

Rural Utilities Service, USDA

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advanced technology system to provide educational or health care benefits primarily to residents of rural areas.

RUS means the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, successor to the Rural Electrification Administration.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture.

Technical assistance means:

(1) Assistance in learning to manage, operate, or use equipment or systems; and

(2) Studies, analyses, designs, reports, manuals, guides, literature, or other forms of creating, acquiring, or disseminating information.

Telecommunications carrier means any provider of telecommunications services.

Telecommunications or electric borrower means an entity that has outstanding RUS or Rural Telephone Bank electric or telecommunications loans or loan guarantees under the provisions of the Act.

Telecommunications systems plan means the plan submitted by an applicant in accordance with §1703.125 for grants, §1703.134 for a combination loan and grant, or §1703.144 for loans.

Telecommunications terminal equipment means the assembly of telecommunications equipment at the end of a circuit or path of a signal, including but not limited to facilities that receive or transmit over the air broadcast, satellite, and microwave, normally located on the premises of the end user, that interfaces with telecommunications transmission facilities, and that is used to modify, convert, encode, or otherwise prepare signals to be transmitted via such telecommunications facilities, or that is used to modify, reconvert, or carry signals received from such facilities, the purpose of which is to accomplish the goal for which the circuit or signal was established.

Telecommunications transmission facilities means facilities that transmit, receive, or carry voice, video, or data between the telecommunications terminal equipment at each end of the telecommunications circuit or path. Such facilities include microwave antennae, relay stations and towers,

other telecommunications antennae, fiber-optic cables and repeaters, coaxial cables, communication satellite ground station complexes, copper cable electronic equipment associated with telecommunications transmissions, and similar items.

Telemedicine means a telecommunications link to an end user through the use of eligible equipment which electronically links medical professionals at separate sites in order to exchange health care information in audio, video, graphic, or other format for the purpose of providing improved health care services primarily to residents of rural areas.

§ 1703.103 Applicant eligibility and allocation of funds.

(a) To be eligible to receive financial assistance under this subpart, the applicant must be organized in one of the following corporate structures:

(1) An incorporated organization, partnership, Indian tribe and tribal organization as defined in 25 U.S.C. 450b (b) and (c), or other legal entity, including a municipal corporation or a private corporation organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis, which operates, or will operate a school, college, university, learning center, training facility, or other educational institution, including a regional educational laboratory, library, hospital, medical center, medical clinic, or any rural community facility. A political subdivision of a State government, other than a political subdivision of a State government that operates a rural community facility, is not considered an eligible applicant; or

(2) A consortium, as defined in §1703.102. A consortium which includes a political subdivision of a State government is only eligible if the political subdivision of the State government operates a rural community facility; or

(3) An incorporated organization, partnership, Indian tribe, and tribal organization as defined in 25 U.S.C. 450b (b) and (c), or other legal entity which is providing or proposes to provide telemedicine service or distance learning service to other legal entities or consortia at rates calculated to ensure that the economic value and other benefits of the financial assistance is

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passed through to such other legal entities or consortia.

(b) At least one of the entities in a partnership or consortium must be eligible individually, and the partnership or consortium must provide written evidence of its legal capacity to contract with RUS and to obtain the applicable financial assistance. If a partnership or consortium lacks the capacity to contract, each individual entity must contract with RUS on its own behalf.

(c) Electric or telecommunications borrowers are eligible for loans only.

[64 FR 14357, Mar. 25, 1999; 64 FR 25422, May 12, 1999]

§ 1703.104 [Reserved]

§ 1703.105 Processing of selected applications.

(a) During the period between the submission of an application and the execution of documents, the applicant must inform RUS if the project is no longer viable or the applicant no longer is requesting financial assistance for the project. When the applicant so informs RUS, the selection will be rescinded or the application withdrawn and written notice to that effect sent to the applicant.

(b) If an application has been selected and the scope of the project changes substantially, the applicant may be required to submit a new application to RUS for review and consideration depending on the degree of change. A new application will be subject to review in accordance with this subpart. The financial assistance may not be transferred by the applicant for use for another project.

(c) If State or local governments raise objections to a proposed project under the intergovernmental review process that are not resolved within 90 days of the Administrator's selection of the application, the Administrator will rescind the selection and written notice to that effect will be sent to the applicant. The Administrator, in his sole discretion may extend the 90 day period if it appears resolution is imminent.

(d) RUS may request additional information to complete the appropriate

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documents covering financial assistance.

(e) *Financial assistance documents.* (1) The documents will include a grant agreement for grants; loan documents, including third party guarantees, notes and security instruments for loans; or any other legal documents the Administrator deems appropriate, including suggested forms of certifications and legal opinions.

(2) The grant agreement and the loan documents will include, among other things, conditions on the release or advance of funds and include at a minimum, a project description, approved purposes, the maximum amount of the financial assistance, supplemental funds required for the project, and certain agreements or commitments the applicant may have proposed in its application. In addition, the loan documents may contain covenants and conditions the Administrator deems necessary or desirable to provide additional assurance that loans will be repaid and the purposes of the loan will be accomplished.

(3) The recipient of a loan will be required to execute a security instrument in form and substance satisfactory to RUS and must, before receiving any advance of loan funds, provide security that is adequate, in the opinion of RUS, to assure repayment, within the time agreed, of all loans to the borrower under the DLT program. This assurance will generally be provided by a first lien upon all facilities and equipment financed by the loan. RUS may require additional security as it deems necessary.

(4) Adequate security may also be provided by third-party guarantees, letters of credit, pledges of revenue, or other forms of security satisfactory to RUS.

(5) The security instrument and other loan documents required by RUS in connection with a loan under the DLT program shall contain such pledges, covenants, and other provisions as may, in the opinion of RUS, be required to secure repayment of the loan.

(6) If the project does not constitute a complete operating system, the DLT recipient shall provide evidence, in form and substance satisfactory to