Funding to facilitate broadband deployment in underserved rural areas

What does this program do?

The ReConnect program provides loans, grants, and loan-grant combinations to bring high-speed internet to rural areas that lack sufficient access to broadband. ReConnect program funds can be used to pay for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service.

The ReConnect Program encourages private-sector investments in broadband infrastructure to deploy high-speed internet service to rural homes, businesses, and essential community facilities that support public safety, health care, schools, libraries, business and industry, and agricultural operations.

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants can be either for- or nonprofit organizations and include:

- Cooperatives or mutual associations

- Corporations, limited liability companies, or limited liability partnerships

- States, local governments, or their agencies, subdivisions, instrumentalities, or political subdivisions

- A U.S. territory or possession

- Tribes, Tribal organizations, and governments as defined in the current funding announcement.

You must be able to supply broadband service — at the speeds defined in the most recent funding announcement — simultaneously to all customers in your proposed funded service area (PFSA).

What is an eligible area?

For a geographic area to be eligible, it must meet two criteria:

1. The area must be rural.
2. Ninety percent of households in the area must lack sufficient access to broadband service.

What is considered "rural"?

Service areas cannot be located in a city, town, or incorporated area with a population greater than 20,000, or an urbanized area adjacent to a city or town with a population greater than 50,000.

Eligible areas must be fully contained within a rural area, or comprised of multiple rural areas. You can use our mapping tool (available at this link: usda.gov/reconnect) to help determine your project's eligibility.

What is "sufficient access"?

Currently, sufficient access to broadband is defined as fixed terrestrial broadband service at 25 megabits per second (Mbps) downstream and 3 Mbps upstream.

How can funds be used?

This program provides funding for:

- To build or improve facilities capable of delivering 100 Mbps symmetrical service to every premises in the PFSA at the same time

- To acquire an existing system that does not currently provide sufficient access to broadband service (under certain circumstances and with restrictions)

- To offset the cost of pre-application expenses (up to 5 percent of the requested funding amount) and to cover the costs of the required environmental review (up to 3 percent of the amount)

How do we apply?

Applications must be submitted through USDA Rural Development's online application system, available at this link: usda.gov/reconnect.

All materials required for completing an application are included in the online system. The ReConnect webpage also includes basic program information and detailed application guidance.

Where can we find technical assistance?

USDA Rural Development will host several technical assistance webinars and workshops during the application window. Webinar and workshop dates and times, along with additional technical assistance, is available at this link: usda.gov/reconnect.

You also can contact your Telecommunications General Field Representative (GFR) for assistance. A map and list of GFRs is available at this link: rd.usda.gov/contact-us/telecom-gfr.

When are applications due?

The application deadline is determined by the latest funding announcemen, which can be found at this link: usda.gov/reconnect

What governs this program?

In 2018, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act (available at this link: go.usa.gov/xea7W), which established the broadband loan and grant pilot program known as ReConnect.

In 2021, USDA codified the program's policies and procedures in a published ReConnect Program Regulation (available at this link: https://go.usa.gov/xexPT).

In addition to the regulation, USDA Rural Development publishes a funding announcement in the *Federal Register*.

What kind of funding is available?

ReConnect offers grants, loans, and loan-grant combinations. The minimum request for funding across all categories is $100,000. You can submit only one application for one of the four following funding options:

Type of Funding Available	Total Funding and Maximum Award Available	Key Funding Requirements
100 Percent Grant	• $150 million total funds • $25 million maximum, per project	• Competitive review based on scoring criteria. • 25 percent cash match requirement.
Loan-Grant Combination (50-50)	• $200 million total funds available • $25 million maximum for the grant, per project • $25 million maximum for the loan, per project • Loan and grant amounts will always be equal	• Competitive review based on scoring criteria. • Interest rate is set at the U.S. Treasury rate at the time of each advance of funds.
100 Percent Loan	• $150 million total funds • $50 million maximum, per project	• Funds are awarded on a rolling basis until exhausted after the application window closes • Interest rate is fixed at 2 percent.
100 Percent Grant for Tribal Governments, Alaska Native Corporations, Colonias, Persistent Poverty Areas, and Socially-Vulnerable Communities	• $150 million total funds • $25 million maximum, per project	• Only available to those entities and areas defined in the funding annoucement. • No cash match is required if the applicant meets the requirements for this type of funding as set forth in the funding annoucement.

NOTE: Because program information changes, always consult the program instructions in the Federal Register. You can also contact your General Field Representative for help. A map and list of GFRs is available at this link: rd.usda.gov/contact-us/telecom-gfr. You will find additional forms, resources, and program information at usda.gov/reconnect.
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.