USDA RUS-DLT Grant Program

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE
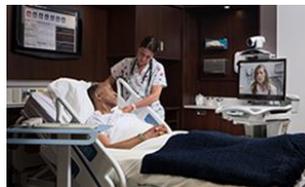

Award Amount: $50,000 - $500,000

Total Funds Available: $19M+ (TBD)

Due Date: Anticipated March release date with 60-day application window

Program Purpose: The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program (DLT) is designed specifically to meet the educational and health care needs of rural America. Through this grant program, advanced telecommunications technologies connect rural sites to content or service providers, helping to provide enhanced learning and health-care opportunities for rural residents in an effort to bridge the Digital Divide.

Eligible Organizations: PK-12, Community and Technical Colleges, four-year Colleges & Universities, Libraries, Head Starts, Departments of Health and other State & Local agencies, Hospitals, Clinics, Non-Profits, For-Profits. Almost every organization except sole proprietorships and federally funded sites may apply for this grant program. Applicants must (propose to) provide or receive distance learning and/or telemedicine content and services.

Rurality Requirement: A minimum Rurality score of 20 is required. Rurality has recently been determined by "population of place" for Fixed-Site projects. The PGAP Team is happy to provide assistance in determining the Rurality for your project.

Measure of Poverty: Project poverty is measured through the use of current National School Lunch Participation data. Each end user site provides their local NSLP % and the sites are averaged. Projects with an average of 75% or greater receive the highest possible points (35); sites with 50% - 74% NSLP average receive 25 points; projects with 25% - 49% NSLP receive 15 points; and projects with less than 25% average NSLP receive 0 NSLP points. There is an opportunity for projects with less than 50% NSLP to request additional NSLP points based on documented need not measured by NSLP.

Tribal, Strike Force or Promise Zone: Projects that include at least one site located on federal recognized tribal land, in a strike force or promise zone area receive 15 additional points.

Match Requirement: 15% Match is required; however, points for Leverage are not obtained until you reach the 30% match plateau. As higher match plateaus are reached, more points are obtained, with the highest points going to projects matching at greater than 100%. Cash Match is highly desirable in this program.

Eligible Use of Funds: The gamut of distance learning and telehealth technologies are eligible for use with both grant and matching funds. Eligibility is based less on specific technologies and more on the ways the technologies are used in support of true distance learning and telemedicine. Technologies may include: room based videoconferencing, video to the desktop, carts, monitors, interactive whiteboards, PCs, Tablets and other peripheral devices required to deliver content and images between sites, telehealth carts, digitally connected scopes and other telehealth devices, video and audio bridging, firewall traversal, scheduling and management, and other telecommunications infrastructure. Product and services eligibility varies from year to year; once the guidelines are released, a comprehensive list of eligible products will be made available.