



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Rural Development

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program Application Guide Fiscal Year 2021



Rural Utilities Service
Telecommunications Program

April
2021

**DISTANCE LEARNING & TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM
GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE
FISCAL YEAR 2021**

**RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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Introduction and General Information

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program

General Information:

Distance learning means a real-time, interactive, telecommunications link to an end-user through the use of eligible equipment to provide educational programs, instruction, or information originating in one area, whether rural or not, to students and teachers who are located in rural areas.

Telemedicine means a real-time, interactive, telecommunications link to an end-user through the use of eligible equipment which electronically links medical professionals at separate sites in order to exchange health care information in audio, video, graphic, or other format for the purpose of providing improved health care services primarily to residents of rural areas.

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program is specifically designed 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. Since 1994, the DLT Grant Program has helped to establish hundreds of distance learning and telemedicine systems improving quality of life for thousands of residents in rural communities all across the United States.

!! BEFORE GETTING STARTED!!

All applicants must read:

7 CFR 1734, Subpart A and B

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) published on the DLT Program Website and in Grants.gov on **April 5, 2021**.

DLT Program Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>;

The regulation **MUST** be used in conjunction with this Application Guide. Should any differences result in the interpretation of this Application Guide and the regulation, the regulation takes precedence.

**For additional information concerning this grant program, please contact:
Loan Origination and Approval Division, Telecommunications Program
(202) 720-0800 or Email: dltinfo@usda.gov**

**When and Where to Submit Application:
GRANT applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 pm EDT on**

June 4, 2021

Applications must be submitted **ELECTRONICALLY** via www.grants.gov. Applications will not be accepted on paper or electronic mail.

Prior to official submission of applications, applicants may request technical assistance or other application guidance from the Agency, if such requests are made at least 15 days prior to the due date listed in FOA. Technical assistance is not meant to be an analysis or assessment of the quality of the materials submitted, a substitute for agency review of completed applications, nor a determination of eligibility, if such determination requires in-depth analysis. The Agency will not solicit or consider scoring or eligibility information that is submitted after the application deadline. The Agency reserves the right to contact applicants to seek clarification information on materials contained in the submitted application.

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) strongly encourages applicants to obtain all necessary sign-ups, credentials and authorizations well in advance of the deadline including the required SAM.gov registration and financial assistance certifications and representations. Grants.gov requires some one-time credentialing and online authentication procedures. These procedures may take several business days to complete. Several requirements on Grants.gov and SAM.gov call for an annual update; applicants should also ensure that their credentials and authorizations are up to date.

The Grants.gov website, like all web facilities, has finite capacity. If several federal grant programs have the same application deadline date, periods of site overloading can be experienced. Please plan accordingly.

Please follow the instructions on Grants.gov. If applicants experience a technical problem retrieving or submitting an electronic application, they should contact the Grants.gov customer support resources. RUS staffers do not control the technical aspects of Grants.gov and won't be able to help if an applicant experiences a problem. However, RUS is available to answer questions about the Program and the contents of an application.

Grants.gov applications must be submitted by **11:59 pm Eastern Time** on the closing date.

Additional Registration Requirements for all Applicants:

Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System Registration – As required by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), all applicants for grants must supply a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying. The Standard Form 424 (SF-424) contains a blank to enter the DUNS number. The DUNS number can be obtained free of charge by calling Dun & Bradstreet.

Please see: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

for more information on how to obtain a DUNS number or how to verify an organization's number. Note that the DUNS number must belong to the Applicant, not an affiliate, subsidiary, or parent company.

System for Award Management and Grants.gov Registration – Applicants must register in the System for Award Management (SAM) PRIOR to registering in Grants.gov, which is required to submit an application. Applicants must also make the certifications and representations required of entities which are applying for or have received funding under any Federal financial assistance project or program in order to be eligible for a DLT grant. **A SAM registration that lacks the Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations will cause an application to be rejected as ineligible.**

Registration with SAM is free of charge at <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>. Please keep in mind that it can take up to 12-15 business days to register as a new potential grantee with SAM, then an additional 24 hours for Grants.gov to recognize the SAM information. Applicants should plan accordingly and begin the process well in advance of the application deadline.

Throughout the RUS application review and the active Federal grant funding period, the SAM registration with Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations must be active with current data at all times. To maintain active SAM registration, the applicant must review and update the information in the SAM database annually from the date of initial registration or from the date of the last update. The applicant must ensure that the information in the database is current, accurate, and complete.

If an applicant has a current SAM registration but did not make the Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations at the time of establishment or renewal of its registration, it should log into SAM and add those certifications and representations before submitting a grant application. Note that it can take an additional 10 business days for SAM to recognize the update to the registration.

Please check the applicant's SAM registration for accuracy prior to submitting an application.

Changes for FY 2021:

1. To increase the range of applicants that will be successful in FY 2021, only one application per applicant is eligible for approval. If an applicant submits more than one application, then the Agency will only consider the application with the highest score.
2. The Agency has clarified that it will not transfer awards to another entity because the applicant has later determined that it cannot close the award, execute the standard Grant Agreement, which is publicly available, nor hold the grant assets in its name. (see page 6)
3. The Economic Need scoring has been modified to calculate an average Economic Need score based on the score of each individual end-user site, rather than assigning a score based on the average of the SAIPE poverty percentage of each end-user site. (see page 16)
4. Special Consideration points are no longer provided for STEM education or service in an Opportunity Zone. However, 20 points may now be awarded for properly documented service to be provided on Tribal Lands. (see page 17)

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for a grant, an organization must:

1. Be legally organized as an incorporated organization, an Indian tribe or tribal organization, as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304, a state or local unit of government, a consortium, or other legal entity, including a private corporation organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis. Each applicant must provide evidence of its legal capacity to contract with the Rural Utilities Service to obtain the grant and comply with all applicable requirements, in accordance with 7 CFR part 1734.4(a).

Consortium: A consortium is a combination or group of entities formed to undertake the purposes for which the distance learning and telemedicine financial assistance is being requested.

- If the applicant is an existing established consortium with the legal ability to contract with the Federal Government, that organization can apply in the name of the formal consortium.
- If the applicant is an informal consortium which by itself lacks the legal capacity to contract with the Federal Government, either one entity must serve as the host organization which will apply on behalf of the consortium and be designated as the project owner with all awardee responsibilities or each individual entity must contract with RUS in its own behalf.

2. Either operate a rural community facility or deliver distance learning or telemedicine services to entities that operate a rural community facility or to residents of rural areas at rates calculated to ensure that the benefit of the financial assistance is passed through to such entities or to residents of rural areas.

Grant applications that are written by vendors who are mentioned in the application as vendors to be used on the project to be funded by the DLT award are ineligible as a violation of the competition rules in 2 CFR 200.319. Such vendors are also prohibited from bidding on the project because of conflict of interest. Additionally, applicants must fully understand the procurement requirements of 2 CFR part 200 Subpart D and the DLT regulations when compiling an application for submission, and must avoid the use of predetermined equipment as a violation of the bidding requirements unless they have adequately demonstrated in the application that no other equipment is available for the intended purpose.

Equipment vendors, manufacturers, system integrators, and other businesses whose purpose in the proposal is to sell equipment or technological services to support applicants cannot themselves be applicants or affiliates of the applicant. If the grant writer for the application is paid by a vendor, manufacturer, system integrator, or other business, the vendor, manufacturer, system integrator or other business becomes an affiliate of the applicant and cannot participate in the project.

Applicants are required to provide evidence of their ability to contract with RUS to obtain the grant and comply with all applicable requirements, in accordance with 7 CFR 1734.4(a). It is incumbent on applicants to determine the appropriate entity to apply for the grant. Entities created by educational or medical institutions for the purpose of applying for and managing grants, such as university or hospital foundations, should not be applicants unless they can own and manage grant-funded equipment as required by the Grant Agreement and applicable regulations, including 2 CFR Part 200. Accordingly, **RUS will not transfer awards to another entity because the applicant has later determined that it cannot close the award, execute the standard Grant Agreement, which is publicly available, nor hold the grant assets in its name.**

Note: Electric or telecommunications borrowers financed through the Rural Utilities Service are eligible for grants.

Eligible Grant Purposes:

There are three categories of eligible purposes:

1. **Acquiring, by lease or purchase, eligible equipment.** If leased, the cost of the lease during the three-year life of the grant is eligible.

The following are examples of eligible equipment. This list is not exhaustive. Neither does it convey blanket eligibility. A computer is not automatically eligible. It must be used for an eligible purpose. The purpose of the DLT Grant program is to deliver education or medical care to end users at remote sites via telecommunications, not simply to furnish educational or medical technology.

- Computer hardware and software
- Site licenses and maintenance contracts
- Extended warranties (up to 3 years)
- Audio and video equipment
- Computer network components
- Telecommunications terminal equipment
- Data terminal equipment
- Interactive audio/video equipment
- Inside wiring
- Broadband facilities, if owned by the applicant (**limited to 20% of grant**)

In general, equipment not electronically interconnected to the grant and match funded equipment is not eligible. The application must demonstrate that the predominant purpose (50% or more of use) of every line-item in the grant and match budget meets the DLT Grant definition of distance learning or telemedicine. **NOTE: All equipment purchased for this Project must be new or non-depreciated.**

2. **Acquiring instructional programming** that is a capital asset (including the purchase or lease of instructional programming already on the market). Renewals of instructional programming are not eligible nor is classroom equipment (such as laboratory equipment). Also, expenses (such as those for tuition, fees for coursework on a per course basis, or fees for cultural events or virtual field trips) are not capital assets and therefore, are not eligible.
3. **Providing technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment,** including any related software, developing instructional programming that is a capital asset, and providing engineering or environmental studies relating to the establishment or

expansion of the phase of the project to be financed with the grant. The costs for this category cannot exceed 10% of the grant amount requested.

Ineligible Grant Purposes:

The following purposes are considered ineligible grant purposes (see 7 CFR 1734.23):

- To pay for medical or educational equipment not having telemedicine or distance learning as its essential function, including telephone systems
- To pay for Electronic Medical Records (EMR) systems
- To pay salaries, wages, or employee benefits to medical or educational personnel
- To pay for the salaries or administrative expenses of the applicant or the project
- To purchase equipment that will be owned by the local exchange carrier or another telecommunications service provider unless that service provider is the applicant
- To duplicate facilities providing distance learning or telemedicine services in place or to reimburse the applicant or others for costs incurred prior to RUS' receipt of the completed application
- To pay costs of preparing the application package for financial assistance under this program
- For projects whose sole objective is to provide links between teachers and students or between medical professionals who are located at the same facility or campus environment
- For site development and the destruction or alteration of buildings
- For the purchase of land, buildings, or building construction
- For projects located in areas covered by the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.)
- For any purpose that the Administrator has not specifically approved
- Except for leases provided for in §1734.21, to pay **the cost of recurring or operating expenses for the project, including but not limited to broadband connection fees**
- For any other purposes not specifically contained in §1734.21.

Additionally, except as otherwise provided in §1734.12, grants shall not be used to finance a project, in part, when the success of the project is dependent upon the receipt of additional financial assistance under this subpart **or is dependent upon the receipt of other financial assistance that is not assured.**

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

1. **Minimum Rurality Score:** In order to be eligible to receive a grant, an application must receive a minimum of **20 points** as an average score for all hub/end-user and end-user

sites included in the project. See instructions under Section D-1 for calculating the Rurality Score.

2. **Matching Contribution:** The grant applicant's matching contribution must total at least 15 percent of the grant amount requested and be used for eligible grant purposes. See instructions under Section E for more information on the Matching Contribution.

Other Considerations:

Rural Areas: The intent of the DLT program is to benefit rural areas (populations of 20,000 or less and not contiguous and adjacent to urban areas > 50,000). While some projects could include end-users in more urbanized areas, the Agency will evaluate projects based on their benefit to rural areas.

Online Education Services: Because this program is intended to fund end-user equipment at specifically identified sites, applications which propose to provide only web-based services which are universally available are ineligible. This type of project does not have a defined service area and the beneficiaries can be located anywhere, including urban areas.

Grant Limits

The minimum Grant amount which can be requested is **\$50,000**. The maximum Grant amount which can be requested is **\$1,000,000**.

Grant Review Process

1. **Grant Receipt:** Completed applications must be submitted through <https://www.grants.gov> by the specified submission date to be considered for funding.
2. **Incomplete Applications:** RUS may request additional information that would not change the application or scoring, in order to complete the appropriate documents covering financial assistance.
3. **Scoring:** All complete applications will be scored in accordance with the criteria set forth in this guide, on the program website and the Grants.gov website.
4. **Ineligible Applications:** Applicants with applications that are deemed ineligible will be notified in writing regarding application deficiencies.
5. **Appeals:** Only RUS Telecommunications and Electric Borrowers may appeal the decision to reject their applications. Any appeal must be made, in writing, within 10 days after the applicant is notified of the determination to deny the application.

6. **Selection Process:** Applications will be selected for approval based on scores assigned, availability of funds, and the provisions of § 1734.27. To increase the range of applicants that will be successful in FY 2021, only ONE application per applicant is eligible for approval. If an applicant submits more than one application, then the Agency will only consider the application with the highest score.

Regardless of the number of points an application receives, the Administrator may take any of the following actions:

- a) Limit the number of applications selected for projects located in any one State during a fiscal year.
 - b) Limit the number of selected applications for a particular type of project.
 - c) Select an application receiving fewer points than another if there are insufficient funds during a particular funding period to select the higher scoring application.
7. **Legal Documents:** All grantees will be required to execute a standard DLT Grant Agreement. A standard form of this agreement can be found on our website under the To Apply tab at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>

Completing the Grant Application

This section addresses all the information that must be submitted in order for an application to be deemed complete and considered for funding. Please make sure that all the necessary information is included in the appropriate section. All the required forms and certifications are included on the DLT website, shown in Appendix A to this Guide, or are available through SAM.gov.

- A. Standard Form 424
- B. Site Worksheet
- C. Executive Summary of the Project
- D. Scoring Criteria Documentation (3 Worksheets plus Needs & Benefits discussion)
- E. Matching Requirements (Worksheet plus correspondence)
- F. Scope of Work (Including Budget Worksheet)
- G. Financial Information and Sustainability
- H. Statement of Experience
- I. Telecommunications System Plan
- J. Compliance with other Federal Statutes
- K. Evidence of Legal Authority and Existence
- L. Environmental Impact and Historic Preservation
- M. Consultation with USDA State Director
- N. Supplemental Information

A. Standard Form 424

The SF-424 is provided by Grants.gov as a required form. Every other application element must be attached to the SF-424. See page 34 for more details.

B. Site Worksheet

The Site Worksheet is a required attachment that lists all the locations to receive grant-funded equipment or function as a critical part of the proposed project. Please use the following definitions on the Site Worksheet when distinguishing a site as a Hub, Hub/End-User or End-User Site. These designations should be used consistently on the Site Worksheet and the Rural and Economic Need Worksheets.

Hub Sites: A hub site is a facility that is part of a network or telecommunications system that provides educational or medical services to hub/end-user or end-user sites. A pure hub receives no end-user benefits. The site is usually a connection management point or is exclusively an educational or medical source of distance learning or telemedicine.

End-User Site: An end-user site is a facility that is part of a network or telecommunications system that is utilized by end-users. For a site to be included as an end-user site for scoring purposes, the applicant must demonstrate equipment purchased will be installed or placed at the site and the site will only receive benefits or services from other networked sites.

A **Hub/End-User** site performs both functions: a hub which also accommodates end-users.

Non-fixed End-User Sites: If equipment funded by the grant will be used in rural residents' homes or in mobile facilities, the project will be deemed a non-fixed end-user site application, since the end-user sites will change constantly. The location of the hub site that serves the non-fixed end-user sites will serve as a proxy for the addresses of the end-users. If the project includes both non-fixed and fixed end-user sites, it will be described as a **Hybrid** application. Note: the addresses of individual homes of prospective students or patients for non-fixed project **should not** be provided on the site worksheet. These addresses will not be used for scoring purposes, and such personally identifiable information should not be included in the application.

Some of the information requested on the Site Worksheets such as congressional districts can be obtained at the US Census web site. Further guidance on navigating the US Census website is available in Appendix B.

C. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary gives reviewers their first overall view of the project area, the problems that residents face, and how the proposed project will address those problems. This is the applicant's opportunity to discuss the core aspects of the project. It should contain a concise description of the project including:

1. A description of why the project is needed.
2. An explanation of how the applicant will address the need cited, why the applicant requires the financial assistance, the types of education or medical services to be offered by the projects, and the benefits to rural residents.
3. A description of the applicant, documenting eligibility.
4. An explanation of the total project cost including a breakdown of the grant required and the source of matching contribution and other financial assistance for the remainder of the project.
5. A statement specifying whether the project is either a **distance learning or telemedicine facility** as defined in § 1734.3. If the project provides both distance learning and telemedicine services, the applicant must identify the predominant use of the system.
6. A statement specifying whether the project is requesting special consideration points for Opioid or other Substance Use Disorder treatment or Tribal Lands. If no special consideration is being requested, applicant should state “No special consideration requested.”
7. A general overview of the telecommunications system to be developed, including the types of equipment, technologies, and facilities used.
8. A description of the participating hubs and end-user sites and the **number of rural residents that will be served by the project at each end-user site**.
9. Discussion of the relationship of the applicant with participating hubs and end-user sites and if the application is being filed as an **informal consortium**. If application is for an informal consortium with all entities requesting ownership of their sites' equipment, a single **fiscal agent** must be identified as the applicant and **all** entities must provide certifications and documentation under Sections J and K, respectively, including SAM registrations with Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations.
10. A certification by the applicant that facilities to be constructed with the grant do not duplicate adequate established telemedicine or distance learning services.
11. A listing of the location of each end-user site (city, town, village, borough, or rural areas) plus the State.

At the end of the Executive Summary, please provide a section titled “**Publicly Releasable Project Description**” which contains the following information:

1. Title of the Project
2. Description of the proposed hub/end-user and end-user site(s)
3. A brief description of project

4. Total estimated population affected by proposed project

Any information included in this section may be released to interested parties inquiring about an application, so please provide an adequate description of the project, but do not include any information that the applicant would not want released to the public. A long description is not needed, but an informative one is. Refer to descriptions of past awards on the DLT website for some insight into how to write the description for the application.

D. Scoring Criteria Documentation

The DLT Grant Program is a competitive program. Applications are scored in **objective** and **subjective** categories. The table below lists each DLT category, and the maximum points available.

Objective Criteria

D-1	Rurality: (up to 40 points)	This category is based on Census population data.
D-2	Economic Need: (up to 30 points)	This category is based on poverty data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program.
D-3	Special Consideration: (up to 20 points)	RUS will offer special consideration to applications that have the primary purpose of Opioid or other Substance Use Disorder treatment or that serve Tribal Lands.

Subjective Criteria

D-4	Need for Services and Project Benefits (Needs & Benefits): (up to 30 points)	These criteria evaluate the specific needs for the technology in the proposed service territory, how the proposed project will address those needs and benefit the residents of the area affected, and the community involvement in the planning and implementation of the project.
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D-1 Rurality – Up to 40 Points

The Rurality score is based on the population size of each community where an end-user site is located and the proximity of urban areas to the site. For non-fixed end-user site projects and projects which contain non-fixed components, the Rurality score will be based on the population and the proximity of urban areas to the Hub site. Applicants should use Census population data from the Census Website (Appendix B) that cites the 2010 Census as its source for population statistics. The determination of the proximity of urban areas should be made using the DLT Map (Appendix B), which is also based on the 2010 Census.

Please use the Rurality Worksheet to calculate the Rurality Score. The Worksheet is available as an Excel worksheet at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>.

Include the population statistics and rurality calculations for all sites, including those designated as (pure) hubs. Use the following definitions for assistance in designating the type of site:

Hub Sites: A hub site is a facility that is part of a network or telecommunications system that provides educational or medical services to end-user sites. A pure hub receives no end-user benefits. The site is usually a connection management point or is exclusively an educational or medical source of distance learning or telemedicine.

End-User Site: An end-user site is a facility that is part of a network or telecommunications system that is utilized by end-users. In order for a site to be included as an end-user site for scoring purposes, the applicant must demonstrate equipment purchased will be installed or placed at the site.

A **Hub/End-User** site performs both functions: a hub which also accommodates end-users.

The following classifications define the various population levels determining the Rurality score.

EXCEPTIONALLY RURAL AREA – 5,000 and under: 40 Points. Any area of the USA not included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population in excess of 5,000 inhabitants and not part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

RURAL AREA – 5,001-10,000: 30 Points. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population over 5,000 and not in excess of 10,000 inhabitants and not part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

MID-RURAL AREA – **10,001-20,000: 20 Points**. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population over 10,000 and not in excess of 20,000 inhabitants and not part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

URBAN AREA - **Over 20,000: 0 Points**. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population in excess of 20,000 inhabitants or part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

Use the **Rurality Worksheet** to enter: 1) the name given to the site; 2) the town, city, or Census Designated Place where the site is located; 3) the population (2010 Census) of the town, city or Census Designated Place; 4) whether or not the site is in an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town with population > 50,000; 5) the name and population of the adjacent urban city or town (if any); and 6) the *Rurality* score (as derived from the Scoring Table).

Although pure hubs are not included in the calculation, except in the case of Non-fixed end-user applications and hybrid applications, the Agency will need this data to recalculate the score if there appear to be end-user beneficiaries at the site. Place the sites in the same order and use the same numbering as on the *Site Worksheet* (which will also be used on the *Economic Need Worksheet*).

If any end-user sites are not within the boundaries of a town or a *place* that can be identified by the 2010 Census, there is a possibility that the community is so rural that it is not associated with any Census-recognized community. If this is the case, the location would be considered by the RUS DLT Program as ‘Census Rural’ and be reported as an “Exceptionally Rural Area” (unless it is contiguous and adjacent to an urban area > 50,000).

Combining Individual Scores for an Overall *Rurality* Score

After all the sites and corresponding populations have been entered on the *Rurality Worksheet*, calculate the estimated score by taking the average of the scores for sites designated as end-users or hub/end-users. Do not include pure hubs in the calculation. **Exception:** Non-fixed end-user applications only use hub sites in the calculation and Hybrid Projects use hub sites for the non-fixed portion of the service area.

Minimum Rurality Score: In order to be eligible to receive a grant, an application must receive a minimum of 20 points as an average score for all hub/end-user and end-user sites included in the project.

Rounding: Scores should be shown with their decimals rounded to 2 decimal places (i.e., 20.49999 rounds to 20.50).

D-2 Economic Need – Up to 30 Points

Economic Need is measured by the County SAIPE poverty percentage, all ages, data found at [US Census SAIPE data](#). The dataset released December 2020, which has data for 2019, is the information to use for the Economic Need calculation. A spreadsheet with the necessary data has also been downloaded to the [DLT website](#). This criterion will be used to evaluate the relative financial need of the applicant, community, and project. All applicants are required to provide the applicable SAIPE poverty percentage based on the counties where the hub, hub/end-user and end-user sites (as defined in §1734.3) are located.

Please use the Economic Need Worksheet to calculate the score. The Worksheet is available as an Excel worksheet at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>

The *Economic Need* score is based on SAIPE data for the COUNTY where the hub/end-user and end-user sites are located. *Exception:* Non-fixed end-user applications only use Hub sites in the calculation and Hybrid Projects use Hub sites for the Non-fixed portion of the service area. The SAIPE data used is from the column “poverty percentage, all ages.”

Determining the Economic Need Score:

The project Economic Need Score percentage will be determined by the average of the scores for all of the end-user sites. For purposes of averaging, if a hub is also utilized as an end-user site, the hub will be considered as an end-user site. The sites will receive points as follows:

- County poverty percentage \geq 30 percent - **30 points**
- County poverty percentage \geq 20 percent but $<$ 30 percent - **20 points**
- County poverty percentage \geq 10 percent but $<$ 20 percent - **10 points**
- County poverty percentage $<$ 10 percent - **0 points**

Sites located within geographic areas for which no SAIPE data exist will be determined to have a poverty percentage of 30%. Such geographic areas include territories and certain other locations eligible for funding through the DLT program.

Combining Individual Scores for an Overall *Economic Need* Score

After all the sites and corresponding populations have been entered on the *Economic Need Worksheet*, calculate the estimated score by taking the average of the scores for sites designated as end-users or hub/end-users. Do not include pure hubs in the calculation. *Exception:* Non-fixed end-user applications only use hub sites in the calculation and Hybrid Projects use hub sites for the non-fixed portion of the service area.

Rounding: Scores should be shown with their decimals rounded to 2 decimal places (i.e., 12.49999 rounds to 12.50).

D-3 Special Consideration – up to 20 Points

Special consideration points will be awarded for projects in the four following areas. Applicants may only receive special consideration points in one area.

- **Opioid or other Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment (10 points):** RUS will award 10 special consideration points to applications that have opioid or other substance use disorder treatment as their primary purpose. The Executive Summary and the Needs and Benefits sections of the application should support the claim that this is the primary purpose of the application.

For the purpose of the DLT program, opioid or other SUD treatment is defined as the interactive communication between medical or educational professionals and people with SUD or their families, other treatment professionals or those who interact with people with SUD.

Opioid or other SUD treatment eligible purposes include:

- Counseling of people with SUD
 - Treatment of people with SUD
 - Training of medical professionals, counselors or first responders in the interaction with people with SUD
 - Education programs addressing SUD
- **Tribal Lands (20 points):** RUS will award 20 special consideration points to projects that have at least one end-user site providing service to ***Federally Recognized Indian Tribes*** on ***Tribal Lands***. Non-tribal applicants must submit a tribal resolution authorizing the proposed service on tribal lands included as part of the application. If a resolution is not provided, no points will be awarded.

Federally Recognized Indian Tribes are those on the list published in the Federal Register by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on January 30, 2020 ([pp. 5462-5467](#)) or a subsequent updated list published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Federal Register prior to the closing date for grant applications. ***Tribal Lands*** means any land that is held in trust by the United States for Native Americans, is subject to restrictions on alienation imposed by the United States on Indian lands, or is owned by a Regional Corporation or a Village Corporation, as such terms are defined in section 3(g) and 3(j) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, respectively (43 U.S.C. 1602(g), (j)).

- Eligibility for Special Consideration points should be identified using the Special Consideration Worksheet. The worksheet is also available as an Excel worksheet at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>.

D-4 Need for Service and Project Benefits – Up to 30 Points

These criteria measure the extent to which the proposed project meets the need for distance learning or telemedicine services in rural areas. They also evaluate benefits derived from the services proposed by the project, and local community involvement in planning, implementing, and providing financial assistance to the project.

Need for Services

Clearly state the economic, geographic, educational, or health care challenges facing the project's respective communities and provide any documentation that demonstrates the challenges. Use verifiable data and statistics to substantiate and quantify these challenges. Address why the applicant cannot afford the project without a grant.

Document support for the project provided by professionals in the educational or health care fields. The more specific their professional opinion is regarding the situation and the proposed project as a solution, the more compelling it is. Substantiate the underserved educational or health care nature of the project's proposed service area. Demonstrate demand by rural residents and other beneficiaries for the educational or medical services that the project would provide. Show that the project is designed to meet local community needs.

Benefits Derived from Services

In addition to documenting the need for services, describe how the project would assist the community in solving these challenges. **Document the specific benefits of the project and quantify them in terms of expected outcomes.** Tie the benefits of the project DIRECTLY to the stated needs the project is intended to address. Provide measurable targets or goals such as estimates of the number of people that will benefit from the project.

Examples

For a distance learning project that serves secondary schools, provide the **number of schools and students** that will benefit. The applicant should also document all other benefits provided by the project with quantifiable goals when possible such as:

- four-year foreign language availability up from 300 to 1,200 students
- AP chemistry offered for first time to entire district
- expanded educational facility use, such as evening vocational training
- a reduction in the rate of high school dropouts from 17% to 12%

For a telemedicine project that serves a group of hospitals, provide the **number of health care facilities and the number of patients** expected to benefit. The applicant should also **document** all other benefits provided by the project such as:

- time and monetary savings to the community from telemedicine diagnoses
- 400 patients receiving at-home monitoring
- 4 doctors retained in the community or medical staff trained
- lives saved due to prompt medical diagnoses

Document any ancillary benefits or multiple uses that would create added value in the rural communities which the project will serve. Examples include training, information resources, library assets, adult education, lifetime learning, and job creation. If applicable, address particular community problems such as out-migration and the extent to which the project would reduce or prevent population loss.

Local community involvement in planning, implementing, and financial assistance of the project.

Address the participation by local residents and organizations in planning and developing the project. Include evidence of this participation in the application. Examples of evidence of community involvement include community meetings, public forums, and surveys. Willingness of local end-users or community-based organizations to contribute to the costs of completing, operating, or maintaining the project is a strong indication of community support. Documentation of support includes letters of financial and non-financial commitment towards the project from local organizations.

E. Matching Requirements

The grant applicant’s minimum matching contribution must equal 15% of the grant amount requested. Matching contributions generally must be in the form of cash. However, in-kind contributions solely for the purposes listed in §1734.21 may be substituted for cash and appropriately identified on the budget worksheet.

Please use the Matching Worksheet to calculate the match percentage. The Worksheet is available as an Excel worksheet at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>. Additionally, documentation submitted in support of the application should reflect all financial support for the project from non-Federal sources as required by §1734.22. The applicant must provide evidence, from authorized representatives of the sources, of a commitment that the funds are available and will be used for the project. Each match entry on the Matching Worksheet must be supported by a signed letter from the entity proposing the match unless the match is being provided by the applicant.

Special Matching Provisions for American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Under Federal law, applications from these areas are exempt from matching requirements up to \$200,000. The maximum DLT Grant in FY 2021 is \$1,000,000 and

the required minimum match is 15%, or \$150,000. This means that for the FY 2021 DLT Grant Program, these areas are not required to provide a minimum match.

Eligible purposes for in-kind matching funds are identical to eligible purposes for a DLT grant.

For a line-item identified as in-kind to be eligible for match funding, the application must demonstrate:

1. The match is used for eligible purposes;
2. That none of the use is to benefit sites not shown in the scoring; and
3. That the predominant purpose (over 50% of use) of that line-item is for purposes which meet the DLT grant definition of distance learning or telemedicine.

If any part of an in-kind line-item is for ineligible purposes, the line-item cannot be budgeted for match. To be eligible, items proposed as match must be integral to the project in exactly the same way as items the applicant proposes to obtain with the grant. The technology purchased with DLT grant monies or credited as in-kind match items are intended to build distance learning or telemedicine systems that would not otherwise be financially possible if not for the grant.

Federal funds are not eligible as matching funds, unless specifically authorized otherwise by Federal statute. E-rate funds are federal funds and cannot be applied as matching funds to a DLT project.

Special Matching Provisions for projects located in eligible counties under Counties in Appalachia. If counties in the proposed project are any of the counties eligible under this provision, Appalachian Regional Commission ("ARC") funds may be used as a matching contribution. Please see www.arc.gov for a list of eligible counties. Applying ARC funds as a match requires coordination with ARC State Program Managers and States in the Region. See the ARC Members, Partners and Staff link also at www.arc.gov for ARC State Program Managers contact information. DLT applicants considering an ARC match are strongly encouraged to contact their ARC State Program Manager(s) early in the process to explore the feasibility of an ARC grant.

Use of non-Federal Grants as Matching Funds: To document the match, include a copy of the announcement letter from the grantor. The letter from the grantor must be explicit about the purpose of the grant and not have limitations or exclusions, and the funds must be available at the time of application submission. If another grant is to be used as matching funds toward the DLT Grant application, include a letter from the grantor stating that the money in that grant is available and can be applied to the purposes of the DLT Grant.

Types of Matching Funds

Cash

Most applicants propose to provide a cash match for the project. When this occurs, reimbursements for approved purposes are made on a pro-rata basis with the applicant being reimbursed for the approved Grant Percentage of the presented invoiced cost.

In-Kind Match

An in-kind match must be integral to and necessary for the DLT project, not simply a technology purchase made in the same timeframe. Unlike cash, in-kind matches are tied directly to the eligibility of the proposed in-kind item. **If an item is not eligible or not integral to and necessary for the project, the item will be removed from the grant and match budget and the proposed match will not be credited.** This could make the application ineligible.

In-kind items must be non-depreciated or new assets, not installed, with established monetary values.

Costs incurred by the applicant, or others on behalf of the applicant, for facilities or equipment installed, or other services rendered prior to submission of a completed application, shall not be considered as an eligible in-kind matching contribution.

In-kind match from vendors, in the form of equipment; is not eligible.

Funding Commitments

The applicant must provide, in form and substance satisfactory to RUS, funding agreements that have been obtained to ensure completion of the project. These agreements, which must be placed in this section of the Application, shall be sufficient to ensure:

- a) Payment of all proposed expenditures for the project;
- b) All required matching contribution as required by 1734.22;
- c) Any additional funding provided in accordance with §1734.25(g).

Match Documentation Specifics - The applicant must document the project's proposed matching funds in form and substance satisfactory to the Agency. The documentation must be placed under Section E of the application. Each proposed match entry on the Matching Worksheet must be supported by a signed letter from the entity proposing the match except when the match is provided by the applicant.

1. **Be signed by a person capable of obligating the donor organization.** Include the printed name and title of the person signing the letter. The letter must clearly indicate the

name of the donor organization and state that the funds are committed to the proposed DLT project as described in the Budget and elsewhere in the application. If the name and title do not appear on the donor organization's letterhead, attach evidence of the signer's authority to obligate the funds.

2. **If the match is cash, state the dollar amount.** Letters without a **stated cash amount** cannot be credited as a cash match.
3. **If the proposed match is in-kind,** state the actual dollar amount and give a complete description of the donation identified by the line-item number in the budget and the expected date of purchase. Letters that do not identify the line-items in the budget cannot be credited as an in-kind match. Demonstrate how the established monetary value of the item was determined. Applicants that do not submit adequate documentation for in-kind match as specified will have their in-kind match disallowed. Proposed matches must be consistent on the SF-424, the Budget, and the Matching Worksheets. Equipment operational prior to submission of an application cannot be an in-kind contribution.
4. **Discounts and Donations:** In review of applications submitted in the past, it was determined that vendor donated matches did not have value without a required, subsequent purchase of vendor equipment or licenses with grant funds. For example, in many grant applications, software licenses were donated in satisfaction of the matching requirement. However, such licenses only worked with, and thus only had value with, the same vendor's equipment. Additionally, by side agreement, grant applicants were required to purchase the vendor's equipment once the grant was made with grant funds. The Agency determined that such a practice violated federal procurement standards found at 2 CFR part 200.317-326, given that the grant applicant could not put the purchase out for bid, either because no other equipment would work with the "donated" licenses, or because they were contractually obligated to buy the equipment before the grant was made. As such, the Agency has determined that vendor matches requiring subsequent purchases, either by necessity or contract, are not permitted.

F. Scope of Work

Provide a narrative (with charts, if needed) explaining the Scope of Work. Make a clear and convincing presentation of how the goals of the project will be achieved. The scope of work completes the picture for the reviewer. It discusses how the organization proposes to proceed with the project. **An application that does not include a scope of work cannot be evaluated and may be returned as ineligible.**

The scope of work must include, at a minimum, the following:

1. The **specific activities** to be performed under the project;

2. **Who** will carry out the activities;
3. The **timeframes** for accomplishing the project objectives and activities; and
4. A **budget** for all capital expenditures reflecting the line item costs **separated by site** for approved purposes for both the grant funds and the matching funds for the project. Separately, the budget must specify any line item costs that are nonapproved purposes for grants as contained in §1734.23.

Additional Guidance for the Budget: The budget is a required document for RUS to evaluate an application. An Excel spreadsheet for completing the budget is available on our website at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>

- a) The Budget should show each cost as a **line-item, separated by site**. The items listed and described in the Telecommunications System Plan (Section I) should track line-by-line with the entries in the budget. **The site references in the Budget must match the Site Worksheet** (Section B) so that it is clear which locations will be receiving equipment through the grant project.
- b) Do not combine items into lump sums that cannot be evaluated individually by the Agency. The individual parts have to be evaluated for cost comparison and program eligibility. **If an aggregated line item includes a component that is ineligible, the entire item will be deemed ineligible.**
- c) Provide detail such as the brand and model number used to prepare the budget, i.e., “VideoKing TX-90, \$5,600,” as opposed to “One Video System, \$75,000,” Installation,” \$50,000,” or “Wiring, \$100,000.” (Note that the approval by RUS of a project budget for application purposes does not constitute specific approval to purchase a particular brand of equipment if a grant is made. The procurement of equipment by a grantee must be performed in compliance with the grant agreement and applicable regulations, including 2 CFR Part 200.)
- d) If a user fee or license fee is required to use grant or match purchased equipment, it must be presented as such in the application.
- e) The final budget total should be rounded to the nearest whole dollar amount.

G. Financial Information and Sustainability

The applicant must provide a narrative description demonstrating the feasibility of the project, including having sufficient resources and expertise necessary to undertake and complete the project and how the project will be sustained following completion of the project. The application needs to show that funding is available for the three-year period that it takes to put together the project (required for eligibility), and to ensure the project’s continuance as a viable community resource.

Provide a narrative description that addresses the project's feasibility. The narrative should include a description of the project's leadership, its technical expertise, and how leadership and technical expertise is distributed throughout all of the sites or the service territory. Describe how the flow of funds and institutional financial support (local government, businesses, school system, university or foundation) will sustain the project and maintain a continuity of service. The narrative should include all assumptions and the following information:

- A description of the project's revenues and expenses in the project budget;
- Evidence of cost-sharing arrangements among hub and end-user sites, if applicable;
- Identification of any other items that may affect feasibility or sustainability of the project.

H. Statement of Experience

Provide a written narrative describing the organization's demonstrated capability and experience in operating an educational or health care endeavor and any project similar to the proposed project. Experience in a similar project is desirable but not required. If the organization does not have experience with projects like the proposed project, the application should explain how this lack of experience will be overcome.

I. Telecommunications System Plan

A Telecommunications System Plan (TSP) consists of the following:

1. The capabilities of the telecommunications terminal equipment, including a description of the specific equipment which will be used to deliver the proposed service. The applicant must document discussions with various technical sources which could include consultants, engineers, product vendors, or internal technical experts, provide detailed cost estimates for operating and maintaining the end-user equipment and provide evidence that alternative equipment and technologies were evaluated.
2. A complete listing of the proposed telecommunications terminal equipment, telecommunications transmission facilities, data terminal equipment, interactive video equipment, computer hardware and software systems, and components that process data for transmission via telecommunications, computer network components, communication satellite ground station equipment, or any other elements of the telecommunications system designed to further the purposes of this subpart, that the applicant intends to build or fund using RUS financial assistance.
3. A description of the consultations with the appropriate telecommunications carriers (including interexchange carriers, cable television operators, enhanced service providers, providers of satellite services and telecommunications equipment manufacturers and

distributors) and the anticipated role of such providers in the proposed telecommunications system.

4. A diagram or map of the proposed system overlaid with a geographic map of the service area. Also included in the TSP are other diagrams (if necessary), technical descriptions, and a narrative accounting of each item in the budget.
5. A listing of the sites (hubs, hub/end-users, or end-users) where the equipment will be located. This listing should explain how the equipment is interconnected and how the distance learning or telemedicine benefits flow from the hub sites to the rural end-user sites.

System Plan Map/Diagram

Attach a map or a drawing which is a spatial representation of the service area encompassing the project, displaying an overlay of the proposed distance learning or telemedicine system, including hub sites and end-users. This map can be displayed as a series of maps containing an overview, followed by close-up maps of individual sites.

Each site, hub and end-user, must be represented on the map. This representation need not be to scale, but it must be representational of the project, not generic. These generic network diagrams, usually depicting some kind of campus architecture are by themselves insufficient. However, applicants can provide network diagrams (without geographic references) if they can also provide geographic maps that reference the diagrams. Nevertheless, an application that does not contain a map that shows each site could be difficult to evaluate, thereby losing competitive value when compared to applications that present visual clarity of their project.

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.

- Some items requested for DLT funding will have more general uses than other equipment, which may have 100% distance learning or telemedical purposes. For each item, specify the percentage of use that can be attributed to purposes that meet the DLT grant definition of distance learning or telemedicine, explain how those percentages were determined, and address the capabilities of the proposed equipment/software. The percentage of use is only to be used for analysis as part of

line item explanations. Do not breakout items in the actual budget by percentage of use.

- Document discussions with various technical sources, such as consultants, engineers, product vendors or internal technical experts.
- Address whether or not any part of the project will duplicate any adequate, established telemedicine or distance learning services already in operation. In particular, discuss how match and grant funding for this project, if approved, would complement previous efforts. Describe the status of previous projects and, in particular, the extent to which the funds have been drawn for eligible grant purposes. **Please note that the Non-duplication of Services Certificate must be included within the application, in the certification section. The form is in Appendix A.**
- Identify any previous grants that the applicant has received from this program in the past and how they would affect the project proposed in the current application. This applies not only to prior grants received by the current applicant, but to grant funding that may have gone to any of the end-user sites in the current proposal via a grant received by another entity.
- Discuss whether or not any of the sites in the current project are included as participants in another application for a Fiscal Year 2021 DLT Grant.
- In the absence of any explanation, overlaps in projects are assumed to be duplication and, as a consequence, the application could be deemed ineligible.

Failure to provide a well-written and thorough Telecommunications System Plan may result in the application being rejected.

J. Compliance with other Federal Statutes

Appendix A contains certification forms to demonstrate compliance with certain Federal statutes and regulations. There are five required certifications numbered from J-1 through J-5. The applicant attests to these certifications by executing and including the FY2021 DLT Checklist under this section. Certifications J-2 and J-3 require additional selection or discussion as stated in the certification.

A number of certifications which used to be required as separate forms are now addressed by the financial assistance certifications and representations in SAM.gov. Applicants are required to have made these certifications and representations as part of their SAM.gov registration in order to be eligible for a grant. See page 4 for more details.

FY2021 DLT Application Checklist can be found on our website:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>

Important Note: If the applicant is applying as a consortium which does not have the legal authority to contract with the Government (see page 5), each entity within the consortium must

provide a set of these certifications. However, if the consortium has a designated host entity which will be legally responsible for execution of the grant documents, only the host entity is required to submit certifications.

- J-1** Certificate regarding Flood Hazard Area Precautions
- J-2** Certification regarding Federal Collection Policies for Commercial Debt
- J-3** Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970
- J-4** Certificate Regarding Architectural Barriers
- J-5** Non-Duplication of Services Certificate

K. Evidence of Legal Existence and Authority to Contract with the Federal Government

Eligibility Criteria

The applicant must provide evidence with respect to legal existence and authority to contract with the United States Government (See 7 CFR 1734.4 and page 6 of this guide).

- 1. Legal Existence:** The applicant must provide acceptable evidence of legal existence. Corporations or LLCs must provide evidence of good standing in accordance with the laws of the state or other body under which they are organized. For entities that exist under law, rather than through incorporation or other action (such as school districts or hospital districts), a copy of the state statute, regulation, or other appropriate documentation must be provided to confirm the legal name of the entity. **Note: A SAM registration is not sufficient evidence of legal existence, neither is an IRS or state statement of tax status. Applications that do not demonstrate the applicant's legal existence as an entity that is eligible to apply for a grant will be returned as ineligible.**
- 2. SAM.gov registration:** The applicant must provide a printout of the organization's SAM.gov registration which (a) clearly identifies the CAGE code assigned by SAM.gov, (b) demonstrates that the Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations have been made as part of the registration, and (c) shows the registration was active **before** the application was submitted. The SAM.gov registration must remain active with current information while RUS is considering an application and while a Federal Grant Award or loan is active. To maintain the registration in the SAM.gov database the applicant must review and update annually. The applicant must ensure that the information in the database is current, accurate, and complete.

The Entity Name, DUNS Number and SAM.gov registration must be for the applicant. They cannot be for a parent, subsidiary or other affiliated entity.

It is important that the exact name of the legal entity applying for the grant be listed in block 8 of the SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance, and that the entity be legally eligible to receive the award and take legal ownership over items acquired under the grant.

Additional Guidance for Consortia:

As defined in 7 CFR 1734.3, a consortium means a combination or group of entities undertaking the purposes for which the distance learning and telemedicine financial assistance is provided. At least one of the entities in a consortium must meet the requirements of § 1734.4.

- a) If the applicant is an existing established consortium with the legal ability to contract with the Federal Government, the consortium itself must provide documentation as listed in Section K above.
- b) If the applicant is an informal consortium which by itself lacks the legal capacity to contract with the Federal Government, the applicant must have a legally organized fiscal agent which is part of the consortium and which submits the application on behalf of the consortium. There are two possibilities with respect to legal information for the informal consortium.
 1. The fiscal agent can serve as the host organization, i.e. assume sole responsibility for the grant, be the sole entity executing the documents, and be solely responsible for ownership and control of all assets acquired with the grant funds, regardless of where they are installed. In this scenario, the documentation as listed in Section K is only required from the fiscal agent.
 2. The fiscal agent can elect not to assume sole responsibility for the grant; instead, each organization within the consortium will be party to the grant agreement, will be responsible for the performance of the entire grant project, and will be able to own and control assets acquired with the grant funds. In this scenario, each entity in the consortium must submit documentation as listed in Section K above.

L. Environmental Impact and Historic Preservation

The applicant must provide details of the project's impact on the environment and historic preservation. Grants made under this part are subject to 7 CFR Part 1970 which contains policies and procedures for implementing a variety of Federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders generally pertaining to the protection of the quality of the human environment. The application shall contain a separate section entitled "Environmental Impact of the Project."

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 (see Appendix A) in accordance with 7 CFR Part 1970, for any external facilities that will be constructed with Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program funds. A copy of 7 CFR Part 1970 can be retrieved from: <https://www.ecfr.gov>.

Applications not proposing broadband facilities must provide an Environment Impact Survey consisting of a brief project description with a statement of why the project will not impact the environment.

M. Consultation with USDA State Director

The 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.

When requesting evidence of consultation with the USDA State Director, an applicant should provide an executive summary of the project as well as the proposed grant and match amounts to enable the State Director to make an informed determination. Failure to provide this information may delay receipt of the State Director's response.

Note: Applicants should contact the USDA State Director as early as possible in the application process. A listing of the State Rural Development Offices can be found at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.

N. Supplemental Information

The 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.

Appendix A - Forms

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Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

All applicants requesting funding under the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program must complete the Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), on Grants.gov. Additional instructions for specific line items also are included below. The form and any attachments referenced in this Guide can also be found on our website at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>.

Additional Instructions for the SF-424

Block 1: Applicants should select “Application” for their submission. If an applicant makes changes to a submitted application, please select “Change/Corrected Application” for the resubmission. For applications with more than one copy submitted through Grants.gov, the Agency will base its evaluation on the last copy of the application submitted.

Block 8: There are multiple entries in this block. The contact information provided in this box will be used by RUS for all contact and correspondence. Full, accurate contact information must be provided for someone with the authority to answer any questions that RUS staff may have about the application.

As required by the Office of Management and Budget, all applicants for grants must supply a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. See instructions on Page 4 of this guide for assistance in obtaining a DUNS number

Block 10: The Name of the Federal Agency is Rural Utilities Service.

Block 11: The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number is 10.855.

Block 12: Funding Opportunity Number is RUS-21-01-DLT. The Title is “Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program”.

Block 14: Please use the Site Worksheet to provide this information

Block 15: Brief descriptive title of project. **Upload all application sections using the “Add Attachments” button under Block 15.**

Block 16: Please use the Site Worksheet to provide this information

Block 19: Program is covered by E.O. 12372. Go to https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/spoc_1_16_2020.pdf for state office contact information. Applicants must select option (a) or (b) determined by state participation. Use the above link to determine if the state, for which applicant resides, participates in SPOC.

Block 20: An explanation of the delinquency must be provided if “yes” is checked. This can be handled through the DLT Checklist (see page 47).

Block 21: Please be sure to check “I agree”. The application must be submitted by an authorized representative of the organization that will own and operate the project if the grant is awarded.

Site Worksheet

The site worksheet can be found at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>

Instructions for Completing Site Worksheet

1. Use the Excel worksheets provided on the Agency's website at:
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>
Please insert additional rows as needed to accommodate the Sites.
2. **Site Number** – Number each Site consecutively regardless of its designation. This number should be used consistently to identify each site in the Site Worksheet, Rurality Worksheet, Economic Need Worksheet, and Budget Worksheet.
3. **Site Name** – Input the official name of the site. Use this name consistently in the Site Worksheet, Rurality Worksheet, Economic Need Worksheet, and Budget Worksheet.
4. **Site Designation** – Designate each Site as Hub, Hub/End-User, or End-User according to the guidance on Page 14 of this guide.
5. **Street Address, Town, County, State, 5 Digit ZIP** – Input the Street Address, Town or Place Name, County, State, and 5 Digit ZIP code for the Site location.
6. **Congressional District** – Input the Congressional District in which the Site is located. This information can be found on the House of Representatives website: www.house.gov.

Rurality Worksheet

The rurality worksheet can be found at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>

Instructions for Completing Rurality Worksheet

1. Use the Excel worksheets provided on the Agency's website at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>. Please insert additional rows as needed to accommodate the Sites.
2. **Site Number** – Number each Site consecutively regardless of its designation. This number should be used consistently to identify each site in the Site Worksheet, Rurality Worksheet, Economic Need Worksheet, and Budget Worksheet.
2. **Site Name** – Input the official name of the site. Use this name consistently in the Site Worksheet, Rurality Worksheet, Economic Need Worksheet, and Budget Worksheet.
3. **Site Designation** – Designate each Site as Hub, Hub/End-User, or End-User according to the guidance on Page 14 of this guide.
4. **Town or Place Name** – Input the Town or Place Name, in which the Site is located.
5. **Census Population** – Input the population from the 2010 Census, guidance provided in Appendix B. If town or place is not located in the Census, there is a possibility that the community is so rural that it is not associated with any Census- recognized community. If this is the case, the location would be considered by the DLT Program as ‘Census Rural.’
6. **Is Site in a Town contiguous and adjacent to a City or Town > 50,000?** - Choose Yes or No from the dropdown list to indicate if there is an adjacent urban community, based on the DLT Map, guidance provided in Appendix B.
7. **Name of Adjacent Urban City or Town (if Yes in prev. col.)** - If there is an adjacent city or town with a population > 50,000, enter the name of that city or town.
8. **Rurality Score for each Site** – Input the Rurality Score for each site according to the following table:

EXCEPTIONALLY RURAL AREA – **5,000 and under: 40 Points**. Any area of the USA not included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population in excess of 5,000 inhabitants and not part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

RURAL AREA – 5,001-10,000: 30 Points. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population over 5,000 and not in excess of 10,000 inhabitants and not part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

MID-RURAL AREA – 10,001-20,000: 20 Points. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population over 10,000 and not in excess of 20,000 inhabitants and not part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

URBAN AREA - Over 20,000: 0 Points. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population in excess of 20,000 inhabitants or part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

9. **Rurality Score for the Application** – Calculate the score for the application by taking the average of the scores for sites designated as end-users or hub/end-users. Do not include pure hubs in the calculation, except for hubs serving non-fixed end user sites. Enter the average in the space provided, rounding to two decimal places.

Economic Need Worksheet

The economic need worksheet can be found at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>

Instructions for Completing Economic Need Worksheet

1. Use the Excel worksheets provided on the Agency's website at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>. Please insert additional rows as needed to accommodate the Sites.
2. **Site Number** – Number each Site consecutively regardless of its designation. This number should be used consistently to identify each site in the Site Worksheet, Rurality Worksheet, Economic Need Worksheet, and Budget Worksheet.
3. **Site Name** – Input the official name of the site. Use this name consistently in the Site Worksheet, Rurality Worksheet, Economic Need Worksheet, and Budget Worksheet.
4. **Site Designation** – Designate each Site as Hub, Hub/End-User, or End-User according to the guidance on Page 14 of this guide.
5. **County** – Input the County in which the Site is located.
6. **SAIPE Percent Poverty, All Ages** – Input the percent of county residents that are impoverished as identified in the dataset released December 2020, which has data for 2019. The data can be found in the spreadsheet downloaded to the [DLT website](#) or at [US Census SAIPE data](#). If the site is located within a geographic area for which no SAIPE data exists (e.g. insular territories), enter 30%.
7. **Economic Need Score for each Site** – Input the Economic Need Score for each site according to the following table:

County poverty percentage \geq 30 percent	- 30 points
County poverty percentage \geq 20 percent but $<$ 30 percent	- 20 points
County poverty percentage \geq 10 percent but $<$ 20 percent	- 10 points
County poverty percentage $<$ 10 percent	- 0 points
8. **Economic Need Score for the Application** – Calculate the score for the application by taking the average of the scores for sites designated as end-users or hub/end-users. Do not include pure hubs in the calculation, except for hubs serving non-fixed end user sites. Enter the average in the space provided, rounding to two decimal places.

Special Consideration Worksheet

The special consideration worksheet can be found at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>

1. Use the Excel worksheets provided on the Agency's website at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>.
2. Document any special consideration request as described on Pages 17 of this guide. No special consideration points will be awarded if the claim is not properly supported.

Matching Worksheet

The matching worksheet can be found at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>

Instructions for Completing Matching Worksheet

1. Use the Excel worksheets provided on our website at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>.
2. List each matching contribution and the dollar value on a separate line.
3. Input the total value of the matching contributions in Line 1 at the bottom of the sheet.
4. Input the total grant request in Line 2 at the bottom of the sheet.
5. Calculate the percent match and input in Line 3.
6. Match must be a minimum of 15%
7. Matching funds must be documented as described on page 22. Place letters of financial commitment and other match documentation along with this form into Section E of the application package. Each external donor's match must be supported by a matching letter. Matches not properly documented will not be credited. Depending on the consequent reduction of the match, this could make the project ineligible (i.e., if resultant match is < 15%)

Budget Worksheet

The budget worksheet can be found at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dltworksheetsfy2021.xlsx>

Instructions for Completing Budget Worksheet

1. Use the Excel worksheets provided on the Agency's website at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>. Please insert additional rows as needed to accommodate the Budget items.
2. All budget items to be funded by the Grant or the Cash Match should be included in the upper section of the budget; this should be the majority of the budget. The lower section of the budget should only include In-Kind items. Remember that only non-depreciated or new assets can be contributed as in-kind items; no services can be included in this section.
3. **Site Number & Name:** Insert Site Number and Name, consistent with the Site Worksheet, Rurality Worksheet, and Economic Need Worksheet, where equipment will be installed.
4. **Description:** Provide a detailed description, such as brand and model number, for the equipment to be purchased.
5. **Unit Cost:** Provide the cost for purchasing one unit of the equipment.
6. **# of Units:** Provide the number of units to be purchased for the site.
7. **Extended Cost:** Provide the total cost for this line item (i.e. unit cost * # of units).
8. Place Totals of each section in the Totals boxes. **Round total request to the nearest whole dollar amount.**
9. Line A is the total cost of the project.
10. Line B is the total amount of Cash Match contributed to the project and supported by the Matching Worksheet and documentation.
11. Line C is the total amount of In-Kind Match contributed to the project and supported by the Matching Worksheet and documentation.
12. Line D is Line A minus Line B and Line C. This should reconcile with the Grant Request on the Form SF-424 Block 18 Line a. Federal.

13. Grant to Match check is the match provided on Line B + Line C divided by the grant request on Line D (* 100%). This should equal a minimum of 15%.

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program: Broadband Facility

Overview

The USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is required to assess the impacts of proposed federal actions, such as the provision of financial assistance through the DLT Grant Program, to the human environment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and other federal, state, and local environmental laws. Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program applicants proposing to construct Broadband Facilities must complete an Environmental Questionnaire (EQ) and submit it with their applications. The attached Environmental Review Fact Sheet can help to focus the environmental review process and the information provided as part of the EQ depending on the project activity. The EQ provides information to RUS so that it can either complete the environmental review process or determine the appropriate level of additional impact analyses needed, in accordance with RUS Environmental Policies and Procedures, 7 CFR 1970 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=be582d41f15145ec19384e8522198e33&mc=true&node=pt7.14.1970&rgn=div5>). RUS will notify applicants if additional information or analyses are necessary beyond what was submitted in the EQ.

No construction activities may begin until final environmental approval from RUS is granted. In accordance with 7 CFR § 1970.12, awardees are prohibited from taking actions that may have an adverse environmental impact or limit the choice of practicable alternatives that may be considered until RUS has concluded the environmental review process. If the proposed project involves construction activities or property acquisition, the applicant is generally prohibited from acquiring, rehabilitating, converting, leasing, repairing or constructing property or facilities, or committing or expending Agency or non-Agency funds until after RUS has concluded its environmental review requirements.

An applicant may submit to RUS a copy of any environmental review document that has been prepared in connection with obtaining permits, approvals, or other financing for the proposed project from state, local or other federal agencies. Such material, to the extent determined to be relevant, may be used to fulfill RUS environmental review requirements. Applicants should not reference items provided in other parts of the application package in the EQ; all materials relevant to the EQ must be integrated herein to facilitate timely review.

NOTE: It is imperative an applicant start the consultation process with applicable agencies, if required, before submitting the application. If consultation is required, but evidence that the process has begun is not provided, or if special or highly sensitive issues are not adequately addressed, RUS may deem the application to be incomplete and reject it on that basis. Engage relevant agencies early; be aware of any significant issues before applying; consider designs that bypass sensitive areas, and work to fully address the requested information.

Requested Information

- 1. Project Description and Location:** Describe all project-related construction activities, including, but not limited to, the construction or renovation of any buildings, the construction and installation of cable (buried or aerial), or the installation of telecommunications transmission facilities, including construction of new towers or collocations. Complete descriptions, locations and mapping must be provided for each site affected by project-related construction activities (recommend U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle maps at a map scale of 1: 24,000; larger scale maps may be provided for site-specific proposals). USGS maps may be obtained and purchased at the following website: <http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod/maps.html>. All project elements, if known at the time of the application, must be clearly depicted on any map provided. If appropriate, photographs or aerial photographs of site-specific proposals may be provided.
- 2. Land Use:** Describe the amount of property to be cleared, excavated, fenced, or otherwise disturbed by the proposed project, and the current land use and zoning for each project site affected by construction. Document whether the proposed project is located on public land owned or managed by the federal government. For information related to federal lands see the following website (<http://navigator.blm.gov>). This website provides cadastral survey and land management information and data from the National Integrated Land System specifically the distribution of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS), other survey-based data, and federal land boundaries. Detailed guidance related to evaluating impacts related to land use can be found in Subpart L of Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (<http://www.rd.usda.gov/files/1970l.pdf>)
- 3. Wetlands:** Describe and indicate whether wetlands are present on or near the project site(s) affected by proposed construction (maps of wetlands may be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory website (<https://fws.gov/wetlands/>), or from soil maps obtained from the USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service's website (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/soils/home/>), focusing on areas of hydric soil(s)). If wetlands are identified within the project area, please document where the project components will be located in relation to the identified wetland areas. Detailed guidance related to evaluating impacts to wetlands can be found in Subpart G of Rural

Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures
(<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/1970g.pdf>).

4. **Threatened and Endangered Species:** Describe and indicate whether any proposed project site(s) will directly or indirectly affect any threatened, endangered or candidate species, or is/are within or near critical habitats. Applicants must provide species lists and appropriate species accounts (i.e. requisite habitat) for each county affected by construction obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website (<https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>). Information about potential critical habitat areas should also be included and can be found on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website noted above. The attached Environmental Review Fact Sheet gives further detail on the information to provide. Detailed guidance related to evaluating impacts to threatened and endangered species can be found in Subpart N of Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/1970n.pdf>).
5. **Floodplains:** Describe and indicate whether or not any facility(ies) or site(s) are located within a 100-year or 500-year floodplain. If any project-related construction activities are within a floodplain, a copy of a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that depicts construction activities must be included. Information related to floodplains and National Flood Insurance Maps may be obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) website (<https://msc.fema.gov/portal>). Detailed guidance related to evaluating impacts to and from floodplains can be found in Subpart F of Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/1970f.pdf>).
6. **Coastal Areas:** Determine whether or not the project is within the boundaries of a coastal zone management area (CZMA). For boundary related and contact information related to CZMA, see National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management's website (<https://coast.noaa.gov/>) Detailed guidance related to evaluating impacts to coastal areas can be found in Subpart O of Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/1970o.pdf>).
7. **Brownfields:** Determine whether the project is located within a brownfield site. Per 42 U.S.C. 9601, the term "brownfield site" means real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Maps and locations of sites, facilities and properties that have been contaminated by hazardous materials and are being, or have been, cleaned up under EPA's Superfund, RCRA or brownfields cleanup programs can be found at the EPA's Cleanups in My Community website (<https://www.epa.gov/cleanups/cleanups-my-community>). Detailed guidance related to evaluating impacts from locating projects at brownfield sites can be found in Subpart J of

Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures
(<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/1970j.pdf>).

Section 106 Review: Applicants are delegated the authority to initiate consultation with State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) and engage with interested tribes related to their projects. Prior to initiating any communications, please see the attached Environmental Review Fact Sheet to determine whether the proposed project will require such communication. In some cases, statewide programmatic agreements may apply, please contact RUS for more information. Detailed guidance and template letters related to evaluating impacts to historic and cultural resources can be found at Subpart H of Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/1970h.pdf>).

Applications Not Subject to FCC Section 106 Reviews

Applicants who propose to use Federal Communications Commission (FCC) spectrum for their telecommunications towers and collocations note that the FCC has regulatory requirements for licensing radio spectrum to be carried by these facilities, and an established review process for ensuring compliance with Section 106 of NHPA. If the proposed tower or collocation will use FCC licensed spectrum, regardless of the height of the telecommunications tower, applicants must complete FCC's Section 106 review process – see: http://wireless.fcc.gov/siting/historic_preservation.html. If an application proposes a tower or collocation that will carry FCC spectrum, RUS has agreed that FCC will conduct Section 106 review for those facilities.

Applications Not Subject to FCC Section 106 Reviews or Statewide Programmatic Agreements

RUS will conduct Section 106 review for any new tower or collocation which will not carry FCC regulated spectrum and any other construction component of an application not subject to FCC review. Please follow the guidance in the attached Environmental Review Fact Sheet and in Subpart H of Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures to include all applicable information in the EQ (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/1970h.pdf>).

Additional Assistance/Contact Information

In addition to the resource specific references provided above, general NEPA related information and guidance can be found on the CEQ website (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/>) or on the environmental section of the RUS website at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/publications/environmental-studies/environmental-guidance>.

For information related to Section 106 of NHPA, see the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website - <https://www.achp.gov/digital-library-section-106-landing/citizens-guide-section-106-review>

Compliance Forms

Federal Statute/Regulation	Evidence of Compliance	Attachment
42 U.S.C. 4001 through 4128; 7 CFR 1734.25(i)(3)	<p>Certification regarding Flood Hazard Area Precautions</p> <p>Language is included on the following page; applicant certifies to the language by including the signed Application Checklist. Applicant must indicate whether or not any buildings which are part of the project fall within a 100-year flood plain and, if so, must attach a statement explaining who is or will be providing flood insurance. The checklist template includes a worksheet with a text box for the statement.</p>	J-1
28 U.S.C. 3201(e); 7 CFR 1734.25(l)	<p>Applicant Certification Federal Collection Policies for Commercial Debt</p> <p>Language is included on the following pages; applicant certifies to the language by including the signed Application Checklist. Applicant must indicate if it delinquent on any federal debt and, if so, must attach explanatory information. The checklist template includes a worksheet with a text box for the explanation.</p>	J-2
42 U.S.C. 4601-4655; 49 CFR 24 and 7 CFR 21	<p>Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 Certification</p> <p>Language is included on the following pages; applicant certifies to the language by including the signed Application Checklist.</p>	J-3
42 U.S.C. 4151 <i>et seq.</i> ; Appendix A to 41 CFR subpart 101-19.6	<p>Certification regarding Architectural Barriers</p> <p>Language is included on the following pages; applicant certifies to the language by including the signed Application Checklist.</p>	J-4
7 CFR 1734.25(b)(8)	<p>Non-Duplication of Services Certificate</p> <p>Language is included on the following pages; applicant certifies to the language by including the signed Application Checklist.</p>	J-5

Certificate Regarding Flood Hazard Area Precautions

If the project is located in an area subject to flooding, flood insurance must be provided to the extent available and required under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended by the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4001 through 4128). If applicable, the insurance must cover, in addition to the buildings, any machinery, equipment, fixtures, and furnishings contained in the buildings. Rural Utilities Service will comply with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management (3 CFR, 1977 Comp., p. 117), and 7 CFR 1970, of this chapter in considering the application for the project.

Please provide an explanation below to the following questions:

Is the project not located in a 100-year flood plain; and therefore, no Flood Insurance is required?

Or

Is the project is located in a 100-year flood plain? If yes, who is or will be providing the required insurance.

Fill in the explanation:

The Applicant hereby certifies, that, as a prospective recipient under the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program, it is in compliance, or will be in compliance during construction or installation of equipment and upon completion of the project, with the above referenced law.

Federal Obligations Certification on Delinquent Debt

IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?

Note: Example of debts include, but are not limited to, delinquent taxes, guaranteed or direct government loans (more than 31 days past due) and other administrative debts.

If Yes, provide explanatory information.

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

FEDERAL COLLECTION POLICIES FOR COMMERCIAL DEBT

The Federal Government is authorized by law to take any or all of the following actions in the event that a borrower's loan payments become delinquent or the borrower defaults on its loan: (1) Report the borrower's delinquent account to a credit bureau; (2) Assess additional interest and penalty charges for the period of time that payment is not made; (3) Assess charges to cover additional administrative costs incurred by the Government to service the borrower's account; (4) Offset amounts owed to the borrower under other Federal programs; (5) Refer the borrower's debt to the Internal Revenue Service for offset against any amount owed to the borrower as an income tax refund; (6) Refer the borrower's account to a private collection agency to collect the amount due; and (7) Refer the borrower's account to the Department of Justice for litigation in the courts.

All of these actions can and will be used to recover any debts owed when it is determined to be in the interest of the Government to do so.

Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition

Policies Act of 1970 Certification

The Applicant assures that it will comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act) as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4601-4655, and with implementing Federal regulations in 49 CFR 24 and 7 CFR 21.

Specifically, the Applicant assures that:

Whenever Federal financial assistance is used to pay for any part of the cost of a program or project which will result in the displacement of any person;

- (a) Fair and reasonable relocation payments and assistance shall be provided to or for displaced persons in accordance with sections 202, 203, and 204 of the Uniform Act,
- (b) Relocation assistance programs offering the services described in section 205 of the Uniform Act shall be provided to displaced persons, and
- (c) Within a reasonable period of time prior to displacement, comparable replacement dwellings will be available to displaced persons in accordance with section 205(c) (3) of the Uniform Act.

Certificate Regarding Architectural Barriers

All facilities financed with RUS grants that are open to the public, or in which physically handicapped persons may be employed or reside, must be designed, constructed, or altered to be readily accessible to and usable by handicapped persons. Standards for these facilities must comply with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4151 *et seq.*), and with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS), (Appendix A to 41 CFR subpart 101-19.6).

As a prospective primary participant recipient of financial assistance from RUS, this organization commits to carry out RUS' established policy to comply with the requirements of the above referenced law to the effect that all facilities must be readily accessible to and usable by handicapped persons.

The Applicant hereby certifies, that, as a prospective recipient under the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant, it is in compliance, or will be in compliance upon completion of the project, with the above referenced law.

Non-Duplication of Services Certificate

As a prospective primary participant recipient of assistance from RUS, this organization commits to carry out RUS' established policy to comply with the requirements that no facilities using financial assistance will duplicate adequate established telemedicine services or distance learning services.

The Applicant hereby certifies that as a prospective recipient under the said Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program, that it will not use RUS grant funds to duplicate any adequate established services as referenced above.

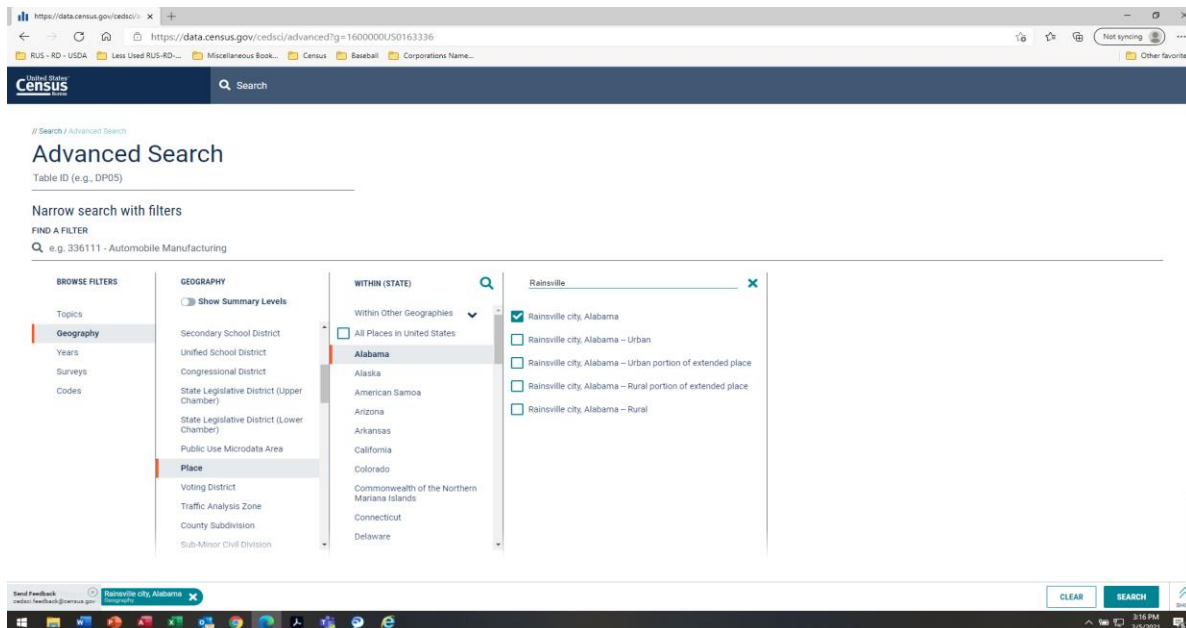
Appendix B: Determining Rurality using the Census Website and the DLT Map

There are two pieces of information needed to determine the rurality of any site: 1) the population of the town where the site is located and 2) the proximity of urban communities to the site. Although both pieces of information are based on 2010 Census data, the first comes directly from the Census website, while the second will be determined using the DLT Map from the RUS DLT website. Detailed instructions for each data source appear below.

1) Finding the Population of a Town Using the Census website

1. Go to the main page, <https://data.census.gov/>.
2. Select **Advanced Search** from the initial screen. This option appears immediately under the large search box.
3. In the left navigation column labelled **BROWSE FILTERS**, click on **Geography**.
4. In the new filter column labelled **GEOGRAPHY** scroll down and click on **Place**.
5. In the new filter column labelled **WITHIN (STATE)** scroll down and click on the name of the state or other territory within which the desired town is located.
6. In the new filter column labelled with the name of the state click on the magnifying glass near the name of the state. This will bring up a search box. Enter into the search box the name of the desired town.
7. The area under the search box should populate with options for the town name typed. Select the most appropriate choice (usually the first one) and then click the **SEARCH** button in the lower right portion of the screen.
8. Scroll through the **Tables** presented to Table P1, the 2010 Decennial Census, and select that. After a short delay, the 2010 population should display for the chosen town.

Example:



This example shows a search for Rainsville, Alabama. This is step 7, just before the Search.

United States Census

Search

ALL TABLES MAPS PAGES

About 60,857 results | Filter

EXPLORE DATA

5,041 Total Population in Rainsville city, Alabama
 Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

EXPLORE DATA

Rainsville city, Alabama Profile
 Rainsville city, Alabama is a city, town, place equivalent (CDP), or township located in Alabama. Rainsville city, Alabama has a total area of 20.6 square miles.

EXPLORE DATA

ACS 5 YRS 2004-2018

Public Use Microdata
 Create record level custom tables

Tables

ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES
 Survey/Program: American Community Survey
 Years: 2019,2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011,2010 | Table: DP05

TOTAL POPULATION
 Survey/Program: American Community Survey
 Years: 2019,2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011,2010 | Table: B01003

TOTAL POPULATION
 Survey/Program: Decennial Census
 Years: 2010 | Table: P1

AGE AND SEX
 Survey/Program: American Community Survey
 Years: 2019,2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011,2010 | Table: S0101

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOTAL AND NATIVE POPULATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES
 Survey/Program: American Community Survey
 Years: 2019,2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011,2010 | Table: S0601

GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES
 Survey/Program: American Community Survey
 Years: 2019,2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011,2010 | Table: S0701

COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS BY SEX
 Survey/Program: American Community Survey
 Years: 2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011,2010 | Table: S0801

Send Feedback
 usdoj-feedback@census.gov

2:18 PM
 3/5/2021

This is immediately after the search. Note that the population that is first displayed (5,041) is not from the 2010 Decennial Census, and is **not** the number that should be used.

United States Census

Search

ALL TABLES MAPS PAGES

2738 Results | FILTER | DOWNLOAD

TOTAL POPULATION
 Survey/Program: Decennial Census
 TableID: P1

Product: 2010_DEC_Summary File 1
 Universe: Total population

CUSTOMIZE TABLE

Label	Rainsville city, Alabama
Total	4,948

COMPARE | GET/COMPARE VALUES

Send Feedback
 usdoj-feedback@census.gov

3:22 PM
 3/5/2021

After clicking on Table P1, the decennial census table from 2010, which is the third choice of the Tables on the screen, the population value that is needed appears. It is 4,948 which is considered Exceptionally Rural on the Rurality Worksheet, tentatively assigned a score of 40 points, pending the check for an adjacent urban area. If the value that first displayed had been

used, the population would have been inaccurately labelled as Rural, which would be assigned a value of 30 points.

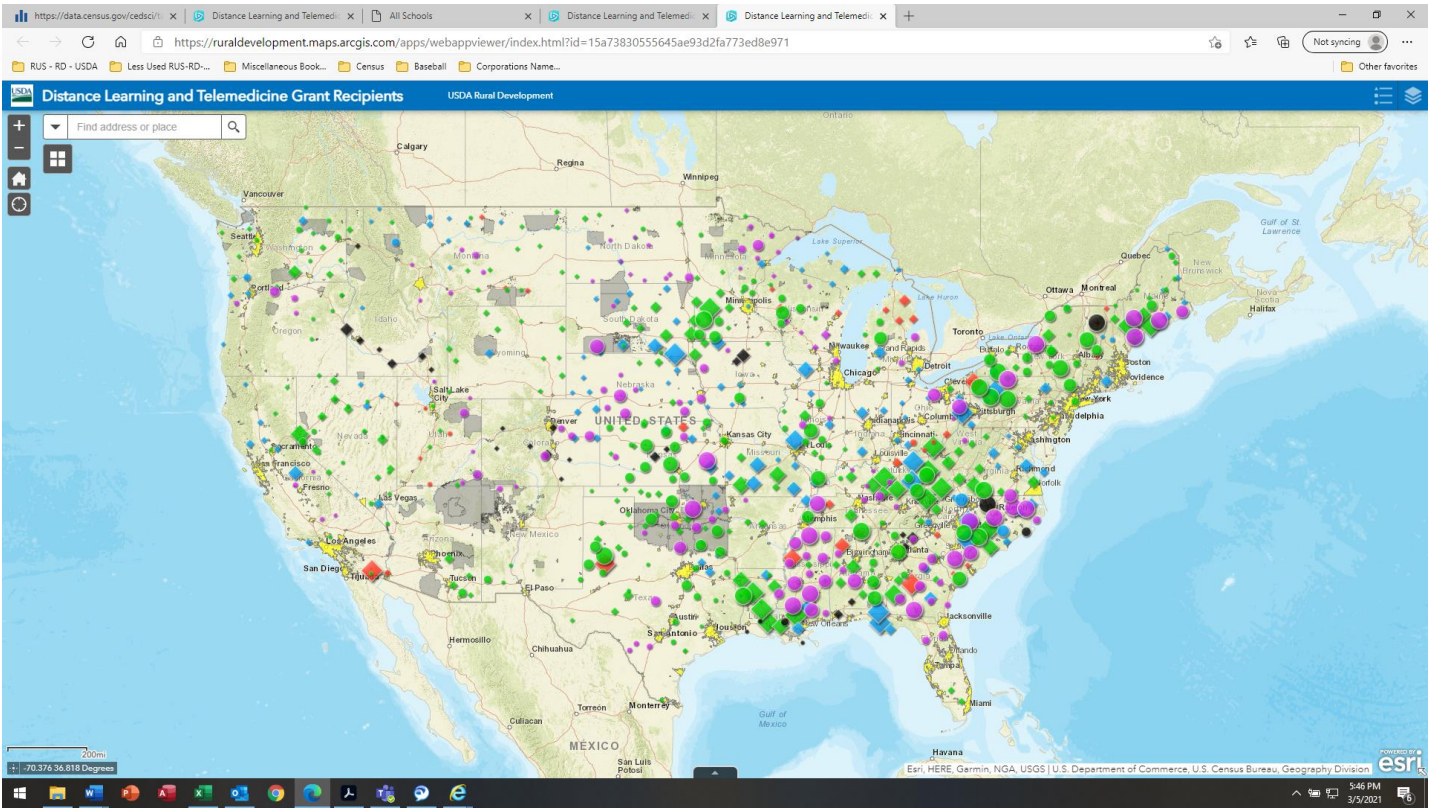
If any end-user site is not within the boundaries of a town or a *place* that can found in the 2010 Census data or found in the listing of cities, towns, and places in the recent Atlas, then mark that site as “Census Rural” and assign 40 points to it, if there is no adjacent urban area. If a site is identified as Census Rural, please include a .pdf map showing the site location with the application. The map may be created from any mapping software as long as the site location can be determined in comparison to other cities, towns, roads and other features. The location of the sites must be able to be verified to confirm their associated population and rurality scores.

2) Finding the proximity of urban areas using the DLT Map

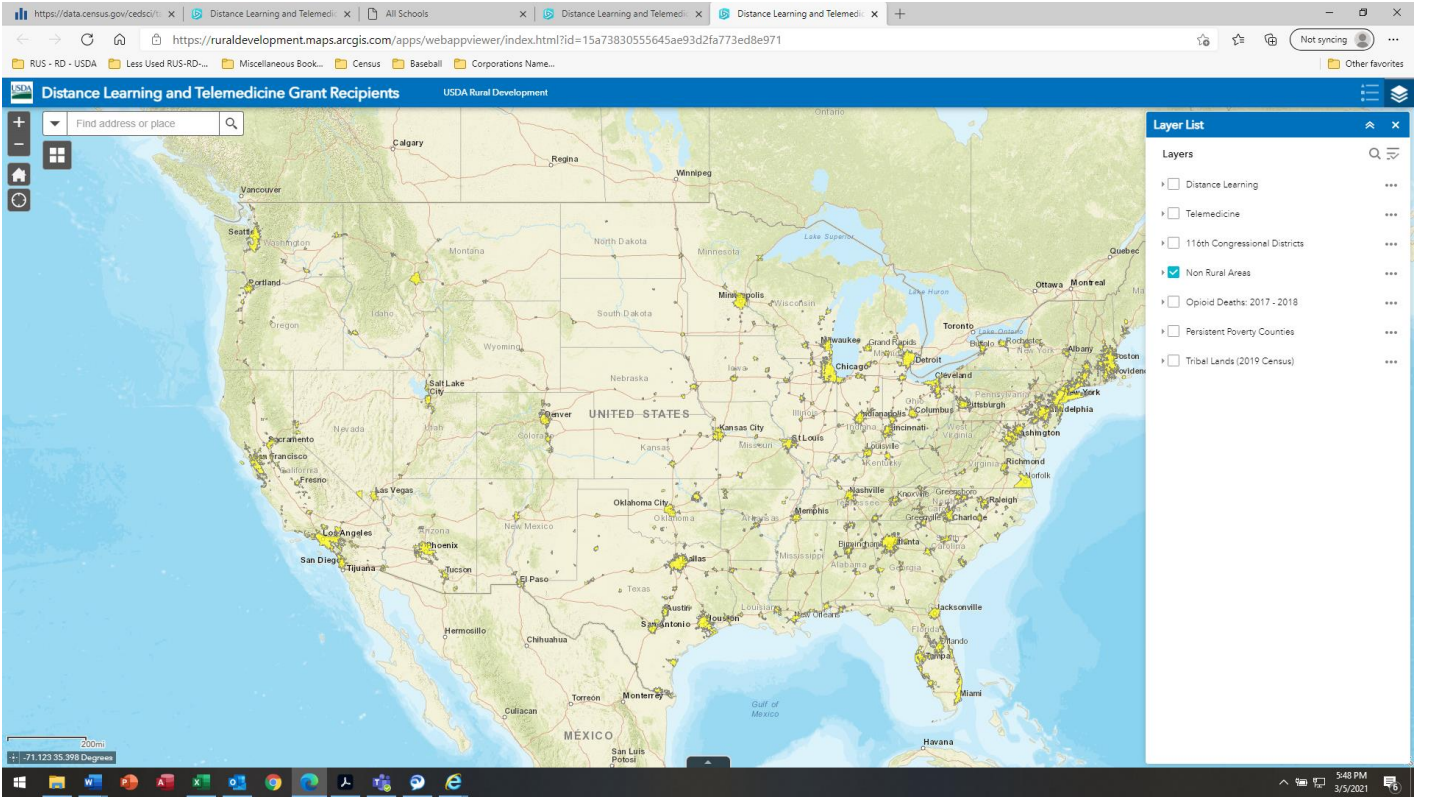
1. Go to the DLT Map, <https://ruraldevelopment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=15a73830555645ae93d2fa773ed8e971> .
2. To reduce clutter on the map, go to the list of Layers in the upper right-hand corner and uncheck every layer except the **Non Rural Areas** layer. The Non Rural Areas on the map are shaded for ease of identification. Currently the shading is yellow, although the color may change in future updates. Look at cities on the map to identify the color.
3. In the white box in the upper left-hand corner, enter the address of the site and search.
4. The map will zoom and recenter on the address entered. If the address is in a shaded Non Rural Area, it either lies in a town with population > 20,000 or is adjacent to and contiguous with an urban area around a city or town with population > 50,000.
5. If the site **is not** in a Non Rural Area, the town population confirmed using the Census data in step 1) above is the determinant of the rurality score for the site. Enter the appropriate information on the Rurality Worksheet. **Exception: If the town population associated with the site address from step 1) is > 20,000, but the site lies outside of the Non Rural Area, the site will be considered Mid-Rural and receive a score of 20 points. Add an appropriate footnote to the Rurality worksheet.**
6. If the site **is** in a Non Rural Area, zoom out to identify which adjacent city or town with population > 50,000 is the reason for the shading. Check the 2010 population of the adjacent city or town in question as directed in step 1) above; then enter that population and the name of the urban city or town where indicated on the Rurality Worksheet. The rurality score for the site will be 0 due to the proximity of the urban city or town.

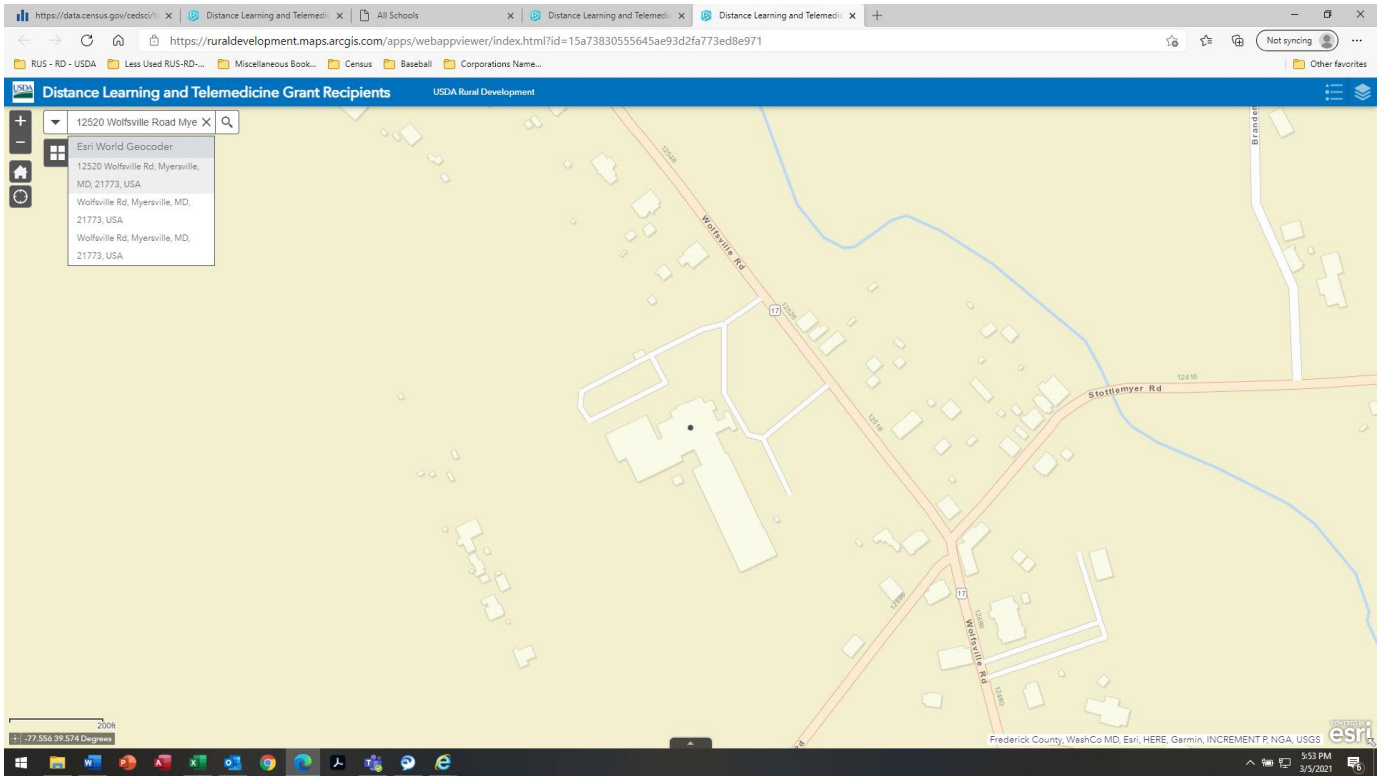
Example:

This example will show DLT Map screen shots for two different school sites in Frederick County, Maryland. The two schools are Wolfsville Elementary School and Woodsboro Elementary School. Wolfsville Elementary is located in Myersville, Maryland, which has a 2010 Census population of 1,626. Woodsboro Elementary School is located in Woodsboro, Maryland, which has a 2010 Census population of 1,141. Based on that data alone, both school sites would be Extremely Rural and receive 40 points.

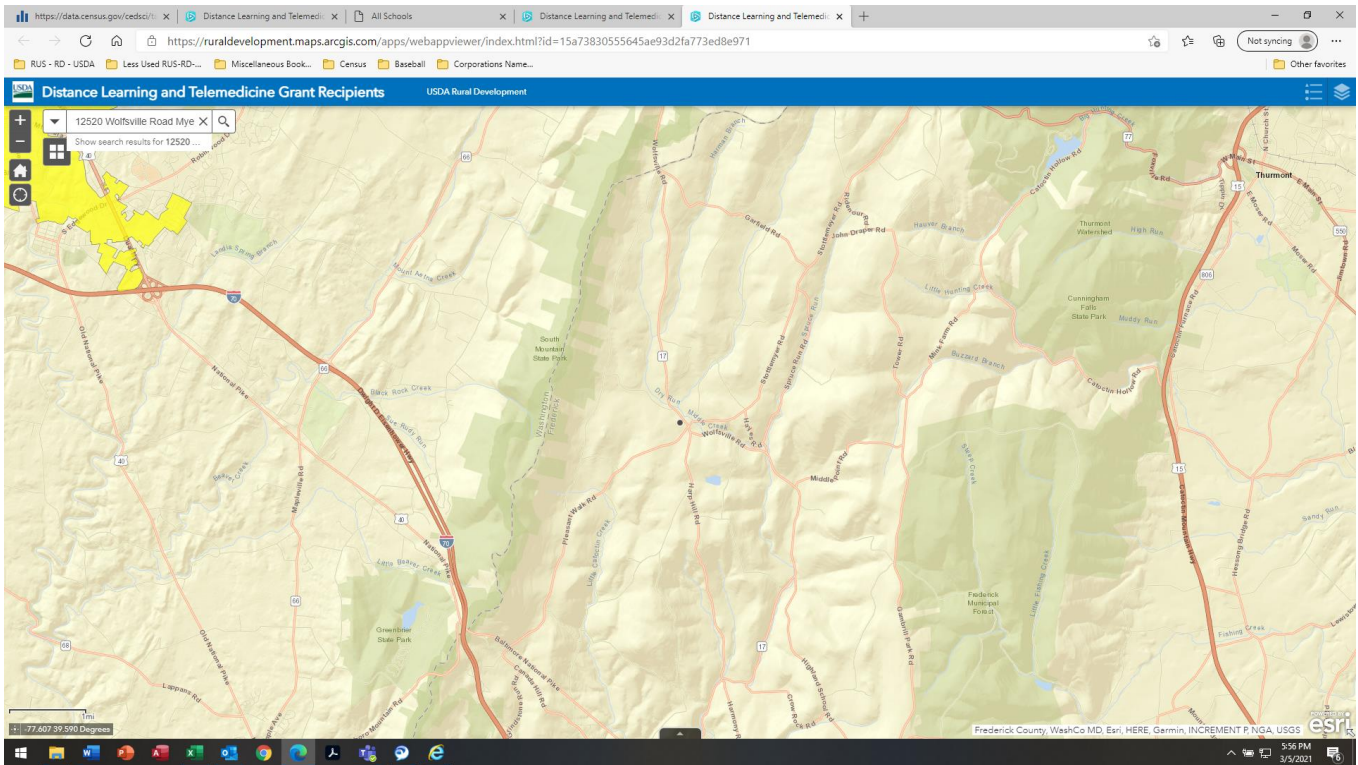


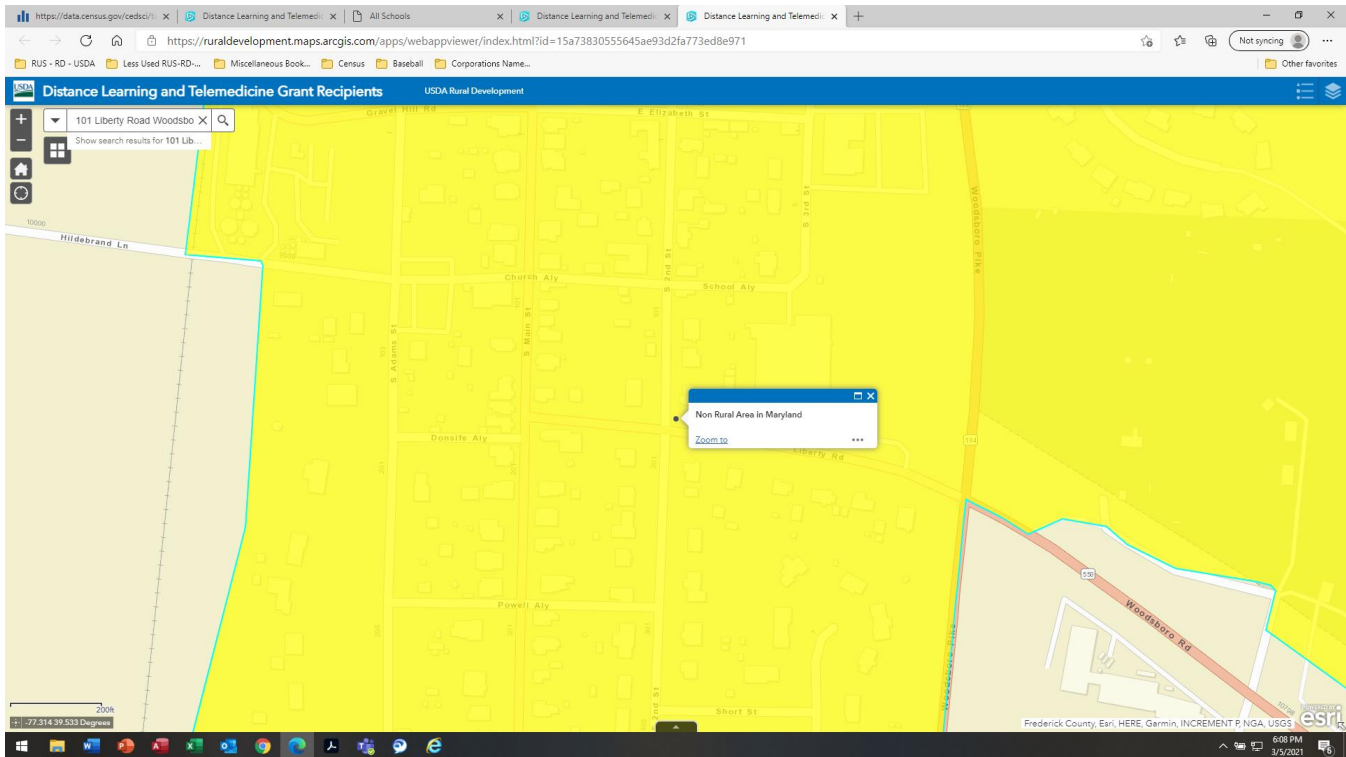
The first screen shot shows the DLT Map as it initially loads, while the second shows the Layer List with all layers other than Non Rural Areas unchecked. Note the yellow shading around major cities.





Above is the screen after the search for the address of Wolfsville Elementary School, which is identified by the dot. The zoom is very high, but the shading is clearly not yellow. The shot below is zoomed out to confirm the lack of shading. This site is Extremely Rural and would receive 40 points.





Above is the screen after the search for the address of Woodsboro Elementary School, which can be seen in the upper left. The bright yellow shading is clear, and clicking on the dot reinforces that it is Non Rural. Zooming out identifies the center of this shading as the city of Frederick, Maryland, which has a 2010 Census population of 65,239. This site is Urban and would receive 0 points.

