

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Reviewing Applications From 41 States to Expand Rural Broadband in Second Round of ReConnect Pilot Program

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2020 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary Bette Brand today announced that USDA has received 172 applications requesting \$1.57 billion in the second round of the [ReConnect Pilot Program](#). The applications seek funding to provide or upgrade rural broadband service across 41 states.

“Ensuring that residents, businesses and health care providers in rural areas have access to reliable, high-speed broadband e-Connectivity is a critical component of the response to the COVID-19 National Emergency,” Brand said. “Under the leadership of President Trump and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, we at USDA are eager to begin reviewing these 172 applications so we can help bring critical infrastructure investments to homes, farms, ranches, schools and health care sites across rural America.”

The second round will enable USDA to implement innovative new solutions to rural connectivity by leveraging financial options with our partners and adding to the success of the first round of funding. The application window for round two closed April 15.

Today, the Rural Utilities Service will provide public notice filings and the proposed service area maps at reconnect.usda.gov through June 6 to allow existing service providers to submit responses. The Agency will use the information submitted to determine if there is sufficient access to broadband in any part of the proposed funded service area.

Congress appropriated \$1.3 billion for the first and second rounds of the ReConnect Program. USDA made \$550 million available for the second round. That includes up to \$200 million for grants, up to \$200 million for 50/50 grant/loan combinations, and up to \$200 million for low-interest loans. The [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security](#) (CARES) Act provided \$100 million in additional funding to the program.

USDA received 11 round one ReConnect Program applications that are eligible for the \$100 million Congress allocated to the program through the [CARES Act](#).

ReConnect grants, loans and combination funds enable the federal government to partner with the private sector and rural communities to build modern broadband infrastructure in areas with insufficient internet service.

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