



**Broadband USA**



# **BROADBAND INITIATIVES PROGRAM**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Satellite Projects, Rural Library  
Broadband and Technical  
Assistance Grants**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>		<b>PAGE</b>
<b>General Guidelines</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Satellite Projects</b>		<b>5</b>
<b>Rural Library Broadband</b>		<b>7</b>
<b>Technical Assistance</b>		<b>9</b>

## **General Guidelines**

### **In what format are applications required to be submitted?**

Applications for Satellite, Rural Libraries Broadband, and Technical Assistance projects must be submitted in paper format

### **How many copies of the application are applicants required to submit?**

Applicants must submit one original and one copy of the application.

### **Where can applicants obtain copies of the applications?**

Copies of the applications can be downloaded from [www.broadbandusa.gov](http://www.broadbandusa.gov).

### **What is the deadline for submitting the applications?**

Applications for Satellite, Rural Libraries Broadband, and Technical Assistance projects must be submitted in paper format by June 7, 2010.

### **What evidence are applicants required to provide to show that their applications were submitted by the required deadline?**

Applications must include one of the following proofs of mailing:

- Legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark. Note that the U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Applicants should check with their local post office before relying on this method.
- Legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service; or
- A dated shipping label, invoice or receipt from a commercial carrier.

### **What forms of evidence will NOT be accepted as evidence that the application was submitted by the required deadline?**

RUS will not accept a private metered postmark or a mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service as evidence.

**Where should applications for Satellite, Rural Libraries Broadband, and Technical Assistance projects be submitted?**

Applications must be mailed, shipped or sent overnight express to:

Broadband Initiatives Program  
Rural Utilities Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Stop 1599, Room 2868 - South Ag Building  
Washington, DC 20250-1599

**Where can applicants request general guidance on applying for these grants?**

Applicants should direct all questions to the BroadbandUSA helpdesk at 877-508-8364 or send an email to [BroadbandUSA@usda.gov](mailto:BroadbandUSA@usda.gov).

**Is RUS staff available to discuss the application before submission?**

No, RUS staff cannot pre-screen or offer consultations during a competitive application process. Any general inquiries should be directed to BroadbandUSA helpdesk.

**Can pre-application expenses be included in the Satellite, Rural Library Broadband and Technical Assistance applications?**

Pre-application expenses can only be included in the Technical Assistance application. These expenses are limited to no more than 5% of the costs of the total proposed budget. Pre-application expenses are not eligible for the Satellite or Rural Library programs.

## **Satellite Applications**

### **What is considered a satellite project?**

A satellite project means any project to provide Satellite Broadband Service to unserved rural premises (including households, businesses, public safety entities, and critical community facilities).

### **What is an eligible service area for a satellite project?**

Applicants can propose to serve only eligible unserved rural premises in any of the eight regions listed in Section IV.C.1(a) of the Request for Proposals (RFP).

### **What is RUS' definition of unserved rural premises as it applies to the Satellite Projects?**

Unserved rural premises cannot include premises located within service areas of Last Mile Awardees under the First Round NOFA, Second Round NOFA, or BTOP NOFA, regardless of whether the premises are unserved at the time of the application. In addition, the applicant cannot request grant funds for premises already receiving broadband satellite service. Moreover, once an eligible unserved rural premises is connected and begins receiving broadband satellite service from an Awardee under this Program, the Awardee cannot use additional grant funds to re-connect said subscriber if the subscriber chooses to disconnect services at any time during the 3 year drawdown period.

### **Who is eligible to apply for satellite projects?**

To apply for satellite funding, the organization must be a satellite Internet service provider (ISP), a reseller of satellite ISP service, a distributor or dealer of satellite ISP service, or a consortium of all three of the above, EXCEPT for a consortium of more than one satellite ISP.

### **Can satellite applicants propose to serve more than one region?**

Yes. Applicants may propose to serve more than one region in an application. The application must be broken out for each region. Applicants can also submit a National application that proposes to serve at least 6 of the 8 regions listed in Section IV.C.1(a) of the RFP.

**Will more than one application be approved for a region?**

The Agency has determined that reaching hard to serve unserved rural premises may best be served by awarding more than one Regional or National applicant for the same Satellite Region, depending on the proposals received.

**What must an applicant propose to provide to be eligible as a satellite project?**

At a minimum, an application for satellite must commit to providing no cost customer premises equipment (CPE) (including no installation, activation, or other fees) for all packages offered. In addition, the Basic Service Package (BSP) must be offered at a rate no higher than \$50 per month for at least one year.

**Can the applicant require that the end user sign a length of service contract?**

The applicant may not require any length of service requirements, unless the Applicant offers the Basic Service Package at less than \$40 per month. In such case, the Applicant may propose a one-year contract requirement, if an unconditional 30-day cancellation clause is provided. There is no length of service requirements or price requirements for Expanded Service Packages or Commercial Service Packages.

**Does the Basic Service Plan have to be at least 768 kbs downstream and at least 200 kbs upstream?**

Yes, the basic service plan must meet the definition of Broadband as defined in the RFP.

**Does the Basic Service Plan have to be offered to residences and businesses at no greater than \$50 per month for the first year?**

Yes, the Basic Service Plan must be offered to all premises.

**Can an applicant use a tiered approach when determining their Proposed Subscriber Amount?**

Yes, applicants can use a tiered approach when determining their proposed subscriber amount.

## ***Rural Library Broadband Applications***

### **Who is eligible to apply for a Rural Library Broadband grant?**

Awardees under the First Round NOFA and Second Round NOFA and applicants under the Second Round NOFA.

*Note: Applicants under the Second Round NOFA may apply at their own risk. Only those applicants that are ultimately selected as Awardees under the Second Round NOFA will be eligible to receive a Rural Library Broadband grant.*

### **How does an applicant determine if the library is eligible under this program?**

The library must have been constructed or is proposed to be constructed with funding from USDA's Community Facilities program of the Rural Housing Service and not have existing broadband service.

### **Where can applicants obtain a list of the libraries that were constructed or proposed to be constructed with funding from the Community Facilities Program?**

The list of libraries will be posted at [www.broadbandusa.gov](http://www.broadbandusa.gov)

### **Can Rural Library Broadband grant funds be used for computers?**

Grant funds can be used for up to 10 desktop or laptop computers and the individual workstations located within the rural library.

### **Does the library have to be located within the approved service area of the Round 1 or Round 2 awardees?**

Yes, the library that is proposed to be connected must be located within the proposed funded service area of a Round 1 or Round 2 awardee.

### **Can Rural Library Broadband grant funds be used to pay for salaries and what are the limits?**

No, grant funds CANNOT be used to pay for salaries.

**What can be included in the costs for improvements of the rural library?**

Improvements can include remodeling, running cables, etc. The improvements must be directly related to accommodating the individual workstations.

**What can be included in the cost of providing broadband service, free of charge, to the rural library for up to 2 years?**

The cost of providing free service should be the cost of the bandwidth. Salaries cannot be included.

**Does the applicant have to include the Environmental Questionnaire if connecting the library was included in the Round 1 or Round 2 application that was approved?**

It is recommended that the application include a copy of the original EQ that was submitted with the Round 1 and/or Round 2 application.

**Can the library be a co-applicant on the application?**

If the library will own the computers and workstations that are funded with the grant funds, they must be a co-applicant.

## ***Technical Assistance Applications***

### **Who is eligible to apply for a Technical Assistance grant?**

Awardees under the First Round NOFA and Second Round NOFA, applicants under the Second Round NOFA and Indian Tribes.

*Note: Applicants under the Second Round NOFA may apply at their own risk. Only those applicants that are ultimately selected as Awardees under the Second Round NOFA will be eligible to receive a Technical Assistance grant.*

### **Will there be a limit on the amount of grant funds that will be provided for technical assistance applications?**

Yes. Grants for technical assistance will be made in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 per applicant.

### **Will there be a size limitation to the Technical Assistance applications?**

A complete Technical Assistance application can not exceed twenty (20) consecutively numbered, 8.5x11-inch pages of single-spaced, standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. The required attachments are NOT included in the twenty (20) pages.

### **Can an applicant submit more than one Technical Assistance application?**

Yes, applicants can submit more than one Technical Assistance application.

### **Does the region included in the Technical Assistance application have to be included in the proposed funded service area of the applicant?**

No, the region(s) do not have to be included in the proposed funded service area of the application that was awarded under Round 1 or Round 2.

### **How long do applicants have to draw down grant funds under the Technical Assistance award?**

All grant funds from the Technical Assistance award must be drawn down within 12 months.

**Where can applicants find the eligibility requirements for RUS' Infrastructure Telecommunications, Rural Broadband Access, Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband and/or Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant and loan programs?**

The regulations that govern these programs and address the eligibility criteria can be obtained at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/publications/publications.htm>.