

**SYNOPSIS**  
**USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants**

Due Date: July 13, 2020

Total Amount Available: \$71.7 million (includes \$24.7 million not expended in 2019)

Minimum Request: \$50,000

Maximum Request: \$1,000,000

Purpose: to assist rural communities in acquiring distance learning and telemedical technologies so that local teachers, and medical service providers who serve rural residents can link to other teachers, medical professionals, and other needed expertise located at distances too far to access otherwise.

Eligible Grant Purposes:

1. Acquire by lease or purchase eligible equipment which may include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Computer hardware or software
  - b. Site licenses and maintenance contracts
  - c. Extended warranties
  - d. Audio and video equipment
  - e. Computer network components
  - f. Data terminal equipment
  - g. Interactive audio/video equipment
  - h. Inside wiring
  - i. Broadband facilities, if owned by the applicant (limited to 20% of grant)

Applicant must demonstrate that 50% or more of use of every line-item in the grant and match budget meets the DLT Grant definition of distance learning and/or telemedicine.

2. Acquiring instructional programming that is a capital asset (renewals of instructional programming is not considered a capital asset)
3. Providing technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment

Ineligible Grant Purposes:

1. Medical or educational equipment lacking telemedicine or distance learning functionality
2. EMR systems
3. Salaries, wages or employee benefits to medical or educational personnel
4. Salaries or administrative expenses of the application or the project
5. Equipment that will be owned by the local exchange carrier or other telecom provider
6. To duplicate in place facilities providing distance learning or telemedicine services
7. Costs of preparing application package
8. Projects whose sole objective is to provide links within a single facility or campus
9. For site development and the destruction or alteration of buildings
10. For the purchase of land, buildings or building construction
11. For the cost of recurring or operating expenses including broadband connection fees

12. For any purposes not specifically contained within CFR 1734.21 subparts a and b

Additional Eligibility Criteria

1. Minimum rurality score. Must receive a minimum of 20 points for all hub/end user and end-user sites included in project. (In general, populations of 20,000 or less that are not adjacent to urban areas >50,000).
2. Matching contribution must be at least 15% of the grant amount request and must be used for eligible grant purposes.

Required Grant Application Elements:

1. SF 424 with Site Worksheet
2. Executive Summary – See page 14 of App. Guide for guidance on required elements
3. Scoring Criteria Documentation – Complete Site Worksheet for
  - a. Rurality;
  - b. Economic Need;
  - c. Special Consideration (special consideration for providing STEM Learning and for Opioid Treatment Services). Instructions for completing Worksheet on page 15-19 of Application Guide. Additional 10 points
    - i. Must be described in Ex. Summary and Needs and Benefits section of application. ID certifications, credentials or other relevant specialized training that demonstrates ability to deliver STEM or Opioid treatment/SUD treatment.
    - ii. Special consideration if at least one end-user site is located in an opportunity zone.
  - d. Document within the grant narrative the following:
    - i. Educational/healthcare challenges and related economic needs facing community and proposed plan to address these challenges, how the grant will help and why applicant cannot complete project w/o support; why challenges cannot be addressed without high tech. Consider the following:
      1. Improved ed opps for specific number of children
      2. Travel time and money saved by telemedicine
      3. # of docs retained in rural areas
      4. # of students electing to attend higher ed
      5. Lives saved due to prompt diagnosis and treatment
      6. New ed courses offered including college level
      7. Increased use of ed facilities, such as night classes
      8. # of patient receiving telemed diagnoses
      9. Provision of training, info resources, library assets, adult ed, lifetime learning, use of technology, jobs, connection to the world
    - ii. May also consider:
      1. Extent that beneficiaries have expressed interest in services to be offered

2. Extent of project planning, development and support by local residents
    3. Extent to which application addresses problems of population out-migration and how project seeks to slow this
  - iii. Clearly describe economic, geographic, educational and/or healthcare challenges using verifiable data and statistics to quantify challenges
  - iv. Document support for the project by professionals in education/healthcare
  - v. Substantiate the underserved educational or health care nature of proposed project's service area and justify and document that educational/medical services will provide direct benefit
  - vi. Document the specific benefits of the project and quantify them in terms of expected outcomes, e.g.,
    1. Four year foreign language instruction availability up from 300 to 1,200 students
    2. Organic chemistry offered for first time to entire district
    3. Time and money saved to community from telemedicine
    4. 400 patients receiving at-home monitoring
  - vii. Document ancillary benefits that would accrue such as library resources, adult education, job creation, reduced out-migration, etc.
  - viii. If you have received a previous DLT award, you will need to discuss that as well.
4. Matching Requirements – Minimum 15% of eligible costs.
  - a. Must provide satisfactory evidence that agreements are in place to ensure project completion
  - b. Using Matching Worksheet
  - c. Must be used for eligible matching purposes
  - d. None of the use is to benefit sites not shown in the scoring
  - e. >50% of the use is for purposes of distance learning of telemedicine
  - f. Federal Funds cannot be used for match purposes. If matching funds are from another grantor, must include letter from the grantor.
  - g. Cash or in-kind match is acceptable
5. Scope of Work
  - a. Specific activities to be performed under project
  - b. Who will carry out activities
  - c. Timeframes for accomplishing project objectives and activities
  - d. Budget
    - i. All capital expenditures reflecting line item costs for approved purposes
    - ii. Each cost as line-item; no bundling of line items such that the line item may not be evaluated independently
    - iii. Provide detail including brand and model number
    - iv. Budget total should round to nearest whole dollar
6. Financial Information and Sustainability – Narrative description demonstrating project feasibility including:

- a. Description of project revenues and expenses in project budget
  - b. Evidence of cost-sharing arrangements between hub and end-user sites (if applicable)
  - c. Identification of any other items that may affect feasibility or sustainability
7. Statement of Experience – Narrative description of the organization’s capability and experience operating an educational or health care endeavor and any project similar to proposed project
8. Telecommunications System Plan – Consists of the following:
  - a. Capabilities of the telecom terminal equipment including a description of the specific equipment which will be used to deliver the proposed service. Must document discussions with technical sources including consultants, engineers, product vendors or internal technical experts and provide evidence that alternative technologies were considered.
  - b. Complete listing of the proposed telecom terminal equipment, transmission facilities, data terminal equipment, interactive video equipment, computer equipment, hardware and software systems, etc., etc.
  - c. Description of consultations with appropriate telecom carriers and anticipated role of such providers in proposed telecom system
  - d. Successful DLT application includes a well planned Plan, starting with a diagram or map of proposed system overlaid with a geographic map of service area and other relevant diagrams, technical description and a narrative accounting of each within the budget. Attach map or drawing with spatial representation of service area. Each site, hub and end-user, must be represented on the map.
  - e. TSP should show sites that will participate in the project and where the equipment will be located, how it is interconnected and how the benefits flow from the hub to the end-user sites
  - f. System Plan Narrative - Provide a narrative describing the overall DLT network and the proposed equipment’s use in the network. Detail each item in the Scope of Work budget by line number - what it is, how it will be used in the network and how does it qualify as a DLT use. Provide justification of the equipment based on discussions with technical experts. Discuss any possible duplication of other DLT efforts and how this project avoids such duplication. Discuss the applicant’s involvement in any previous USDA DLT grants or current USDA DLT grant application. (See balance of explanation on page 31)
9. Compliance with Federal Statutes – Six required certifications to be placed in Appendix A and number I-1 through I-6.
  - a. Assurance Agreement
  - b. Certificate regarding Flood Hazard Area Precautions
  - c. Certification regarding Federal Collection Policies for Commercial Debt
  - d. Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970
  - e. Certificate Regarding Architectural Barriers
  - f. Non-Duplication of Services Certificate
10. Evidence of Legal Authority and Existence
  - a. Legal Eligibility

- b. Legal Existence
  - c. SAM.gov registration
  - d. Entity Name, DUNS Number
11. Environmental Impact and Historic Preservation
- a. The application shall contain a separate section entitled “Environmental Impact of the Project.” The applicant may use the “Environmental Questionnaire,” in Appendix A, to assist in complying with the requirements of this section.
  - b. For projects requesting funding of broadband facilities, an Environmental Questionnaire must be completed to provide information on environmental compliance. Applicants must complete and submit an Environmental Questionnaire
12. Consultation with USDA State Director and State Strategic Plan Conformity
- a. applicant must provide evidence that the organization has consulted with the USDA State Director for Rural Development about the availability of other sources of funding available at the State or local level. Include this evidence as part of the application.
  - b. applicants should provide an executive summary of the project as well as the proposed grant and match amounts to the State Director to enable them to make an informed determination.
13. Supplemental Information - applicant can use this section to provide any additional information it considers relevant to the project and likely to be helpful in determining the extent to which the project will further the purposes of the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program