

FEDERAL GRANT PROFILE



Department: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Agency: Rural Utilities Service (RUS)

FY 2021 Community Connect Grant Program

Grant Overview

This program helps fund broadband deployment into rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service. Eligible applicants are incorporated organizations, Indian tribal organizations, states, units of local government or any other legal entity.

Program History

	Total Funding	# of Awards
2018	\$9,305,565	5

Key Information and Tips

Total Funding: Unspecified

Award Range: \$100,000 - \$3 million

Match: 15 percent

Solicitation date: September 24, 2020

Proposal due: December 23, 2020

- To qualify as a broadband service, the minimum rate of data transmission must be 10 Megabits (MB) per second downstream plus 1 MB per second upstream for both fixed and mobile service
- The minimum broadband grant speed that award recipients must deliver is 25 MB per second downstream and 3 MB upstream for both fixed and mobile service
- Use USDA's [Mapping Tool](#) to draw your proposed funded service area. The Mapping Tool also provides information on what counts as rural areas and the existing Rural Utilities Service borrowers and grantees.

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



Awardee Profile

Inland Cellular, LLC
College Park, GA

POPULATION: 14,026

AMOUNT: \$389,589

YEAR: 2018

This rural development investment will be used to implement a fixed wireless LTE network in the 3.65 GHz spectrum to provide service in Pierce, in Clearwater County. The system will cover 266 households and 34 businesses, providing service offerings of up to 15 megabits per second download and 3 Mbps upload.

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Detailed Summary

The Community Connect Grant Program provides financial assistance to eligible applicants that will provide service at or above the Broadband Grant Speed to all premises in rural, economically-challenged communities where broadband service does not exist. Priority will be given to rural areas that demonstrate the greatest need for broadband services, based on program criteria.

Applicants are encouraged to consider projects that provide measurable results in helping rural communities build robust and sustainable economies through strategic investments in infrastructure, partnerships and innovation. Key strategies include:

- Achieving e-Connectivity for Rural America
- Developing the Rural Economy
- Harnessing Technological Innovation
- Supporting a Rural Workforce
- Improving Quality of Life

Eligible projects must propose to fulfill the following requirements:

- **Proposed Funded Service Area (PFSA):** The applicant must define a contiguous geographic area within one or more eligible Rural Areas, in which Broadband Service does not exist and where the applicant proposes to offer service at the Broadband Grant Speed to all residential and business customers
 - A Rural Area is defined as an area having a population of less than 20,000, and cannot be adjacent to a city or town with a population of 50,000 or more
 - Broadband Service exists if the rate-of-data transmission in an area is at least 10 MB per second downstream and 1 MB per second upstream for fixed or mobile broadband service
 - The Broadband Grant Speed for this program is defined as at least 25 MB per second downstream, and 3 MB per second upstream for fixed and mobile service
- **Essential Community Facilities:** The applicant must propose to offer free service at the Broadband Grant Speed to all participating Essential Community Facilities located within the PFSA for at least two years
- **Community Center:** The applicant must provide a Community Center within the PFSA. Grant funds must be used to provide a minimum of two, and up to 10, Computer Access Points at the community Center. The Community Center must also provide wireless access at the Broadband Grant Speed, free of all charges, for users for at least two years.

Funds may be used for:

- Construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, including spectrum, land, or buildings to deploy broadband services to all residential and business customers and all participating Essential Community Facilities
- Improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of a community center that furnishes free internet access at the Broadband Grant Speed and provides Computer Access Points
- The cost of bandwidth necessary to provide service free of charge at the Broadband Grant Speed to each Essential Community Facility for the first two years of operation

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants are: incorporated organizations, Indian tribes or tribal organizations, states, units of local government, or, any other legal entity, including a cooperative, private cooperation, or limited liability company organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis located in a rural area. A rural area is defined as having a population of 20,000 or less and is not adjacent to a city/town with a population of 50,000 or more.

Use USDA's [Mapping Tool](#) to draw your proposed funded service area. The Mapping Tool also provides information on what counts as rural areas and the existing Rural Utilities Service borrowers and grantees. Applicants must have the legal capacity and authority to own and operate the proposed broadband facilities, to enter into contracts, and to otherwise comply with applicable federal statutes and regulations. While prior Community Connect grants cannot be renewed, existing Community Connect awardees can submit applications for new projects.

The applicant must define a contiguous geographic area, located entirely within a rural area, in which Broadband Service does not exist and where the applicant proposes to offer service at the Broadband Grant Speed to all residential and business customers.

Funding

An unspecified amount of funding is available to support awards ranging from \$100,000 to \$3 million through this program. Services must be provided for at least two years. Funds for the improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of a Community Center should not exceed the lesser of 10 percent of the amount requested or \$150,000.

Applicants must provide at least 15 percent of the requested award amount via nonfederal cash source.

Contact Information

Shawn Arner

Deputy Assistant Administrator

(202) 720-0800

community.connect@wdc.usda.gov

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