



ReConnect Program

Preparing to Apply: Getting Started & Engaging Your Community

Preparing to Apply Presentation Overview

- Key Terms & Abbreviations
- Engaging Your Community
 - Engaging, Mapping, and Assessing Your Community
 - Developing Your Application Approach
- Getting Started
 - Understand the ReConnect Program Rules and Requirements
 - ReConnect Application Account Set Up & Account Information
 - Creating Your Application
- Resources
- Q&A

Key Terms & Abbreviations

- **Funding Opportunity Announcement (or FOA):** The FOA represents the governing provisions for the ReConnect Program. The second ReConnect program FOA was published on December 12, 2019 in the Federal Register.
- **Proposed Funded Service Area (or PFSA):** The geographic area where an applicant is requesting ReConnect Program funds to provide broadband service.
- **ReConnect Online Application System:** The Online Application System, found at <https://reconnect.usda.gov>, is RUS's online platform where applicants can register, apply, and submit all relevant documentation. Please note, the Online Application System will be open between January 31, 2020 and March 16, 2020. This is the application window for all three funding categories.

Engaging, Mapping, and Assessing Your Community

Strategies for engaging your
communities





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Nearly 60 million
Americans live in
rural areas



Map Your Communities

- Key Considerations
 - Where do residents live?
 - Can I develop a project that is able to serve households throughout the service area?
 - Is there existing broadband service, and if so where is this service provided?
 - Are there areas in the intended service area that may be ineligible?
 - Are there planned community developments, expansions, or economic initiatives?

Assess Your Communities

- Assess expectations and performance: What do residents expect from the applicant in this project?
- Consider the following:
 - What is the level of need for broadband in this community?
 - What does the community expect from the applicant to be successful when their grant and/or loan has been awarded?
 - What level of support does the community expect?
 - How well is the applicant currently meeting their consumer expectations with current projects?
 - Will an applicant need to do extensive marketing efforts to reach this market - how will residents know about their service?

Develop Your Application Approach

Network, Financial, Environmental,
Evaluation Criteria, and Application
Documentation Considerations



Network Considerations

- Network design
 - Certified by a professional engineer (PE)
 - Certification that the proposed network can deliver broadband service at the required level of service to all premises in the PFSA
 - Ask yourself: Does my network design match the needs of the community I'm proposing to serve?
- Executive Summary
 - Applicants will be asked to describe their project as part of the executive summary in the application
 - The executive summary should include the solution overview, network speeds, type of service, premise type, and timelines
 - Ask yourself: Am I proposing reasonable and feasible solutions given the areas I plan to serve?

Financial Considerations

- Projects must be feasible and sustainable to be eligible for award. Requirements include:
 - Generate sufficient revenues to cover expenses
 - Produce sufficient cash flow to service all debts and obligations as they come due
 - Positive ending cash balance for each year of a five-year forecast period
 - Meet either a minimum TIER of 1.2, a minimum DSCR of 1.2, or a minimum current ratio of 1.2
 - Demonstrate positive cash flow from operations at the end of the forecast period
- Ask yourself:
 - What is your financial and operational status?
 - Where is your PFSA? What kind of access do people already have in that area? Who are the other providers?
 - What can customers afford to pay for broadband service?
 - Are these financial projections reasonable given the demographics of my PFSAs?

Environmental Considerations

- Identify the service area of the proposed project and be aware of any environmental and historic resource areas the project will impact
- Consider whether the project will require new rights of way and whether the project service area will impact native tribal land, protected farmland or federal land (land owned by Federal agencies other than USDA)

Evaluation Criteria

25 points	Rurality of the Proposed Service Area
1 point for every 10 farms, up to 20 points	Farms Served
20 points	Performance of the Offered Service (100/100 Mbps)
1 point each, up to 15 points	Businesses
1 point each, up to 15 points	Healthcare Centers
1 point each, up to 15 points	Educational Facilities
1 point each, up to 15 points	Essential Community Facilities
5 points	Opportunity Zones
20 points	State or Tribal Broadband Activity

Other Application Considerations

- Applicants should be aware of - and be making progress on - specific requirements that may be unique to their application such as:
 - Construction easements, licenses, and permits
 - Application support
 - Local and state involvement
- Begin collecting required documents

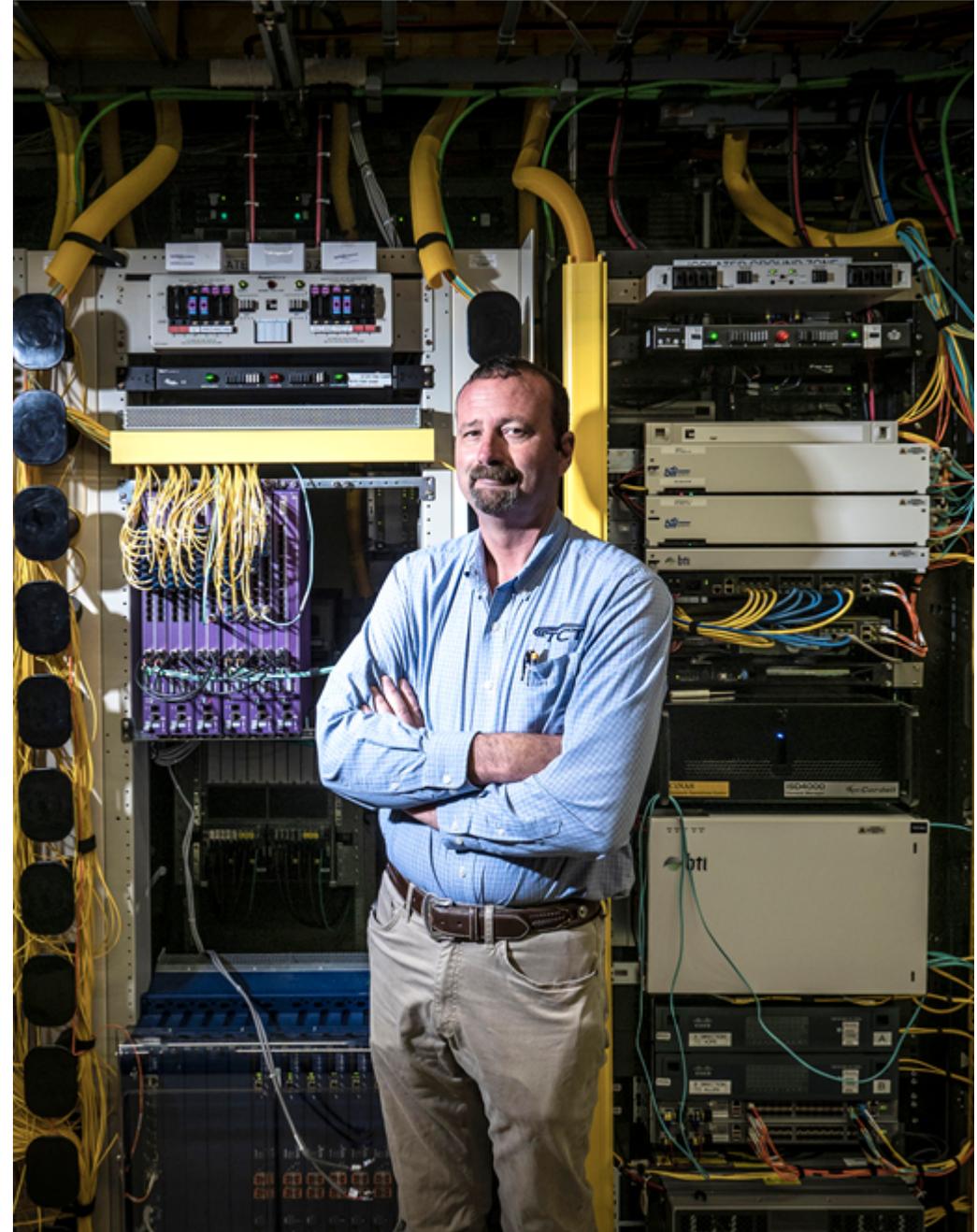
Getting Started

Preparing to apply for the
ReConnect application



How Does USDA Define Applicant Success?

- A successful application will:
 - Meet RUS's eligibility standards
 - Propose a project to service as many rural customers that do not have sufficient access to broadband as possible
 - Be submitted by the deadline: 6:00PM EST on March 16, 2020



General Reminders

- As you read the FOA and determine your PFSAAs, keep in mind the following:
 - Understand the ReConnect program rules and requirements
 - Plan your application approach
 - Keep in mind project considerations
 - Engage your community
 - Become familiar with the Online Application System
 - Always refer to the FOA
 - Apply only through the ReConnect Online Application System
 - Select ONE funding category for your project
 - Reach out with questions

Understand the ReConnect Program Rules & Requirements

Becoming familiar with the FOA and
key considerations



Become Familiar with the FOA

- Read the official 2019 Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and all eligibility requirements at <https://reconnect.usda.gov>
- Review other helpful materials located on the ReConnect Website
 - FOA Introduction and Overview webinar recording
 - FAQs
- Key requirements:
 - Apply online
 - Apply for ONE of the three funding categories
 - Funding category cannot be changed once selected
 - The Online Application System will open starting January 31, 2020 and close March 16, 2020, 6:00 PM EST

Getting Started: Application Tips

- Conceptualize your project before beginning the online application
- Obtain Level 2 eAuthentication as soon as possible
- Set up your account and submit an Authorized Representative Request (ARR) as soon as the application window opens
- Educate yourself on requirements that may be unique to your application
- Start collecting documents as soon as possible

Introduction to the ReConnect Application System

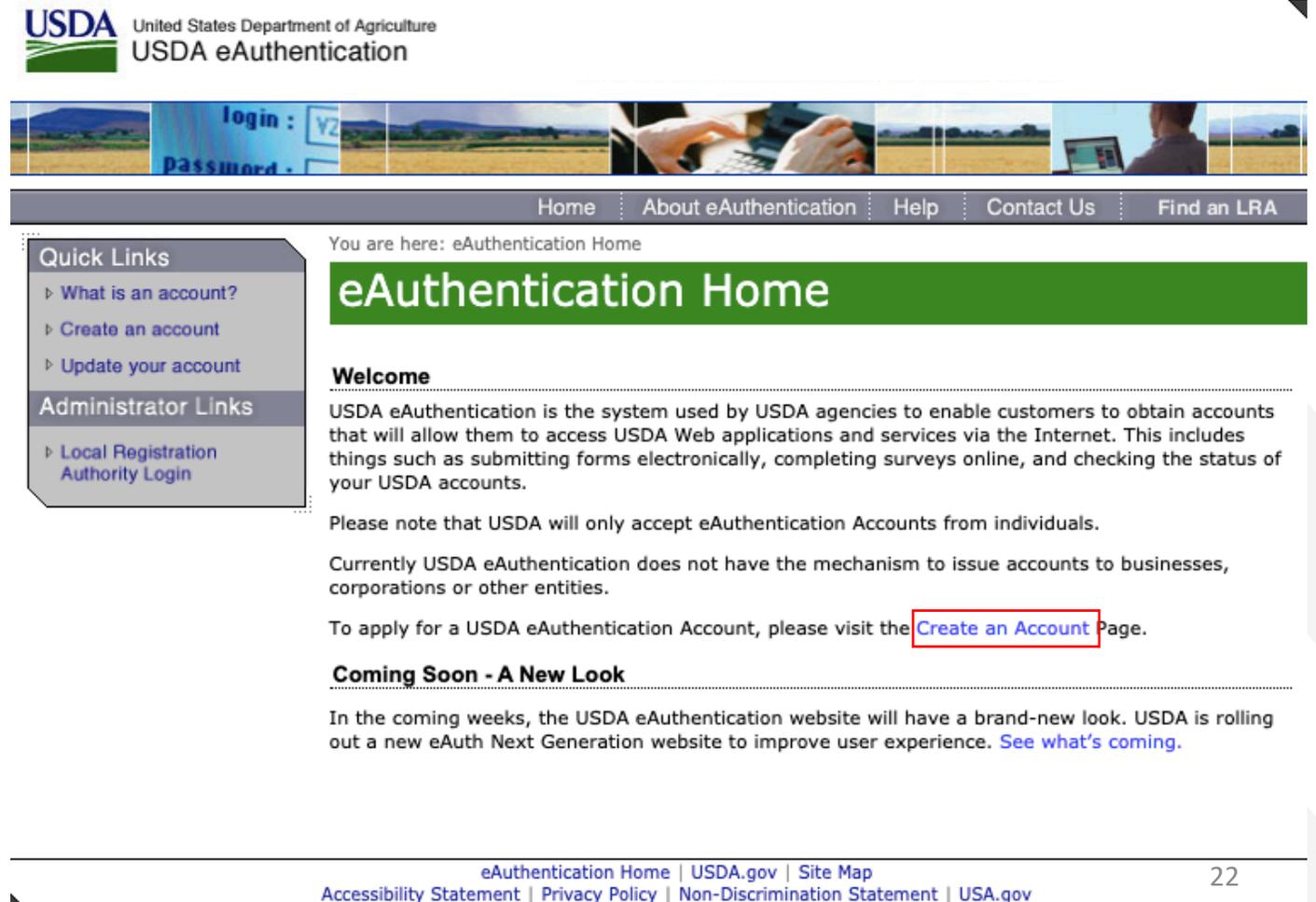
- All applications must be submitted through the RUS Online Application System located at <https://reconnect.usda.gov>
 - Applications **cannot be submitted** until the system opens on January 31
- Prepare by collecting the following:
 - Level 2 eAuthentication (eAuth)
 - Your organization's Tax Identification Number (TIN)
 - Your organization's legal name and state
 - Contact information for all persons who will interact with the online application
 - A current CAGE/DUNS number from SAM.gov
 - Key organizational documentation

Tips for Using the Application System

- The Application System allows information to be added gradually
 - The application does not need to be completed in one session
 - Remember to save often
- The System does not require completion of each layer or tab in sequence
 - Changes within layers or tabs can ripple throughout the application and impact overall eligibility or feasibility
 - A specific order is not required, but the system is designed to move from left to right and top to bottom within subsections
- Be sure to use a compatible browser
 - Google Chrome
 - Mozilla Firefox
 - Microsoft Edge
- **Do not use Internet Explorer**

Sign up for a ReConnect Account - Obtain Level 2 eAuth

<https://www.eauth.usda.gov/>



The screenshot shows the USDA eAuthentication website. At the top left is the USDA logo with the text "United States Department of Agriculture" and "USDA eAuthentication". Below the logo is a banner image with a "login:" and "password:" field. A navigation bar contains links for "Home", "About eAuthentication", "Help", "Contact Us", and "Find an LRA". A "Quick Links" sidebar on the left lists: "What is an account?", "Create an account", "Update your account", "Administrator Links", and "Local Registration Authority Login". The main content area features a green header "eAuthentication Home", a "Welcome" section explaining the system's purpose, a note that accounts are only for individuals, and a link to "Create an Account". A "Coming Soon - A New Look" section mentions a website redesign. The footer includes links for "eAuthentication Home", "USDA.gov", "Site Map", "Accessibility Statement", "Privacy Policy", "Non-Discrimination Statement", and "USA.gov".

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
USDA eAuthentication

login :
password :

Home About eAuthentication Help Contact Us Find an LRA

You are here: eAuthentication Home

eAuthentication Home

Welcome

USDA eAuthentication is the system used by USDA agencies to enable customers to obtain accounts that will allow them to access USDA Web applications and services via the Internet. This includes things such as submitting forms electronically, completing surveys online, and checking the status of your USDA accounts.

Please note that USDA will only accept eAuthentication Accounts from individuals.

Currently USDA eAuthentication does not have the mechanism to issue accounts to businesses, corporations or other entities.

To apply for a USDA eAuthentication Account, please visit the [Create an Account](#) Page.

Coming Soon - A New Look

In the coming weeks, the USDA eAuthentication website will have a brand-new look. USDA is rolling out a new eAuth Next Generation website to improve user experience. [See what's coming.](#)

eAuthentication Home | USDA.gov | Site Map
Accessibility Statement | Privacy Policy | Non-Discrimination Statement | USA.gov

eAuthentication Login

 An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) ✓

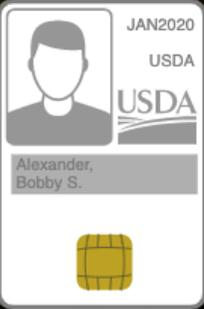
USDA eAuthentication
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HOME | CREATE ACCOUNT | MANAGE ACCOUNT ▾ | HELP ▾

We'll take you to your destination in just a moment... ✕
The application you are accessing requires you to log in to USDA eAuthentication. Please log in or create an account.

 **Log In with PIV/CAC** ?


JAN2020
USDA
USDA
Alexander,
Bobby S.

Log In with PIV/CAC

 **Log In with Password** ?

User ID [Forgot User ID](#)

Password [Forgot Password](#)

Show Password

Log In with Password

ReConnect Account Setup

How to create your ReConnect
account



ReConnect Account Set Up: ARR

- Authorized Representative Request (ARR)
 - Signifies that the applying entity has the authority to enter into a legal agreement with USDA
 - Designates the Representative-Signature-Certifier (Rep-Sign-Cert) and Administrators
 - Submitted by either the Rep-Sign-Cert or Administrator, but must at a minimum assign the Rep-Sign-Cert
 - Administrators and Rep-Sign-Cert must be employed by the applying entity

Sign up for a ReConnect Account - Submit an ARR

- Instructions on the ReConnect website with sample Governing Body Resolutions

Application and Award Forms Checklist

This section provides a checklist of the application forms and legal documents that applicants will need as part of the application process. Not every form is relevant to each funding category. Please refer to the checklist to see which forms are applicable to the funding category for which you wish to submit an application. These documents are initial versions and may be modified at a later date. Click on the name of each form to view more details, or to download a copy.

APPLICATION AND AWARD MATERIALS	GRANT	COMBO	LOAN
APPLICATION MATERIALS			
ARR Resolution Instructions and Samples (PDF, 66 KB)	✓	✓	✓

Application Security Roles

- **Representative-Signature-Certifier (Rep Sign Cert)**
 - Submit the ARR on behalf of the applicant
 - Create, view, and update all account and application sections
 - Add, edit, and delete users that will be working on any of the account or application sections
 - Authorize certifications on behalf of the applicant
 - Submit the application
- **Administrator (Application Administrator)**
 - Submit the ARR on behalf of the applicant with a Rep-Sign-Cert identified
 - Create, view, and update all account and application sections
 - And add, edit, and delete users, except for the Rep-Sign-Cert, that will be working on any of the account or application sections
 - *Cannot authorize certifications or submit the application*

Application Security Roles: Continued

- **Representative – Update Data (Application Rep Update Data)**
 - Employees of the applicant who will be completing the application
 - Can create, view, and update all account and application sections
- **The Consultant**
 - Consultants who are hired by the applicant to complete the application
 - Can create, view, and update all account and application sections

Account Information

Start entering account information



Accounts Home Page

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HOME | ACCOUNTS | AUTHORIZATIONS | PUBLIC NOTICE FILINGS | INSTRUCTION GUIDES | CONTACT US

 Account
Smith Wireless

ACTIVE AUTHORIZATIONS | ACCOUNT INFORMATION | KEY CONTACTS | ACCOUNT DOCUMENTS | RUS IDS

Account Information

LEGAL NAME OF APPLICANT
Smith Wireless

APPLICANT'S TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
230983423

APPLICANT'S CAGE CODE
12345

APPLICANT'S DUNS NUMBER
123456784



Steps

 ACCOUNT INFORMATION

 ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Enter Account Information

- Navigate to the account information sub header tab to populate the required account information
- Account information includes, but is not limited to:
 - Common name for the applicant
 - CAGE/DUNS number
 - Address
 - Borrowing entity type
- Be sure to get started as soon as possible to collect and obtain this information
- Account sub header also requires the Applicant to upload and enter the following:
 - Organizational documents
 - Parent company information
 - Affiliate information
 - Subsidiary information
 - Identify key contacts
 - Upload account documents
 - And provide existing RUS IDs as applicable

Creating Your Application



Create a New Application

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 Authorizations
C-000278

[Start New Application](#)

[ACTIVE APPLICATIONS](#) | [SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS](#)

Application Number	Funding Type	Status	Last Edited	
101000310	100% Grant	In Progress	Jan 9, 2020 12:14 PM	 Edit Application
101000315	50% Loan/50% Grant	In Progress	Jan 2, 2020 9:40 AM	 Edit Application
101000316	100% Grant	In Progress	Jan 7, 2020 5:07 PM	 Edit Application

Application Home Screen

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 Application
101000310

Funding Type
100% Grant



Project

Service Area(s)

Network

Financials

Environmental

Evaluation Criteria

Licenses & Agree...

Certifications

Documents

Summary/Submit

[USDA RD Home](#)

[USDA.gov](#)

[RD Telecom Programs](#)

[RD Recovery](#)

[Policies and Links](#)

[FOIA](#)

[Accessibility Statement](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Non-Discrimination Statement](#)

[Information Quality](#)

[FirstGov](#)

[White House](#)

[No Fear Act](#)

[Browser Recommendations](#) 

Resources

- Submit questions through the Contact Us form on the ReConnect website
- Applicants can also submit questions through the Contact Us form within the Online Application System beginning January 31
- Reach out to your State Directors and local General Field Representatives (or GFRs)
- Other resources located on the ReConnect website:
 - Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)
 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q&A



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