



Rural Development Community Connect

Customer User Guide

Together, America Prospers

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1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Community Connect Grant Program (Community Connect Program) is designed to provide financial assistance to provide service at the Broadband Grant Speed in rural, economically challenged communities where broadband service does not currently exist. Grant funds may be used to: (1) deploy service at the Broadband Grant Speed to essential community facilities, rural residents, and rural businesses, (2) construct, acquire, or expand a community center, and (3) equip a community center that provides free access to service at the Broadband Grant Speed to community residents for at least two years. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis for entities to serve all premises in eligible rural areas at the Broadband Grant Speed to ensure rural consumers enjoy the same quality and range of broadband services as are available in urban and suburban communities.

The Community Connect Portal allows applicants to electronically submit their Community Connect application to RUS when the application window is open. This User Guide specifically provides information on the technical aspects of the Community Connect Portal. For information on program and application *requirements*, please refer to the **Community Connect Application Guide for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021** on the program website at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/community-connect>.

1.2 Overview of the Community Connect Portal

Prior to FY 2021, RUS accepted both electronic applications submitted via grants.gov and paper applications mailed directly to the National Office in Washington, D.C. To comply with new mapping and reporting requirements outlined in the 2018 Farm Bill and streamline the overall application process, RUS created an online application portal specific to the Community Connect Grant Program. The application portal allows applicants to map their proposed funded service areas and upload their application documents in a single place. In previous years, applicants were required to draw their service areas in one place and upload their application documents in a separate package on grants.gov or a flash drive. Beginning FY 2021, only applications submitted through the Community Connect (CC) Portal will be reviewed for financial assistance.

The CC Portal:



- Streamlines the entire application process by allowing applicants to use one common platform to draw their service area and upload their application documents
- Streamlines the mapping functionality across the Telecom programs.
- Ensures that RUS receives the application in a timely manner.
- Allows applicants to work on multiple applications simultaneously.

2. Accessing the Community Connect Portal

Prior to accessing the CC Portal, the applicant must be a **legal entity** with a **Tax ID Number** (TIN) and a **Data Universal Numbering System** (DUNS) number. Additional information on these numbers is available in the FY 2021 Community Connect Application Guide.

USDA strongly recommends using one of the Internet browsers listed below when accessing the CC Portal to avoid the technical challenges associated with unsupported browsers. The CC Portal can be accessed by clicking on the “Apply Now” button on the [Community Connect home page](#).

Table 1: Supported Browsers

Icon	Supported Browser	Download Source
	Microsoft Edge for Windows 10	https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/edge
	Google Chrome (newest version)	https://www.google.com/chrome/

2.1 USDA eAuthentication Account

USDA eAuthentication (eAuth) is the identity service provider and system that USDA agencies use to establish secure user accounts for individual customers and employees seeking access to USDA web applications and services. All CC Portal users are required to have a USDA Level II eAuth account. If a user already has a Level II eAuth account associated with other USDA applications or systems, then the same account credentials (eAuth ID and password) may be used to gain access to the CC Portal. If a user doesn't have a Level II eAuth account, then the Level II eAuth account must be acquired before proceeding further.

To create a new USDA Level II eAuth account or modify an existing account, please visit: <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/home>. If the user does not have any accounts with USDA, then click on the **Create Account** tab to create a new eAuth account. If the user only has a Level I account, then the account must be upgraded to a Level II account in order to access the CC Portal. Click on the **Manage Account** tab to upgrade the account.

An employee of the applicant who has a Level II eAuth ID may now submit an Authorized Representative Request (ARR) to USDA to gain access to the CC Portal. The ARR designates the

individuals that will have certain user security roles, which are described in the next section. Since this is a new Portal accepting applications for the Community Connect Grant Program, all applicants will be required to submit ARR even though they may have submitted ARRs previously to access other online application systems. **Please note that users associated with multiple applicants only need one eAuth ID.**

2.2 User Security Roles

The CC Portal was designed to allow a combination of users with different security roles to complete and submit an application. The roles include the following:

- **Application Representative Signature Certifier (Rep Sign Cert).** Every applicant must have a single Rep Sign Cert. The individual designated as the Rep Sign Cert must be identified on the ARR Form and in the Board Resolution. This security role is limited to an employee of the applicant. As Rep Sign Cert, the user can perform the following actions:
 - Submit the ARR on behalf of the applicant;
 - Add, edit, and delete users that will be working on the application;
 - Create, view, and update the Proposed Funded Service Area on the mapping tool and upload/delete the application documents; and
 - Submit the application to USDA on behalf of the applicant.

To update the Rep Sign Cert role, the current Rep Sign Cert can request a replacement through the entity's profile in the CC Portal (as outlined in **Section 3.5 Update the Representative Signature Certifier**).

- **Application Administrator (Administrator).** This security user role can be identified during the ARR process or added later by the Rep Sign Cert once the ARR has been approved. This security role is limited to employees of the applicant. As Administrator, the user can perform the following actions:
 - Submit the ARR on behalf of the applicant;
 - Add, edit, and delete users except for the Rep Sign Cert; and
 - Create, view, and update the Proposed Funded Service Area on the map and upload/delete the application documents.

- **Representative Update Data (Rep Update Data).** This security role is limited to employees of the applicant. As Rep Update Data, the user can perform the following actions:
 - Create, view, and update the Proposed Funded Service Area on the map and upload;
 - Upload/delete the application documents.
- **Consultant.** This security role is for Consultants who have been contracted by the applicant. **Do not assign the Consultants to any other security role as this may restrict their access to other applicants' information.** As a Consultant, the user can perform the following actions:
 - Create, view, and update the Proposed Funded Service Area on the map and upload/delete the application documents.
- **Application Viewer (Viewer).** This security role allows the user to view the Proposed Funded Service Area on the map and the uploaded application documents.

Assigning Key Contacts

A Key Contact is a user that is designated to be a point of contact for USDA if any questions arise during the application life cycle. Any user associated with the applicant can be a Key Contact. All user roles may be assigned as Key Contacts. The Key Contact can be assigned when the user is added to the account, during the ARR process or by the Rep Sign Cert or Administrator after the account has been created, by marking the “ASSIGN AS A KEY CONTACT” checkbox. To modify the Key Contact assignment, the Rep Sign Cert and/or Administrator can edit the user’s role as described in **Section 3 User & Entity Account**.

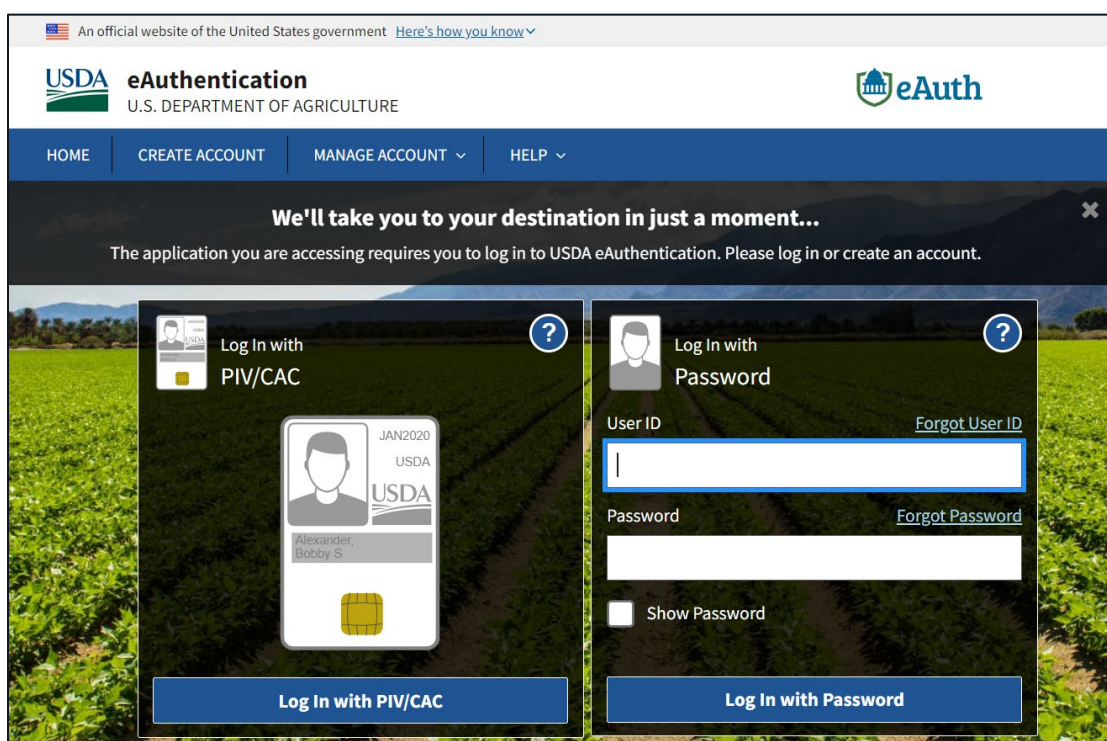
2.3 Authorized Representative Request

An integral part of the CC Portal’s security, the Authorized Representative Request (ARR) process ensures that only the individuals that the applicant has authorized to work on the Community Connect application will have access to the organization’s account and application information. The ARR consists of system generated screens that request information about the applicant and the individual(s) designated as the Rep Sign Cert and Administrator(s), if any, and a board resolution that must be signed and uploaded to the system. The ARR must be submitted by the designated Rep Sign Cert or Administrator that is identified in the board resolution.

The following steps outline how to access, complete, and submit an ARR:

1. Navigate to the CC Portal login page via <https://rus-apply.rd.usda.gov>.
2. The eAuthentication Login page displays. Under the User ID and Password section, enter the user's Level II eAuth credentials (i.e., eAuth ID and Password) and then click on the "Log In with Password" button.

Figure 1: eAuth Login



3. The CC Portal website displays. Click on the "Start an ARR" button to complete the Authorized Representative Request (ARR) on behalf of the applicant.
4. The ARR form displays, prompting input of the applicant's Tax Identification Number (TIN) and Dun & Bradstreet Number (DUNS), as shown in Figure 2 below. Both the TIN and DUNS must contain 9 digits, **including any leading zeros** (0). Once this information has been entered, the system will either return the applicant's legal name and the headquarters state or prompt the user to enter this information.

Figure 2: ARR Entity Look-up Form

The screenshot shows the 'Authorized Representative Request' form. At the top, there is a header for 'USDA Rural Development U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE' and a user profile for 'Grace Cooper'. Below the header is a blue bar with 'COMMUNITY CONNECT'. The main content area has the title 'Authorized Representative Request' and a sub-header 'Entity Information'. There are two input fields: 'TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER' and 'DUNS NUMBER'. At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: 'Return to Home' and 'Add Entity'.

- 4.1. If a match is **not** found, the user is prompted to enter the Legal Name and Headquarters for the applicant, as displayed in Figure 3 below.

Figure 2: ARR - New Entity

The screenshot shows the 'Authorized Representative Request' form with a message box: 'Based on the TIN & DUNS entered, you are not an existing USDA customer and may continue with the Authorized Representative Request below. If you believe this is incorrect, please contact us.' Below the message box, there is a 'Clear ARR' link. The 'Entity Information' section has four input fields: 'LEGAL NAME OF ENTITY', 'HEADQUARTERS OF ENTITY', 'TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER' (with value 123456789), and 'DUNS NUMBER' (with value 123456789). Below this is the 'Authorized Representatives' section with a note: 'Please identify a single Representative Signature Certifier and any Administrators that will be assigned to this account. You can assign one individual as the Representative Signature Certifier and one or more individuals as Administrators. All individuals listed on the ARR must be employed by the Entity and have a USDA eAuthentication account.'

- 5. If a match is found, then the Legal Name and the Headquarters state auto-populate on the ARR form and are non-editable, as seen in Figure 4 below. Users should check the “**Entity Information**” for accuracy. If any changes need to be made on the “**Entity Information**,” contact USDA directly for technical support, as outlined in **Section 6 Contact USDA**.

Figure 3: ARR - Existing Entity

USDA Rural Development
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Home Michael Bluth

COMMUNITY CONNECT

Authorized Representative Request

To apply for a Community Connect grant, entities must submit an Authorized Representative Request (ARR) and a resolution. At a minimum, entities must identify a single Representative Signature Certifier on the ARR.

Entity Information [Clear ARR](#)

LEGAL NAME OF ENTITY	TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
Central Internet Company	519852000
HEADQUARTERS OF ENTITY	DUNS NUMBER
OK	505556747

Authorized Representatives

Please identify a single Representative Signature Certifier and any Administrators that will be assigned to this account. You can assign one individual as the Representative Signature Certifier and one or more individuals as Administrators. All individuals listed on the ARR must be employed by the Entity and have a **USDA eAuthentication** account.

+ Add Representative Signature Certifier

- Under the Authorized Representatives section, add the eAuth account information for the “Representative Signature Certifier.” Other individuals may be designated as “Administrators” at this time, but there will be other opportunities for the entity to add Administrators after the ARR has been approved.
- To add the Representative Signature Certifier (Rep Sign Cert) and Administrator(s), select the associated buttons. A window pops up requesting additional information on the designated individual. The eAuth ID of the individual must be entered first. See Figure 5 below.

Figure 4: Add RepSignCert Form

Add Representative Signature Certifier

Entities must designate a single Representative Signature Certifier. The person in this role must be employed by the Entity and have the authority to authorize certifications and submit information to the USDA on behalf of the Entity.

USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID *

FIRST NAME * MIDDLE NAME

LAST NAME *

EMAIL ADDRESS * PHONE NUMBER

Cancel Save

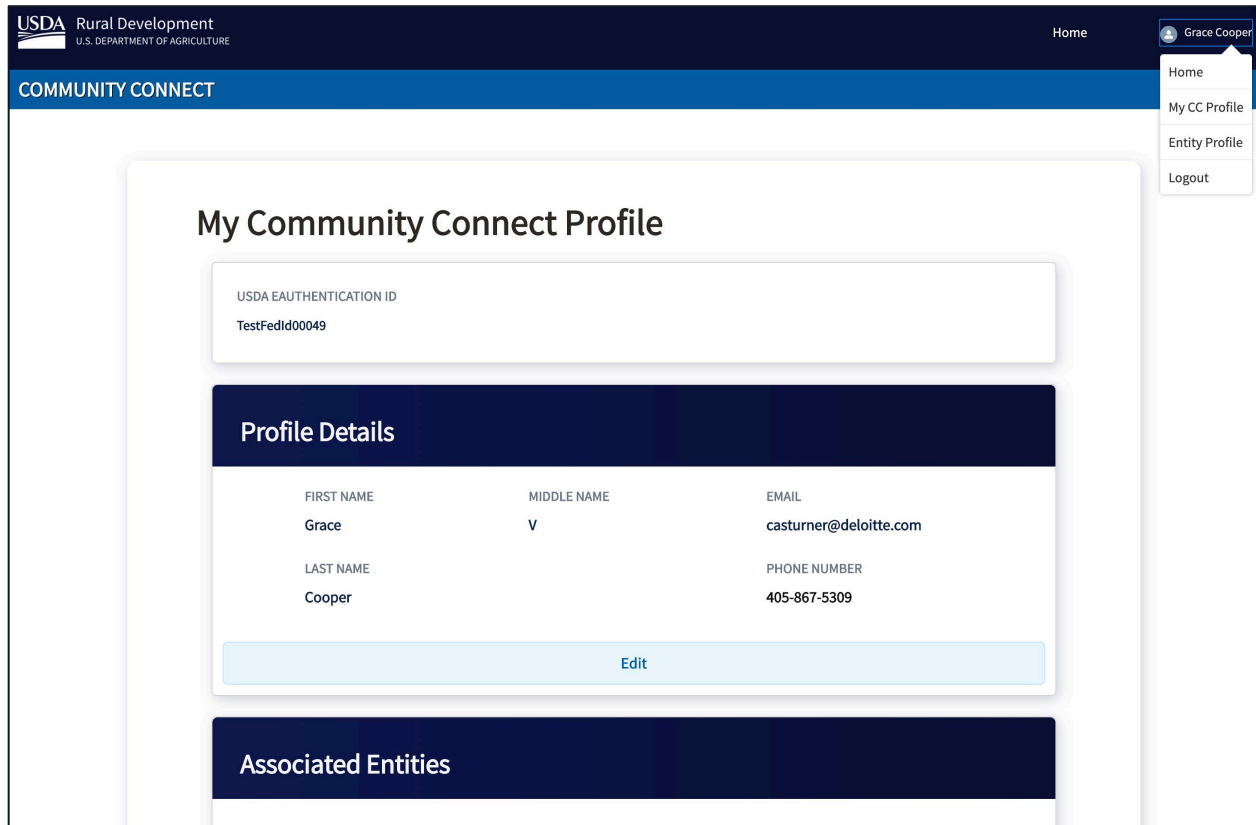
- 7.1. If the eAuth ID is **not** found, then check the entry to ensure that the ID that was entered matches the ID that the individual uses to log into USDA applications. If that doesn't work, then the individual should log into his/her eAuth account and confirm that the account is a Level II account. If the user does not have the appropriate account, return to **Section 2.1 USDA eAuthentication ID** for instructions.
8. If the eAuth ID is valid, the information associated with the user will auto-populate from the user's eAuth account. Users should check the information displayed for accuracy and add the current phone number for the contact. If any updates need to be made to the auto-populated fields, the users should make the necessary updates by logging in to their eAuth account. Once the phone number has been added, click on the 'Save' button.
9. Once the designated individuals have been added to the ARR form, the user must upload a signed board resolution before selecting the "Submit" button. The information in the signed board resolution must match all information that the user entered on the ARR form. Board resolutions must be uploaded in PDF format and may not exceed 25MB in size. Additional tips and sample board resolutions are available at:
<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/arr-resolution-instructions-samples.pdf>.
10. Users may download and view the board resolution before submitting the ARR by selecting the file presented below the upload box.
11. To submit the ARR, users select the 'Submit' button at the bottom of the page. USDA will process the request within two business days of receipt. If the ARR is approved, all the authorized representatives on the ARR will be notified by email. These users can login to the CC Portal to begin working on their application. If the ARR is rejected, the ARR submitter will be notified by email with the reason why the ARR was rejected. If there are any further questions regarding the ARR rejection, the ARR submitter can contact USDA directly, as outlined in **Section 6 Contact USDA**.

3. User & Entity Account

3.1 User Profile Information

The user’s profile can be accessed from any CC page by selecting “My CC Profile” in the drop-down menu under the user’s name, as shown in Figure 6 below. All user information can be viewed on the “My Community Connect Profile” page, including the user’s *USDA eAuth ID*, *Name (First, Middle, Last)*, *Email*, *Phone Number*, and all Entities associated with the User. The Associated Entities information includes the *Primary Borrower ID*, *Entity Name*, and the *Security Role* assigned to the user. More information on security roles can be found in **Section 2.2 User Security Roles**.

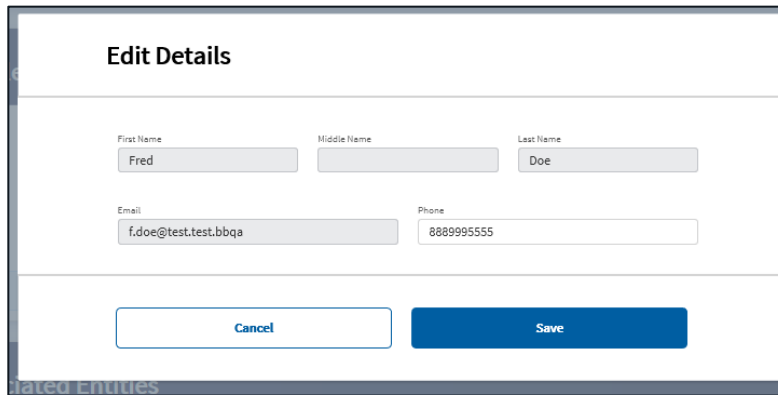
Figure 5: My CC Profile



Under Profile Details, users may only edit the phone number. To edit the phone number, select Edit. A secondary window appears, as shown in Figure 7. Once the phone number has been updated, select “Save.” To exit the secondary window at any time, the “Cancel” button returns the user to the “My Community Connect Profile” page. If any other user profile information

needs to be updated, the user must Contact USDA directly, as outlined in **Section 6 Contact USDA**.

Figure 6: Edit User Details Window



The screenshot shows a window titled "Edit Details". It contains a form with the following fields and values:

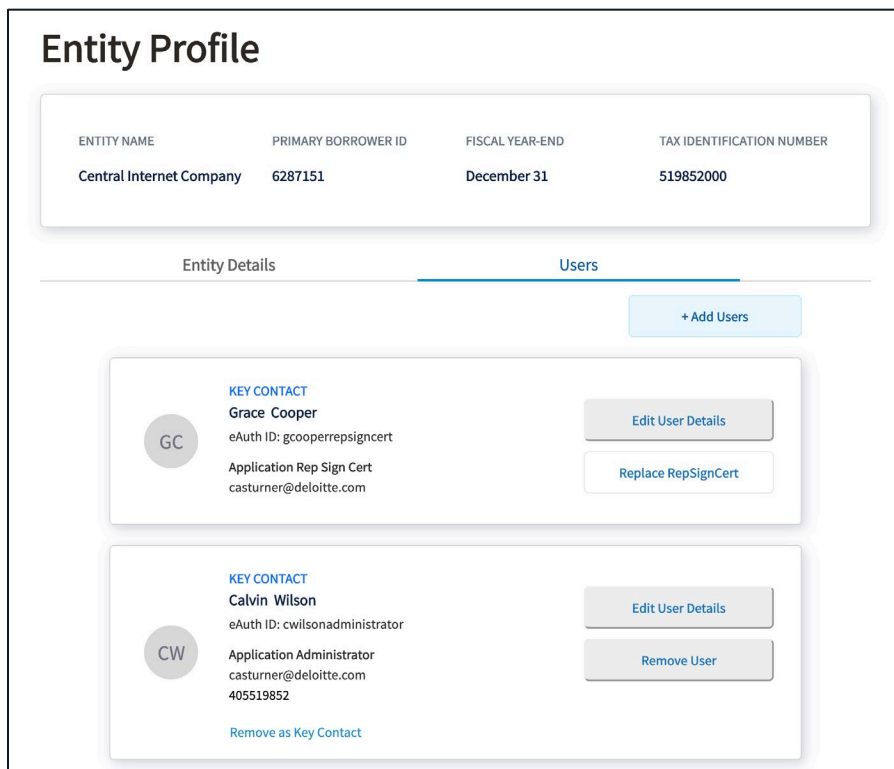
Field	Value
First Name	Fred
Middle Name	
Last Name	Doe
Email	f.doe@test.test.bbqa
Phone	8889995555

At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Cancel" (light blue) and "Save" (dark blue).

3.2 Entity Profile Information

Entity information is displayed on the entity profile page, which can be accessed from any CC page by selecting “Entity Profile” from the drop-down menu under the user’s name, as shown in Figure 6 above. At the top of the entity profile page, the entity’s *Name*, *Primary Borrowers ID*, *Fiscal Year-End* and *Tax Identification Number* are displayed. Under the “Entity Details” tab, additional information regarding the Entity is displayed, including the *DUNS Number*, *CAGE code*, *Legal Structure*, *HQ State*, and *Contact Information*. Under the Users tab, a list of all users associated with the entity is displayed, as shown in Figure 8 below. The Users’ information displayed includes *Name*, *USDA eAuth ID*, *Security Role*, *Email* and *Phone Number*.

Figure 7: Entity Profile



3.3 Add and Edit Users

The Rep Sign Cert and the Administrator of the Applicant are the only users who have the permissions to add other users to an Entity’s account. The following outline the steps to add a user to the Entity’s account:

1. The Rep Sign Cert and/or the Administrator can add a user by selecting “Add User” on the entity profile, as shown in Figure 8 above.
2. An ‘Add User’ secondary window displays prompting the Rep Sign Cert or Administrator to provide the new user’s USDA Level II eAuth ID. If the eAuth ID is valid, the *First Name*, *Middle Name (if applicable)*, *Last Name*, and *Email* auto-populate in the fields in the secondary. If the eAuth ID is not associated with an existing Level II account, an error appears, as shown in Figure 9 below.

Figure 8: Add User - eAuth Error

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Add User" with a red toast message at the top that says "User not found. Please try a new USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID." The form contains several input fields: "USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID" with the value "12342", "FIRST NAME", "MIDDLE NAME", and "LAST NAME" (all empty), "EMAIL ADDRESS" (empty), and "* PHONE NUMBER" (empty). There is a dropdown menu for "* SECURITY ROLE" with the text "Please select role" and a checkbox for "ASSIGN AS A KEY CONTACT". Below the form is a "Cancel" button and an "Add" button.

3. The users' Phone Number and Security Role are required fields. If any field is left blank, an error displays prompting the fields to be filled, as shown in Figure 10 below. To complete the desired action and add the user to the entity account in the CC Portal, select the "Add" button. To return to the entity profile without adding the user, select the "Cancel" button.
4. To assign a user as a Key Contact, add a check beside "ASSIGN AS A KEY CONTACT."
5. To add the user to the entity account in the CC Portal, select the "Add" button. A toast message will appear at the top that the User has been successfully added. To return to the entity profile without adding the user, click on the "Cancel" button.

Figure 9: Add User - Input Required

The screenshot shows the "Add User" form with a red toast message at the top that says "Invalid input. Please update invalid input and try again." The "USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID" field is empty and has a red border with the text "Complete this field." below it. The "PHONE NUMBER" field is also empty and has a red border with "Complete this field." below it. The "SECURITY ROLE" dropdown menu is set to "Application Viewer". The "ASSIGN AS A KEY CONTACT" checkbox is unchecked. The "Cancel" and "Add" buttons are at the bottom.

After a user has been added to the Entity account, the Rep Sign Cert or Administrator can edit the user information by navigating to the Users tab on the Entity profile page at any time. To edit user details, the Rep Sign Cert and/or Administrator can select the 'Edit User Details' button, as shown in Figure 8 above. The 'Edit User' secondary window displays, as shown in Figure 11 below. The only editable fields are the User's Phone Number, Security Role, and Key Contact assignment.

Figure 10: Edit User

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Edit User". At the top, there is a field for "USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID" with the value "gcooperrepsigncert". Below this are three fields for "FIRST NAME" (Grace), "MIDDLE NAME" (empty), and "LAST NAME" (Cooper). There is an "EMAIL ADDRESS" field with "casturner@deloitte.com" and a "PHONE NUMBER" field which is empty. Underneath the form, there is a section for "Application Rep Sign Cert" with a checked checkbox for "ASSIGN AS A KEY CONTACT". A note below the checkbox states: "Key contacts may be contacted by USDA for clarifications and/or requests related to the entity's reporting." At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Save".

3.4 Remove Users

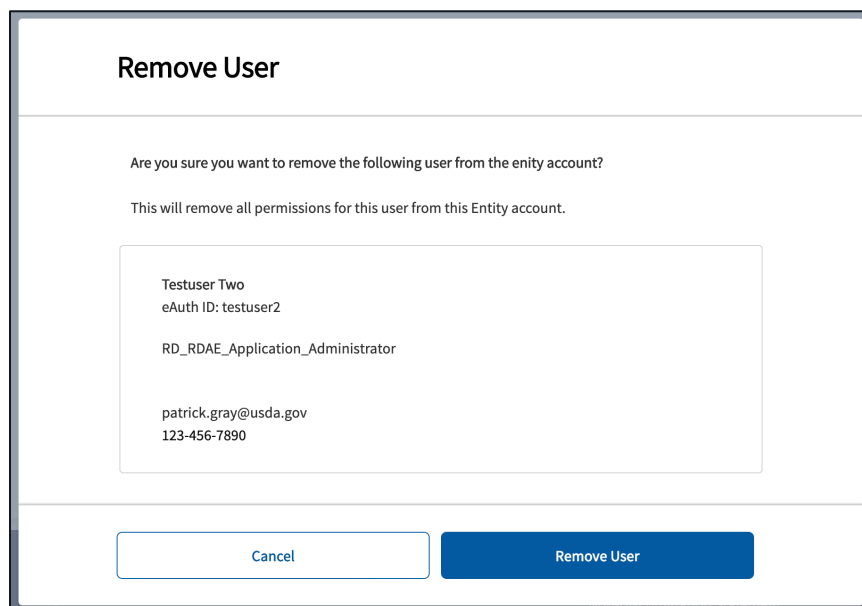
The Entity Rep Sign Cert and/or Administrator are the only security roles that have the permissions to edit or remove other users from the Entity Account. No user has the permissions to modify the Rep Sign Cert without requesting assistance from the USDA. To update the Rep Sign Cert, refer to **Section 3.5 Update the Representative Signature Certifier**.

If a user has access to both the ReConnect Online Application System and the CC Portal, the removal of the user from the CC Portal will only deactivate their permissions for the CC Portal. The user will remain active in the ReConnect Intake Portal. However, if a user did not have previous access to the ReConnect Online Application System and was removed from the CC Portal, that user account will be completely deactivated. To reactivate the user account, USDA would need to be contacted directly, as outlined in **Section 6 Contact USDA**.

To remove users (except the Rep Sign Cert):

1. The Rep Sign Cert and/or Administrator can navigate to the Users tab from the entity profile page, as shown in Figure 8 above.
2. After locating the User on the page who is to be removed, click on the “Remove User” button, as shown in Figure 8 above, which prompts a secondary window confirming that the desired action is to remove the user from the CC Portal. See the ‘Remove User’ secondary window in Figure 12 below.
3. Click on the “Remove User” button in the secondary window to delete the user from the entity account. To return to the Entity Profile page without removing the User, select the “Cancel” button in the secondary window.

Figure 11: Remove User



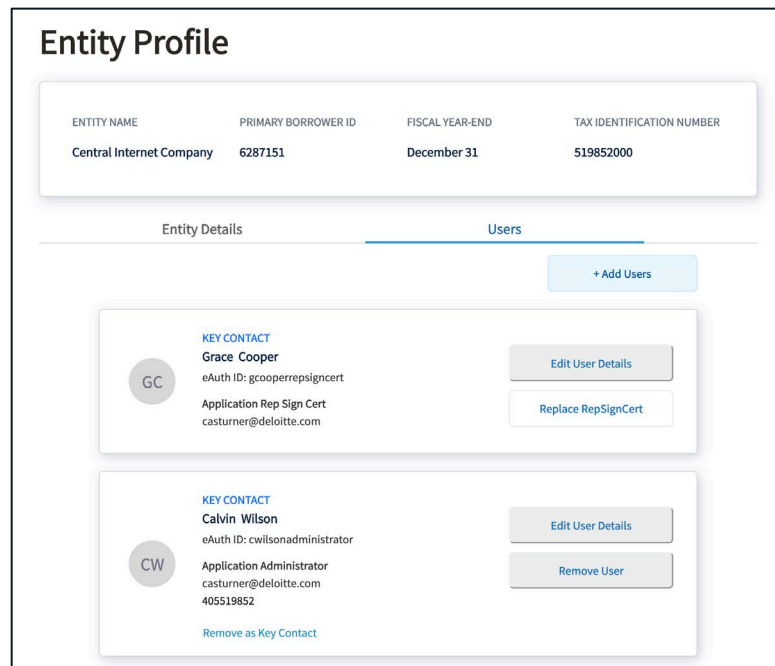
3.5 Update the Representative Signature Certifier

An applicant account must have one designated Rep Sign Cert at all times. If an update is made to the Rep Sign Cert in the CC Portal, this update will also be made automatically in the ReConnect Online Application System and the Reporting & Compliance Portal.

To replace the Rep Sign Cert, the Entity's current Rep Sign Cert or the Administrator must take the following actions:

1. Navigate to the Rep Sign Cert user under the Users tab on the Entity profile, as shown in Figure 13 below. Click on the 'Replace RepSignCert' button. This will prompt a secondary window, Update Representative Signature Certifier, to appear where the user can make changes to the user record.

Figure 12: Entity Profile - Replace RepSignCert



2. In the Update Representative Signature Certifier secondary window, as shown in Figure 14 below, the USDA eAuth ID and Phone Number of the proposed Rep Sign Cert must be provided. The system will validate the eAuth ID and auto-populate the user's First Name, Middle Name (if applicable), Last Name, and Email Address if a user account exists. If the eAuth ID is not recognized and/or the Phone Number and ID fields are left blank, an error will display, as shown in Figure 15 below.
3. If the replacement Rep Sign Cert should be assigned as a Key Contact for the Applicant, check the box beside ASSIGN AS A KEY CONTACT.

Figure 13: Update Rep Sign Cert

Update Representative Signature Certifier

* USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID
gcooperresigncert

FIRST NAME: Grace
MIDDLE NAME:
LAST NAME: Cooper

EMAIL ADDRESS: casturner@deloitte.com
* PHONE NUMBER:
Complete this field.

Upload New Resolution

An uploaded resolution, or its equivalent based on the type of Entity that is applying, is required to replace the designated RepSignCert. Sample resolutions for corporations and LLCs are available under the Forms and Resources tile on the USDA Inform portal. You may adjust the language of the sample resolutions to fit your Entity's legal structure.

Upload File
Accepted file types include .txt, .pdf, .jpg, .zip. File limit is 25MB.

ASSIGN AS A KEY CONTACT

Key contacts may be contacted by USDA for clarifications and/or requests related to the entity's reporting.

Cancel Submit

Figure 14: Update Rep Sign Cert - Error

User not found
Please try a new USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID.

* USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID
rjelafa,ffa

FIRST NAME:
MIDDLE NAME:
LAST NAME:
Complete this field.

EMAIL ADDRESS:
* PHONE NUMBER:
Complete this field.

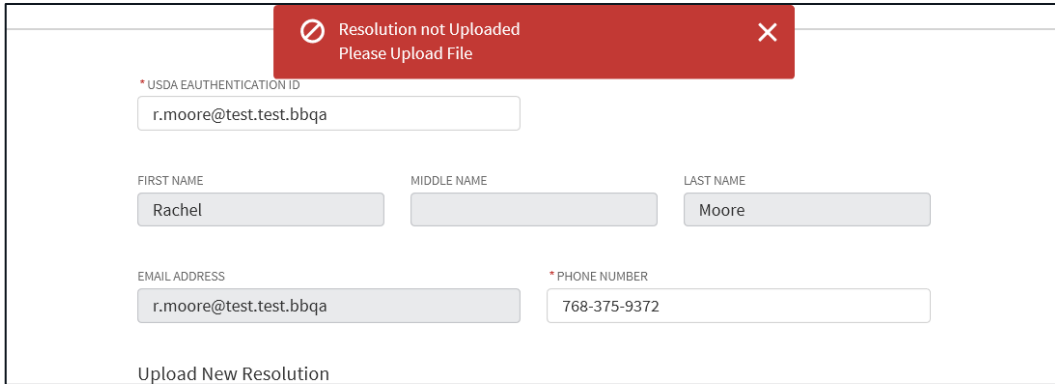
Upload New Resolution

An uploaded resolution, or its equivalent based on the type of Entity that is applying, is required to replace the designated RepSignCert. Sample resolutions for corporations and

4. Upload a new board resolution. All information entered in the system must match the information in the signed board resolution. The acceptable file types for the board resolution are .txt, pdf, jpg, and zip. The file size cannot exceed 25 MB.
5. Click the “Submit” button. If the user tries to submit the request without uploading the new board resolution, an error will display, as seen in Figure 16 below. Once the Update

Representative Signature Certifier request has been submitted, the user will get a confirmation message “Success Contact Updated.”

Figure 15: Update Rep Sign Cert – Resolution Error



The screenshot shows a web form with a red error message at the top: "Resolution not Uploaded Please Upload File". Below the error message, the form contains the following fields:

- * USDA EAUTHENTICATION ID: r.moore@test.test.bbqa
- FIRST NAME: Rachel
- MIDDLE NAME: (empty)
- LAST NAME: Moore
- EMAIL ADDRESS: r.moore@test.test.bbqa
- * PHONE NUMBER: 768-375-9372

At the bottom of the form, there is a button labeled "Upload New Resolution".

The existing Rep Sign Cert under the Users tab on the entity profile page will now display a ‘Pending Removal’ status, and the new Rep Sign Cert will have a ‘Pending Approval’ status. These statuses will remain until the change request is approved by USDA.

4. Dashboard & Navigation

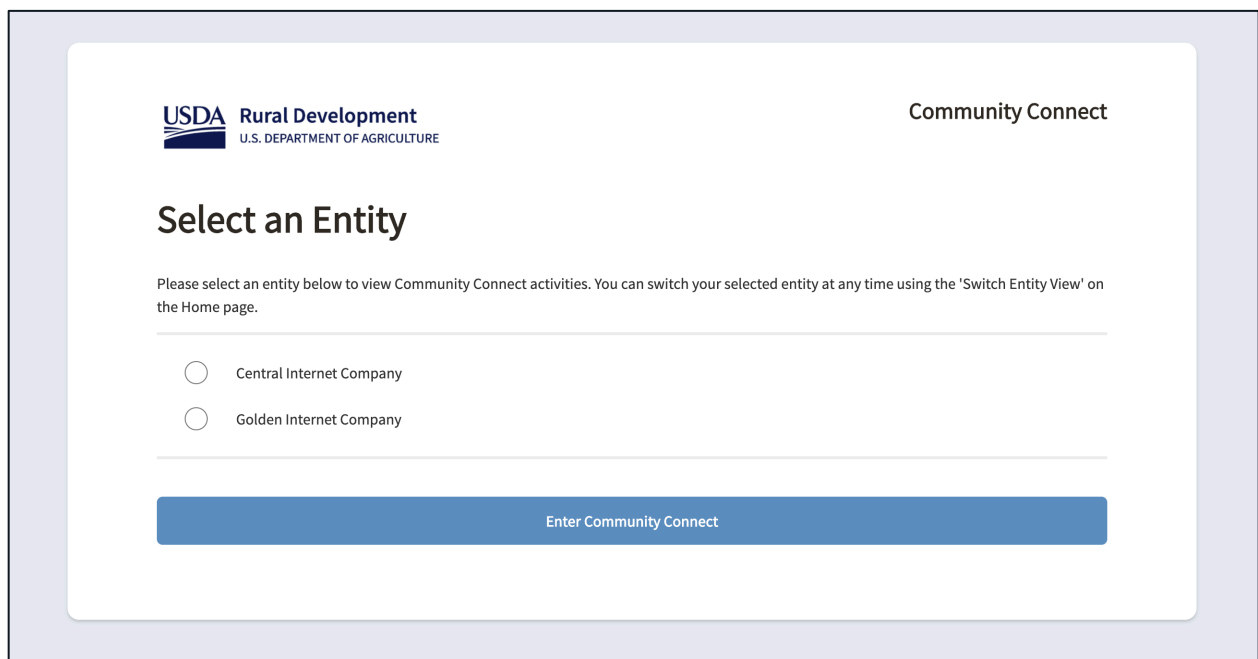
4.1 Dashboard Home

Upon logging into the CC Portal, users will see the CC home page for the entity they are representing. On the CC home page, new Community Connect Grant applications can be started, in progress applications can be accessed, and submitted applications can be viewed. At the top of the home page, if the user is assigned to more than one applicant, then there is the capability to switch between entity accounts.

Switch Entities in Community Connect

For users with access to multiple entity accounts, at login they will be prompted to select the account they want to work on, as seen in Figure 16 below.

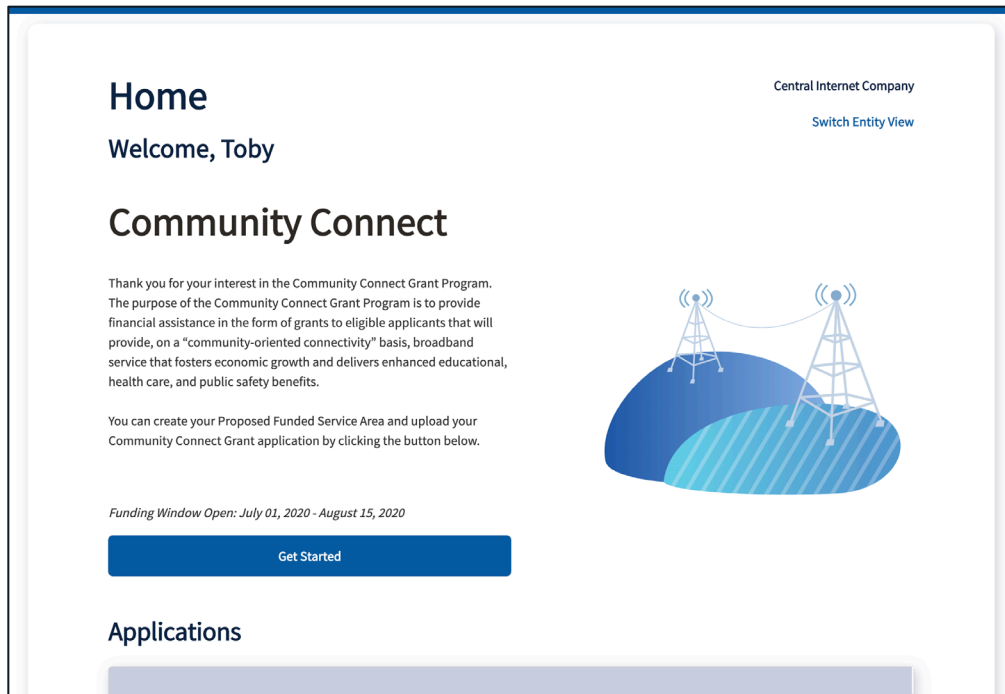
Figure 16: Select Entity - Login



The screenshot shows a web interface for selecting an entity. At the top left is the USDA Rural Development logo (U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE). At the top right is the text 'Community Connect'. The main heading is 'Select an Entity'. Below this is a paragraph: 'Please select an entity below to view Community Connect activities. You can switch your selected entity at any time using the 'Switch Entity View' on the Home page.' There are two radio button options: 'Central Internet Company' and 'Golden Internet Company'. At the bottom is a blue button labeled 'Enter Community Connect'.

The user will then be directed to the CC home page for the specified entity, as shown in Figure 18 below. The name of the entity that they are logged in under can be seen in the top right corner of the home page.

Figure 17: Community Connect Home Dashboard



Underneath the Entity’s name, users that are associated with multiple account can switch to another entity at any time by selecting “Switch Entity View.” After click on “Switch Entity View,” users will be able to view the names of the applicants they are associated with, similar to the list that appeared at login. Users will be directed to the home page of the newly selected Entity. The name of the new Entity that they have logged in under is now displayed in the top right corner of the home page.

Previously Uploaded Applications

On the home page, the user can view existing grant application(s) and their submission status in the application table, shown in Figure 19 below.


Figure 18: CC Applications Table

Community Connect

Thank you for your Interest in the Community Connect Grant Program. The purpose of the Community Connect Grant Program is to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible applicants that will provide, on a "community-oriented connectivity" basis, broadband service that fosters economic growth and delivers enhanced educational, health care, and public safety benefits.

You can create your Proposed Funded Service Area and upload your Community Connect Grant application by clicking the button below.

Funding Window Open: July 01, 2020 - August 15, 2020



Get Started

Applications

APPLICATION NO.	FUNDING WINDOW	START DATE	SUBMITTED
102000055	Jul 1, 2020 - Aug 15, 2020	08/05/2020, 08:02 AM	
102000054	Jul 1, 2020 - Aug 15, 2020	08/05/2020, 07:38 AM	08/05/2020, 07:52 AM
102000053	Jul 1, 2020 - Aug 15, 2020	08/05/2020, 07:16 AM	08/05/2020, 07:21 AM
102000052	Jul 1, 2020 - Aug 15, 2020	08/05/2020, 06:42 AM	08/05/2020, 07:03 AM

The user can view the existing application(s) by selecting the Application Number in the leftmost column. If the application has been submitted, the submitted date appears in the ‘Submitted’ column and the application is no longer editable. If the application is in progress, all users with edit permissions can edit the application. The Rep Sign Cert may submit applications as long as the funding window is active.

Resources

Below the applications table, the users are presented with a list of other resources, including a link to the “Contact Us” form, which is described in **Section 6 Contact USDA**.

Table 2: CC Portal Resources

Program Information	This links back to the USDA Community Connect informational website, where the user can view documents and resources to help them with their applications.
Events	This links to the USDA Community Connect website where the user can sign up for events related to the grant program.

Stay Up to Date	This links to the site where a user can sign up to receive notifications regarding PNF/PNRs and other Community Connect information.
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4.2 Email Notifications

To assist the user in their application, email notifications will be sent to the user’s specified email for the following circumstances, as seen in Table 4 below:

Table 3: Email Notifications

Scenario	User
Authorized Representative Request has been approved	External User
Authorized Representative Request has been rejected	External User
Grant Application Successful Submission	Rep Sign Cert

These emails will include the entity name, grant application number, and any actions the user needs to take. Emails will also include URLs that return to the CC Portal.

5. Community Connect Grant Application

5.1 Proposed Funded Service Area Map

The Proposed Funded Service Area (PFSA) map is a tool used to identify the applicant’s service area. Once drawn or uploaded to the map, the PFSA polygon represents the area where the applicant proposes to deploy broadband using CC grant funds. The map also provides insight into restricted areas and other pending/funded project areas. Users may submit *one polygon per application*.

Users cannot make changes to the PFSA if one or more of the following conditions are true:

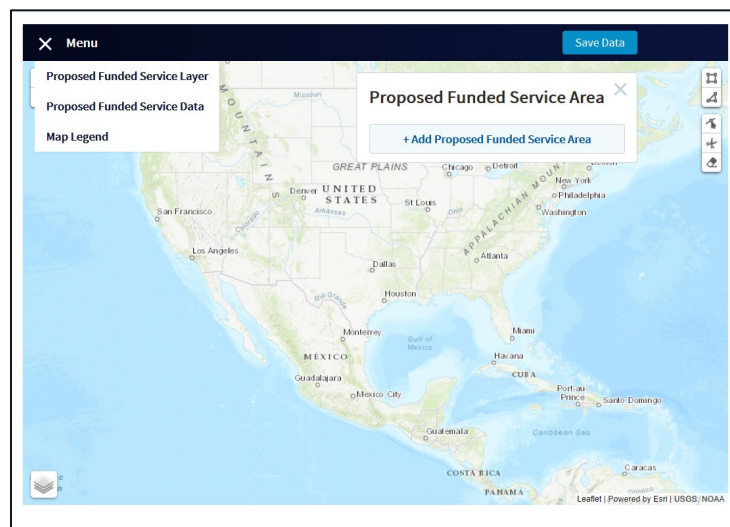
- The Community Connect application has a “*Submitted*” status.
- The application window has closed.
- The User viewing the map has the Application *Viewer* security role.

Upload Polygon

If uploading a polygon of the PFSA from the user’s computer, do the following:

1. In the drop-down menu on the map in the top left corner, select “Proposed Funded Service Area Layer.” Then click on “+ Add Proposed Funded Service Area” as displayed in Figure 20 below.

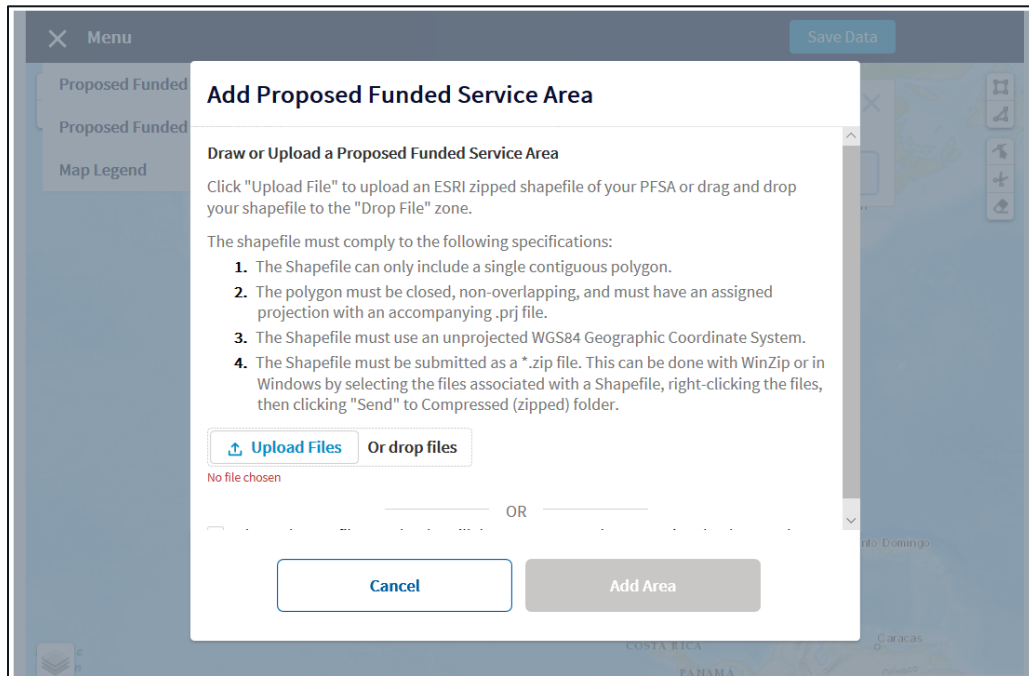
Figure 19: PFSA Map - Panel



2. Upon selection, an ‘Add Proposed Funded Service Area’ secondary window will appear. In the secondary window, click on “Upload Files” and navigate to the browser directory

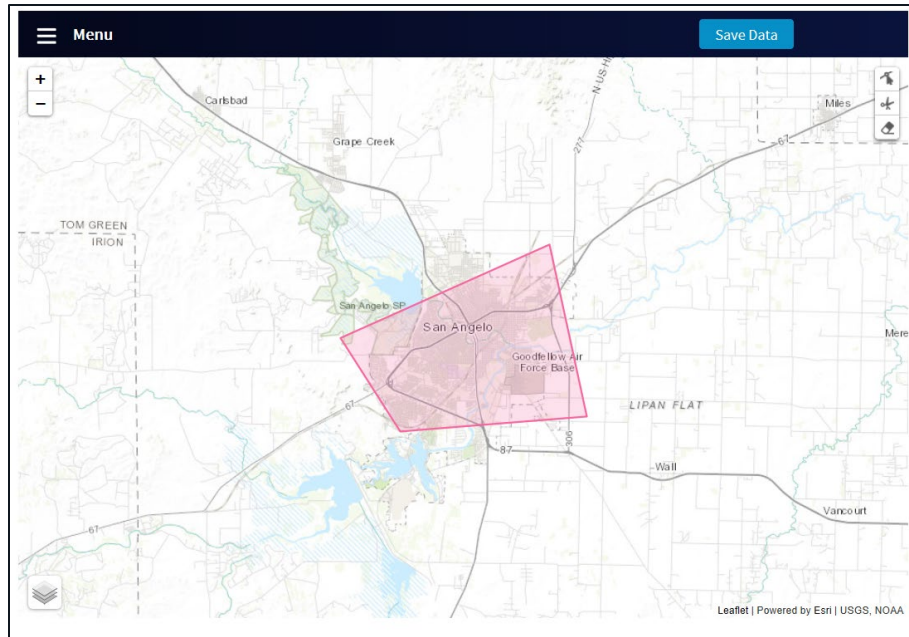
to select the polygon zip file. Users may also drag the file to where the box that says, “Or drop files,” as seen in Figure 21 below.

Figure 20: Add Proposed Funded Service Area



3. Because the user is uploading a polygon, the checkbox in the secondary window for drawing the polygon should not be selected. The “Add Area” button in the secondary window will be enabled after a polygon has been uploaded or the box to draw a polygon is selected.
4. When a polygon is uploaded successfully, the boundaries of the PFSA will display on the map in pink, as shown in Figure 22 below.

Figure 21: Uploaded PFSA



Draw Polygon

To draw a polygon, complete step 1 in the section above. Then select the check box next to “I do not have a file to upload. I will draw my area on the map using a draw tool” and click on the “Add Area” button. The user can start drawing a polygon with the tools in the tool bar on the right side of the map. The following tools are included in the tool bar:



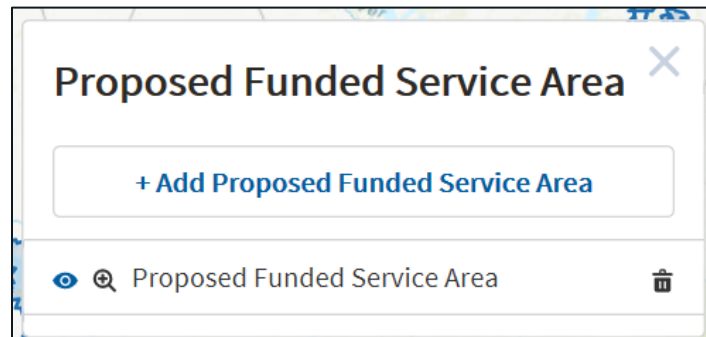
- **Draw Rectangle** – draws a polygon that is in the shape of a rectangle. After selecting this tool, the user must click on the map to place the first vertex. Drag the shape across the map to identify the PFSA and click again to complete the rectangle. A success message will display notifying the user that the polygon has been successfully added.
- **Draw Polygon** – draw a polygon with a nonstandard shape. After selecting this tool, click on the map to place the first vertex. Every additional click will add a new vertex to the map and connect it to the previous vertex. To complete the polygon, click on the original point to add the final line. A success message will display notifying the user that the polygon has been successfully added.
- **Edit Layers** – edits the polygon by moving the vertices to different points on the map. After selecting this tool, click on an existing vertex of the polygon and drag it to its new location. To complete the edit, click ‘Finish’ next to the Edit Layers icon.

- **Remove Layers** – deletes a polygon that has been plotted on the map. After selecting this tool, click on the polygon to delete it. A success message will display notifying that the polygon has been successfully removed.

View Polygon

After a PFSA has been uploaded or drawn, the polygon will appear on the map in the PFSA layer. The visibility of the layer can be turned off and on from the ‘Proposed Funded Service Area’ panel. To access the panel, the User must select “Proposed Funded Service Layer” from the menu drop-down. From the panel, the PFSA layer visibility can be turned on and off by selecting the eye icon, as seen in Figure 23 below. Selecting the magnifying glass zooms in on the PFSA on the map.

Figure 22: Proposed Funded Service Area Panel



Remove Polygon

To remove a PFSA layer, the user can either select the trash can icon on the panel or use the remove layer tool from the tool bar.

Save Map Data

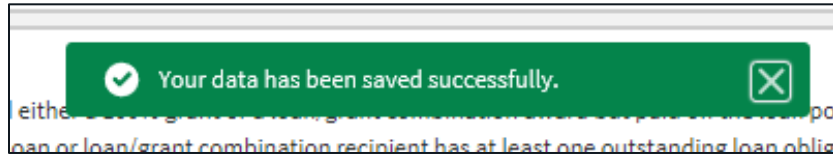
When a polygon is successfully uploaded or drawn on the map, map data can be saved to the application. When the map data is saved to an application, the user can close the application to return to later. When the application is opened again, the polygon will load directly on the map. To save map data, the user must select the ‘Save Data’ button at the top right of the map, as shown in Figure 24 below.

Figure 23: Save Data on Map



Once the map data is successfully saved to an application, a green success message will display at the top of the screen, as seen in Figure 25 below.

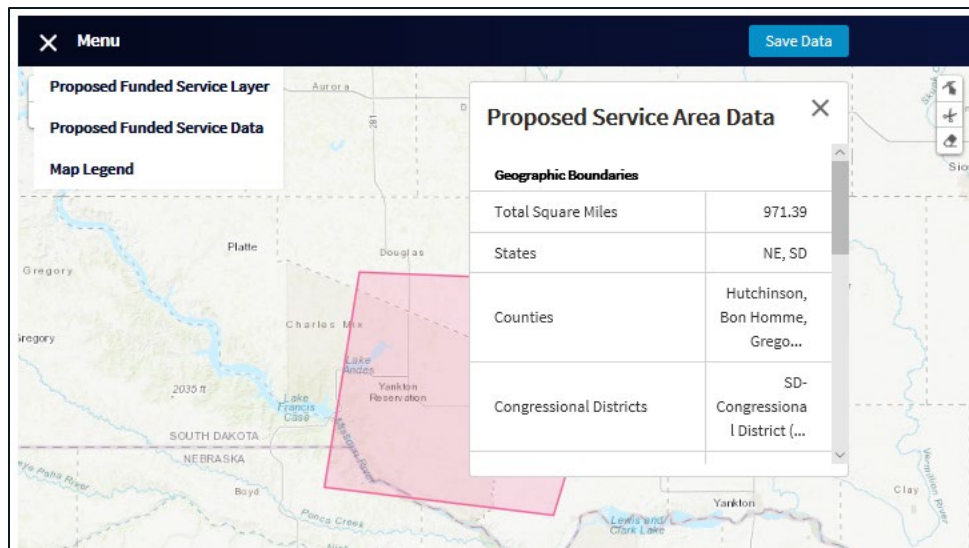
Figure 24: Saved Data Success Toast



View PFSA Data

To view PFSA data, select 'Proposed Funded Service Data' from the drop-down menu and the panel will display the map. The panel displays the PFSA's geographic data and census information, as seen in Figure 26 below. When the user hovers over a certain data metric the field will expand to increase the visibility.

Figure 25: Proposed Service Area Data



Map Sources

The mapping tool uses the following sources to collect data:

- RUS Project Service Areas, Pending Application Areas, Non-Rural Areas, Tribal Lands – USDA
- Geographic Boundaries - United States Census Bureau

- People & Housing, Race & Ethnicity – Esri Geoenrichment Service
 - <https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/location-services/services/geoenrichment>
- Data Apportionment
 - <https://developers.arcgis.com/rest/geoenrichment/api-reference/data-apportionment.htm#:~:text=site%20P1%3A-,How%20data%20apportionment%20works,variables%20to%20input%20polygon%20features.>

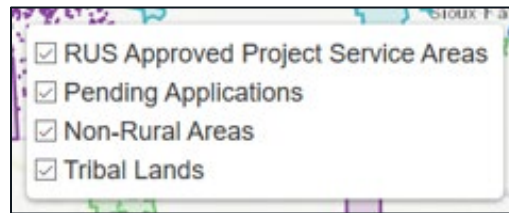
View Eligibility Layers

On the PFSA map, the user can view additional data layers. Data layers available on the map include:

- **Pending applications** – PFSAAs associated with applications that have been submitted but not accepted.
- **RUS approved project service areas** – Service areas associated with awardees that are or will receive RUS funding for broadband projects.
- **Non-rural** – Areas that are urban or urbanized.
- **Tribal land** – Areas that are protected reservations.

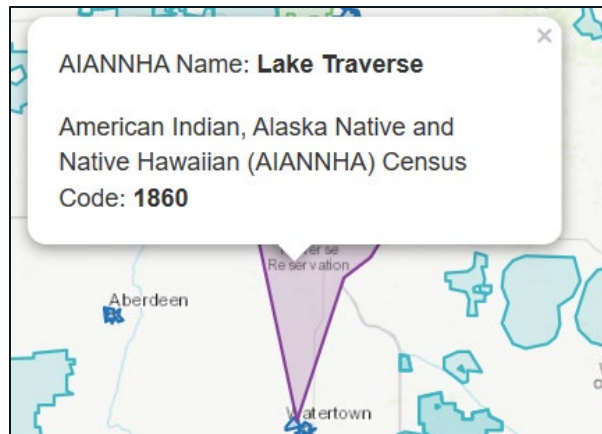
To display these layers on the map, hover the mouse over the layer icon in the bottom left of the map and select the check boxes next to the desired layers, as shown in Figure 27 below.

Figure 26: Eligibility Layers



Each eligibility layer is assigned a color. A map legend is available associating the colors with the applicable eligibility layer. To display the map legend, the user must select ‘Map Legend’ from the menu dropdown in the top left corner of the map, as seen in Figure 28 below. The legend includes all eligibility layers along with PFSA layer that the user may have added.

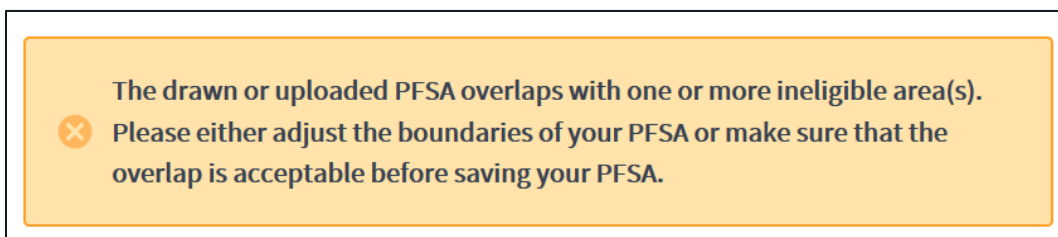
Figure 29: Tribal Layer



Error Guidance

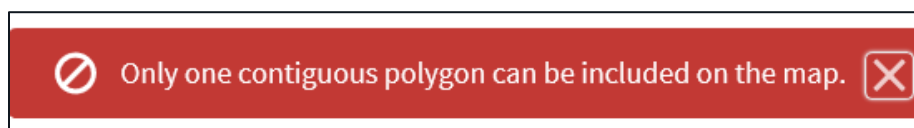
Warnings and error messages are included throughout the mapping process to inform the user of potential issues. Yellow warning messages are displayed at the top of the screen. For example, if the PFSA polygon *intersects* the area of an existing RUS awardee (as marked in *non-rural areas, pending application layers* and *protected layers*), the message, “The drawn or uploaded PFSA overlaps with one or more ineligible area(s). Please either adjust the boundaries of your PFSA or make sure that the overlap is acceptable before saving your PFSA,” will appear, as shown in Figure 31. This warning will not prevent the application from being submitted. However, the user should adjust the boundaries of the PFSA so there is no longer an intersection.

Figure 30: Map Warning Message



If users try to add more than one polygon to the map, another error will appear. See Figure 32.

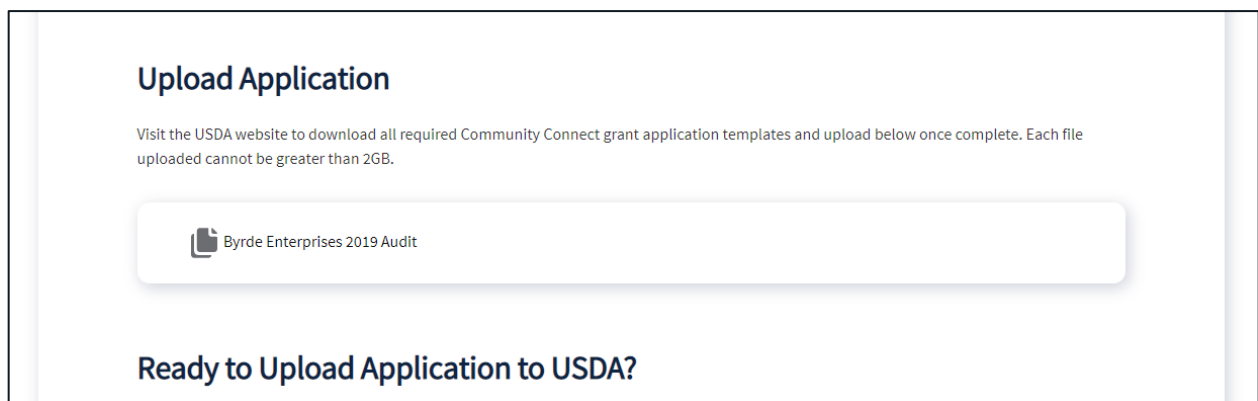
Figure 31: Map Error Message



5.2 Upload Application Documents

Below the mapping tool, there is a section where the user can upload application document(s). Only .doc, .pdf, and .zip files can be uploaded. Once complete, select the 'Done' button in the secondary window. Successfully uploaded files will appear on the page, as shown in Figure 33 below. Users can download these files by clicking on the file name. The files on an 'In Progress' application can be deleted by users with security roles that have permission to edit the application.

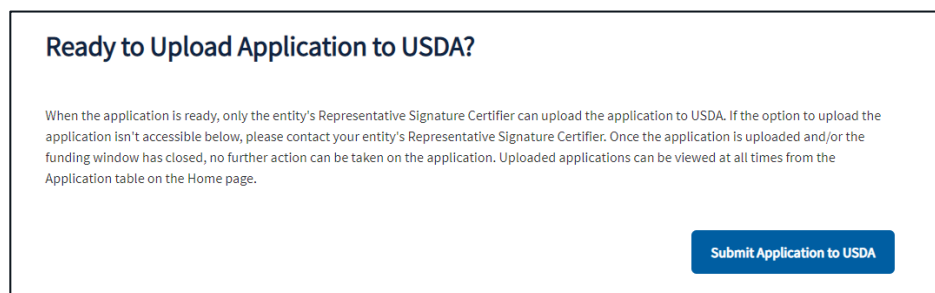
Figure 32: Uploaded Application Document



5.3 Application Submission

Once the application is ready for submission, the 'Submit Application to USDA' button is enabled for the Rep Sign Cert, as shown in Figure 34 below.

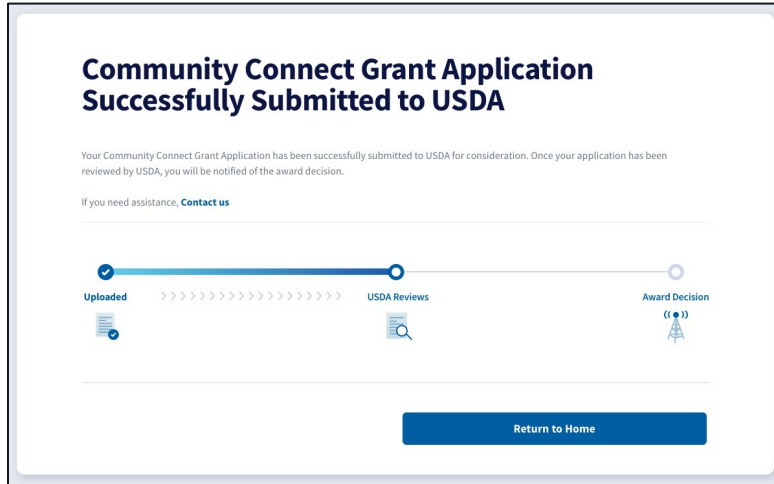
Figure 33: Ready to Upload Application Section



Once the Rep Sign Cert selects the 'Submit Application to USDA' button, the user must confirm that the applicant is ready to submit the application. If 'No' is selected, then the Rep Sign Cert is

returned to the application. If 'Yes' is selected, the application map and files are submitted to USDA, and the user is directed to a success page as shown in Figure 35 below.

Figure 34: CC Success Page

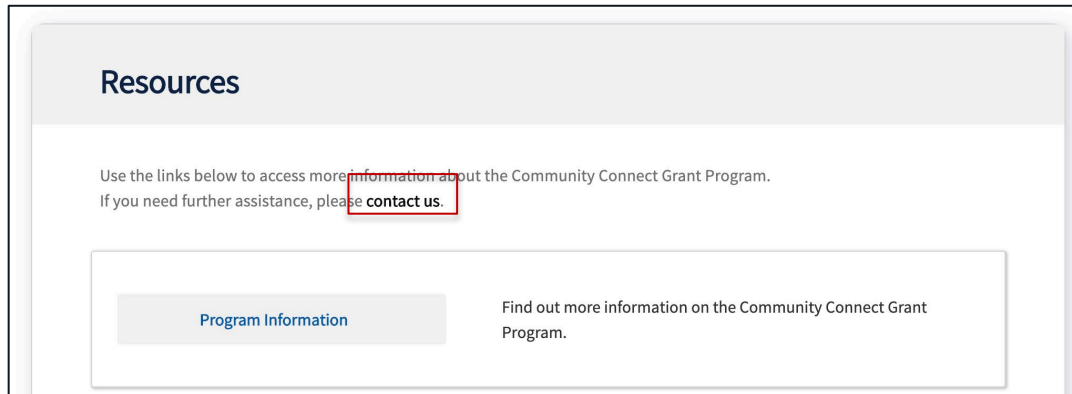


From the success page, the user can return to the CC home page by selecting the 'Return to Home' button, where they can view the applications they have submitted, or start a new application, as outlined in **Section 4.1 Dashboard Home**. After the CC application window has closed, USDA will begin the review process. Applicants will be notified by email of the status of their applications at a later date.

6. Contact USDA

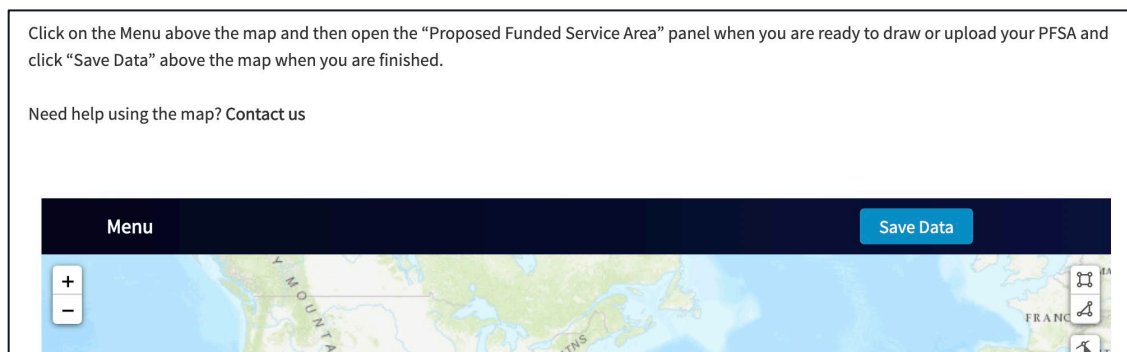
If at any time while in the CC Portal, a question arises and help from USDA is needed, a 'Contact Us' link can be found in the 'Resources' section on the CC home page, as seen in Figure 36 below.

Figure 35: Resources Contact USDA



The grant application has a 'Contact Us' link embedded. The link can be found above the Proposed Funded Service Area Map, as seen in Figure 37 below.

Figure 36: Contact Us - Grant Application



All 'Contact Us' links redirect to the external USDA Contact Form found at <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/contact-us>, as seen in Figure 38 below. The form includes a selection of a subject for the question from a picklist of options, a text box area to provide the question to USDA, a contact name and email address for USDA to reply to the question.

Figure 37: Contact Us USDA Form

Contact Us

USDA › TOPICS › BROADBAND › RECONNECT LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAM › CONTACT US

We'd like to hear from you.

Submit your ReConnect comments and suggestions to help us identify how we can meet your broadband service needs.

To contact us about other USDA programs, visit the [Contact Us page](#).

Subject:

Question:

Contact Name:

Email Address:

Navigation Menu:

- Animals
- Biotechnology
- Broadband**
 - ReConnect Loan and Grant Program
 - Program Overview
 - Eligible Service Area
 - Mapping Tool
 - Funding Categories
 - Evaluation Criteria
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - Forms and Resources
 - Keys to Success
 - Announcements
 - Events
 - Application Webinar Materials
 - Awardee Webinar Materials
 - Contact Us**
- Climate Solutions
- Conservation

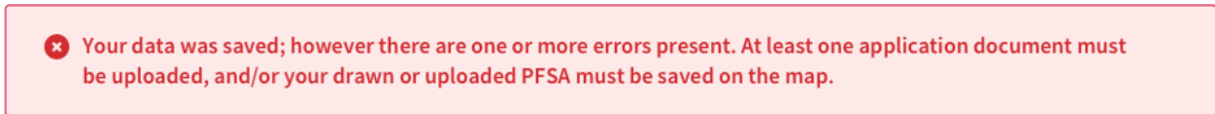
APPENDIX A - ERRORS

The purpose of this section is to explain the different types of errors the user may encounter as they work within the CC Portal. Errors and warnings appear in a few different forms; banner notifications, toast notifications, and in-line notifications.

Banner Notifications

Banner notifications are static messages describing an error associated with the page. Banner notifications will appear at the top of the page beneath the page title and description. A visual example of a banner notification can be seen in Figure 39 below.

Figure 38: Error Banner Notification



All error banner notifications in the CC Portal are explained in Table 5 below.

Table 4: Error Banner Notifications

Error	What it Means	Where it Appears
<p>“Entity cannot be found. Please check the accuracy of the TIN and DUNS numbers. If you have been awarded, try again or contact us for further help.”</p>	<p>The TINS and DUNS number entered to start an Authorized Representative Request does not match an entity within the database.</p>	<p>On the Authorized Representative Request page</p>
<p>“Your Authorized Representative Request could not be submitted as there are one or more critical errors present. To clear the errors,</p>	<p>There is at least one missing required field or upload. To submit the Authorized Representative Request, all required fields and uploads must be provided. Once</p>	<p>On the Authorized Representative Request page</p>

<p>refer to the flagged items before proceeding.”</p>	<p>provided, the user must try submitting again.</p>	
<p>“Your data was saved; however there are one or more errors present. At least one application document must be uploaded, and/or your drawn or uploaded PFSA must be saved on the map.”</p>	<p>To submit the application, users must upload at least one Application Document, and have saved the Proposed Funded Service Area (PFSA) on the map using the “Save Data” button at the top of the map.</p>	<p>At the top of the Community Connect Grant Application page.</p>
<p>“The drawn or uploaded PFSA overlaps with one or more ineligible area(s). Please either adjust the boundaries of your PFSA or make sure that the overlap is acceptable before saving your PFSA.”</p>	<p>The polygon uploaded or drawn intersects with an existing USDA grantee’s layer. The user must update the boundaries of the polygon to ensure it isn’t intersecting. If, however, the intersection is intentional or the entity believes it does not intersect, the polygon may be submitted as is. USDA may contact users for questions.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>
<p>“There was a problem communicating with one or more of our 3rd party services. Please try again later or contact an administrator.”</p>	<p>One or more of the third-party tools which are used for the map is currently experiencing issues. Please try again in a different session; and if the error persists, the user must contact USDA to raise the issue.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>

In-Line Notifications

In-Line notifications are messages corresponding to the upload zone for file upload. A visual example of an in-line notification can be seen in Figure 40 below.

Figure 39: In-Line Notification



All in-line notifications in the Community Connect portal are explained in Table 6 below.

Table 5: In-Line Notifications

Error (Red)	What it Means	Where it Appears
“Must be provided” or “Document is required”	A value is missing or an upload has not been provided. The user must provide the required value or upload a file to resolve the error.	This error appears for all required line items, fields, and uploads which have not yet been provided.
“A Representative Signature Certifier must be provided to submit an Authorized Representative Request”	To submit an Authorized Representative Request, a Representative Signature Certifier must be elected for the entity.	On the Authorized Representative Request page
“Invalid USDA eAuthentication ID”	The USDA eAuthentication ID does not match what is in USDA’s systems. The user must ensure the number is 6 characters, and if users continue to have trouble, they must contact USDA for assistance.	On the Authorized Representative Request page, and Entity Profile

<p>“Please use the following format: 000-000-0000”</p>	<p>The telephone number entered consists of less or more than 10 digits. The user must correct the entry to be a 10-digit number.</p>	<p>On the Authorized Representative Request page, and Entity Profile</p>
<p>“File type not supported”</p>	<p>The format of the file was not accepted. The user must check the allowable file types next to the upload zone.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Upload Application Documents” and “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” sections.</p>
<p>“File size exceeds limit”</p>	<p>The file which was attempted to be uploaded was larger than 25MB. The file must be broken up into smaller files to ensure each is less than 25MB when uploaded.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Upload Application Documents” and “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” sections.</p>

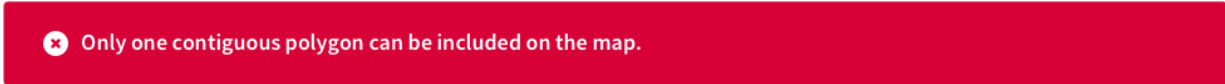
Toast Messages

Toast notifications are temporary messages which appear at the top of the screen or on top of the map. These messages describe success or failure of an action performed. A visual example of a green success toast message can be seen in Figure 41 below. A visual example of a red error toast message can be seen in Figure 42 below.

Figure 40: Green Success Toast



Figure 41: Red Error Toast



All toast messages in the Community Connect portal are explained in Table 7 below.

Table 6: Toast Messages

Informative (Various)	What it Means	Where it Appears	Color
<p>“Only one contiguous polygon can be included on the map.”</p>	<p>More than one polygon has been added to the map. For the application, only one polygon can be saved and submitted.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Red</p>
<p>“The file failed to upload. Please try again or contact us for further help.”</p>	<p>The shapefile upload failed, likely due to a connection issue. The user must try again, and if the error persists in a different session, USDA should be contacted for assistance. As an option, the user should try drawing the polygon on the map using the drawing tools.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Red</p>
<p>“The polygon was unable to be added. Please try again or contact us for further help.”</p>	<p>The drawn polygon was unable to be saved on the map, likely due to a connection issue. The user must try again, and If the error</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Red</p>

	<p>persists in a different session, USDA must be contacted for assistance. As an option, the user should try uploading a shapefile on the map.</p>		
<p>“Your data could not be deleted. Please try again.”</p>	<p>The data on the map could not be deleted, likely due to a connection issue. The user should try again, and if the error persists in a different session, USDA should be contacted for assistance.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Red</p>
<p>“Your data could not be saved. Please try again.”</p>	<p>The data on the map could not be saved, likely due to a connection issue. The user should try again, and if the error persists in a different session, USDA should be contacted for assistance.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Red</p>
<p>“The file has been successfully uploaded.”</p>	<p>The shapefile has been successfully added and rendered on the map.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Green</p>

<p>“The polygon has been successfully added.”</p>	<p>The drawn polygon was successfully added to the map.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>“Deleted successfully.”</p>	<p>The uploaded shapefile was successfully removed from the map</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>“Your data has been successfully saved.”</p>	<p>The data on the map has been successfully saved.</p>	<p>On the Community Connect Grant Application page, in the “Proposed Funded Service Area Map” section.</p>	<p>Green</p>

APPENDIX B - GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Account: Represents a Customer, which is any company that is completing an application in the Community Connect Portal

Banner Notifications: Static messages describing an error associated with the page

Contacts: Associated with individuals, who are linked to an Account

In-Line Notifications: Messages corresponding to the upload zone for file upload.

Key Contacts: A user that is designated to be a point of contact for USDA if any questions arise during the application life cycle.

Proposed Funded Service Area (PFSA) Map: A tool used to plot a visual area that is to be associated with the grant application for an entity to display the proposed service area to be funded by the Community Connect award.

Service Areas: Contains geospatial data in Community Connect. It contains all underlying census and region-specific geographic data

Status: The description of if a Customer Account is active and/or inactive, as well as if an Authorized Representative Request has been accepted and/or rejected

Tabs: Pages within the portal used to users navigate between multiple pages contained within the Account objects

USDA eAuthentication: The identity service provider and system that USDA agencies use to establish secure user accounts for individual customers and employees seeking access to USDA web applications and services.

Toast Notifications: Temporary messages which appear at the top of the screen or on top of the map that describe success or failure of an action performed.

User: An individual authorized by USDA to have access to the Community Connect Portal. New users will receive instructions on how to access the Portal and create a password.

Validation Messages: Contains warnings that have been triggered during the preparation of the CC Application