

Rural Utility Service, Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant

Grant Overview: The Rural Utility Service, Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant 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. The primary benefit for funded projects should be for end-users not at the same location as the source of the education service.

UPDATE (4/7/11): The district has confirmed that the matching funds it hoped to use for its own proposal were not eligible. As a result, the district proposal has been shelved. The district was then approached by two outside agencies who were also exploring the RUS-DLT grant. They are:

- 1) Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5. IU5 was working on a project with a contracted grant writer. After a conference call with the IU grant writer, it was determined that the district would most likely not be a good fit within the IU's project. Not long after the conference call, the IU pulled the project, and will not be submitting any application.
- 2) The Education Consortium of the Upper Allegheny (ECUA). The ECUA is considering a project among area districts that would involve sharing classes – both within the district and with other partner districts. An exploratory meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 12th if enough interest is expressed by area districts. The district has expressed its interest to the ECUA and plans to attend the meeting. Major concerns at this time are the eligible match funding required by participating districts and remaining time to complete the grant. In this case the ECUS would submit the application and administer any award.

Grant funds may be used for:

- Acquisition of eligible capital assets:
- Interactive video equipment
- Audio and video equipment
- Terminal equipment
- Data terminal equipment
- Inside wiring
- Computer hardware and software
- Computer network components
- Other facilities that further DLT services
- Acquisition of instructional programming that is a capital asset
- Acquisition of technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment

Amount of Award: \$50,000 - \$500,000.

Due Date/Notification of Award: due on April 25, 2011. Notification by July 2011.

Alternatives if not Awarded: any proposed project will not take place without RUS DLT funding.

WCSD Resources Required: A minimum of a 15% match is required. Matching funds must be for eligible costs, and may not reflect discounts from potential vendors involved in the proposal.

Administrative Recommendation: That the Board of School Directors instructs the administration to determine if there is an eligible distance learning project for the RUS DLT funding, and, if so, attempt to develop and submit a proposal for consideration.