

Polycom Grant Assistance Program
Get a Plan. Get a Grant. Get Connected.

Getting Grant Ready for the RUS DLT



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United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/UTP_DLT.html

Getting Grant Ready for the RUS DLT – More than 230 RUS DLT applications were submitted last year and roughly 100 were awarded, making the RUS DLT grant opportunity very competitive. This guidebook will highlight important grant requirements and provide next steps to putting together a successful RUS DLT proposal.

“The Polycom grant program provides assistance for organizations seeking grant based funding. With their extensive experience in realm, they have a complete portfolio and understanding of grants, how they apply to your specific needs, and can offer guidance on how to optimize chances for success. In such a complex and ever changing environment, Polycom’s guidance is extremely valuable.”

-Dr. Andrew Watson
Vice President of ICSD with UPMC* and
Medical Director of the CCM

“We have worked through the Polycom Grant Assistance Program and the Polycom 7 Step Grant Assistance Process™ on several grants. I can’t say enough positive things about Polycom’s Grant Assistance Program. Without their high level of expertise, we might never have been funded. Now we have the capability of providing model distance learning programs for all our students.”

-Kay Highbarger, Executive Director
South Central Kansas Regional Service Center

* UPMC and Polycom are partners in the Center for Connected Medicine (CCM), a groundbreaking collaboration among innovators in health care, information technology and communications that showcases the patient-centered health care model developed at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

RUS DLT Grant Overview

Purpose

The USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program (DLT) supports projects in highly rural and economically disadvantaged locations to develop and expand distance learning and telemedicine capacity through the acquisition of equipment, instructional programming, and technical assistance for using eligible equipment.

Award Amount

\$50,000 – 500,000

Matching Dollars Required

A minimum 15% match is required.

**Additional match contributions can garner additional points and increase a proposal score.*

Anticipated Deadline for Application:

Spring 2012

Who Can Apply

Applicants must be legally organized as an incorporated organization or partnership; an Indian tribe or tribal organization; a consortium; or other legal entity, including a private corporation organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis.

Examples of eligible organizations are local education agencies (LEAs), education service centers, hospitals, higher education institutions, workforce investment boards, tribal organizations, education and training providers, health care providers, and faith-based community organizations.

To be eligible for a grant, organizations must currently deliver or propose to deliver distance learning or telemedicine services for the term of the grant.

Examples of Awarded Distance Learning & Telemedicine Programs

Distance Learning

- Sharing teachers between different educational facilities
- Connecting students at a distance to 2 and 4 year colleges
- Dual credit, advance placement distance learning classes
- Vocational training and certification
- Community outreach and education
- Foreign languages distance learning courses

Telemedicine

- Home Healthcare
- Telepsychiatry
- Providing telehealth services to correctional facilities
- Telestroke and telecardiology
- Connecting specialists in urban areas to rural clinics and hospitals
- School based health centers

Polycom Solutions for RUS DLT

Polycom telecommunication technologies can include High Definition (HD) audio and video conferencing equipment that connects students from one classroom to another, professors in one location to a remote campus site, urban healthcare facilities to rural community health centers, provide telemedicine solutions, and more. Polycom technology can vastly improve access to education and healthcare to rural American's and bridge the gap for their needs.

Polycom Solutions for RUS DLT

Polycom's Eligible Technology:



High Definition Video Conferencing and H.264 High Profile Technology

The Polycom® HDX® solutions have standards-based presence capabilities that enable faculty and students, doctors and patients for one-click dialing from a classroom, doctor's office, or from a mobile laptop. HDX solutions provide easy access to quality distance learning and telemedicine sessions across the network or over public internet. This application is able to share content virtually.



Polycom developed the first and only H.264 High Profile technology implementation for real-time video. Now, organizations can immediately begin saving on bandwidth costs—up to 50%! High Profile enables a dramatic reduction in the network resources necessary to video-enable organizations. It allows schools and healthcare organizations to meet budget challenges and power visual communication with fewer resources, thus limiting or avoiding costly network upgrades—all while remaining standards-based. Video deployments can now be extended to more sites, most cost-effectively, and with greater quality, than ever before.



Polycom® EagleEye Director

The most intelligent camera for unified communications delivers breakthrough HD video collaboration, changing the face of distance learning and telemedicine sessions by enabling close-up views of every speaker in a video conference. Regardless of their location or the number of people in the room, the Polycom EagleEye Director camera provides automated and 'directed' camera pan, tilt and zoom with no remote control or user intervention required.



Recording and Streaming Technology

The Polycom RSS™ recording and streaming server is a platform that gives participants of distance learning classes and/or telemedicine sessions the ability to record and review a video call or to view a live stream from their computer. With the use of a common Web browser, the RSS can record or stream multiple separate lectures simultaneously. This application is important for viewing archived content and providing flexibility to view necessary video sessions.



Polycom® RealPresence™ Media Manager

The Polycom RealPresence Media Manager can ingest content from distance learning technology, upload video content sources, and integrate content from leading videoconferencing systems that will allow participants of distance learning classes and/or telemedicine sessions to have the ability to view a live stream from their computer. Polycom RealPresence Media Manager also enables participants to deliver distance learning and/or telemedicine over networks, and to confidently allow real time sessions. This application is important for the viewing of archived content and providing flexibility to view necessary video sessions.



Bridging Technology

The Polycom RMX® real-time multimedia conferencing bridge allows simultaneous video conference locations to actively participate in a call. The RMX platform extends the reach of education and healthcare needs to allow rural residents to connect in remote locations in real time, and to share high resolution or HD content. Content can include presentation slides, medical images, and the use of peripheral devices (for example, document camera, laptop, and microscope). Users can be assigned their own personal conference room location on the bridge, similar to a personal audio conference bridge number.



Content Management Application

The Polycom CMA® conference and management solution assists in the management of video conferencing sessions. The CMA management solution allows for the scheduling of video conferencing sessions, manages the usage and reporting of the video conferencing sessions, troubleshoots any problems, and automates the dialing of the video conferencing units during a scheduled call. The CMA solution streamlines deployment, management and provisioning of visual communications equipment. Additionally, as part of the CMA solution, a client desktop video conference software application is provided that can be used by faculty members, guest speakers, and students using a PC or laptop from remote locations.

RUS DLT Scoring Breakdown

The RUS DLT program focuses on projects that benefit residents in highly rural areas. “Rurality” is the term used by the RUS DLT program to describe how rural your project’s service area is, and the term is used as a measure of rural benefit. An applicant’s rurality score for site location will fall into one of four categories. The rurality score makes up part of the total objective score for the project.

Site Location	Points
Exceptionally Rural Area (population 5,000 and under)	45
Rural Area (population 5,001 – 10,000)	30
Mid-Rural Area (population 10,001 – 20,000)	15
Urban Area (population over 20,000)	0

Figure 1: Rurality Score

In addition to rurality criteria, the RUS DLT program uses the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) eligibility statistics as a way to measure the financial need of the beneficiaries of the DLT project. Applicants are required to provide an estimated NSLP score in the application by providing the average of the relevant NSLP eligibility percentages for all hub/end-user and end/user sites. Applicants use the following table to determine the score entered for the NSLP. The NSLP score also makes up a portion of the Applicant’s objective score.

NSLP Percentage	Points
NSLP < 25%	0
25% < NSLP < 50%	15
50% < NSLP < 75%	25
75% < NSLP	35

Figure 2: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Score

The Leveraging score also makes up a portion of the total objective score, and is based on the eligible matching fund contribution of the applicant and others. Applicants must present an estimated leveraging score in the application. Up to 35 points are eligible under this criterion. See Figure 3 for a breakdown of the percentage of eligible match compared to grant request. Failure to properly document the minimum required match is the single largest reason that an application is returned

Percentage of Eligible Match Compared to the Grant Proposal	Points
15% < Match % < 30%	0
30% < Match % < 50%	15
50% < Match % < 75%	25
75% < Match % < 100%	30
Match > 100%	35

Figure 3: Leveraging Score

Figure 4 on page 6 shows an example of how to calculate matching funds:

Applicant	Grant Requested	Matching Funds	% of Grant Funds	Points Scored
Applicant #1	\$100,000	\$15,000	15%	0
Applicant #2	\$100,000	\$45,000	45%	15
Applicant #3	\$100,000	\$60,000	60%	25
Applicant #4	\$100,000	\$80,000	80%	30
Applicant #5	\$100,000	\$105,000	105%	35

Figure 4: Matching Funds Calculation Example

A summary and breakdown of the RUS DLT scoring system for objective and subjective scoring is provided below, and includes a description of each criterion. An application can score up to 220* points.

Possible Score	Objective Scoring Summary				Subjective Scoring Summary				Total
	Rurality	NSLP	Leverage	Empowerment Zones	Addnl. NSLP*	Needs & Benefits	Innovativeness	Cost Effectiveness	
	45	35	35	10	10	45	15	35	220

Figure 5: Scoring System

The objective criteria listed below are straightforward indicators designated by the RUD DLT program is used by the program to establish a preliminary score for the applicant that may be used in determining whether the applicant will move forward in the review process.

The subjective criteria listed below are used by the RUS DLT program to provide context to the information contained in the proposal, and attempts

OBJECTIVE SCORING		
Criteria	Criteria Description	Points
Rural Area (Rurality)	This criterion measures how rural the area is. To be eligible for a grant, the applicant must earn a minimum score of 20 points.	45
Economic Need (National School Lunch Program – NSLP)	This criterion measures the general economic need of the area through the use of statistics from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).	35
Empowerment Zones (EZ)	This criterion awards points to projects located in a USDA Empowerment Zone. Only one end-user site must be located in a USDA Empowerment Zone to receive 10 points.	10
Leverage (Match)	The DLT program requires a minimum match of 15%. Higher matches receive additional points. There are special matching provisions for American Samoa, Guam, Virgin Islands, and the North Amriana Islands.	35

Figure 6: Objective Scoring Criteria

to assess a unique characteristic of the project which is not captured by other scoring categories. Scores are based on the subjective reaction of the scoring team to the supporting arguments made in the application. This scoring mechanism is intended to create a ranking of projects within the subjective scoring categories. This means that an applicant's score is dependent upon the qualities of documentation presented by all other applicants in that year's competition.

SUBJECTIVE SCORING		
Criteria	Criteria Description	Points
*Additional NSLP	An applicant with a NSLP eligibility below 50% may request additional points based on a well-documented demonstration that the NSLP percentage is not accurate indicator of the economic need of the area.	10
Needs and Benefits	This criterion measures the specific needs of the community and how the proposed project will meet those needs, not the generalized need captured by the NSLP score.	45
Innovativeness	This criterion assesses how the objectives of the proposed project are met in a new and creative ways.	15
Cost Effectiveness	This criterion evaluates the efficiency with which the proposed project delivers education and/or medical benefits to beneficiaries.	35

Figure 7: Subjective Scoring Criteria

*Although the eight categories appear to add to a maximum score of 230, the maximum score that can actually be earned is 220 points. This is because the Additional NSLP points are available only to applicants who score 15 or fewer of the 35 points possible under NSLP category.

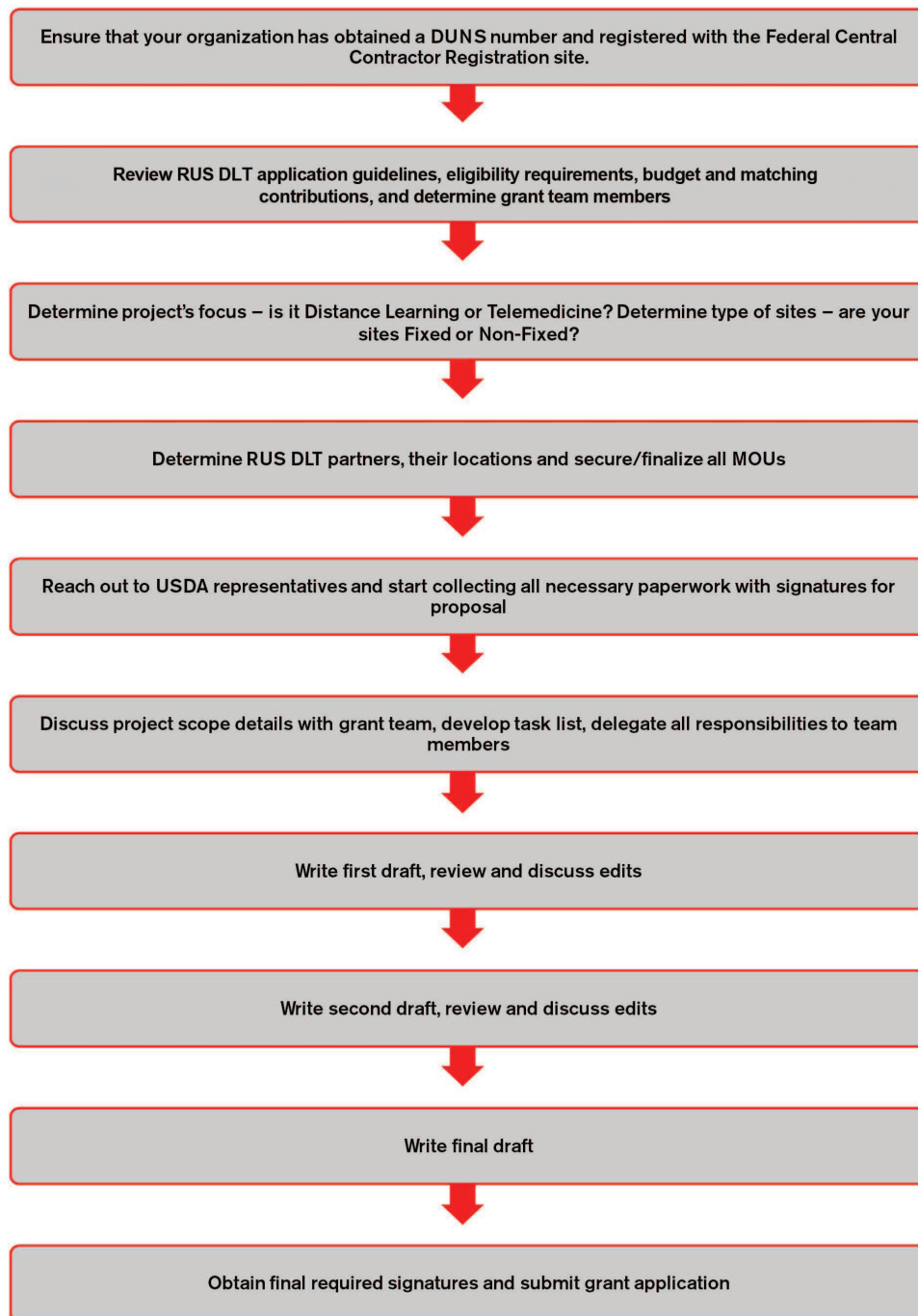
Getting the Most from Your Score

The following are tips and tools we suggest to increase the competitiveness of an application:

- Aim for an objective score of 90+ points – many experts and consultants believe that with the high competition for these grant funds, 90+ points in the objective score will make your application competitive. Many times this requires a leverage match of 30% or higher.
- Ensure that items used for match are eligible. All items to be funded with match or grant must be obtained from an organization other than the applicant or other entities participating in the applicant's RUS DLT project as hubs, hub/end-users, or end-users; that is, items must be procured from a third party. Items acquired before the application deadline date are not eligible for grant or match.
- Do not use a "scavenger hunt" approach to matching funds. Criteria for budgeted item and for match funds are the same, and if there is a question as to whether an item is a valid and an integral part of the project, it can be disallowed.
- Match letters must be specific and state the dollar amount.
- The budget must be itemized, reasonable, and accurate.
- The Telecommunication Plan must be comprehensive and consistent, include a map and/or a network diagram of the telecommunications system, and describe how distance learning or telemedicine equipment relates to that system. An application that does not contain a map/diagram that shows each site cannot be evaluated and will be returned as ineligible for funding considerations.
- When putting together the Rurality, be sure to label each map with the appropriate site address and highlight the address.
- Make sure the project need and scope is well-defined and backed up with facts and supporting documentation. It is OK to repeat the project need and scope throughout the proposal even if it may seem redundant. It is a good refresh for the reviewer. Many times reviewers may only score one section from the whole proposal, so restating the project can be helpful to frame the section.
- Remember that the needs and benefits section is not intended to capture general economic need of an area served by the project, but should document the specific distance learning or telemedicine needs of the community and how the project will address those needs. Quantify the benefits your project will provide to the community with expected outcomes. Provide evidence of support from the community.
- Be prepared to demonstrate project sustainability by describing the technical and programmatic expertise that your organization will bring to the project.
- Specifically describe how your project may be innovative (technical or application) using the guiding questions in the RFP.
- Demonstrate cost-effectiveness that provides reviewers with information that will allow them to evaluate the efficiency with which the proposed project delivers educational and medical benefits to the target population. For example, describe how various technological options were considered, provide bids from vendors, discuss whether buying or leasing is more effective, explain the ability to use existing networks, and so on. A spreadsheet showing initial costs and annual costs of all considered alternative technologies and implementations can offer strong support in this category.
- Make sure your site list and information is consistent throughout the proposal. For example, everything must always be listed in the same order and be reflective of your Network Map.

RUS DLT Development and Progression Outline

The list below outlines the important development and progression process of assembling a competitive and comprehensive RUS DLT proposal.



The Complete Application

There are eight (8) separate sections to the RUS DLT application. Below is a detailed check list of all the sections and requirements which allows you to assign a person and due date to keep your grant team working toward the same deadline and stay organized.

RUS DLT APPLICATION SECTIONS	Person Assigned	Task Due Date
Section A: Form 424 <i>(Form 424 with instructions, site worksheet TOOLKIT)</i>		
Section B: Legal Eligibility, Legal Existence, Authority to Contract		
Section C: Executive Summary <i>(2 paragraphs to summarize the project, overview of equipment and facilities, list of sites, description of services, address community needs, brief budget)</i>		
Section D: Project Information		
D1 Telecommunications System Plan <i>(description of the DL or telemedicine project, telcom facilities, map or network drawing, description of line-items in the budget, documentation of discussions to evaluate cost and effectiveness of equipment, info about prior RUS DLT grants, info about other RUS DLT applications, documentation of telcom carriers)</i>		
Scope of Work <i>(specific activities in project, persons responsible for activities, timeline for objectives and activities)</i>		
D2 Budget - Budget TOOLKITS <i>(Overall budget worksheet, In kind match worksheet, other funds worksheet)</i>		
D3 Financial Information & Sustainability <i>(Describe project revenues and expenses, Cost sharing arrangements, facts that effect sustainability of project, cost of savings to the community)</i>		
Section E Objective Scoring Supporting Documentation		
E1 Rurality TOOLKIT <i>(Rurality worksheet TOOLKIT, maps of all sites, census data of all sites)</i>		
E2 NSLP <i>(NSLP Worksheet TOOLKIT, Documentation on where NSLP was obtained)</i>		
E3 Leveraging - Matching Funds and Other Assistance <i>(Leveraging worksheet TOOLKIT, Letter from each donor)</i>		
E4 Empowerment Zones <i>(Empowerment Zones worksheet TOOLKIT optional)</i>		
Section F: Subjective Scoring Supporting Documentation		
F1 Additional NSLP TOOLKIT optional <i>(Additional NSLP Worksheet)</i>		
F2 Community Needs and Project Benefits <i>(Discuss other projects, define the community, needs assessment for services proposed, benefits from services proposed)</i>		
F3 Innovativeness of the Project <i>(Technical innovation, education or medical innovation, how the proposed project will influence your proposed service area)</i>		
F4 Cost Effectiveness of the Project <i>(Quotes from multiple vendors, use of existing telecom, use of local, regional, statewide networks, how financial assistance will help project, comparison between buy or lease options, how project will go beyond primary objectives, how project will meet the needs of the community)</i>		
Section G: Contact with USDA State Director <i>(Provide evidence of other sources of funding and that project meets state strategic plan)</i>		
Section H: Certifications <i>(9 Certifications TOOLKIT)</i>		
Checklist for putting grant together		

DLT Program Contact Information

Phone: 202-720-0413

Fax: 202-720-1051

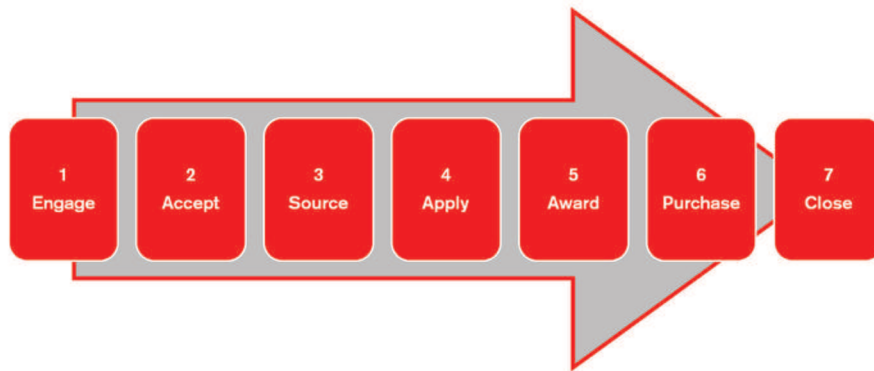
E-mail: dltinfo@wdc.usda.gov

Web: www.rurdev.usda.gov/UTP_DLTResources.html

Polycom Grant Assistance Program & the Polycom 7-Step Grant Assistance Process™

Get a Plan. Get a Grant. Get Connected.

The Polycom Grant Assistance Program has successfully assisted customers all across the country with preparing and writing successful RUS DLT proposals. Utilize the customizable Polycom® 7-Step Grant Assistance Process™ for your program's specific needs to build a competitive RUS DLT grant proposal!



Polycom® 7-Step Grant Assistance Process™

What Polycom Can Do For You

The Polycom Grant Assistance Program is a FREE service that helps schools, institutions of higher education, healthcare organizations, and nonprofit organizations identify grant opportunities and submit successful grant applications to purchase and implement telecommunication. Example applications include telehealth, distance learning, job training, video conferencing, and more. We help you by:

- Working with a team of grant researchers, grant writers and technology experts to provide you with customized support, based on your organization's assistance needs
- Providing training and assistance on grant resources and requirements
- Being your trusted advisor on grants, and working closely with you throughout the entire grant process

Learn More

To find out more about how Polycom can help you apply for this or any other grant, please visit us at www.polycom.com/grants or contact your advisor at grants@polycom.com.

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