

# SIMON AND COMPANY

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*Intergovernmental Affairs*

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## FEDERAL GRANT OPPORTUNITY

**FROM: Jen Covino  
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**SUBJECT: USDA RUS FY 2019 Community Connect Grant Program**

**DATE: February 22, 2019**

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has issued a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 **Community Connect Grant Program**. Award sizes range from \$100,000 to \$3 million depending on the service area population. The deadline to apply is **April 15, 2019**.

The purpose is to support broadband deployment in rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service. The goal is to stimulate economic development and provide enhanced educational and health care opportunities in rural areas. Grant funds may be used for the construction, acquisition, or leasing of rural broadband facilities; the cost of providing rural broadband service free of charge for two years; and up to ten percent for the improvement or construction of a community center that provides online access to the public.

Eligible applicants include State, local, and tribal governments; nonprofits; and for-profit companies. Grant applicants must demonstrate matching contributions of at least 15 percent of the requested grant amount. Eligible projects must be located in census-defined rural areas without broadband service. The minimum bandwidth that an applicant must provide to every customer is 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream for fixed and mobile service.

For more information, please see the [summary document](#), full [FOA](#) or [Program Website](#). RUS will also host [webinars](#) on the program for interested applicants on Tuesday, February 26, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. and on Thursday, March 7, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. For questions or assistance, you may contact the USDA Loan Origination and Approval Division at [community.connect@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:community.connect@wdc.usda.gov) or 202-720-0800. We would also be glad to make an inquiry on your behalf.