



2023 Farm Bill Legislative Side-By-Side

COMMUNITY CONNECT GRANT PROGRAM

Program Description

The USDA Rural Development's [Community Connect Grant Program](#) provides financial assistance to eligible organizations planning to provide broadband internet service in rural, economically-challenged communities where such service does not exist.

Climate Highlights

The Community Connect Grant Program helps rural communities access [broadband](#), which facilitates many energy-efficiency technologies like precision agriculture and smart home energy devices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save customers money. Broadband expansion is essential to a successful transition to a clean energy economy.

Funding

The 2018 Farm Bill ([P.L.115-334](#)) codified the Community Connect Grant Program and authorized discretionary annual appropriations of \$50 million for the program through fiscal year (FY) 2023. Congress appropriated \$35 million for the program in FY 2023.

Key Changes

- This resource will be updated as the House and Senate legislative Farm Bill texts are released.

Legislative Side-By-Side

Current Law 7 USC §950bb-3 (October 2022)	House Version	Senate Version
<p>(a) Definitions In this section:</p> <p>(1) Eligible broadband service The term "eligible broadband service" means broadband service that has the capability to transmit data at a speed specified by the Secretary, which may not be less than the applicable minimum download and upload speeds established by the Federal Communications Commission in defining the term "advanced telecommunications capability" for purposes of section 1302 of title 47.</p> <p>(2) Eligible service area The term "eligible service area" means an area in which broadband service capacity is less than-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) a 10-Mbps downstream transmission capacity; and (B) a 1-Mbps upstream transmission capacity. <p>(3) Eligible entity</p> <p>(A) In general The term "eligible entity" means a legally organized entity that-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) is- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (I) an incorporated organization; (II) an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization; (III) a State; (IV) a unit of local government; or (V) any other legal entity, including a cooperative, a private corporation, or a limited liability company, that is organized on a for-profit or a not-for-profit basis; and (ii) has the legal capacity and authority to enter into a contract, to comply with applicable Federal laws, and to own and operate broadband facilities, as proposed in the application submitted by the entity for a grant under the Program. <p>(B) Exclusions The term "eligible entity" does not include-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) an individual; or (ii) a partnership. <p>(4) Rural area The term "rural area" has the meaning given the term in section 950bb(b)(3)(A) of this title.</p>	<p>This resource will be updated as the House legislative Farm Bill text is released.</p>	<p>This resource will be updated as the Senate legislative Farm Bill text is released.</p>

<p>(b) Establishment The Secretary shall establish a program, to be known as the "Community Connect Grant Program", to provide grants to eligible entities to finance broadband transmission in rural areas.</p>		
<p>(c) Eligible projects An eligible entity that receives a grant under the Program shall use the grant to carry out a project that-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) provides eligible broadband service to, within the proposed eligible service area described in the application submitted by the eligible entity- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) each essential community facility as defined pursuant to section 1926(a) of this title; and (B) any required facilities necessary to offer that eligible broadband service to each residential and business customer within such proposed eligible service area; and (2) for not less than 2 years- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) furnishes free eligible broadband service to a community center described in subsection (d)(1)(B); (B) provides not fewer than 2 computer access points for that free eligible broadband service; and (C) covers the cost of bandwidth to provide free eligible broadband service to each essential community facility that requests broadband services within the proposed eligible service area described in the application submitted by the eligible entity. 		
<p>(d) Uses of grant funds</p> <p>(1) In general An eligible entity that receives a grant under the Program may use the grant for-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) the construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities (including spectrum), land, or buildings to deploy eligible broadband service; and (B) the improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of a community center within the proposed eligible service area described in the application submitted by the eligible entity. <p>(2) Ineligible uses An eligible entity that receives a grant under the Program shall not use the grant for-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) the duplication of any existing eligible broadband service provided by another entity in the eligible service area; or (B) operating expenses, except as provided in- 		

<p>(i) subsection (c)(2)(C) with respect to free eligible broadband service; and (ii) paragraph (1)(A) with respect to spectrum.</p> <p>(3) Free access for community centers Of the amounts provided to an eligible entity under a grant under the Program, the eligible entity shall use to carry out paragraph (1)(B) not greater than the lesser of-</p> <p>(A) 10 percent; and (B) \$150,000.</p>		
<p>(e) Matching funds</p> <p>(1) In general An eligible entity that receives a grant under the Program shall provide a cash contribution in an amount that is not less than 15 percent of the amount of the grant.</p> <p>(2) Requirements A cash contribution described in paragraph (1)-</p> <p>(A) shall be used solely for the project for which the eligible entity receives a grant under the Program; and (B) shall not include any Federal funds, unless a Federal statute specifically provides that those Federal funds may be considered to be from a non-Federal source.</p>		
<p>(f) Applications</p> <p>(1) In general To be eligible to receive a grant under the Program, an eligible entity shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.</p> <p>(2) Requirement An application submitted by an eligible entity under paragraph (1) shall include documentation sufficient to demonstrate the availability of funds to satisfy the requirement of subsection (e).</p>		
<p>(g) Authorization of appropriations There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.</p>		

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This resource is available electronically (with hyperlinks and endnotes) at www.eesi.org/papers.

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