

# USDA Rural Development Wisconsin: To begin accepting applications on September 6 for USDA ReConnect Program Round 4 Funding

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**STEVENS POINT, Wis., August 10, 2022** – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Director for Wisconsin Julie Lassa today announced that the Department will begin accepting applications on September 6 for funding to expand access to high-speed internet for millions of people in rural America nationwide, part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to investing in rural infrastructure and affordable high-speed internet for all. USDA is making the funding available under the [ReConnect Program](#), which received new funding from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

“In today’s digital world, access to high-speed internet is critical,” Lassa said. “It is necessary infrastructure that enables connections, whether it’s to each other, students to schools, patients to health care providers, or businesses to new markets. Investments like the ones we are making through President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help close the digital divide and help rural residents build a brighter future.” [\[Audio: MP3, 579KB, 24 seconds\]](#)

USDA is making additional funding available for high-speed internet in Round 4 of the ReConnect Program. The Department will begin accepting applications on September 6 for up to \$150 million in loans, up to \$300 million in loan/grant combinations, and up to \$700 million in grants. The Department will use funds appropriated under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a historic \$65 billion investment to expand affordable, high-speed internet to all

communities across the U.S.

The application deadline is November 2.

USDA has made several improvements to the ReConnect Program for Round 4. Collectively, they increase the availability of funding in rural areas where residents and businesses lack access to affordable, high-speed internet. These include:

- Allowing applicants to serve areas where at least 50% of households lack sufficient access to high-speed internet.
- Adding a funding category for projects where 90% of households lack sufficient access to high-speed internet. For applications submitted under this category, no matching funds will be required.
- Waiving the matching funds requirement for: (a) Alaska Native Corporations, (b) Tribal Governments, (c) projects proposing to provide service in colonias, (d) projects proposing to serve persistent poverty counties and (e) projects proposing to provide service in socially vulnerable communities.

Additionally, to ensure that rural households that need internet service can afford it, all awardees under this funding round will be required to apply to participate in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The ACP offers a discount of up to \$30 per month towards internet service to qualifying low-income households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal Lands. The Department's actions to expand high-speed internet access in rural areas are key components of the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to help America build back better in its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Background: ReConnect Program**

To be eligible for ReConnect Program funding, an applicant must serve an area where high-speed internet service is not available at speeds of 100 megabits per second (Mbps) (download) and 20 Mbps (upload). The applicant must also commit to building facilities capable of providing high-speed internet service at speeds of 100 Mbps (download and upload) to every location in its proposed service area.

For additional information, see page 47690 of the August 4 [Federal Register](#).

To learn more about investment resources for rural areas, visit [www.rd.usda.gov/wi](http://www.rd.usda.gov/wi) or contact the nearest [USDA Rural Development office](#).

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans 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, tribal and high-poverty areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

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