education Institutions

Amount Available

Discretionary

Contact Website

https://www2.ed.gov/programs/nasnti/index.html

Contact Information

Don Crews

Telephone: (202) 453-7920

E-mail: don.crews@ed.gov

Department of Education

Promise Neighborhoods

Overview

The Promise Neighborhoods program is authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The program provides funding to support eligible entities, including (1) institutions of higher education; (2) an Indian tribe or tribal organization; (3) one or more nonprofit organizations, which may include faith-based nonprofit organizations, in partnership with high-need LEAs, institutions of higher education, the office of a chief elected official of a unit of local government, or an Indian tribe or tribal organization.

This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access. The allowability of costs is always a situation and program-specific factor. For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to device or mobile hotspot access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as supplement not supplant, if it applies to program. We also note that, while funds under one of these programs can be used on broadband access, the programs' purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Mobile hotspots and mobile hotspot data plans

Rural Recipients

Eligibility

Libraries

K-12 Schools

Higher Education Institutions

Tribal Entities

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding Amount - $80,000,000

Contact Website

https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-discretionary-grants-support-services/school-choice-improvement-programs/promise-neighborhoods-pn/

Contact Information

Elson Nash

(202) 453-5563

Department of Education

Rural, Low-Income School Program

Overview

The purpose of the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) grant program is to provide rural districts with financial assistance for initiatives aimed at improving student achievement. The grant is non-competitive, and eligibility is determined by statute. Awards are issued annually to state education agencies (SEAs), which make sub-grants to local education agencies (LEAs) that meet the applicable requirements. Awards are made to all SEAs that apply and meet the applicable requirements of the act (see legislative citation above).

This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access. School districts may use Rural and Low-Income School funds to pay for activities that are allowable under Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title III, and Title IV, Part A, as well as parental involvement activities. The allowability of costs is always situation and program specific.

The use of Rural and Low-Income School Program funds for broadband infrastructure must be consistent with the definition of "minor remodeling" in 34 CFR Part 77. That definition of minor remodeling means "minor alterations in a previously completed building. The term also includes the extension of utility lines, such as water and electricity, from points beyond the confines of the space in which the minor remodeling is undertaken but within the confines of the previously

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Digital Skills Training

Hotspot data plans

Mobile hotspots and mobile

Minor remodeling, consistent with 34 CFR Part 77, to improve the academic achievement of students served by the program

Eligibility

Rural Recipients

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding Amount $92,920,000

Contact Website

https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/rural-insular-native-achievement-programs/rural-education-achievement-program/rural-and-low-income-school-program/

Contact Information

Patrick Carr - Group Leader, Rural Education Achievement Program Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

The REAP Group: Phone: (202) 401-0039

Department of Education

Small, Rural School Achievement Program

Overview

The purpose of the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program is to provide small, rural local educational agencies (LEAs) with financial assistance to address the unique needs of rural school districts that frequently lack the personnel and resources needed to compete effectively for Federal competitive grants and receive formula grant allocations in amounts too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes. LEAs are entitled to funds if they meet eligibility and application requirements. Awards are issued annually, and award amounts are determined using a formula.

This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access. School districts may use Small, Rural School Achievement funds to pay for activities that are allowable under Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title III, Title IV, Part A, and Title IV, Part B of the ESEA. The allowability of costs is always situation and program specific.

For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to device or mobile hotspot access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as the "supplement not supplant" requirement. We also note that, while funds under one of these programs can be used on broadband access, the programs' purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

The use of Small, Rural School Achievement Program funds for broadband infrastructure must be consistent with the definition of "minor remodeling" in 34 CFR Part 77. That definition of minor remodeling means "minor alterations in a previously completed building. The term also includes the extension of utility lines, such as water and electricity, from points beyond the confines of the space in which the minor remodeling is undertaken but within the confines of the previously completed building. The term does not include building construction, structural alterations to buildings, building maintenance, or repairs."

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Mobile hotspots and mobile hotspot data plans;

Minor remodeling, consistent with 34 CFR Part 77, to improve the academic achievement of students served by the program.

Rural Recipients

Eligibility

K-12 Schools

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding Amount $92,920,000

Contact Website

https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/rural-insular-native-achievement- programs/rural-education-achievement-program/small-rural-school-achievement-program/

Contact Information

Patrick Carr - Group Leader, Rural Education Achievement Program

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (202) 401-0039

Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program, Title IV, Part A

Overview

To improve student's academic achievement by increasing the capacity of States, local educational agencies, schools and local communities to: (1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; (2) improve school conditions for student learning; and (3) improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy for all students.

This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access. The allowability of costs is always a situation and program-specific factor. For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to device or mobile hotspot access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as supplement not supplant, if it applies to program. We also note that, while funds under one of these programs can be used on broadband access, the programs' purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

The use of SSAE Program funds for broadband infrastructure must be consistent with the definition of "minor remodeling" in 34 CFR Part 77. That definition of minor remodeling means "minor alterations in a previously completed building. The term also includes the extension of utility lines, such as water and electricity, from points beyond the confines of the space in which the minor remodeling is undertaken but within the confines of the previously completed building. The term does not include building construction, structural alterations to buildings, building maintenance, or repairs."

A Special Rule in the SSAE program states that no more than 15 percent of funds for activities to support the effective use of technology may be used "for purchasing technology infrastructure as described in subsection (a)(2)(B), which includes technology infrastructure purchased for the activities under subsection (a)(4)(A)." To clarify, LEAs or consortiums of LEAs may not spend more than 15 percent of funding in this content area on devices, equipment, software applications, platforms, digital instructional resources and/or other one-time IT purchases. (ESEA section 4109(b)). Expenditures for construction are prohibited under this program

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Digital Skills Training

Mobile hotspots and mobile hotspot data plans;

Minor remodeling, consistent with 34 CFR Part 77, to improve the academic achievement of students served by the program.

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding Amount $1,210,000,000

Eligibility

K-12 Schools State and Local Governments

Contact Website

https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/safe-supportive-schools/student-support-and-academic-enrichment-program/

Contact Information

PBryan Williams - OESE Office of Safe and Supportive Schools

(202)453-6715 / E-mail: OESE.TITLEIV-A@ed.gov

Department of Education

Title III, Part A: Strengthening Institutions

Overview

The program helps eligible institutions of higher education (IHEs) to become self-sufficient and expand their capacity to serve low - income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability of eligible institutions.

This is one of several Department programs that provide funds that could be used to support broadband access. The allowability of costs is always a situation and program-specific factor. For that reason, if you decide to use funds under one of these programs for costs related to broadband access, you must be sure that the use of the funds is, under the specific circumstances of the expenditure and the program authority selected, reasonable and necessary for the purposes of that program, and does not violate other program requirements, such as supplement not supplant, if it applies to program. We also note that, while funds under one of these programs can be used on broadband access, the programs' purpose is not primarily focused on that issue.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Mobile hotspots and data plans

Eligibility

Higher Education

Amount Available

FY2020 $107,854,000

Contact Website

https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iduestitle3a/index.html

Contact Information

Office of Postsecondary Education

Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) Building 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. Washington, DC 20202 / (202) 453-6914

Department of Education

Title III, Part B: Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program

Overview

This program provides financial assistance to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to establish or strengthen their physical plants, financial management, academic resources, and endowment-building capacity.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Mobile hotspots and data plans

Eligibility

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Amount Available

FY2020 $324,792,000

Contact Website

https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iduestitle3b/index.html

Contact Information

Office of Postsecondary Education

Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) Building 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.

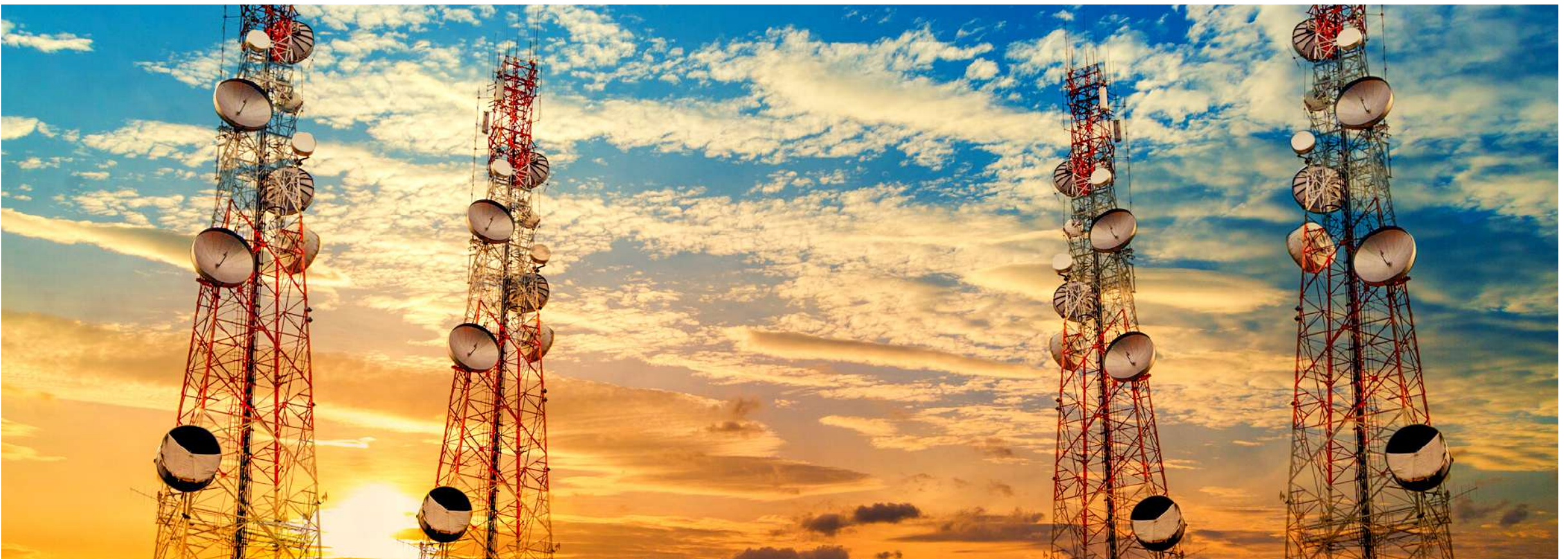Washington, DC 20202 / (202) 453-6914

Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development

National Tribal Broadband Grant (NTBG) program

Overview

This is the first broadband funding IEED has done. They solicited proposals from Indian Tribes for grant funding to hire consultants to perform feasibility studies for deployment or expansion of high-speed internet (broadband) transmitted, variously, through digital subscriber line, cable modem, fiber, wireless, satellite and broadband over power lines.

NTBG is a competitive, discretionary grant program. IEED awarded 23 grants between $40,000 and $50,000. It's uncertain that this program will repeat itself. The funding program was championed by the Trump administration so will be determined by the administration that's in place in the 2021 fiscal year.

Purpose

Expansion or deployment of high speed internet

Eligibility

Tribal Entities

Amount Available

$107,854,000

Contact Website

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/02/10/2020-02616/national-tribal-broadband-grant-solicitation-of-proposals

Contact Information

Mr. James R. West, National Tribal Broadband Grant (NTBG) Manager,

Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development,

Room 6049-B, 12220 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 20191;

telephone: (202) 595-4766; e-mail: jamesr.west@bia.gov

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Delta Regional Authority

Established in 2000 by Congress, DRA makes strategic investments of federal appropriations into projects that will improve regional economic opportunity by helping create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of the 10 million people who reside in the 252 counties and parishes of the eight-state region. DRA provides investment for basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, business development, and workforce development.

Community Infrastructure Fund

Overview

The Community Infrastructure Fund was created to target physical infrastructure projects that help build safer, more resilient communities in the Delta region. The three areas of investment through this program target basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, and flood control project centered around economic development.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Eligibility

Non-Profit Organizations

Higher Education Institutions

Hospitals

State and Local Governments

Amount Available

Funding – $15,000,000

Contact Website

https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/tradeact/community-colleges/

Contact Information

Brian Henson

202-400-1453

Delta Regional Authority

States Economic Development Assistance Program

Overview

The States Economic Development Assistance Program makes strategic investments in DRA's congressionally mandated four funding areas of basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, business development, and workforce development.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Eligibility

Higher Education Institutions

Hospitals

State and Local Governments

Electric Utilities/Co-ops

Tribal Entities

Amount Available

Funding $12,350,000

Contact Website

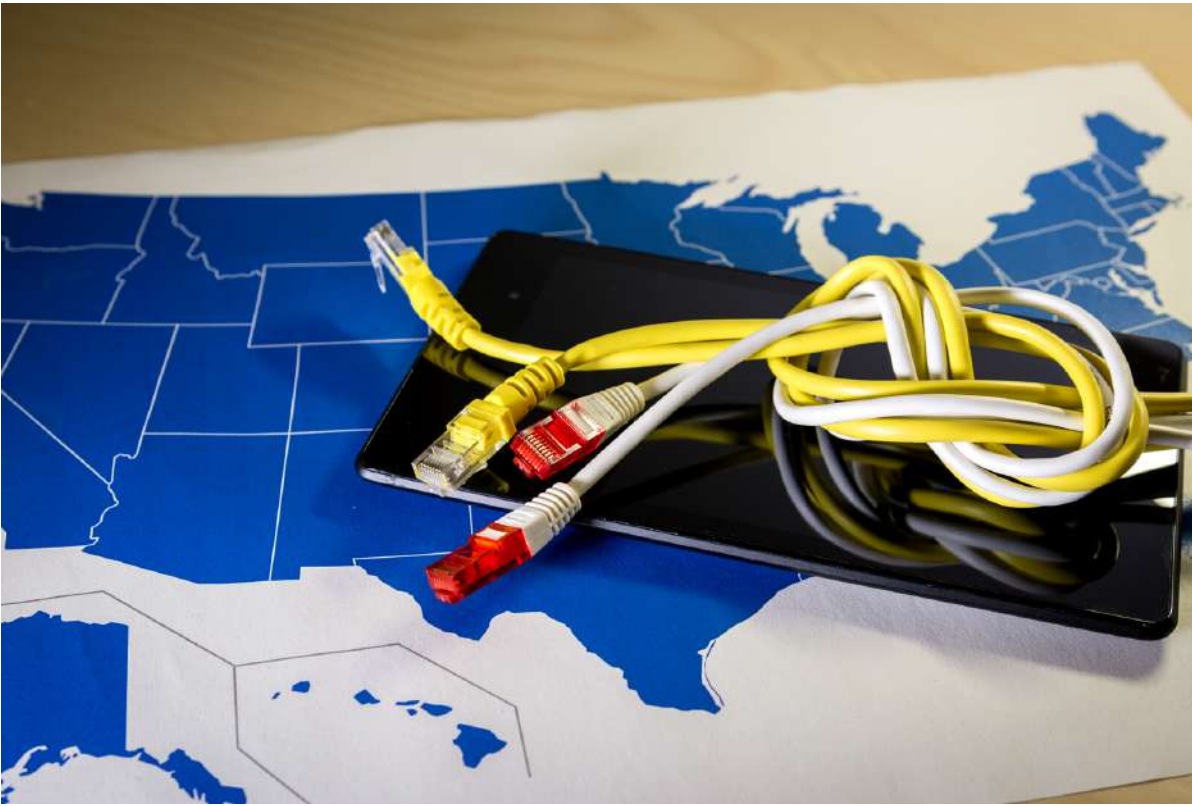https://dra.gov/funding-programs-states-economic-development/states-economic-development-assistance-program/

Contact Information

Brian Henson

202-400-1453

US Dept of Commerce
Economic Development Administration

EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

Overview

EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) programs provide economically distressed communities and regions with comprehensive and flexible resources, including broadband, to address various economic needs. EDA can fund broadband projects in urban or rural Opportunity Zones. Keep in mind that the bottom line mission of this agency is to create jobs.

Whatever you're planning to do with a broadband network, at least one of those goals has to be job creation. For example, company ABC will bring its operation with 100 jobs to your community, but only if there is broadband available. With this EDA grant, you have to spend the money for the broadband buildout before EDA reimburses you. Subsequently, your going to have to document and verify that you delivered on the 100 jobs you promised EDA.

This is a matching grant, so 50% of the budget must be matched by private or public entities, but no other federal government agency can be a match partner. Through the PWEAA NOFO, EDA solicits applications from applicants in order to provide revolving loan fund projects under EDA's Public Works program and EAA programs.

If yours is an urban city and you have several distressed neighborhoods, EDA would encourage the city ask for the money to build broadband in all of those areas together rather than to a do separate application processes for each neighborhood. Since EDA is supporting smart city development, consider adding telehealth because a lot of smart city applications lend themselves well to telehealth applications.

Purpose

Planning (e.g., feasibility) / Smart Cities

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding $200 Million Grant

Contact Website

https://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/
https://www.eda.gov/disaster-recovery/

Eligibility

Libraries

Non-Profit Organizations

K-12 Schools

Small Businesses

Higher Education Institutions

State and Local Governments

District Organization of an EDA-designated

Economic Development District (EDD)

Tribal Entities

Contact Information

Please contact your local economic development representative (based on the location of the proposed project) at https://www.eda.gov/contact/

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Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

E-Rate Program

Overview / Purpose / Eligibility

The E-Rate program helps schools and libraries obtain affordable broadband. Eligible schools, school districts, and libraries may apply individually or as part of a consortium. Funding may be requested under two categories of services: telecommunications, telecommunications services and Internet access; and internal connections, basic maintenance of internal connections, and managed internal broadband services.

The eRate program funding process is easy to describe but the details involved with each step can be burdensome. Many school and library districts often hire consultants who specialize in the FCC's respective funding programs.
Do your homework, vet your potential consultant well.

- *Initiate a competitive bidding among service providers or venders*
- *Select a winning service provider / vender*

- *Apply for discounts therapist on the districts poverty level*
- *Participate in your application review with the agency*
- *The service provider/vendor does the work, gets paid*

Discounts for support depend on the level of poverty and whether the school or library is located in an urban or rural area. The discounts range from 20 percent to 90 percent of the costs of eligible services. E-Rate program funding is based on demand up to an annual established cap.

Amount Available

Discount; $4,151,395 [funding cap for Funding Year 2019; cap for Funding Year 2020 not yet available]

Contact Website

https://www.fcc.gov/general/e-rate-schools-libraries-usf-program

Contact Information

Telecommunications Access Policy Division
Tel. (202) 418-7400, Fax (202) 418-7361

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Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and 5G Fund (RDOF)

Overview / Purpose / Eligibility

Descended from the Connect America Fund, RDOF funds the construction and operation of telecommunications and broadband networks. The goal of the program is to ensure rural Americans reasonably comparable telecommunications services at comparable rates that are on par with urban consumers.

The program fulfills this universal service goal by allowing eligible carriers who serve these areas to recover some of their costs from the federal Universal Service Fund. Some might consider the downside to this goal Is the way we endeavor to reach it. Roughly two-thirds of the budget for this fund is going to the usual suspects - the huge cable telecom companies - in a way that ensures these companies don't have competition in their territories.

This next fiscal year the FCC will award about one-third its monies through reverse auctions. Reverse auctions, version 1.0, debuted in 2018. What's good is that smaller ISPs, co-ops, and municipalities can compete in this process.

Carol Mattey, Principal, Mattey Consulting LLC and former FCC Deputy Bureau Chief, simplifies a complex procedure. "The FCC analyzes various rural areas of the country where they would like to have broadband. They establish a price point that is the most they want to pay a provider to deploy broadband. Assume it's $1 million. But rather than having each bidder breathlessly out-bid each other, each bidder says what's the least of amount of money they want to spend to deploy to that area, starting at $1 million."

One bidder starts at $900,000,000, the next comes in at $850,000,000, and so forth. When it goes down as far as I can, low bidder wins. But remember, this is a watered down description. For all of the details, visit the FCC's website.

Contact Website

Announcements for Lifeline service providers
can be found at www.checkLifeline.org.

Contact Information

Prospective
Lifeline subscribers can apply and find more information at
www.checklifeline.org. Announcements for Lifeline service providers can be
found at www.checkLifeline.org

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Lifeline

Overview / Purpose / Eligibility

The FCC's Lifeline $9.25 per month subsidy started as a way to ensure low-income people had basic telephone service come hell or high water. The Obama Administration expanded it to give recipients the option to get telephone or broadband.

However, there's no way $9.25 buys underprivileged people anything more than a cheap mobile phone and an inadequate data plan. Furthermore, communities need high-quality broadband infrastructure and services, not inadequate subsidies for neglected out-of-date technology. The pressure in Congress to raise this subsidy to $50 a month, which does address the affordability issue.

Providers of voice and broadband service, either wireless of wireline, that become *"eligible telecommunications carriers"* and join the program. Prospective Lifeline subscribers can apply and find more information at www.checklifeline.org.

Contact Website
Announcements for Lifeline service providers can be found at www.checkLifeline.org.

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Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Rural Health Care (RHC) Program

Overview / Purpose / Eligibility

The Rural Heath Care Program (RHCP), originally Healthcare Connect Fund Program, provides a flat 65% discount on an array of communications services to both individual rural health care providers and consortia. Consortia may include urban healthcare providers as long as the consortium is minimum of 51% rural participants.

The RHC Program provides funding through two programs: the Telecommunications (Telecom) Program and the Healthcare Connect Fund Program. The Telecom Program ensures that rural health care providers pay no more than their urban counterparts for eligible telecommunications services. Services include Internet access, dark fiber leases, business data, and private carriage services, and funding for construction of health care provider-owned communications facilities.

The grants boost healthcare providers' fiber broadband and provide patients with tablets and other equipment to facilitate telehealth, but they fail to provide broadband to private neighbors and homes. Giving homes telehealth without reliable, affordable Internet access is like giving people boots, telling them to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, but not giving them straps. So the question is, what's the grant solution in your plan to the lack of broadband to the home?

Additional information

To qualify for one of these grants, yours must be one of the following types of facilities:

- A post-secondary educational institution offering healthcare instruction, such as teaching hospitals or medical schools,
- A community health center or health center providing healthcare to migrants,
- A local health department or agency,
- A community mental health center,
- A not-for-profit hospital,
- A rural health clinic,
- A dedicated emergency room of a rural for-profit hospital
- A skilled nursing facility (SNF), or
- A consortium of health care providers (HCPs) that includes at least one of the facilities mentioned in above (HCF Program only)

Contact Website
https://www.usac.org/rural-health-care

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Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Connect America Fund (CAF II)

Overview / Purpose / Eligibility

The Connect America Fund Phase II (Phase II) is part of the Commission's reform and modernization of its universal service support programs. In 2018, the Commission conducted an auction (Auction 903) to allocate Phase II support to certain eligible areas across the United States.

Purpose

the FCC has adopted comprehensive reforms of its Universal Service Fund (USF) and Intercarrier Compensation (ICC) systems to accelerate broadband build-out to the approximately 23 million Americans (as of December 31, 2013) who lack access to infrastructure capable of providing 10/1 Mbps fixed broadband. This reform will expand the benefits of high-speed Internet to millions of consumers in every part of the country by transforming the existing USF into a new Connect America Fund focused on broadband.

Eligibility

The Commission made eligible for the Phase II auction census blocks in states where price cap carriers declined the offer of model-based support, extremely high-cost census blocks nationwide (excluding NY, AK, PR, VI), and certain other census blocks that were removed from the offer of model-based support. To be eligible, a census block could not have been served with voice and broadband of at least 10/1 Mbps (based on Form 477 data) by an unsubsidized competitor or price cap carrier.

Amount Available

$198 million in annual support (a total of $1.98 billion for 10 years). The Commission adopted a $2.15 billion total budget for the Phase II auction, but set aside up to $170.4 million total to allocate through New York's New NY Broadband Program.

Contact Website

https://www.fcc.gov/auction/903#eligible

Contact Information

auction903@fcc.gov

You can also contact members of the Commission's Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force at ruralbroadband@fcc.gov

Housing and Urban Development

All of the HUD block grants for public housing is targeted to low-income communities and tribes. Local jurisdictions that request grants have to assess their communities needs, including specific broadband needs, and put all those needs into a Consolidated Plan. Typically jurisdictions take their plans and proposals to the economic development agency or department that in turn meets with the states for final approval.

In 2016, regulations were passed that mandated broadband (as defined by the FCC) infrastructure be built into all newly constructed public housing buildings or any major building rehabilitation. HUD leaves it up to the communities to figure out whether they want wireless or fiber or both when they ask for grant money.

There's no "one size fits all" model when it comes to broadband planning. Every city has it various laundry list of needs and broadband may or may not be top on their list.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Overview

The CDBG Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states and local governments, to be used for economic and community development, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

The CPD Office oversees HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to cities, counties, and states; the HOME affordable housing program; and programs to help end homelessness and promote economic revitalization. Section 108 offers state and local governments the ability to transform a small portion of their CDBG funds into federally guaranteed loans large enough to pursue physical and economic revitalization projects.

Purpose

Planning (e.g., feasibility)

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Public Computer Access

Eligibility

Non-Profit Organizations

Rural Recipients.

State and Local Governments

Amount Available

FY2020 Funding Amount $3,425,000,000

Contact Website

https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4891/cdbg-broadband-infrastructure-faqs/

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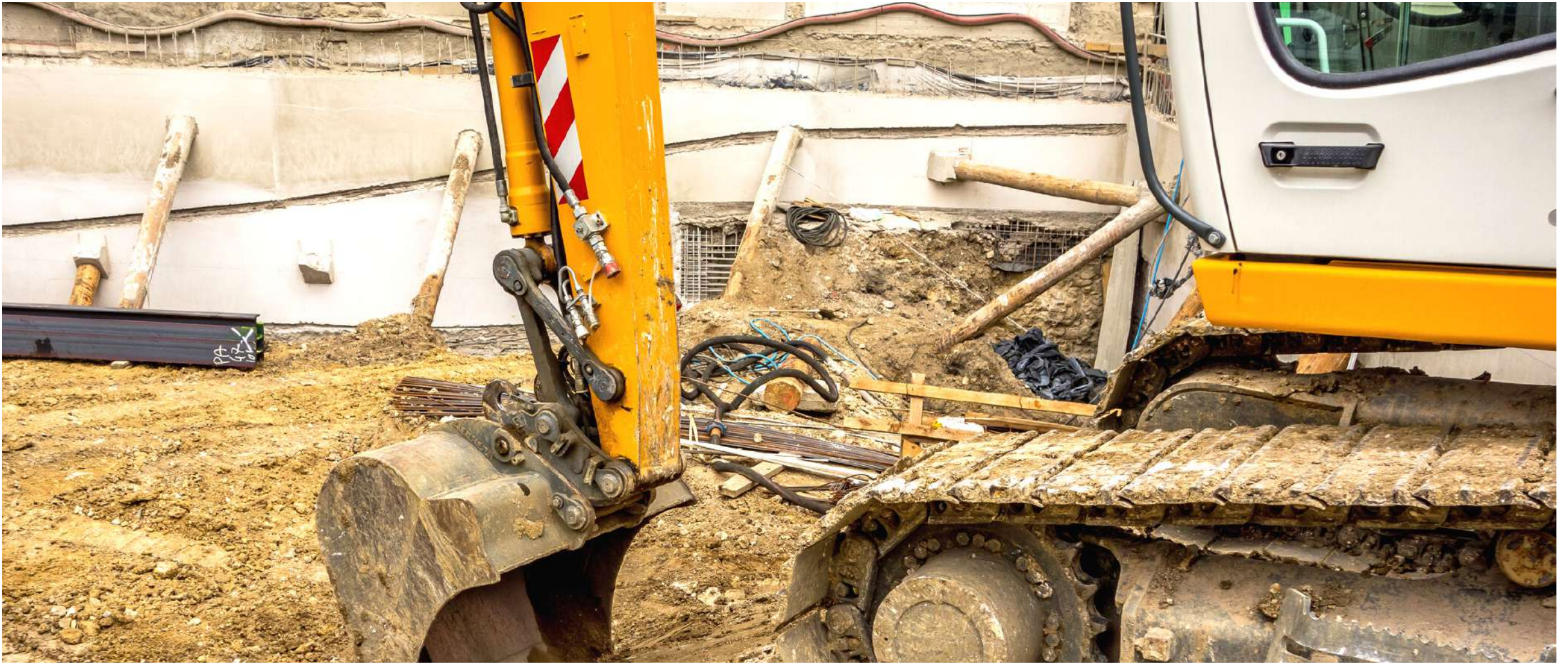
Housing and Urban Development

Overview

Section 108 offers state and local governments the ability to transform a small portion of their CDBG funds into federally guaranteed loans large enough to pursue physical and economic revitalization projects.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure (e.g., construction)

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Public Computer Access

Broadband Financing

Eligibility

Non-Profit Organizations

State and Local Governments

Amount Available

FY 2020 $300,000,000

Contact Website

https://www.hud.gov/states/shared/working/r7/mfn bornetworksfaq

Contact Information

Agency Contact.

Dina Lehman-Kim, (202) 402-2430

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Housing and Urban Development

Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG)

Overview

The Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) ensures safe, decent, and affordable housing, creates opportunities for residents' self-sufficiency and economic independence, and assures the fiscal integrity of all program participants.

Purpose

The IHBG program funds a wide range of affordable housing activities in Indian Country that benefit primarily low- and moderate-income persons. Specifically, these grants can fund broadband infrastructure projects for tribal entities

Eligibility

Tribal Entities

Amount Available

FY 2020 $746,000,000

Contact Website

https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/BROADBANDGUIDANCE.PDF

Contact Information

Contact your local HUD Field Office with questions

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Housing and Urban Development

Neighborhood Networks (multifamily housing)

Overview

Neighborhood Networks establishes multi-service community technology centers that bring digital opportunity and lifelong learning to low- and moderate-income residents living in HUD housing.

Purpose

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Public Computer Access

Amount Available

FY 2020 Capital Fund: $2.8 billion, Operating Fund: $4.5 billion

Contact Website

https://www.hud.gov/states/shared/working/r7/mfnbornetworksfaq

Contact Information

Agency Contact (202) 402-2430, 703-915-8957

Dina.Lehmann-Kim@hud.go

Housing and Urban Development

Title VI Loan Guarantee

Overview

The Title VI Loan Guarantee program assists Indian Housing Block Grant recipients to finance affordable housing construction and related community development. Bank can be used for broadband infrastructure construction for tribal entities.

Purpose

Broadband Adoption

Digital Skills Training

Public Computer Access

Eligibility

Indian Entities

Amount Available

FY 2020 2,000,000

Contact Website

https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/BROADBANDGUIDANCE.PDF

Contact Information

Agency Contact. Dina Lehman-Kim, (202) 402-2430, 703-915-8957
Dina.Lehmann-Kim@hud.go

USDA - Rural Utilities Service

Rural eConnectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect)

Overview

The ReConnect grants, grant and loan combinations, and low-interest loans can be used to construct, improve, and acquire facilities that provide internet services to customers' premises, with reliable technologies that are suitable for the type of rural community and the type of high-speed internet use.

This program provides an avenue broadband infrastructure to connect rural families, businesses, farms, ranches, schools, libraries, and public safety facilities to modern, high-speed internet.

Purpose

This program will generate private sector investment to deploy broadband infrastructure to provide high-speed internet e-Connectivity to as many rural premises as possible, including homes, community facilities for healthcare and public safety, schools, libraries, farms, ranches, factories, and other production sites.

Eligibility

State and Local Governments

Tribal Entities

Commercial

Internet Service Providers

Non-Profit Organizations

Small Businesses

Rural Recipients

Electric Utilities/Co-ops

Financial Institutions

Amount Available

FY2020 Initial Funding Amount $555 million. An additional $100 million in grant funding provided through the CARES Act.

Contact Website

https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/program-overview
https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/reconnect-program-fact-sheet-508c.pdf

Contact Information

Agency Contact. https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/contact-us

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USDA - Rural Development - Community Connect Grant Program

Overview

The grant program offers financial assistance to eligible applicants that will construct broadband networks that provide service on a community-oriented connectivity basis in rural areas. The grants are targeted to rural areas that lack broadband service as defined in the most recent funding announcement are eligible, and it is unlikely that any other provider will service the area.

Addition to using the funds for broadband infrastructure and bright benediction, award recipients must agree to provide community center with two computers and wireless access free of charge to users for at least two years. The agency says that 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.

Only about 10% of the applicants are successful winning award, communities want to hurry and submit your proposal in for consideration.

Purpose

Broadband Infrastructure
 (e.g., construction)
Broadband Adoption
Broadband Financing

Amount Available

$35,000,000

Eligibility

State and Local Governments
Tribal Entities Commercial/Internet
Service Providers
Non-Profit Organizations Small
Businesses

Contact Website

https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants

Contact Information

For questions about the Community Connect Grant Program, please email Community Connect or call the Loan Origination and Approval Division at (202) 720-0800.

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USDA - Rural Housing Service - Community Facilities

Overview

This direct loan and grant program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings.

Purpose

Public Computer Access

Amount Available

$2,800,000,000 (Loan)

$32,000,000 (Grant)

Eligibility

Libraries

K-12 Schools

Higher Education Institutions

Hospitals

Public Safety Entities

State and Local Governments

Tribal Entities

Contact Website

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

Contact Information

Martha Torrez, Director

Martha.Torrez@usda.gov

(202) 720-1500

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)

Overview

Many of the agencies have the same set of grant programs every year. HRSA rolls out new programs every month or so, and it's advisable to check in with their website regularly. Telehealth and broadband can be brought in to address various healthcare issues, such as opiate addiction, maternity care, preventative care, and chronic illness.

HRSA's FY 2021 budget so far provides $11.2 billion to invest in programs that support direct healthcare services to individuals who are medically underserved or face barriers to healthcare, and makes strategic investments in important health issues facing our country. $2.24 billion is committed to HIV/AIDS care alone.

Check with every program's Notice of Availability (NOFA) to get all the details, requirements, any limits on proposed budgets, critical dates, etc. Here are the current crop of broadband HRSA grants so far whose applications deadlines are this quarter (Click here)

Applicants' proposals will be received favorably if there is a telehealth component. Consider reaching out to someone familiar with broadband to determine how to align the telehealth application's continuum of care with the appropriate broadband technologies. There are other divisions of HHS that may provide funding for the broadband component of telehealth as well as other agencies such as the FCC and the USDA.

Information about Health Resources & Services Administration grants:

https://www.hrsa.gov/grants/find-funding

Information about the Department of Health & Human Services grants:

https://www.hhs.gov/grants/index.html

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