



TIME-SENSITIVE
RURAL HEALTHCARE
PROVIDER FUNDING
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
TELEHEALTH AND
TELEMEDICINE

June 2, 2020



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Introduction

Several telehealth/telemedicine funding programs have been made available for rural healthcare providers including funding specific to the COVID-19 pandemic. Plexos Group can provide support to assist your organization with application and help ensure your organization maintains the appropriate documentation required in accordance with the terms and conditions of funding or grants.

Eligibility will vary by program, but includes the following types of providers and entities:

- Community or migrant health centers or other Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Healthcare providers, including pharmacists, in private practice
- Entities operating clinics, including Rural Health Clinics
- Local health departments
- Nonprofit hospitals
- Other publicly funded health or social service agencies
- Long-term care providers
- Providers of healthcare services in the home
- Providers of outpatient mental health services and entities operating outpatient mental health facilities
- Local or regional emergency healthcare providers
- Institutions of higher education
- Entities operating dental clinics
- Rural emergency departments (ED), emergency medical services (EMS) that serve rural populations, and ambulances that serve rural entities

Timing of application is critical, as some of these funding opportunities require application by June 13, 2020.

COVID-19 Telehealth Program

Purpose

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program provides support for eligible healthcare providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by fully funding their telecommunications services, information services, and devices necessary to provide critical connected care services. Examples of services and devices that the COVID-19 Telehealth Program may fund include:

- Telecommunications Services and Broadband Connectivity Services: Voice services, and internet connectivity services for healthcare provider or their patients
- Information Services: Remote patient monitoring platforms and services; patient reported outcome platforms; store and forward services, such as asynchronous transfer of patient images and data for interpretation by a physician; platforms and services to provide synchronous video consultation
- Internet Connected Devices/Equipment: Tablets, smart phones, or connected devices to receive connected care services at home for patient or healthcare provider use; telemedicine kiosks/carts for healthcare provider site

Providers that purchased telecommunications services, information services, and/or devices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic after March 13, 2020 may apply to receive funding support through the COVID-19 Telehealth Program for eligible services purchased on or after March 13, 2020. In addition, COVID-19 Telehealth Program support will be available to eligible healthcare providers for services that require monthly recurring charges, such as broadband connectivity or remote patient monitoring services, through September 30, 2020.

Eligibility

Healthcare providers must obtain an eligibility determination from the [Universal Service Administrative Company \(USAC\)](#) for each site included in the application. Sites that USAC has already deemed eligible to participate in the Commission's existing Rural Health Care (RHC) Programs may rely on that eligibility determination for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program.

Geographic coverage

Nationwide

Amount of funding

Award ceiling: \$1,000,000

Estimated total program funding: \$200,000,000

Application process

1. A link to the [application instructions](#) is available on the [program website](#).

- a. Submit [FCC Form 460](#) to get an eligibility designation. Contact USAC for questions about eligibility and completing the form (800.453.1546/[RHC-Assist@usac.org](mailto:Assist@usac.org)).
 - b. Register for an FCC Registration Number (FRN) in the [Commission Registration System \(CORES\)](#).
 - c. Submit an [online application](#).
2. **Deadlines:** applications accepted on an ongoing basis

Note: [Waiver of the Red Light Rule for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program](#)

[View Program Website](#)

Sponsor

Federal Communications Commission

Contact

EmergencyTelehealthSupport@fcc.gov

Rural Health Care Telecommunications Program

Purpose

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Rural Health Care (RHC) Telecommunications Program provides assistance to healthcare providers for eligible expenses related to telecommunications and voice services for the use of telemedicine and telehealth.

Eligibility

Rural public or nonprofit healthcare providers (HCPs) are eligible. Eligible entities include:

- Post-secondary educational institutions offering healthcare instruction, such as teaching hospitals or medical schools,
- Community health centers or health centers providing healthcare to migrants
- Local health departments or agencies
- Community mental health centers
- Nonprofit hospitals
- Rural health clinics, including mobile clinics
- Dedicated emergency rooms of rural for-profit hospitals
- Skilled nursing facilities
- A consortium of healthcare providers that includes at least one of the facilities mentioned above

Geographic coverage

Nationwide

Amount of funding

Rural rate calculation for voice and data is determined using an urban/rural differential.

Application process

1. To apply, follow the step-by-step process listed on the [program website](#).
2. **Deadlines:** A [March 26, 2020 announcement](#) extended the deadline for the Rural Health Care Program to **June 30, 2020**.

[View Program Website](#)

Sponsor

Universal Service Administrative Company

Contact

rhc-assist@usac.org

800.453.1546

Telehealth Network Grant Program (TNGP)

Purpose

The primary objective of the Telehealth Network Grant Program is to demonstrate how telehealth programs and networks can improve access to quality healthcare services in rural, frontier, and underserved communities. Applicants are encouraged to develop innovative applications that meet new and emerging needs in a changing healthcare delivery system with a focus on value and improved healthcare outcomes. Grantees should demonstrate how telehealth networks improve healthcare services for medically underserved populations in urban, rural, and frontier communities. TNGP networks are used to:

- Expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of healthcare services
- Improve and expand the training of healthcare providers
- Expand and improve the quality of health information available to healthcare providers, and patients and their families, for decision-making

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include rural or urban nonprofit entities that will provide services through a telehealth network. Each entity participating in the networks may be a nonprofit or for-profit entity. Faith-based, community-based organizations, and tribal organizations are eligible to apply. Services must be provided to rural communities, although the applicant can be located in an urban area. The Telehealth Network shall include at least two of the following entities (at least one of which shall be a community-based health care provider):

- Community or migrant health centers or other Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Healthcare providers, including pharmacists, in private practice
- Entities operating clinics, including Rural Health Clinics
- Local health departments
- Nonprofit hospitals
- Other publicly funded health or social service agencies
- Long-term care providers
- Providers of healthcare services in the home
- Providers of outpatient mental health services and entities operating outpatient mental health facilities
- Local or regional emergency healthcare providers
- Institutions of higher education
- Entities operating dental clinics
- Rural emergency departments (ED), emergency medical services (EMS) that serve rural populations, and ambulances that serve rural entities

Geographic coverage

Nationwide

Amount of funding, number of awards and project period:

Award ceiling: \$300,000 per year

Total funding available: \$8,700,000

Number of awards: 29

Project period: 4 years

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 93.211

Application process

1. **How to apply:** links to the full announcement, [application instructions](#), and the online application process are available through [grants.gov](#).
2. Applicant webinar recording:
Playback number: 800.873.1933
Passcode: 3192
3. **Deadlines: June 15, 2020**

[View Program Website](#)

Sponsors

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Contacts

For programmatic questions:

Carlos Mena

301.443.3198

cmena@hrsa.gov

For business, administrative, or fiscal questions:

India Smith

301.443.2096

ismith@hrsa.gov

Rural Healthcare Connect Fund

Purpose

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Healthcare Connect Fund provides assistance to healthcare providers for eligible expenses related to broadband connectivity at a flat discounted rate of 65%. Participants can apply as a member of a consortium or a stand-alone entity.

Eligibility

Rural public or nonprofit healthcare providers (HCPs) are eligible. Eligible entities include:

- Post-secondary educational institutions offering healthcare instruction, such as teaching hospitals or medical schools,
- Community health centers or health centers providing healthcare to migrants
- Local health departments or agencies
- Community mental health centers
- Nonprofit hospitals
- Rural health clinics, including mobile clinics
- Dedicated emergency rooms of rural for-profit hospitals
- Skilled nursing facilities
- A consortium of healthcare providers that includes at least one of the facilities mentioned above

Geographic coverage

Nationwide

Amount of funding

Participants will receive a flat rate discount of 65%.

Application process

1. **To apply:** follow the step-by-step process listed on the [program website](#).
2. A [March 26, 2020 announcement](#) extended the deadline for the Rural Health Care Program to June 30, 2020.
3. **Deadlines:** [June 30, 2020](#)

[View Program Website](#)

Sponsor

Universal Service Administrative Company

Contact

rhc-assist@usac.org 800.453.1546

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program Grants

Purpose

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Program provides grants to encourage and improve telemedicine and distance learning services in rural areas through the use of telecommunications, computer networks, and related advanced technologies to be used by students, teachers, medical professionals, and rural residents. Grants are for projects where the benefit is primarily delivered to end users that are not at the same location as the source of the education or healthcare service. Grant funds may be used to:

- Acquire equipment and other capital assets:
 - Broadband transmission facilities
 - Audio, video, and interactive video equipment
 - Terminal and data terminal equipment
 - Computer hardware, network components, and software
 - Inside wiring and similar infrastructure that further DLT services
- Acquire instructional programming
- Acquire technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include entities that provide education or healthcare through telecommunications, including:

- State and local government entities
- Federally-recognized tribes
- Nonprofit organizations
- For-profit businesses
- Consortia of eligible entities

Geographic coverage

Nationwide

Amount of funding

Award ceiling: \$1,000,000

Award floor: \$50,000

A 15% match is required.

Application process

1. Links to additional guidance and [application instructions](#) are available on the [program website](#) and [grants.gov](#).
2. **Deadlines:** according to a [USDA press release](#), the **second application window deadline is June 13, 2020.**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.855

[View Program Website](#)

Sponsors

U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA Rural Development, USDA Rural Utilities Service

Contacts

dltinfo@wdc.usda.gov

202.720.0800

[Field representatives](#)

USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program

Purpose

The USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program provides direct loans and/or grants for essential community facilities in rural areas. Priority is given to healthcare, education, and public safety projects. Funds may be used to construct, enlarge, or improve facilities. Examples of essential community facilities include:

- Healthcare facilities such as hospitals, medical clinics, dental clinics, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities
- Public facilities such as town halls, courthouses, airport hangars, and street improvements
- Community support services such as childcare centers, community centers, fairgrounds, and transitional housing
- Public safety services such as fire departments, police stations, prisons, police vehicles, fire trucks, public works vehicles, and equipment
- Educational services such as museums, libraries, and private schools
- Utility services such as telemedicine and distance learning equipment
- Local food systems such as community gardens, food pantries, community kitchens, food banks, food hubs, and greenhouses

Applicants may apply for one of three options: the Community Facilities Direct Loan Program, the Community Facilities Grant Program, or a combination of the two. The Rural Housing Service published a notice in the [Federal Register](#) on September 10, 2019 announcing the availability of Disaster Relief Act 2019 Grant Funds for Community Facilities. Applications will be accepted on a continual basis until funds are exhausted.

Eligibility

USDA provides grants to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns with populations up to 20,000. Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as nonprofit corporations and tribal governments. Loans are also available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as to nonprofit corporations and tribal governments.

Geographic coverage

Nationwide

Amount of funding

Amount varies. Grants are authorized on a graduated scale. Applicants located in small communities with low populations and low incomes will receive a higher percentage of grants.

Application process

1. Begin the application process by contacting the appropriate [USDA Rural Development state office](#) to discuss the project.

2. The state office will discuss funding options and refer eligible applicants to:
 - a. Apply directly through USDA for grant and/or loan funds
 - b. Contact an organization that has been awarded funding from USDA for the purpose of re-lending to community facilities projects
 - c. Contact approved banks and lenders to apply through a similar, but separate program, the [Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program](#)
3. **Deadlines:** applications are accepted on an ongoing basis

Resources

[Community Facilities Direct Loan Program Guidance Book for Applicants](#)

[Community Facilities Infrastructure Toolkit](#)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.766

See the [fact sheet](#) describing flexible servicing options to help Community Facilities Direct Loan Program borrowers experiencing temporary cash flow issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[View Program Website](#)

Sponsors

U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA Rural Development

Contact

Choose the appropriate state in the drop down menu on the top right of the [program website](#). This will open the state specific page. Tabs at the top of the page will show general program information, forms and resources, and state specific contact information.