## Funding for Telehealth: Administration, Clinical, Technology & Broadband Services

### FEDERAL FUNDING FOR TELEHEALTH

Federal agencies invest millions of dollars each year to support better access to quality health care for rural and other underserved areas and populations.  Some of the better known sources of funding specific to telehealth and the use of telehealth technologies include:

| Federal Telehealth Grant Quick Reference | What The Grant Will Fund | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | *Administrative & Clinical | Technology: Procurement | Technology: Development |
| HRSA Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) Office for the Advancement of Telehealth Grants http://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/telehealth/ | X | X | |
| USDA Rural Development Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants | | X | |
| NIH Development and Translation of Medical Technologies to Reduce Health Disparities Grants http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-EB-16-001.html | | | X |
| NIH Technologies for Improving Population Health and Eliminating Health Disparities Grants http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MD-15-008.html | | | X |
| SAMHSA Technology Assisted Care in Targeted Areas of Need Grants http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-16-001 | X | X | |

\* allows the use of grant funds to cover the costs of administrative and clinical services

## But Wait, More Federal Funding Is Available…

**KEEP IN MIND** that telehealth is not a specific clinical service, but a tool for supporting clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration

**FIRST ASK** "what problem am I trying to solve?" You do not have to look for a grant that is specifically targeted at telehealth. Most grants encourage the use of technology as part of the solution.

**MAKE SURE TO EXPLORE** all health related grants across the many federal agencies. For a searchable database of federal grants, visit:

http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-programs.html

**FOR EXAMPLE,** HRSA has a grant program for Rural Health Network Development. It is not specific to telehealth, but many have used these funds to develop telehealth networks. Similarly, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) has numerous funding opportunities, and you can take a look at the many programs they have funded related to telehealth: http://www.pcori.org/search/site/TELEHEALTH

## If You Are in Their Footprint…

Don't forget about grants through these other two federal/state sources:
- Appalachian Regional Commission: http://www.arc.gov/grants
- Delta Regional Authority: http://dra.gov/funding-programs/investing-in-the-delta/

## NON-FEDERAL FUNDING FOR TELEHEALTH

National, state and local government and foundations are also sources for health and human service funding. A great resource for all funding opportunities, both public and private is the Rural Health Information Hub: https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/funding.

## Examples of Foundations Providing Funding for Health Initiatives

| | |
|---|---|
| **American Academy of Pediatrics** http://www2.aap.org/catch/funding.htm | **Kroger Foundation** http://www.thekrogerco.com/community/kroger-foundation |
| **DentaQuest Foundation** http://dentaquestfoundation.org/programs-partnerships/funding-opportunities | **NTCA** http://www.ntca.org/smart-rural-community/collaboration-challenge-award-guidelines.html |
| **Kresge Foundation** http://kresge.org/opportunities | **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** http://www.rwjf.org/en/how-we-work/grants-and-grant-programs.html |

## FEDERAL FUNDING FOR BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

Federal agencies invest hundreds of millions of dollars each year to support better broadband connectivity for rural populations. Some of the better known sources of funding specific to broadband connectivity include:

## USAC Rural Health Care (RHC) Program

If you are an eligible health care provider (HCP), $400 million a year is available through the USAC Rural Health Care Program (http://www.usac.org/rhc/default.aspx). **The Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program** provides HCPs and consortia with a 65% flat rate discount on eligible expenses related to broadband connectivity.

**Eligible HCPs** are not-for-profit and public entities in rural areas including:

- Post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction (e.g., teaching hospitals and medical schools)
- Community health centers
- Public health departments
- Community mental health centers
- Hospitals
- Rural health clinics, including mobile clinics
- Skilled nursing facilities (beginning in calendar year 2017)

Eligible HCPs may apply as individuals or as part of a consortium of eligible HCPs. Individuals may also request to join as a member of an existing consortium of HCPs or start a new consortium.

**Are there any exceptions?**

- YES! Dedicated emergency departments of rural **for-profit** hospitals are eligible
- YES! **Non-rural not-for-profit and public HCPs** can participate if they join a consortia with rural eligible HCPs, as long as the consortia consists of a majority of eligible rural HCP sites

**Eligible expenses include:**

- Telecommunications and broadband services (including monthly recurring charges)
- Network equipment
- HCP constructed and owned network facilities (for consortia only)

**CAUTION:** Be wary of consultants offering to "do all your paperwork for you" at an exorbitant fee (e.g., 40% or more of your total cost savings). Also beware of telecommunications companies who increase their prices, but offer to do your paperwork for "free". If in doubt, consult with your regional Telehealth Resource Center. For contact information, visit http://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/.

## USDA Rural Utilities Program

The **Farm Bill Broadband Loans and Loan Guarantees Program** furnishes loans and loan guarantees to provide funds for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide service at the broadband lending speed  in eligible rural areas.  http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/farm-bill-broadband-loans-loan-guarantees

The **Community Connect Grants Program** helps fund broadband deployment into rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service.  Funds may be used for construction, acquisition or leasing of facilities, spectrum land or buildings; the cost or providing broadband service free of charge to critical community facilities for two years and a portion of the grant amount may be used for improvement, expansions or acquisition of a community center that provides online access to the public.  http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants

The **Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees Program** provides financing for the construction, maintenance, improvement and expansion of telephone service and broadband in rural areas. Funds may be used to finance broadband capable telecommunications service, including improvements, expansions, construction, acquisitions (in certain cases) and refinancing (in certain cases). http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-infrastructure-loans-loan-guarantees

**For more information about telehealth, visit www.telehealthresourcecenter.org**