



# GRANT SERIES: RUS-DLT

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# AGENDA

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Scoring:  
Creating a  
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Components**

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# INTRODUCTIONS

# LEARN DESIGN APPLY, INC.



- Grant management and consulting firm
- Look at all levels of funding with extra focus on federal funding
- Partnerships with technology providers who specialize in telehealth, distance learning, and networking / connectivity
- Free initial consultation and planning
- Services offered:
  - Where to find funding, “follow the money”
  - Which programs are the best fit / prequalification
  - Funding strategy
  - Application process project management and comprehensive support
  - Assistance locating a grant writer
  - Post-award support



2

## RUS-DLT OVERVIEW

# THE BASICS



## Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning & Telemedicine Program

- Annual technology-focused competitive grant program
- Very consistent and reliable source of funding (one that you can rely on long-term!)
- LDA helps dozens of organizations apply for this program every year
- Provides funding for **interactive, “real time”** distance learning and / or telemedicine projects that give rural residents access to content and / or services – **helping to bridge the digital divide!**
- Almost any type of organization is eligible to apply (exceptions: Federal organizations, sole proprietors, and organizations in coastal barrier zones).
- Both formal and informal consortiums are eligible to apply



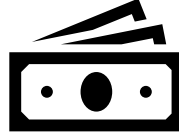


# THE DETAILS



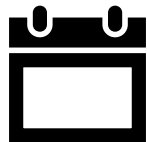
## Project Design & Scoring

- Connecting rural entities together or to an urban hub for resource / content sharing
- Scored on sites that receive the services, information, or content (“end-user sites”)
- Objective scoring based on rurality, economic need, and special considerations (more info to come!)



## Budget & Expenditures

- 3-year grant period
- Match = 15% of the Federal Request (about 13% of total project costs)
- Award Size = Between \$50K and \$1M
- Funds must go toward technology and associated services primarily being used for distance learning and / or telemedicine



## Timing

- Program likely to be released this fall
- Application period = typically 60 days after program is posted
- But you can start on your application NOW!



# WHAT CAN YOU GET?



## Eligible Expenditures

- ✓ **Capital Expenditures** – interactive distance learning or telemedicine equipment, video infrastructure, ancillary core network devices necessitated by the project, internal wiring, software, licensing, digitally connected peripheral devices
- ✓ ***Up to 20% of the budget can be spent on broadband related expenditures***
- ✓ ***Cloud Services, if adequately justified***
- ✓ ***Remote Instruction that is a capital expenditure***
- ✓ ***Technical Assistance (up to 10% of the budget)***



## Ineligible Expenditures

- ✓ **Recurring Expenses** – transmission costs, existing operational costs, **salaries**, benefits, contractual, supplies, etc.
- ✓ **No Indirect Costs!**
- ✓ **No Evaluation Costs!**
- ✓ **Unrelated technology purposes**  
This is not a grant for lots of computers / tablets... the main purpose is for the interactive video. Peripherals that help deliver content or services via the video transmission are provisionally eligible.





# PROJECT DESIGN

1. Hub(s) & Spoke(spokes) – Content or service provider connecting to remote sites who will receive the content or services

- Medical center with specialists connecting to smaller hospitals or clinics without local specialists
- Community college connecting to rural high schools to offer dual-enrollment courses

2. Hub / End-User to Hub / End-User – Remote sites that will share content / services connecting to other remote sites who will receive the content / services and deliver back ***different*** content / services.

- Rural high school with Mandarin teacher connects to another rural high school with a Spanish teacher. Students at both sites receive foreign language classes not available locally.
- Rural hospital connects to rural mental health & substance abuse clinic. Hospital connects to MHSA clinic for services not available locally. Clinic connects to hospital for Continuing Medical Education and training.



# PROJECT DESIGN (cont.)

3. Non-Fixed – Occasionally, you have a hub site that wants to provide services or content to any place in a given geography. In this instance, your Objective Scoring is based on the single hub site.
  - Visiting nurse services – A home health organization would like to send a visiting nurse to anyone within their service area (ex: 2 county area). The home health organization is the **hub site**, and their physical location would be used to define the rurality and economic need scores.
4. Hybrid – Sometimes a project will have both a fixed and non-fixed component. In these cases, you score the non-fixed portion first, and then include it as a line item to be averaged in with your fixed site calculations.
  - A community health center wants to connect to a hospital for fixed site telemedicine, but also wants to connect on-demand to any site that their EMS team visits within their coverage area.



# TYPES OF PROJECTS

- ✓ **School to School** – *sharing teachers & courses, enrichment*
- ✓ **School to Health Center** – *school-based health, prevention / wellness, mental health / substance abuse programming*
- ✓ **School to Higher Ed** – *dual enrollment, teacher training*
- ✓ **Higher Ed to Higher Ed** – *connecting satellite campuses to expand course offerings, bridging programs, workforce development*
- ✓ **Libraries & Other Community Centers** – *lifelong learning, adult education, workforce development, enrichment*
- ✓ **Medical Centers to Clinics** – *primary & specialty care delivery, continued medical education (CME)*
- ✓ **Clinic to Clinic or Hospital to Hospital** – *sharing doctors, dentists, nurses or allied health professionals; sharing CME, wellness & prevention programs*
- ✓ **Mental Health & Substance Abuse Clinics to anyone** – *delivering behavioral health and / or substance abuse treatment, education, therapy, etc.*
- ✓ **State/Local Orgs** – *connecting the “local” organizations together to share employee learning / training (DOH, Head Start, WIBs, etc.)*



*Limited only by your  
imagination!*



# 3

## **OBJECTIVE SCORING**

CREATING A COMPETITIVE  
PROJECT

1234567890

## OBJECTIVE SCORING CALCULATOR

- Once you have identified your project focus and potential programmatic partners, you need to look at their demographics of their sites
- Are they a hub site, end-user site, or hub / end-user site?
- Identify their **Rurality** score (up to 40 points)
- Identify their **Economic Need** score (up to 30 points)
- Is there a **Special Consideration** category that applies to the site? (10-20 points in 2021)
- Crunch the numbers! Is your overall score competitive?
- If not, consider adding or deleting sites to obtain a higher objective score



# RURality – Census Population Lookup

- In previous years, the 2010 Census has been used to determine rurality
- For current estimates, we recommend using the 2020 Census population table, located [here](#)
- Note: Since the 2020 Census is newly finalized, the interface and link are subject to change. Also, not all funding programs have yet made the switch from the 2010 Census to the 2020 Census. Always **reference the guidelines** to confirm the data that should be used!

The screenshot displays the United States Census Bureau's data interface. At the top, the 'United States Census Bureau' logo is visible, along with a search bar containing 'p1'. Below the header, there are tabs for 'All', 'Tables', 'Maps', and 'Pages', with 'Tables' currently selected. A notification banner states: 'Experimental estimates, developed from 2020 ACS 1-year data are now available on the ACS Experimental Data webpage. These estimates will not be available on data.census.gov.' The main content area is divided into three sections. On the left, under 'Filters (1)', there is a 'Clear all' button and a 'P1' filter. Below this is a 'Find a Filter' section with a search bar and a list of filter categories: 'Codes', 'Geography', 'Surveys', 'Topics', and 'Years'. The middle section, titled '1 Result', shows a 'Download tables' link and a table with one result: 'Decennial Census P1 | RACE'. To the right of this table is a 'View All 11 Products' link. The rightmost section, titled 'Decennial Census P1 | RACE', shows the '2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)' and 'Universe: Total population'. It includes a 'Label' section with a 'Total' dropdown and a list of race categories: 'Population of one race' (White alone, Black or African American alone, American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Asian alone, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, Some Other Race alone) and 'Population of two or more races' (White; Black or African American, White; American Indian and Alaska Native).



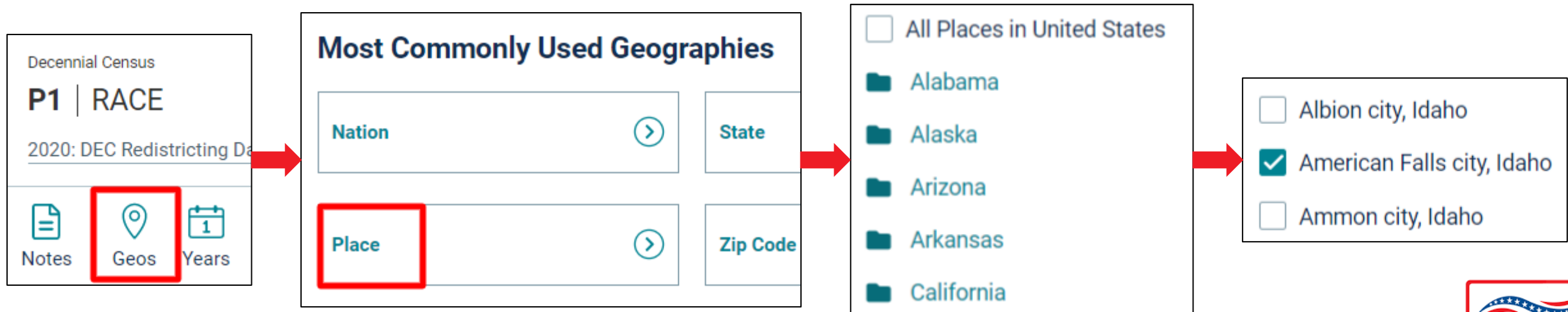


# CENSUS POPULATION LOOKUP EXAMPLE

## Example

American Falls, ID

- Click on “Geos” in the bar going across the top of the page on the right
- Click on “Place” and then select the relevant state
- Scroll down to find the relevant city / town / CDP
  - Note: There used to be a filter option, but it is currently not available for the 2020 Census population table
- Close out of the “Geos” search, and you will then see the population results for the selected Place in the table
- Recommendation: Collapse the racial breakdowns to make the table visually clearer. The “Total” population data is what is relevant.



# CENSUS POPULATION LOOKUP EXAMPLE

## (cont.)

### Example

American Falls, ID

Decennial Census	
P1   RACE	
2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)   Universe: Total population	
<div>Notes   1 Geo   Years   Topics   Surveys   Codes   Hide   Transpose   Restore   Excel   Download   Print   More Data</div>	
Label	American Falls city, Idaho
▼ Total:	4,568
➤ Population of one race:	4,103
➤ Population of two or more races:	465



# RURality – Urban Adjacent Check

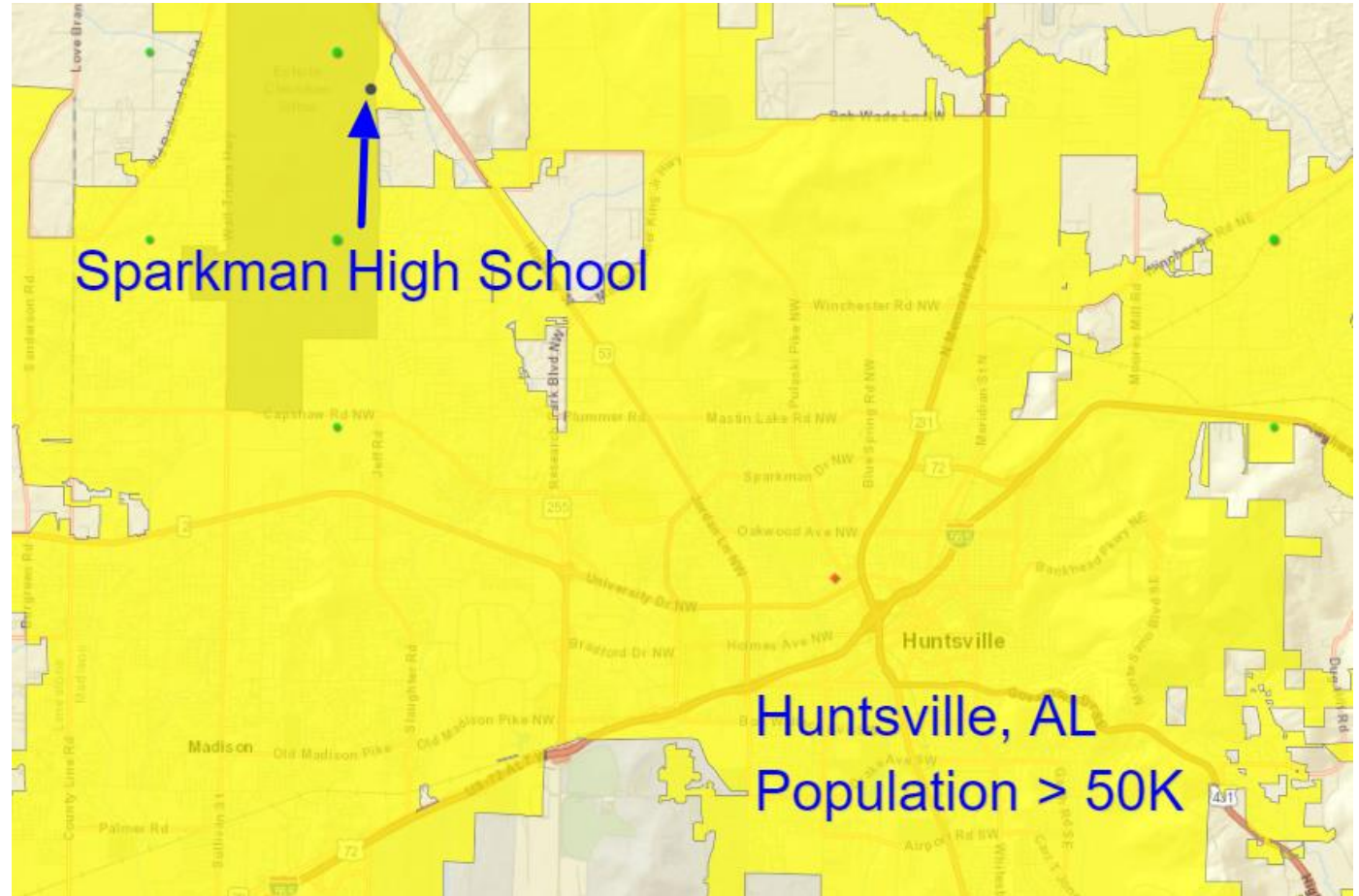
End-user site **cannot** be part of an urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town having a population in excess of 50,000 inhabitants.

USDA Rural Development has created this [map](#) to help you identify sites that are urban adjacent. Simply plug in the address at the text box at the top of the page.

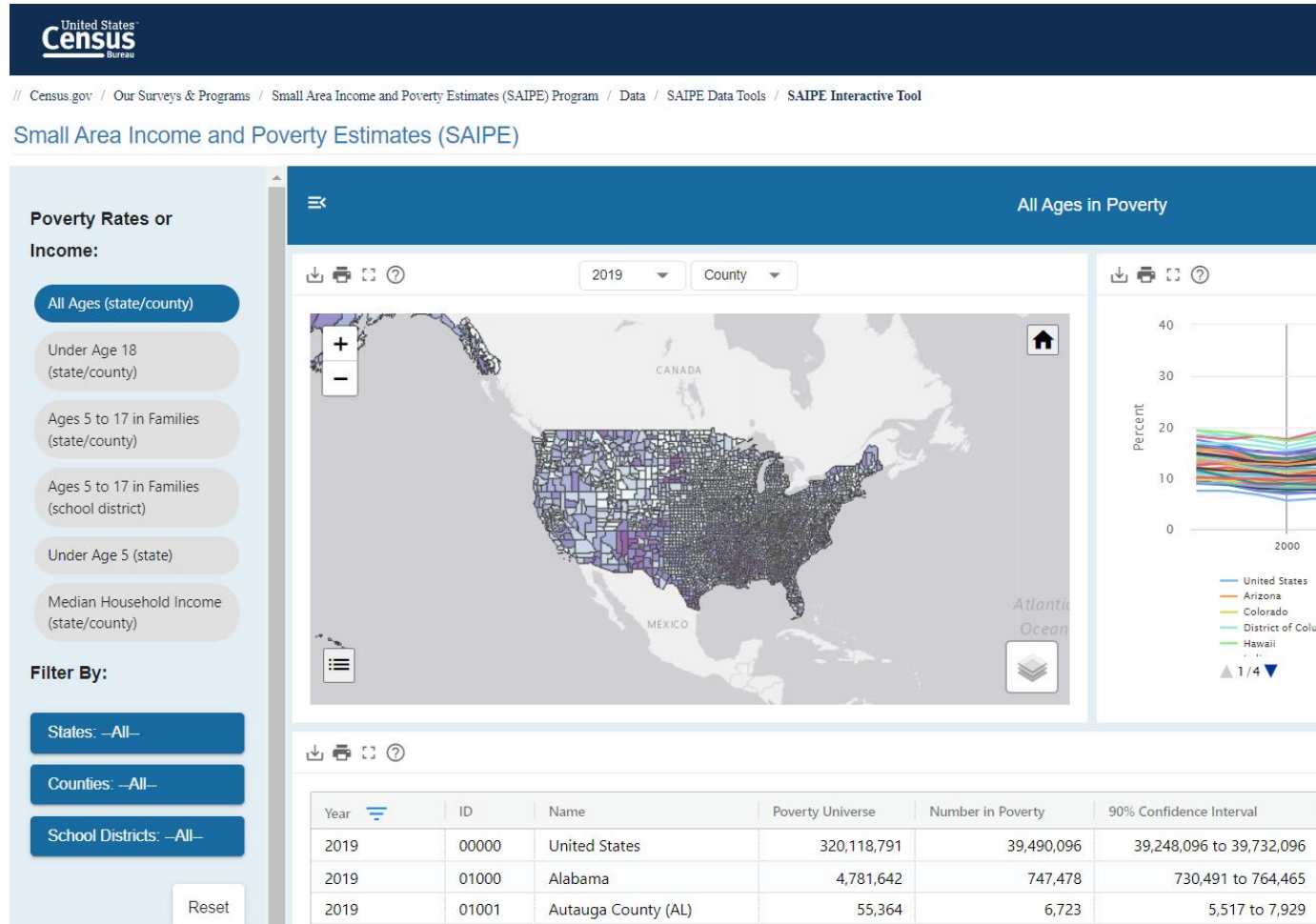
## Example

Sparkman High School  
2616 Jeff Rd NW, Harvest, AL 35749

Harvest, AL population = 5,893



# ECONOMIC NEED – CENSUS SAIPE LOOKUP



- SAIPE = Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates
- Lookup tool located [here](#) on Census website
- A **county-level** measure (*population is calculated at the level of city / town / Census Designated Place*)
- We want to calculate the percentage of people in poverty (all ages) in the county where the site is located



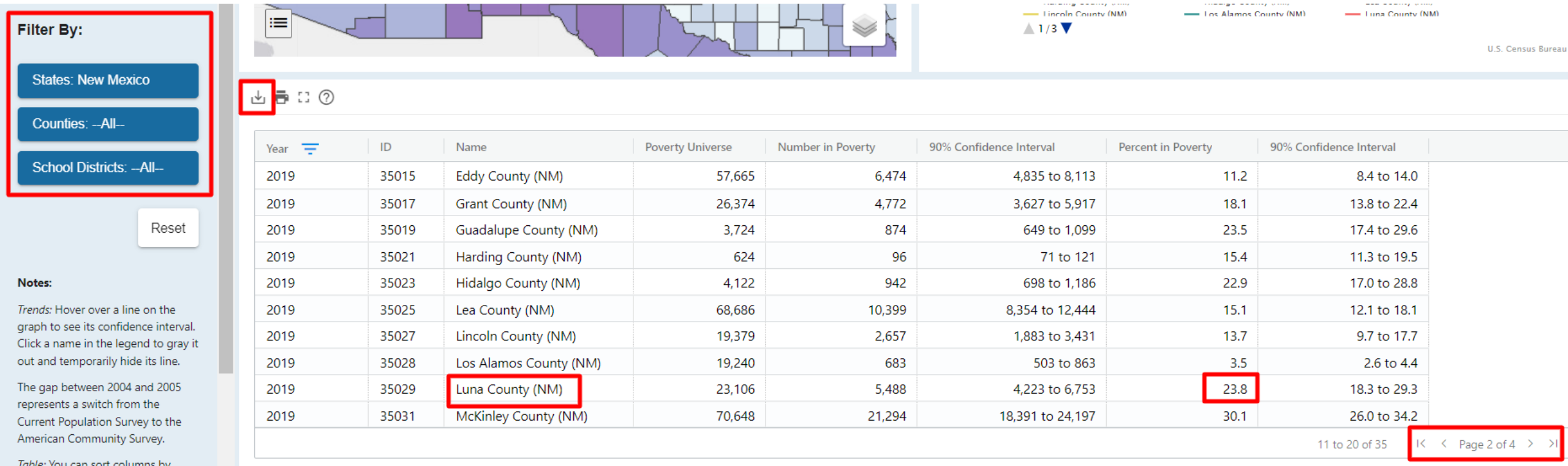
# CENSUS SAIPE LOOKUP EXAMPLE



## Example

Luna County, NM

- Use the “Filter By” option on the left
- You can filter by State and then look at the table at the bottom of the page to see the results for all counties in the state. Go to the next page or download results if they don’t fit on one page.
- OR you can filter by State and by County
- Record the number in the “Percent in Poverty” column



# SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

With every RUS-DLT cycle, there are certain program focuses that are prioritized and receive additional points. In 2021, these focuses (called Special Considerations) were:

- Treatment, counseling, training, or educational services for 1. Opioid or 2. Substance Use Disorder (SUD) – 10 points
- At least one end-user site located on Tribal Lands – 20 points (A Tribal Resolution was required for non-Tribal applicants)

Applicants can only get Special Consideration points in one of these categories. BUT, if your project falls into multiple Special Consideration buckets, mention this in your Needs & Benefits narrative (**more info in next section**)! This will only strengthen your application.

**Every point matters so claim these points if you can!**





# OBJECTIVE SCORE SUMMARY

## Rurality

Up to 40 points

Averaged across all end-user sites  
(sites receiving content / services)

- Exceptionally rural area: population 5,000 and under – **40 points**
- Rural area: population 5,001-10,000 – **30 points**
- Mid-rural area: population 10,0001-20,000 – **20 points**
- Urban area: population over 20,000 – **0 points**

## Economic Need

Up to 30 points

Averaged across all end-user sites  
(sites receiving content / services)

- SAIPE percentage greater than or equal to 30 percent – **30 points**
- SAIPE percentage greater than or equal to 20 percent but less than 30 percent – **20 points**
- SAIPE percentage greater than or equal to 10 percent but less than 20 percent – **10 points**
- SAIPE percentage less than 10 percent – **0 points**

## Special Considerations

In 2021, up to 20 points

Given once per project

- Treatment, counseling, training, or educational services for 1. Opioid or 2. Substance Use Disorder (SUD) – **10 points**
- At least one end-user site located on Tribal Lands – **20 points**



# 4

## **SUBJECTIVE SCORING**

QUANTIFYING YOUR  
PROJECT'S NEEDS



# OVERVIEW – NEED FOR SERVICES AND PROJECT BENEFITS

- The only scored narrative section in the RUS-DLT application is called the Community Needs and Project Benefits section. It makes up your entire Subjective Score – worth up to **30 points!**
- There are other narrative sections that are required as part of your application, but they are not scored. Check the boxes and get those done but focus your efforts on the Needs & Benefits section.
- Be a storyteller! This is where you can really demonstrate the need for your project and resonate with the reviewer.



# START WITH A PROJECT OVERVIEW

## *What's your project about?*

Summarize who you are, where you are, what your problems are, and how you propose to address those challenges through distance learning and / or telemedicine.

Insert a table of the sites in your project (copy from your Rurality Worksheet)

You can reuse this project overview in other parts of your application (e.g., Executive Summary, Scope of Work, Telecommunications System Plan, etc.)

Site Name	Designation	Location	Population
ME Center for the Deaf	Hub Site	Falmouth ME	11,185
Chebeague Island School	End-User Site	Chebeague Island ME	341
Cliff Island Elementary	End-User Site	Cliff Island ME	60
Peaks Island School	End-User Site	Peaks Island ME	843
<b>Total</b>			<b>12,429</b>

**Remember: Paint an emotional picture!**



# ADD A GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE



Discuss the area being served. Paint a picture of the geographic challenges (e.g., isolation, rurality, terrain, weather, etc.)

Consider adding a map.

Put the geographic isolation into context for the reader...**examples:**

***“It’s a 30-minute drive just to pick up a gallon of milk or to get gas.”***

***“Four of our project schools are only accessible by air or boat”***

***“There is not a single healthcare provider in the entire county”***



# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Describe the demographics of your service area. Where do you not compare favorably and most effectively showcases the needs of your community?

**Examples:** Poverty levels, educational attainment, unemployment, health outcomes, etc.

One of the easiest ways to document and compare demographic info is with a table. Compare the datasets relevant to your project. Then describe what the data says in narrative form.

Location	% in Poverty	Median Income	% with HS Diploma	4 Yr Degree or Greater	Not in Labor Force
USA	14.6%	\$57,652	87.3%	30.9%	36.6%
Mississippi	21.5%	\$42,009	83.4%	21.3%	42.3%
Mound Bayou	44.8%	\$21,154	77%	19.1%	55.9%
Sunflower	39.6%	\$26,289	69.7%	16.9%	49.1%
<b>Project Avg.</b>	<b>42.2%</b>	<b>\$23,722</b>	<b>73.35%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>





# OUTWARD MIGRATION



Where relevant, document patterns of population loss present in any of your project areas.

Include possible explanations for why the population loss could be occurring.

**Examples:** Lack of jobs, lack of dependable or affordable housing, lack of healthcare or educational resources

***How will your project can help stem the population loss?***

Project Location	2000 Census Pop.	2010 Census Pop.	% change
Mound Bayou, MS	2102	1533	<b>-27.1%</b>
Sunflower Town, MS	1334	1159	<b>-13.12</b>
Mississippi	2,844,646	2,967,297	<b>4.31%</b>



# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In your application, you want to show that you involved members of the community in planning your project. Some options for doing so include:

- Holding a planning meeting (or meetings) within your community. As evidence your application, you can provide a snapshot of the posted invitation (e.g., newspaper clipping, social media post, etc.), details pertaining to the event, and a list of attendees.
- Developing a planning committee. Make sure you include a variety of stakeholders to show deep involvement and the impact your project will have. Keep a record of the dates of meetings, names and titles of attendees, and the topics discussed to include in your application.
- Sending out surveys to community members. Include the survey questions and response data in your application.

You also want to show how you identified the critical needs that your project is addressing. This could be from the community involvement mentioned above but also from looking at data points, records, incident reports, etc.

**Needs assessment leads to...**



# NEEDS IDENTIFICATION & PROJECT DESIGN



When identifying your needs, try to think broadly.

Start with your primary need and then consider other ways distance learning or telemedicine connections can help address problems in your target area.

## **Example:**

- **Primary need:** To provide primary care in a school-based health setting
- **Other possible needs / use cases:**
  - Prevention / wellness programming
  - Special education services (e.g., physical therapy, speech therapy, psychological testing, etc.)
  - Expanding access to teachers, families, community members
  - Access to specialty care (e.g., mental health professionals, allergist, nutritionist, etc.)
  - Continuing Medical Education, professional development





# ALIGN NEEDS WITH BENEFITS & OUTCOMES

List out the needs you have identified. Go through them one by one and list out the expected benefits and outcomes your project will bring about. Benefits are more general while outcomes are more specific and detailed (and typically contain numbers).

You will typically have multiple benefits per need, and then multiple outcomes per benefit.

Needs	Benefits	Outcomes
1. lack of local primary care	1.1 Healthier Students	1.1.1 Increased attendance
		1.1.2. Greater Academic Achievement
	1.2 Prevention of pandemic outbreaks (measles, etc)	1.2.1 x% decline in epidemic outbreaks due to proactive immunization education and monitoring
2. limited access to special educators due to rurality and limited budget	2.1 virtual access to a wide variety of special educators	2.1.1 time between referral and assessment decrease
		2.1.2 delivery of services increases by X%
		2.1.3 documented student progress as measured by EOY assessments



# NOW ELABORATE!



## ***First with the needs!***

- List out the individual needs included in your table and discuss each in detail
- Cite sources – how can you prove this need really IS a need?
- Make regional, state or national comparisons!
  - In what ways do you not compare favorably?
  - Reference specific metrics and statistics



## ***Then proceed to the benefits and outcomes!***

- Discuss benefits generally. How does your project allow you to achieve those benefits?
- Try to use specifics and numbers when discussing outcomes. What % increase, decrease, improvement, etc. are you anticipating? Use your best judgement!

***Assume the reviewer is not an expert on your topic.***



# OTHER NEEDS & BENEFITS ELEMENTS

## ***Alignment with State Plan***

- Discuss how your project is in line with the direction your state is championing
- Cite similar initiatives

## ***Project Support***

- Letters of support
- Donations of time / money
- Board approval

## ***Non-Duplication***

- Discuss any DLT projects that your partners participated in in the last three years
- Are any project members involved in another 2022 DLT project?
- Address non-duplication





**Q: How long does my Needs section need to be?**

**A:** There is no prescribed length for this section. However, this is a highly weighted section. Aim for 10 pages or more, but more importantly, just be thorough and address all elements

**Q: What data points should I include?**

**A:** You are identifying need... Bad = Good. Point out relevant areas where your project sites do not compare favorably. All projects are different so use data that impacts your proposed project

**Q: How many support letters do I need?**

**A:** Quality over Quantity! No templates! Have a representative sampling.





5

OTHER  
APPLICATION  
COMPONENTS

# **OFFICIAL** **APPLICATION** **COMPONENTS** **(2021)**

- A. Standard Form 424
- B. Site Worksheet
- C. Executive Summary of the Project
- D. Scoring Criteria Documentation (3 Worksheets plus Needs & Benefits discussion)
- E. Matching Requirements (Worksheet plus correspondence)
- F. Scope of Work (Including Budget Worksheet)
- G. Financial Information and Sustainability
- H. Statement of Experience
- I. Telecommunications System Plan
- J. Compliance with other Federal Statutes
- K. Evidence of Legal Authority and Existence
- L. Environmental Impact and Historic Preservation
- M. Consultation with USDA State Director
- N. Supplemental Information



# CREATING A BUDGET

After you have your project design and needs identified, you should proceed to creating a budget. You will need a rough budget in place when consulting with your USDA State Director (another required component of the application). And locating the ideal technology can take time so it's important to start early!

**Q: How do I know what technology I need?**

**A:** *Ask manufacturers and vendors to provide you with information and demonstrations. Ask your peers for references!*

**Q: How do I get pricing?**

**A:** *Request one or more vendor price quotes (ask that they quote by project site to make it easy to translate to your Budget Worksheet)*

**Q: What if I change my mind once the grant is submitted?**

**A:** *RUS has a budget modification process if needed. But try to keep changes minimal!*

**Q: When can I start making purchases?**

**A:** *Purchases can be made the day after the grant due date. Reimbursement will not be received until grant is awarded and paperwork completed.*



# ADDITIONAL NARRATIVE SECTIONS

*These narrative sections are required but not scored!*

**Executive Summary** – Short summary pulled from other portions of your grant application. *Do this last!*

**Scope of Work** – Discuss how you will implement the project. Include a table that aligns the activities proposed with the individuals responsible for them and the estimated timeline of when these activities will commence. *Include budget worksheet here.*

**Financial Information and Sustainability** – Address the feasibility and sustainability of your project. List (in a table) any anticipated project revenues, cost savings, and expenses.

**Statement of Experience** – Describe the relevant experience of your project team and provide bios of the key personnel that will support the project.

**Telecommunications System Plan** – The main task here is explaining and justifying all your budget items (we recommend a line-by-line table). In addition, provide an overview of the equipment / services you chose, discuss how you picked the equipment / services (e.g., did you consult with vendors and providers?), include a list and map of your project sites, and address non-duplication. *Include at least one vendor quote at the end!*



# NEXT STEPS



*Develop your partnerships & determine project sites*



*Check on your SAM registration and Grants.gov access*



*Schedule a free consultation with our team*



*Determine who is writing your grant*



**THANK YOU**

ALLLDA@LearnDesignApply.com