

Funding Opportunities & Initiatives

BROADBAND, NHSC SITE, INITIATIVES



BROADBAND: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently released the [2015 Broadband Progress Report](#) that provides the latest data on broadband deployment in the U.S. The report finds that rural areas are failing to keep pace with today's advanced, high-quality voice, data, graphics, and video offerings. The FCC updated its broadband benchmark speeds from 4 megabits per second (Mbps) for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads in 2010, to 25 Mbps/ 3 Mbps in 2015. Since the updated benchmark, 55 million Americans or 17% of the population lack access to advanced broadband, and over half of those are Rural Americans, causing a significant digital divide. The divide is even larger in Tribal lands and U.S. territories where nearly 2/3 lack access to today's speeds. For more information on available broadband funding in rural areas, please visit the websites for [FCC's Health Care Connect Fund](#) and the [HHS/USDA Rural Health Financing Initiative](#).

NAT'L HEALTH SERVICE CORPS (NHSC) SITE: The 2015 [National Health Service Corps Site](#) application cycle is now open! The NHSC is dedicated to developing the primary care workforce in underserved areas through providing loan repayment and scholarships to providers in return for service in underserved communities.

Becoming an NHSC approved site has many benefits including assisting in provider recruitment, gaining access to State Primary Care offices, and networking with other providers and communities dedicated to improving access to primary care. Eligible sites include any health care facilities providing outpatient, ambulatory, and primary health care services to high-need and underserved populations. Critical access hospitals (CAHs) interested in participation must be affiliated with an NHSC- approved outpatient clinic prior to applying. For more information, please attend the 2015 NHSC Site Application TA Webinar **April 30th from 12 – 1:30 PM Eastern** (Access link: <https://hrsaseminar.adobeconnect.com/nhscsite2015>, dial-in: 1-888-996-4919, passcode: 8392355) or listen in to the TA Conference Call **May 13th from 12-2 PM Eastern** (Dial-in: 1-888-790-1868, Passcode: 8788160). The application cycle will close **June 2nd at 7:30 PM Eastern**.

INITIATIVES: The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced several initiatives around addressing rural poverty, economic development and the social determinants of health:

- Three [rural telecommunication projects](#) in Arkansas, Iowa, and New Mexico
- Awards to [train SNAP recipients for employment skills](#) in California (Fresno), Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Virginia, Vermont, and Washington State
- [Two additional StrikeForce sites to address rural poverty](#) in Oklahoma and Puerto Rico