

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture: Trump Administration invests \$3 million in high-speed broadband in rural Wisconsin

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CORNELL, Wis., Oct. 8, 2020 – The Trump Administration today announced that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$3 million to provide broadband service in unserved and underserved rural areas in Wisconsin. This investment is part of the \$550 million Congress allocated to the [second round of the ReConnect Program](#).

“USDA supports both farmers and rural communities through investments in farm operations and essential infrastructure,” USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey said. “Broadband is so important to farms and other businesses as it can help improve the quality of life in rural communities and help grow rural economies.”

Ntera, LLC will use a \$3 million grant to deploy a fiber-to-the-premises network to connect 2,044 people, 33 farms and 33 businesses to high-speed broadband internet in Chippewa, Rusk, and Taylor counties in Wisconsin.

“Rural Development achieves e-connectivity success when partners like Ntera LLC, step up to the plate to bring broadband to the most rural areas in the communities they serve,” Frassetto said. “Under the leadership of President Trump and Agriculture Secretary Perdue, we have been working tirelessly to be a strong partner to rural Wisconsin in building stronger and healthier communities, because we know when rural America thrives, all of America thrives.”

Background:

In March 2018, Congress provided \$600 million to USDA to expand broadband infrastructure and services in rural America. On Dec. 13, 2018, Secretary Perdue announced the rules of the program, called “ReConnect,” including how the loans and grants will be awarded to help build broadband infrastructure in rural America.

On April 20, 2020, USDA announced the Department has received 172 applications for \$1.57 billion in Round Two of the ReConnect Program. The second round will enable USDA to implement innovative new solutions to rural connectivity by leveraging financial options with our partners and continuing the success of the first round of funding. The application window for Round Two closed on April 15, 2020.

In Round One of the ReConnect Program, USDA invested \$698 million to bring high-speed broadband e-Connectivity to approximately 167,000 households, 17,000 rural small businesses and farms, and more than 500 health care centers, educational facilities and critical community facilities located in 33 states. To learn more about individual investments, read [USDA's Broadband ReConnect Program report](#).

USDA received 11 Round Two ReConnect Program applications that are eligible for the \$100 million Congress allocated to the program through the [CARES Act](#).

To learn more about ReConnect Program eligibility, technical assistance and recent announcements, visit www.usda.gov/reconnect.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov/wi, call us at 715-345-7600 or email wi-rd-stateoffice@usda.gov.