



Attached is the most recent policy brief on the FCC's Rural Broadband Experiments program. In the attached document, we outline the nature and funding amounts available, who is eligible to apply, application deadlines and how to's, eligible area designations, and other specifics.

The FCC has made available \$100 million to fund the RBE program to build out broadband in rural areas over a ten-year term, with the majority of the funding going towards the most robust networks at speeds of 25 Mbps download/5 Mbps upload and greater. Recipients will be selected solely on cost-effectiveness, however, so how low of a bid an applicant submits will determine his competitive edge.

Applications are due **October 14** and Connected Nation stands ready to assist applicants as needed. Next week, we expect the FCC to release a list of eligible census blocks and the reservation prices associated with each block, so state maps of this information are likely to follow shortly.

**Attachments:** [Rural Broadband Experiments FAQ 24 July 2014.pdf](#)

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THE WHITE HOUSE                      Office of the Press Secretary

**FACT SHEET: Increasing Investment in Rural America**

WASHINGTON, DC – This week, the White House Rural Council will host the inaugural Rural Opportunity Investment Conference (ROI) to promote potential investment opportunities that exist throughout rural America. Top leaders from the business community and financial institutions, senior government officials, rural economic development experts and others from across the country, will come together to discuss ways to develop partnerships that create jobs, grow small businesses, and invest in critical rural infrastructure.

In conjunction with this event, the White House Rural Council is announcing a \$10 billion dollar investment fund to promote rural economic development. This fund will continue to grow the rural economy by increasing access to capital for rural infrastructure projects and speeding up the process of rural infrastructure improvements. The fund is immediately open for business and more investors can now add to the initial \$10 billion in available capital.

The ROI conference and the new investment fund are part of the Obama Administration's ongoing efforts to promote investment in rural America, strengthen the nation's infrastructure, and grow the U.S. economy. Since the creation of the White House Rural Council in 2011, the President has made historic investments in rural America designed to drive job growth, invest in rural education, provide emergency services, and address health disparities.

**Public-Partnerships at Work**

- **Rural Infrastructure Opportunity Fund.** The U.S. Rural Infrastructure Opportunity Fund represents a new approach to catalyzing private investment in infrastructure projects in rural America. CoBank, a national cooperative bank serving rural America

and a member of the Farm Credit System, is the fund's anchor investor, committing \$10 billion to get the fund off the ground. Capitol Peak Asset Management will manage the new fund and work to recruit more investors to add to CoBank's initial commitment. The Rural Infrastructure Opportunity Fund will allow America's rural economy to continue its forward momentum by enhancing access to capital for rural infrastructure projects and speeding up the process of rural infrastructure improvements. The fund is immediately open for business and more investors can now add to the initial \$10 billion in available capital. The new fund will allow a wide variety of new participants, including pension funds, endowments, foundations, and other institutional investors that have not traditionally had access to these markets to invest in rural development. In some cases, projects may be funded entirely through private sector dollars. In others, private dollars may be leveraged with and extend critical government loan and grant programs. USDA and other agencies will help to identify rural projects in need of financing through the new fund and through other such private sources and public-private partnerships. Target investments will include rural community facilities (especially health care and educational facilities), rural water and wastewater systems, rural energy projects, rural broadband expansion efforts, local and regional food systems, and other rural infrastructure.

- **Over \$150 Million Investment Funds to Grow Small Businesses, Create Jobs in Rural America.** Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the creation of an investment fund earlier this year that will help propel the growth of small businesses across rural America. The new rural equity fund will facilitate private equity investments in agriculture-related businesses. Advantage Capital Agribusiness Partners, which will manage the new fund, and nine Farm Credit institution partners, have pledged to invest over \$150 million into the new effort. USDA programs have historically provided loans or loan guarantees to help rural businesses grow, but before the creation of the Rural Business Investment Program, many small cutting-edge businesses did not have the opportunity to obtain equity support. With the creation and implementation of this new program, USDA is pleased to announce this first of multiple rural equity funds. USDA is currently accepting applications for additional new rural equity funds.
- **\$9.9 Million to Improve Health Care Quality and Address Rural Health Disparities.** The Department of Health and Human Services continues its efforts as part of the President's Improving Rural Health Care Initiative with \$5.5 million to the Delta State Rural Development Network Grant program and \$4.3 million for the Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement grant program. The Delta Network program invests in each of the eight States of the Delta region to address long-standing health care disparities. The Small Health Care Provider Quality program supports 29 grants that help rural health clinics, community health centers and small rural hospitals improve health care outcomes for rural residents with chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity.
- **Supporting Small, Rural Businesses.** Small businesses create about two out of every three jobs in the U.S. each year, and roughly half of working Americans either own or work for a small business. Small businesses are particularly crucial to the rural economy.
  - **Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative.** The American Farm Bureau Federation and Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business Global Social

Enterprise Initiative are collaborating on a multi-year partnership providing tools and solutions to help strengthen rural America. In the partnership's inaugural year, the focus will be on building greater economic security by launching a Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative together with Startup Hoyas, Georgetown's Entrepreneurship Initiative. Several opportunities will be announced for people interested in rural issues across the U.S. to actively engage with Farm Bureau and the Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative, including an online educational series, the first of its kind rural entrepreneurship challenge and a national summit scheduled for October 14th at Georgetown University. The White House Rural Council will partner with Farm Bureau and Global Social Enterprise Initiative to plan the national summit at Georgetown University.

- **Made in Rural America.** Earlier this year, the President [directed](#) the White House Rural Council to bring together federal resources to help rural businesses and leaders take advantage of new investment opportunities and access new customers and markets abroad. Department of Commerce Secretary Pritzker, Department of Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, Small Business Administration Administrator Contreras-Sweet, US Trade Representative Froman, and Export-Import Bank Chairman Hochberg are leading forums in rural America this summer to highlight opportunities for rural manufactures, value added producers, and service providers to grow their businesses by expanding to international markets. The partnership will also host a “Made in Native America” forum this fall to help Native-owned businesses access export opportunities.
- **Expanding Partnerships.** The Administration recognizes that effective partnerships have a catalytic impact on achieving the Administration priorities, such as increasing opportunity and economic growth in rural America. Good ideas generated by the ROI Conference will be carried forward by the following partnership networks.
  - **Regional Conservation Partnership Program.** The newly stood up Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) takes an innovative approach to furthering conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of soil, water, and wildlife on a regional scale. The program enables partners, using a competitive process, to propose conservation projects that will leverage federal dollars with non-profit, producer, and non-traditional investors in areas of the country with critical conservation needs. The RCPP will invest more than \$1.2 billion in natural resource conservation with a goal of doubling that effort through partnership contributions over the next five years.
  - **Georgetown University Law Center's Public Private Partnership Symposium.** In conjunction with the White House Rural Council's Rural Opportunity Investment Conference, the Georgetown University Law Center will introduce its inaugural Public Private Partnership Symposium. Over the coming year, the Georgetown Law will host three full-day sessions to advance the ideas and lessons discussed at the Rural Opportunity Investment Conference. By bringing together private sector leaders, government officials, and academic scholars, the symposium will broaden opportunities for partnering, provide a venue for sharing knowledge and best practices, and promote economic growth.

- **The Build America Investment Initiative.** The Administration is committed to increasing public private partnerships and collaboration on U.S. infrastructure. Just last week, the President announced the new Build America Investment Initiative, which will use executive authorities to increase the flow of private capital into transportation, water, energy and other infrastructure sectors. The ROI conference will directly inform the ongoing work of the Build America Initiative, helping federal agencies to encourage more investment into rural communities and to key rural infrastructure sectors.
- **The Rural Health Philanthropy Partnership.** This partnership between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Rural Health Policy, Grantmakers in Health and the National Rural Health Association includes more than 30 State and regional Foundations and Trusts that seek to improve health care in rural communities. In 2015, the Partnership is undertaking a Rural Funding Challenge with HHS dedicating \$5 million and seeking a matched effort from the philanthropic community.

### **White House Rural Council's Sustained Support for the Rural Economy**

Today's announcements build on three years [of sustained work](#) by the White House Rural Council to expand opportunity in all corners of rural America. The Rural Council has over twenty policy accomplishments supporting rural America in four priority areas: quality of life, innovation, economic opportunity, and conservation. These advancements will help ensure the development of a rural economy built to last. These actions include:

#### **Increasing Capital Access for Rural Small Businesses**

USDA and SBA committed to providing \$175 million in microloans to small businesses in rural areas for Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014, in addition to new business training and counseling opportunities. To date the two agencies have supported over \$85 million to rural small businesses.

#### **Accelerating Broadband Infrastructure Deployment**

On June 14, 2012 President Obama signed an Executive Order to make broadband construction along Federal roadways and properties up to 90 percent cheaper and more efficient. U.S. agencies that manage Federal properties and roads are partnering to offer carriers a single approach to leasing Federal assets for broadband deployment. Providing a uniform approach for broadband carriers to build networks is speeding the delivery of connectivity to communities, business, and schools in rural America. In order to further expand the nation's broadband service, more than 25 cities and 60 national research universities are partnering to form "US Ignite." US Ignite is creating a new wave of services that will extend programmable broadband networks to 100 times the speed of today's internet. To further leverage private-sector involvement, a three-day Application Summit was conducted this June at the headquarters of Juniper Networks in Silicon Valley. This session made numerous connections that will strengthen rural and urban communities through innovative broadband applications. In total, this partnership will improve services to Americans and drive job creation, promote innovation, and create new markets for American business.

### **U.S Department of Education Investing in Rural Schools**

Through the national broadband plan, the Obama Administration is leveraging the power of technology to overcome distance and increase collaboration to accelerate student achievement in rural schools. The White House Rural Council partnered with the U.S Department of Education to deliver a new online community of practice groups for rural schools. This online tool is creating virtual communities of practice for educators to connect to resources, tools, colleagues, experts, and learned activities both within and beyond schools. As part of the push for broadband in public schools, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is investing \$2 billion over the next two years to dramatically expand high-speed Internet connectivity for America's schools and libraries — connecting 20 million more students to next-generation broadband and wireless. Private-sector companies have also committed more than \$2 billion to deliver cutting-edge technologies to classrooms. The Administration is using technology to break down geographic barriers and address rural isolation in education.

### **Local Food, Local Places**

Recognizing the role local food systems can play in regional economic development, the Administration launched Local Food, Local Places in June, 2014. This effort, a partnership between the US Department of Agriculture, the US Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Delta Regional Commission, provides direct technical assistance to twenty communities integrating local food production into their civic planning process.

### **Small Business Administration Investing in Rural Small Businesses**

The Administration extended more than \$400 million in FY 2011 of investments in rural America through the Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) Impact Investment Program, at no cost to taxpayers. Nearly \$2 billion in additional funding will be invested by the end of fiscal year 2016. These investments will continue to help finance, grow, expand, and modernize rural small business operations around the country.

### **Promoting a Bioeconomy through BioPreferred**

To support the Administration's "Blueprint for a Bioeconomy," the President is utilizing the purchasing power of the Federal government by directing Federal agencies to take additional steps to significantly increase the purchase of biobased products over the next two years, which will create thousands of new rural jobs and drive innovation where biobased products are grown and manufactured. Utilizing the existing BioPreferred program, the Federal government will use its procurement power to increase the purchasing and use of biobased products, promoting rural economic development, creating new jobs, and providing new markets for farm commodities. Biobased products include items like paints, soaps and detergents and are developed from plants, rather than chemicals or petroleum bases. The biobased products sector marries the two most important economic engines for rural America: agriculture and manufacturing.

### **Rural Jobs Accelerator**

The "Rural Jobs Accelerator" links Federal programs to facilitate job creation and economic development in rural communities by utilizing regional development strategies. The "Rural Jobs Accelerator" allows multiple agencies to coordinate technical assistance and grant/loan programs so that a consortium of public and private rural entities can have a single access point within the Federal government, creating improved access, streamlining of programs, and better leveraging of resources. USDA, EDA, Delta Regional Authority, and Appalachian Regional Commission have leveraged approximately \$9 million in funding, with additional technical support from various Federal agencies including Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Education.

### **Commercial Aviation Biofuels Partnership**

The Navy, the Department of Energy, and USDA have joined forces to spur the creation of an advanced biofuels industry that will support commercial aviation, with a pledge of \$510 million, over three years, under the Defense Production Act of 1950.

### **Unprecedented Investments in Rural America**

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*U.S. Department of Agriculture*

The White House Rural Council is chaired by Secretary Vilsack, who in his role as Secretary of the Department of Agriculture has made unprecedented state-by-state investments in rural America. The U.S. Department of Agriculture works with thousands of farmers, ranchers and others living in rural communities every day and knows that there is no limit to the economic potential of rural America. Over the past five years, USDA has made significant investments to support those in rural America who drive the rural economy forward, carry out record conservation efforts, facilitate groundbreaking research, promote new markets for rural products, and provide a safe, affordable and nutritious food supply for American families. Secretary Vilsack invites the private sector to continue building innovative partnerships that drive investments, economic growth, and prosperity.

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**[Carnegie Corporation of New York/New York Times I Love My Librarian Award](#)**

The Carnegie Corporation of New York/New York Times I Love My Librarian Award program recognizes librarians throughout the United States for exemplary service to their communities. Click above to learn more about the funding guidelines and application process.

**[Inter-American Development Bank: Greenovators Contest](#)**

The Greenovators contest, an initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank together with EARTH University of Costa Rica, aims to reward and promote climate change mitigation and adaptation projects led by youth. Click above to learn more about the funding guidelines and application process.

**[Department of Commerce: Community Resilience Center of Excellence Program](#)**

This program provides support for research to enhance the disaster resilience of communities and their built environment. Click above to learn more about the funding guidelines and application process.

Support for Social Justice Issues in the U.S. and Canada

**[Unitarian Universalist Association: Fund for a Just Society](#)**

The Fund for a Just Society, a program of the Unitarian Universalist Association, provides grants to nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and Canada that address issues of social and economic justice. The Fund supports organizations that use community organizing to bring about systemic change leading to a more just society and mobilize with those who have been disenfranchised and excluded from resources, power, and the right to self-determination. Consideration is given to projects that are less likely to receive conventional funding because of the innovative or challenging nature of the work or the economic and social status of the constituency. The maximum grant amount is \$15,000; however, most grants range between \$6,000 and \$8,000. Requests are reviewed two times per year; the next application deadline is September 15, 2014. Visit the Unitarian Universalist Association website to review the funding guidelines.

U.S. Artists Participation in International Festivals Funded

**[USArtists International](#)**

USArtists International, administered by the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, is committed to ensuring that the impressive range of the performing arts in the United States is represented abroad, and that American artists can enhance their creative and professional development through participation at important international festivals. Support is available to American dance, music, and theater ensembles and solo artists that have been invited to perform at significant international festivals anywhere in the world outside of the United States and its territories. Grants, which generally range from \$1,000 to \$10,000, will seldom cover the applicant's total expenses. The application deadlines for the 2015 grant cycle are September 5 and December 5, 2014, and April 17, 2015. Eligibility details and application guidelines are available on the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation website.

Grants Promote Tennis Programs for Children and People with Disabilities

**[USTA Serves](#)**

The mission of USTA Serves, the National Charitable Foundation of the United States Tennis



Association, is to promote programs that enhance the lives of at-risk children and individuals with disabilities through the integration of tennis and education. Grants are provided to tennis programs for underserved youth, ages 5-18, that include an educational component. Support is also available for tennis programs for people with disabilities (all ages) with a life skills component. Nonprofit organizations that are [USTA members](#) are eligible to apply. The upcoming application deadline is October 17, 2014. Visit the USTA Serves website to learn more about the grant program and application procedure.

#### Hardwood Planting and Management Supported

##### **Hardwood Forestry Fund**

The Hardwood Forestry Fund promotes hardwood timber growth, management, and education, as well as environmentally sound uses of renewable forest resources. The Fund supports projects on public land, including state, local, or university land, or on property owned by nonprofit organizations. Grants are provided for the planting and management of commercial hardwood species, with preference given to walnut, black cherry, red oak, white oak, and hard maple. The land must be allocated for multiple uses. Examples of planting sites include idle land being converted to forest; sites damaged by wildfire, insect or disease, ice, or wind storms; and naturally regenerating sites lacking desired stocking or species composition. The grant application deadlines are quarterly; March 31 and June 30 for Fall plantings, and September 30 and December 31 for Spring plantings. For more information, visit the Fund's website, call 877-433-TREE (8733), or email [info@hardwoodforestryfund.org](mailto:info@hardwoodforestryfund.org).

### ***Regional Funding***

#### Funds for Nonprofit Organizations in Selected States

##### **Heineman Foundation**

The Heineman Foundation provides support to nonprofit organizations in Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, and North Carolina. The Foundation's general areas of interest include the following: programs that enable economically challenged women to enter and remain in the workplace; environmental research that helps prevent water degradation; live music performance for education and outreach; research into prevention and treatment of childhood illnesses; programs that enable youth to think, create, and communicate effectively; and programs that promote high achievement in music, science, and literature. The Foundation provides seed money for start-up projects as well as new programs within existing organizations. The application deadline is September 1, 2014. Visit the Foundation's website to review the funding guidelines and to learn more about the application procedure.

#### Grants Enhance Grassroots Efforts in Colorado

##### **Wolcott Family Foundation**

The Wolcott Family Foundation supports nonprofit grassroots organizations throughout Colorado that focus on social change and environmental stewardship. Grants are provided to projects that emphasize environmental preservation, advocacy, and community involvement aimed at root causes of societal problems. Priority is given to organizations working to build community development that seeks to break the cycle of poverty, create economic opportunity, and build effective leadership in distressed communities (e.g. access to quality employment, leadership

development, and community participation). Organizations that demonstrate the interdependence of ecosystems and economics are also of interest. Grants generally range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The application deadline for 2014 is September 5. Visit the Foundation's website to download the funding guidelines.

Support for Oral Health Programs for Minnesotans

**[Delta Dental of Minnesota Responsive Grant Program](#)**

The Delta Dental of Minnesota Responsive Grant Program supports nonprofit organizations throughout the state that promote overall health through increasing access to oral health, and that address innovative solutions to the challenges of healthy living. The program provides grants, averaging \$10,000 to \$25,000, to nonprofit organizations that address the following priorities: The Safety Net category focuses on increasing access to oral health services by optimizing the capacity of the safety net oral health system. The Workforce category strives to improve access by assisting and expanding the oral health workforce and healthcare team. The Prevention and Education category aims to expand access to effective oral health education and prevention services. Requests are reviewed two times per year; the upcoming deadline for letters of inquiry is September 30, 2014. Information on funding criteria and restrictions is available on the Delta Dental of Minnesota website.

Conservation Programs in Alabama and South Florida Funded

**[Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation](#)**

The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation primarily provides support for the conservation of natural resources in North America and the Caribbean Basin, with emphasis on the United States. The Foundation's major program areas that are open for application include the following: marine resource conservation and management with a particular interest in fisheries; South Florida ecosystems (Everglades, Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay, and Florida Keys); and Alabama environmental issues. Site specific grants are limited to South Florida and Alabama. The Foundation's grants, averaging \$15,000 to \$25,000, require a one-to-one match. The final 2014 deadline for letters of inquiry is September 12. Visit the Foundation's website to learn more about each program area.

***Federal Funding***

Funds Available to Support Undergraduate Research

**[National Science Foundation](#)**

The Research Experiences for Undergraduates program supports active research participation by undergraduate students in any of the areas of research funded by the National Science Foundation. The application deadline is August 27, 2014.

Water Quality Improvements Supported

**[Environmental Protection Agency](#)**

The Training and Technical Assistance to Improve Water Quality and Enable Small Public Water Systems to Provide Safe Drinking Water program offers support to help improve small public water systems. The application deadline is September 2, 2014.

Program Supports Innovative Homeownership Efforts

**Department of Housing and Urban Development**

The Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) provides support to facilitate and encourage innovative homeownership opportunities. The application deadline is September 4, 2014.

Digital Humanities Projects Funded

**National Endowment for the Humanities**

The Digital Humanities Start-up Grants program supports innovative digital initiatives in any area of the humanities. The application deadline is September 11, 2014.

***Partner Depot***

**Unleash Your Potential at the UCP Nonprofit Program Conference**

Join us for two full days of strategies to help your nonprofit to achieve maximum impact and success. The UCP Nonprofit Program Conference features nationally-recognized presenters as well as networking and collaboration opportunities. This educational conference is geared toward nonprofit executives, program managers, and charitable leaders and will help you develop the skills to expand your organization’s reach and increase your funding. The 2014 conference will bring together unique insights and funding tactics that will help your nonprofit program succeed, expert educational strategy sessions to GROW your nonprofit organization, and vendor exhibits of innovative nonprofit services/products. The conference will be held October 12-13, 2014, in Arlington VA. [Click here to register!](#)

**International Economic Development Council 2014 Annual Conference**

*Steering towards the future with IEDC: convergence, connectivity, and creativity!*

Representing the spirit of the modern-day pioneer, the International Economic Development Council's 2014 Annual Conference will explore how communities around the world are meeting fresh challenges and transforming their economies for the future. With over 1,400 projected attendees, this event is essential for economic developers at all stages in their careers and at all levels within the profession. Expected participants include leaders from regional, state, county, and city EDOs; chambers of commerce and other business support organizations; community and neighborhood development organizations; technology development agencies; utility companies; educational institutions; consulting practices; redevelopment authorities; and state, local, and federal government offices. [Visit our website to learn more!](#)

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