

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE DISTANCE LEARNING & TELEMEDICINE (RUS DLT) GRANT PROGRAM

DUE - July 13, 2020

\$50K-\$1MM +15% cas/in-kind match

This overview document provides you the keys to creating a strong proposal and becoming grant ready for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning & Telemedicine (RUS DLT) application.

Precision NPO Solutions will work with you every step of the way to provide technology and grant writing consulting services, helping you to win funding from this competitive grant. Our team's application success rate is over 75%, and we have helped hundreds of schools participate in this grant program!

RUS GRANT OVERVIEW

The RUS DLT Grant provides funding for distance learning and telemedicine equipment—primarily to public and private schools, healthcare organizations, and non-profit organizations. More information can be found at www.precisionnpo.com/RUS-DLT

- + USDA released a second application window to enable applicant affected by COVID-19 the opportunity to complete their application
- + While a total of 220 awards are estimated this year between **both applications** windows, each application period will be evaluated separately.
- + The CARES Act supplied an additional \$25MM for total available funds, which will also include any remaining funds from Round one.

WHAT EQUIPMENT IS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

The RUS Grant funds the acquisition of eligible capital assets—equipment that is used primarily for distance learning or telemedicine purposes, including but not limited to:

- + Telemed carts and kiosk for remote visits
- + Zoom and webex licensing
- + Network Infrastructure: switches, wireless APs, network security appliances
- + Network data cabling
- + AR/VR Equipment
- + Broadband fiber line install
- + Technical training for equipment and software
- + Interactive video equipment: cameras, interactive white boards, etc.
- + Acquiring real-time live learning software
- + Any other provisions that further DLT services

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Almost any type of organization is eligible once registrations with Duns, SAM, and Grants.gov are complete. While total program budget has grown, making some criteria more flexible --- **rurality** and **poverty** guidelines are scored strictly and objectively. **Content providers and hub sites may be urban, but the beneficiaries of the grant funds must be able to demonstrate:**

- + Rurality score **MUST** be >20 to qualify town-populations average <20K
- + High economic need for projects
- + Innovation with DKT equipment for unique applications Quality Opportunity Zone Designated census tract

RUS DLT OBJECTIVE SCORING CRITERIA

Rurality - 2010 factfinder Census	SAIPE	Priority for STEM, OPIOID, or Quality Opp Zone
up to 5,000 - 40 pts	30% > Saipe - 30 pts	Yes- 10 pts
5,000 - 10,000 - 30 pts	20% > Saipe <30% - 20 pts	No- 0 pts
10,000 - 20,000 - 20 pts	10% > Saipe <20% - 10 pts	
>20,000 - 0 pts	Saipe <10% - 0 pts	

The RUS DLT program focuses on projects that CONNECT residents in highly rural areas to LIVE INTERACTIVE technology.

“Rurality” scores assist in the calculation of an applicant’s rural need dictated by end-user location population. Applicant’s rurality is determined by 2010 census data, which creates a score for each site. Hub-end user and end-user site scores are both provided -- **BUT ONLY END-USER** scores are averaged to determine total Score.

“Economic Need” calculated by Small Area Income Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) uses the County wide poverty data as measurement for economic need of the applicant. All proposals must provide an estimated SAIPE score in the application by providing the average of the relevant SAIPE eligibility percentages for all sites. Next, **ONLY** end-user site scores are averaged together, which fall into one of the four scoring brackets determining the overall application point allocation.

YOU can CONTROL objective scoring data by selecting best partners from the best locations.

OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Rural Area (<i>Ruality</i>)	This criterion measures rural benefit. This category based on Census data (up to 40 Points).
Economic Need (<i>SAIPE</i>)	This criterion measures the general economic need of the area through the use of statistics from the National School Lunch Program (SAIPE) (up to 30 Points).
<i>Special Consideration</i>	QOZ, STEM or OPIOID services receive 10 pts

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Need for Services and Project Benefits (Needs & Benefits)	This criterion compares the specific need for the technology in the proposed service territory, and how the proposed project will address those needs and benefit the residents of the area affected. (up to 30 Points)
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Subjective data is based on the scoring of the narrative criteria requested by the application.

SCORING TIPS AND TRICKS:

- + Aim for objective scores > than 60, this may require careful planning with high scoring partners
- + Ensure eligibility of all funds listed in your proposal - items must be procured from a third party to be eligible and fit with in the guideline regulations.
- + Ensure all partners supply specific matching letters documenting their contribution.
- + All attachments must be consistent.
- + Demonstrate sustainability and technical expertise through documentation of quotes, vendors, and consultants.
- + Bring innovative creations to your proposal!
- + Develop comprehensive and detailed project need and scope that is supported by evidence and facts.
- + Score one section from the whole proposal, so restating the project can be helpful to frame the section.
- + Remember the mission of the DLT is to provide live learning. Any project detailing static, one-way delivery will not be eligible expenses.
- + Develop partnerships external to your traditional realm, ensure your partners have need and rurality required to increase your objective score.

STEPS TO TAKE IN PREPARING YOUR RUS DLT GRANT APPLICATION

Ensure that your organization has obtained a DUNS number and registered with the Federal Central Contractor Registration site.

Review RUS DLT application guidelines, eligibility requirements, budget and matching contributions, and determine grant team members.

Determine project's focus - is it Distance Learning or Telemedicine?
Determine type of sites - are your sites Fixed or Non-Fixed?

Determine RUS DLT partners, their locations and secure/finalize all MOUs.

Reach out USDA representatives and start collecting all necessary paperwork with signatures for proposal.

Discuss project scope details with grant team, develop task list, delegate all responsibilities to team members.

Write first draft, review and discuss edits.

Write second draft, review and discuss edits.

Write final draft CHECK ALL ATTACHMENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS AGAIN :)