

FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY NAME: United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants.

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: RUS-20-01-DLT.

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 10.855.

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), hereinafter referred to as RUS or the Agency, announces its Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program application window for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

Approximately \$71.7 million is available for funding opportunities under this FOA. This amount includes \$47 million in funds appropriated for FY2020 as well as funds totaling \$24.7 million which were not awarded during FY2019 and have been carried forward to the current year. Additional details regarding restrictions on the use of certain of these funds appear below.

APPLICATION DUE DATE: April 10, 2020

SUBMISSIONS: Submit completed applications for grants according to the following deadlines:

- *Paper submissions:* Paper submissions must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight *no later than* **April 10, 2020** to be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity. Late or incomplete applications will not be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity. Please note that this is the last year RUS intends to accept paper applications to this program.

- *Electronic submissions:* Electronic submissions must be received *no later than* **April 10, 2020** to be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity. Late or incomplete applications will not be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Questions about this announcement can be directed to Shawn Arner, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Loan Origination and Approval, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, telephone: (202) 720-0800, email: dltinfo@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Program Description

Authorized by 7 U.S.C. 950aaa, the DLT Program provides financial assistance to enable and improve distance learning and telemedicine services in rural areas. DLT grant funds support the use of telecommunications-enabled information, audio and video equipment, and related advanced technologies by students, teachers, medical professionals, and rural residents. These grants are intended to increase rural access to education, training, and health care resources that are otherwise unavailable or limited in scope.

The regulation for the DLT Program can be found at 7 CFR part 1734. All applicants should carefully review and prepare their applications according to instructions in the FY 2020 DLT Grant Program Application Guide (Application Guide) and program resources. This Application Guide can be found at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>. Expenses incurred in developing applications will be at the applicant's own risk.

B. Available Funds

Approximately \$71.7 million is available for funding opportunities under this FOA. Of that total, \$12 million may only be used for telemedicine and distance learning projects to help address the opioid epidemic in rural America. An additional \$9.4 million is intended for telemedicine projects that provide substance use disorder treatment services in rural areas. The remaining \$50.3 million is available for all eligible projects.

C. Federal Award Information

Pursuant to 7 CFR part 1734.24, the Administrator has established that the minimum grant amount of \$50,000 and the maximum grant amount of \$1,000,000 will be applied to this grant opportunity.

The Agency will make awards, and the awardees will be required to execute the required grant documents before funding will be advanced. Award documents specify the term of each award. The standard grant agreement is available at http://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/DLT_Grant_Agmt_FY_2020.pdf. While prior DLT grants cannot be renewed, existing DLT awardees can submit applications for new projects that are distinct from previously funded projects, either because they are for a completely separate purpose and technology or because they propose to serve a new service area, unassociated with prior funded service areas. The Agency will evaluate project proposals from existing awardees as new applications. Grant applications must be submitted during the application window.

D. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants (See 7 CFR part 1734.4)

a. Only entities legally organized as one of the following are eligible for DLT Grant Program financial assistance:

- i. An incorporated organization;
- ii. An Indian tribe or tribal organization, as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304;
- iii. A state or local unit of government;
- iv. A consortium, as defined in 7 CFR part 1734.3; or
- v. Other legal entity, including a private corporation organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis.

b. Applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and an active registration, with current information, in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>. Further information regarding DUNS number acquisition and SAM registration can be found in Sections E (3) and E (4) of this document.

c. Corporations that have been convicted of a Federal felony within the past 24 months are not eligible. Any corporation that has been assessed to have any unpaid federal tax liability, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed and is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, is not eligible for financial assistance.

2. Project Eligibility

a. **Ineligibility of Vendor Written Applications.** Grant applications that are written by vendors that will be used on the project to be funded by the DLT award will be ineligible as a violation of the competition rules in 2 CFR 200.319. Additionally, applicants must fully understand the procurement requirements of Subpart D when compiling an application for submission, and must avoid the use of predetermined equipment, unless they have adequately demonstrated in the application that no other equipment is available for the intended purpose.

b. **Ineligibility of Projects in Coastal Barrier Resources Act Areas.** Projects located in areas covered by the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) are not eligible for financial assistance from the DLT Program. See 7 CFR part 1734.23(a)(11).

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

The DLT Program requires matching contributions for grants. See 7 CFR part 1734.22 and the Application Guide for information on required matching contributions.

a. Grant applicants must demonstrate matching contributions, in cash or in kind (new or non-depreciated items), of at least 15 percent of the grant amount requested. Matching contributions must be used for approved purposes for grants (see 7 CFR part 1734.21 and Section E(7)(b) of this document).

b. Applications that do not provide sufficient documentation of the required 15 percent match will be deemed ineligible.

c. Discounts and Donations. In review of applications submitted in the past, it was determined that vendor donated matches did not have value without a required, subsequent purchase of vendor equipment or licenses with grant funds. For example, in many grant applications, software licenses were donated in satisfaction of the matching requirement. However, such licenses only worked with, and thus only had value with, the same vendor's equipment. Additionally, by side agreement, grant applicants were required to purchase the vendor's equipment once the grant was made with grant funds. The agency determined that such a practice violated federal procurement standards found at 2 CFR part 200.317-326, given that the grant applicant could not put the purchase out for bid, either because no other equipment would work with the "donated" licenses, or because they were contractually obligated to buy the equipment before the grant was made. As such, the agency has determined that vendor matches requiring subsequent purchases, either by necessity or contract, are not permitted.

d. Eligible Equipment and Facilities. These terms are defined in 7 CFR part 1734.3. See the Application Guide for more information regarding eligible and ineligible items.

E. Application and Submission Information

The Application Guide provides specific, detailed instructions for each item of a complete application. The Agency emphasizes the importance of including every item and strongly encourages applicants to follow the instructions carefully, using the examples and illustrations in the Application Guide. Prior to official submission of applications, applicants may request technical assistance or other application guidance from the Agency, as long as such requests are made prior to **March 26, 2020**. Agency contact information can be found in Section H of this document.

The Agency will not solicit or consider new scoring or eligibility information that is submitted after the application deadline. The Agency reserves the right to contact applicants to seek clarification on materials contained in the submitted application. See the Application Guide for a full discussion of each item. For requirements of completed grant applications, refer to 7 CFR part 1734.25.

1. *Address to Request Application Package.* The Application Guide and copies of forms and resources are available as follows:

a. Electronic copies are available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>.

b. Paper copies are available from the Rural Utilities Service, Office of Loan Origination and Approval, 202-720-0800.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission.*

a. Carefully review the Application Guide and 7 CFR part 1734, which detail all relevant forms and worksheets. A table summarizing the components of a complete application can be found in this section.

b. Description of Project Sites. Most DLT grant projects contain several project sites. The Agency provides a site worksheet to help applicants clearly identify hub, hub/end-user, and end-user sites. Applicants should complete the site worksheet with all requisite information. As in prior DLT funding windows, site information must be consistent throughout the application. Applications without consistent site information will be returned as ineligible.

c. Submission of Application Items. Given the high volume of program interest, applicants should submit the application items in the order indicated in the Application Guide. Applications that are not assembled and tabbed in the specified order prevent timely determination of eligibility. For applications with inconsistencies among submitted copies, the Agency will base its evaluation on the original signed application received.

d. Table of Application Items.

Application Item	Regulation	Comments
SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance Form)	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(a)</u>	<u>Form provided in the Application Guide</u>
Executive Summary of the Project	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(b)</u>	<u>Narrative, including a publicly releasable section that describes the population served</u>
Scoring Criteria and Special Consideration Documentation	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(c)</u>	<u>Provide documentation on how applicant meets each of the scoring criteria and special considerations contained in §1734.26</u>
Scope of Work	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(d)</u>	<u>Narrative & Documentation, including the budget</u>
Financial Information and Sustainability	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(e)</u>	<u>Narrative</u>
Statement of Experience	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(f)</u>	<u>Narrative</u>
Evidence of Leverage and Funding Commitments from All Sources	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(g)</u>	<u>Worksheet and Match documentation letters with authorized signatures</u>

Telecommunications System Plan	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(h)</u>	<u>Documentation</u>
Compliance with other Federal Statutes	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(i)</u>	<u>Addressed by providing Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations in www.SAM.gov</u>
Non-Duplication of Services	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(i)</u>	<u>Form provided in the Application Guide</u>
Assurance Regarding Felony Conviction or Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(i)</u>	<u>Addressed by providing Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations in ww.SAM.gov</u>
Environmental Review Requirements	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(j)</u>	<u>Form provided in the Application Guide</u>
Evidence of Legal Authority and Existence	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(k)</u>	<u>Documentation including CAGE code from www.SAM.gov</u>
Federal Debt Certification	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(l)</u>	<u>Form provided in the Application Guide</u>
Consultation with USDA State Director	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(m)</u>	<u>Documentation</u>
Supplemental Information	<u>7 CFR part 1734.25(n)</u>	<u>Documentation</u>

e. Number of copies of submitted applications.

i. Paper submissions. Submit the original application and one (1) paper copy to RUS, as well as one digital copy on a Flash Drive. Submit one additional copy to the state government single point of contact as described in Section E (6).

ii. Electronic submissions. Submit the electronic application once. Do not send a paper copy to RUS. Applicants should identify and number each page in the same manner as the paper application. Submit one additional copy to the State government single point of contact as described in Section E (6).

3. *Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number.* The applicant for a grant must supply a DUNS number as part of the application. The applicant can obtain the DUNS number free of charge by calling Dun and Bradstreet. Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> for more information on DUNS number acquisition or confirmation.

4. *System for Award Management (SAM).* Prior to submitting a paper or an electronic application, the applicant must register in SAM at <https://www.sam.gov>. Throughout the RUS application review and the active Federal grant funding period, SAM registration must be active with current data at all times. To maintain active SAM registration, the applicant must review and update the information in the SAM database annually from the date of initial registration or from the date of the last update. The applicant must ensure that the information in the database is current, accurate, and complete. In addition, the applicant must make the certifications and representations required of entities which are applying for or have received funding under any Federal financial assistance project or program.

5. *Submission Dates and Times.*

a. Paper applications must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than **April 10, 2020** to be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity. Late applications, applications which do not include proof of mailing or shipping, and incomplete applications are not eligible for funding under this grant opportunity.

i. Address paper applications to the Telecommunications Program, RUS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Room 2844, STOP 1597, Washington, DC 20250-1597. Applications should be marked, "Attention: Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Loan Origination and Approval."

ii. Paper applications must show proof of mailing or shipping by the deadline consisting of one of the following:

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

B. A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the USPS; or

C. A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.

iii. Due to screening procedures at the USDA, packages arriving via regular mail through the USPS are irradiated, which can damage the contents and delay delivery to RUS. RUS encourages applicants to consider the impact of this procedure when selecting their application delivery method.

iv. Note that this is the last year RUS intends to accept paper applications for this program.

b. Electronic grant applications must be received no later than **April 10, 2020** to be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity. Late or incomplete applications will not be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity.

i. Applications will not be accepted via fax or electronic mail.

ii. Electronic applications for grants must be submitted through the Federal Government's Grants.gov initiative at <https://www.grants.gov>.

iii. Grants.gov requires some credentialing and online authentication procedures. These procedures may take several business days to complete. Therefore, the applicant should complete the registration, credentialing, and authorization procedures at Grants.gov before submitting an application. Instructions on all required passwords, credentialing, and software are available on Grants.gov.

iv. If system errors or technical difficulties occur, use the customer support resources available at the Grants.gov website.

c. If the submission deadline falls on Saturday, Sunday, or a Federal holiday, the application is due the next business day.

6. Intergovernmental Review.

The DLT Grant Program is subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” Submit one copy of the application to the State government single point of contact, if one has been designated, at the same time as application submission to the Agency. If the project is located in more than one State, submit a copy to each applicable State government single point of contact. Go to <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SPOC-February-2019.pdf> for state office contact information.

7. Funding Restrictions.

a. Hub sites located in non-rural areas are not eligible for grant assistance unless they are necessary to provide DLT services to rural residents at end user sites. See 7 CFR part 1734.2(h).

b. Ineligible and Eligible Items. Applicants should exclude ineligible items and ineligible matching contributions from the budget unless those items are clearly documented as vital to the project. See the Application Guide for a recommended budget format and detailed budget compilation instructions.

F. Application Review Information

1. Criteria.

Grant applications are scored competitively and are subject to the criteria listed below. See 7 CFR part 1734.26 and the Application Guide for more information on the scoring criteria.

a. Rurality Category (up to 40 points). The rurality score is based on the population size of each community where an end user site is located. For non-fixed site projects and projects which contain non-fixed components, the rurality score will be based on the population of the Hub site. Applicants can use Census population data either from the Census Website (<http://data.census.gov>) or from Rand McNally Atlas (Atlas) that cites the 2010 Census as its source for population statistics. Population figures used in the DLT grant competition under this announcement must use the 2010 Census as the source, whether it is from the Atlas, or from the Census Website (<http://data.census.gov>). The Application Guide provides additional guidance for this category, including a Rurality Worksheet to assist applicants in the calculation of points.

b. Economic Need Category (up to 30 points). Economic need is based on the county poverty percentage of the end user sites proposed in the application. The percentages must be determined by utilizing the United States Census Small Area Income

and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program. End-user sites located in geographic areas for which no SAIPE data exist will be determined to have an average SAIPE poverty percentage of 30 percent. Such geographic areas may include territories of the United States or other locations eligible for funding through the DLT Grant Program.

c. Service Needs and Benefits Category (up to 30 points). This category measures the extent to which the proposed project meets the need for distance learning or telemedicine services in rural areas, the benefits derived from the proposed services, and the local community involvement in the planning, implementation, and financial assistance of the project. RUS will also consider the extent to which the applicant's documentation identifies the local economic, education, or health care challenges. The applicant must explain how the project proposes to address these issues and why the applicant cannot complete the project without a grant.

d. Special Consideration. Special consideration points will be awarded for projects in the following areas. Applicants may only receive special consideration points in one area (up to 10 points):

- Telemedicine projects having the primary purpose of providing treatment and counseling services for opioid or other substance use disorder. Opioid or other substance use disorder treatment is defined as the interactive communication between medical or educational professionals and opioid users or their families, other treatment professionals or those who interact with opioid or other substance users. Opioid or other substance use disorder treatment eligible purposes include:
 - Counseling of opioid or other substance users
 - Treatment of opioid or other substance dependent persons
 - Training of medical professionals, counselors or first responders in the interaction with opioid or other substance users
 - Education programs addressing opioid or other substance abuse, or;
- Distance learning projects having the primary purpose of providing access to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) courses; or
- Telemedicine or distance learning projects having at least one end-user site physically located in an Opportunity Zone. An Opportunity Zone is an economically distressed community where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Localities qualify as Opportunity Zones if they have been nominated for that designation by the State and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury via delegation of authority to the Internal Revenue Service. See <https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx> for the list of current Opportunity Zones. See <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions> for additional information.

2. Review and Selection Process.

a. Grant applications are ranked by the final score. RUS selects applications based on those rankings, subject to the availability of funds. In addition, the Agency has the authority to limit the number of applications selected in any one state or for any one project during a fiscal year. See 7 CFR part 1734.27 for a description of the grant application selection process. An application receiving fewer points can be selected over a higher scoring application in the event that there are insufficient funds available to cover the costs of the higher scoring application, as stated in 7 CFR part 1734.27(b)(3).

b. The Agency evaluates grant applications on the following items, in accordance with 7 CFR part 1734.27(c):

i. Financial feasibility. A proposal that does not indicate financial feasibility or that is not sustainable will not be approved for an award.

ii. Technical considerations. An application that contains flaws that would prevent the successful implementation, operation, or sustainability of the project will not be approved for an award.

iii. Other aspects of proposals that contain inadequacies that would undermine the ability of the project to comply with the policies of the DLT Program.

G. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notices.

RUS notifies applicants whose projects are selected for awards by mailing or emailing a copy of an award letter. The receipt of an award letter does not authorize the applicant to commence performance under the award. After sending the award letter, the Agency will send an 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 agreement, within the number of days specified in the selection notice letter.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

The items listed in this announcement, the DLT Grant Program regulation, the Application Guide, and program resources implement the appropriate administrative and national policy requirements, which include but are not limited to:

a. Executing a DLT Grant Agreement.

b. Using Form SF 270, "Request for Advance or Reimbursement," to request reimbursements (along with the submission of receipts for expenditures, timesheets, and any other documentation to support the request for reimbursement).

c. Providing project performance activity reports 90 days after the date of the Grant Agreement and then within 90 days after the close of each calendar year until the expiration or completion of the award.

d. Ensuring that records are maintained to document all activities and expenditures utilizing DLT grant funds and matching funds (receipts for expenditures are to be included in this documentation).

e. Providing a final project performance report.

f. Complying with policies, guidance, and requirements as described in the following applicable Code of Federal Regulations, and any successor regulations:

i. 2 CFR parts 200 and 400 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards).

ii. 2 CFR parts 417 and 180 (Government-wide Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension).

g. Signing Form AD-3031, “Assurance Regarding Felony Conviction or Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants” (for corporate applicants only).

h. Complying with Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency.” For information on limited English proficiency and agency-specific guidance, go to <https://www.LEP.gov>.

i. Accountability and Compliance with Civil Rights Laws. The regulation found at 7 CFR part 1901 Subpart E contains policies and procedures for implementing the regulations of the Department of Agriculture issued pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Executive Order 13166, Executive Order 11246, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974, as they relate to the Rural Development. Nothing herein shall be interpreted to prohibit preference to American Indians on Indian Reservations.

The policies contained in this subpart apply to recipients. As recipients of federal financial assistance, awardees are required to comply with the applicable federal, state and local laws. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance. Recipients are required to adhere to specific outreach activities. These outreach activities include contacting community organizations and leaders that include minority leaders; advertising in local newspapers and other media throughout the entire service area; and including the nondiscrimination slogan, “This is an Equal Opportunity Program. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law,” in methods that may include, but not be limited to, advertisements, public broadcasts, and printed materials, such as brochures and pamphlets. All recipients must submit and have on file a valid Form RD 400-1

(Equal Opportunity Agreement); and RUS Form 266 (Compliance Assurance) or RD Form 400-4 (Assurance Agreement).

By signing Form 400-4 or 266, recipients affirm that they will operate the program free from discrimination. The recipient will maintain the race and ethnic data on the board members and beneficiaries of the program. The recipient will provide alternative forms of communication to persons with limited English proficiency. The Agency will conduct Civil Rights Compliance Reviews on recipients to identify the collection of racial and ethnic data on program beneficiaries. In addition, the Compliance Review will ensure that equal access to the program benefits and activities are provided for persons with disabilities and language barriers.

3. Reporting.

a. Performance reporting. All recipients of DLT financial assistance must provide annual performance activity reports to RUS 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 in meeting the DLT Grant Program objectives. See 7 CFR part 1734.7 for additional information on these reporting requirements.

b. Financial reporting. All recipients of DLT financial assistance must provide an annual audit, beginning with the first year in which a portion of the financial assistance is expended. Audits are governed by USDA audit regulations. See 7 CFR part 1734.8 and 2 CFR part 200, Subpart F for a description of the audit requirements.

c. Recipient and Sub-recipient Reporting. The applicant must have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the reporting requirements for first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 in the event the applicant receives funding, unless such applicant is exempt from such reporting requirements pursuant to 2 CFR part 170.110(b). The reporting requirements under the Transparency Act pursuant to 2 CFR part 170 are as follows:

i. First Tier Sub-Awards of \$25,000 or more (unless they are exempt under 2 CFR part 170) must be reported by the recipient to <https://www.fsr.gov> no later than the end of the month following the month the obligation was made. Please note that currently underway is a consolidation of eight federal procurement systems, including the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS), into one system, the System for Award Management (SAM). As a result, the FSRS will soon be consolidated into and accessed through <https://www.sam.gov>.

ii. The total compensation of the recipient's executives (the five most highly compensated executives) must be reported by the recipient (if the recipient meets the criteria under 2 CFR part 170) to <https://www.sam.gov> by the end of the month following the month in which the award was made.

iii. The total compensation of the sub-recipient's executives (the five most highly compensated executives) must be reported by the sub-recipient (if the sub-recipient meets the criteria under 2 CFR part 170) to the recipient by the end of the month following the month in which the sub-award was made.

d. Record Keeping and Accounting. The agreement will contain provisions related to record keeping and accounting requirements.

H. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

1. *Website:* <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>. The DLT website maintains up-to-date resources and contact information for the DLT Program.

2. *Telephone:* 202-720-0800

3. *Fax:* 1-844-885-8179

4. *Email:* dltinfo@usda.gov

5. *Main point of contact:* Shawn Arner, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Loan Origination and Approval, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

I. Other Information

1. USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, familial status, disability, limited English proficiency, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). Program information may be made available in other languages.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/ad-3027-usda-program-discrimination-complaint-form>. You

may also obtain a complaint form by contacting the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Information Research Service, at (202) 260-1026 or (866) 632-9992 (toll free) or by sending an email to Cr-info@ascr.usda.gov. A letter may also be written containing all of the information requested in the form.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

a. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410;

b. Facsimile: (202) 690-7442; or

c. Email: at program.intake@usda.gov.

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