

E-COPERNICUS

RURAL LIBRARIES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ANNOUNCEMENT/DEADLINES:

RUS announced a Request for Proposals in [Federal Register](#) on May 7, 2010. The application window is 30 days with a deadline of June 7. Only paper applications will be accepted so plan on completing the application several days early.

FUNDING AMOUNT:

Up to \$2,000,000 is available for grants for Rural Library projects.

DESCRIPTION:

Awardees under the First Round NOFA or Second Round NOFA, or Applicants under the Second Round NOFA may submit a grant request for providing a broadband connection to any rural library in their proposed funded service area that was constructed or to be constructed with funding from USDA's Community Facilities program of the Rural Housing Service and that is without broadband service.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES:

The following entities are eligible to apply for assistance:

- a. Awardees under the First Round NOFA or Second Round NOFA; and
- b. Applicants under the Second Round NOFA.
 1. Applicants under the Second Round NOFA that have not yet been notified of the status of their application may apply for assistance; however, such submissions are at the applicant's own risk.
 2. Only those applicants that are ultimately selected as Awardees under the Second Round NOFA will be eligible to receive an award for Rural Library Broadband projects.

REQUIREMENTS:

The grant request must include the broadband connection to any rural library in their proposed funded service area that was constructed or to be **constructed with funding from USDA's Community Facilities program of the Rural Housing Service** and that is without broadband service.

Such costs need not have been addressed in the original application submitted under the First Round NOFA or Second Round NOFA.

If the costs were addressed, however, in the original application, the Applicant may request that such costs be converted to grant funds. Rural libraries that already have a broadband connection are ineligible for this program.

In addition to the connection to these unserved rural libraries, Applicants may also request funds to accommodate up to 10 workstations, as well as critical End-user Equipment and Telecommunications Terminal Equipment, as defined herein, to ensure that broadband service is not only available, but can be used by the residents of the community to be served.

If the Applicant will not be solely responsible for grant assets located in the rural library, then the rural library must be a co-applicant for the grant.

INELIGIBLE AREAS:

Rural libraries that already have a broadband connection are ineligible for this program.

Rural libraries that have not received funding under the First Round NOFA or Second Round NOFA are ineligible.

EVALUATION:

Applications for Rural Library Broadband grants will be evaluated in terms of the benefit to the rural library benefitting from the grant, as well as the benefits to the community to be served. The quality of the broadband service being provided, the length of any proposed free service or additional discounted service, the conditions of the community to be served, such as unemployment rate or income levels, and the reasonableness of costs will all be considered as a whole. RUS, in its discretion, may increase or decrease the requested award amount based on its evaluation of the reasonableness of the costs and the level of funding available for this program.

DISPERSEMENT OF FUNDS:

Awardees will be advanced funds no more than once per month for reimbursing the connection of new unserved, rural premises. The Awardee shall be entitled to the approved proposed subscriber amount of federal assistance for each new eligible subscriber.