Department of Economic Development Reopens Rural Broadband Remote Access Grant Program to RDOF-Eligible Recipients

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The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) is accepting new applicants under the Rural Broadband Remote Access Grant program. Under this new application round, eligible applicants include those who were previously *ineligible* due to also qualifying under the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF). Only previously ineligible RDOF-qualifying recipients are eligible under this new round. All other previous criteria also apply.

The Broadband Grant program had previously closed on July 2, 2020, but is being reopened to accommodate the RDOF areas. The new deadline to apply is July 24, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. CDT.

“Part of Nebraska’s way forward is to expand high-speed internet access to the underserved areas of our state,” said DED Director Anthony L. Goins. “It’s more critical than ever that we can accommodate digital work, health and learning opportunities; not only for the good of our residents, but to increase our competitiveness to job creators and remote workers, for whom these capabilities will be in increasingly high demand.”

Funding for the Broadband Grant program is made possible by a $392 million allocation of Coronavirus Relief funding from the Federal Government. Of this amount, $330 million was set aside for small businesses and livestock producers; $16 million will be used to retrain displaced workers in partnership with the community college system; $40 million will help expand the state’s broadband access to enable work-from-home and telehealth/education opportunities; and $1 million will finance Gallup-based leadership training for Nebraska business leaders.

Aside from the specific requirement stipulated above, Broadband Program grants are eligible to communities, in partnership with internet service providers, that fall below the FCC broadband standard for adequate internet service (i.e., 25/3 Mbps download/upload speeds).

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Potential applicants should visit https://getnebraskagrowing.nebraska.gov/broadband-grant/ to determine their eligibility, browse requirements and learn how to apply. A User Guide and Frequently Asked Questions are available.

For questions or technical difficulties, contact the Get Nebraska Growing hotline at 855-264-6858.

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