

## STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

### USDA Receives Applications for More Than \$635 Million in Loan-Grant Combination Funds in the First Round of the ReConnect Pilot Program

*Loan-Only Applications Still Being Accepted Through [www.USDA.gov/reconnect](http://www.USDA.gov/reconnect)*

**WASHINGTON, June 24, 2019** – Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Joel Baxley today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development received 53 applications requesting more than \$635 million in loan-grant combination funding in the first round of the [ReConnect Pilot Program](#). USDA made \$200 million available for loan-grant combination projects in the first round of funding.

The 53 applications received represent 1,099 farms and 859 businesses in rural areas across 32 states.

In March 2018, Congress provided \$600 million to USDA to expand broadband infrastructure and services in rural America, and on December 13, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue announced the rules of the program. On March 29, 2019, USDA began accepting applications.

For this first round, USDA made available up to \$200 million in grants, \$200 million in loan and grant combinations, and \$200 million in low-interest loans. The application deadlines are:

- May 31, 2019, for grant-only projects;
- June 21, 2019, for loan and grant combinations; and
- July 12, 2019, for low-interest loans.

Applicants can request technical assistance from USDA by filling out the contact form at <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/contact-us>.

State and local governments, Native American tribes, for- and non-profit entities, limited liability companies, and cooperative or mutual organizations may apply for funding through USDA's ReConnect Program to connect rural areas that currently have insufficient broadband service. Funds will be awarded to projects that have financially sustainable business models that will bring high-speed broadband to rural homes, businesses, farms, ranches and community facilities, such as first responders, health care sites and schools.

The ReConnect Program enables USDA to create and implement innovative solutions to rural connectivity by providing various financial options to our partners and customers. For the announcement opening the application windows, see the [Federal Register](#) at Vol. 84 Fed. Reg. 5981 (Feb. 25, 2019), and for the first round Reconnect Program requirements, see the [Federal Register](#) at Vol. 83 Fed. Reg. 64315 (Dec. 14, 2018), or visit [reconnect.usda.gov](http://reconnect.usda.gov). Information for future rounds will also be published in the Federal Register. Congress has provided an additional \$550 million for the ReConnect Program.

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