



News Release

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Biden-Harris Administration Provides \$759 Million to Bring High-Speed Internet Access to Communities Across Rural America

Funding Includes Awards Made Possible by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 27, 2022 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the Department is providing [\\$759 million to bring high-speed internet access](#) to people living and working across 24 states, Puerto Rico, Guam and Palau. Today's investments include funding from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides a historic \$65 billion to expand reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to all communities across the U.S.

“People living in rural towns across the nation need high-speed internet to run their businesses, go to school and connect with their loved ones,” Vilsack said. “USDA partners with small towns, local utilities and cooperatives, and private companies to increase access to high-speed internet so people in rural America have the opportunity to build brighter futures. Under the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Harris, USDA is committed to making sure that people, no matter where they live, have access to high-speed internet. That's how you grow the economy – not just in rural communities, but across the nation.”

The \$759 million in loans and grants comes from the third funding round of the [ReConnect Program](#). As part of today's announcement, for example:

- North Carolina's AccessOn Networks Inc. is receiving a \$17.5 million grant to connect thousands of people, 100 businesses, 76 farms and 22 educational facilities to high-speed internet in Halifax and Warren counties in North Carolina. The company will make high-speed internet service affordable by participating in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Lifeline and Affordable Connectivity Programs. This project will serve socially vulnerable communities in Halifax and Warren counties and people in the Haliwa-Saponi Tribal Statistical Area.
- Tekstar Communications is receiving a \$12.6 million grant to deploy a fiber-to-the-premises network to connect thousands of people, 171 farms, 103 businesses and an educational facility to high-speed internet in Douglas, Otter Tail, St. Louis, Stearns and Todd counties in Minnesota. Tekstar will make high-speed internet affordable by providing its “Gig for Life” service, where households that sign up for internet will not have their internet prices raised as long as they stay at the same address and continue service. Tekstar also will participate in the FCC's Lifeline and Affordable Connectivity Programs.

- In Colorado, the Eastern Slope Rural Telephone Association is receiving an \$18.7 million grant to deploy a fiber-to-the-premises network connecting thousands of people, 898 farms, 110 businesses and 17 educational facilities to high-speed internet in Adams, Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Crowley, Elbert, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lincoln and Washington counties. The company will make high-speed internet affordable by participating in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program.

USDA is making 49 awards in Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, Wyoming, Puerto Rico, Guam and Palau. This list includes awards to The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, and the utility authorities for the Navajo Nation and the Tohono O'odham Nation. Many of the awards will help rural people and businesses on Tribal lands.

In 2022, the Department has announced \$1.6 billion from the third round of ReConnect funding.

Background: ReConnect Program

To be eligible for ReConnect Program funding, an applicant must serve an area that does not have access to service 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 with speeds of 100 Mbps (download and upload) to every location in its proposed service area.

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

Background: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

President Biden forged consensus and compromise between Democrats, Republicans and Independents to demonstrate our democracy can deliver big wins for the American people. After decades of talk on rebuilding America's crumbling infrastructure, President Biden delivered the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) – a historic investment in America that will change people's lives for the better and get America moving again.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$65 billion to ensure every American has access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet through a historic investment in broadband infrastructure deployment. The legislation also lowers costs for internet service and helps close the digital divide, so that more Americans can take full advantage of the opportunities provided by internet access.

USDA 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.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean-energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

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