



National Congress of American Indians

NCIA News

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Rural Utilities Service Announces \$20 Million Available for Broadband Grants -- The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) recently published a Federal Register notice indicating that it will provide \$20 million in grants under the Broadband Pilot Grant Program in FY 2002. Eligible entities include tribal governments, as well as municipalities, cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, and businesses.

Funds will be awarded competitively for "community-oriented connectivity" in rural, economically-challenged areas that currently lack broadband access. Community-oriented connectivity integrates broadband deployment with practical, every-day uses and is intended to promote economic development and enhanced educational and health care opportunities. As such, proposed projects must:

- Serve a rural area where broadband transmission currently does not exist
- Serve one community
- Deploy basic broadband services, free of charge for at least two years, to all critical community facilities (schools, libraries, hospitals, police, fire and rescue) within the proposed service area
- Offer basic broadband services to all residential and business customers within the proposed service area
- Provide a community center (with the greater of at least 10 computer access points or computer access points equal to one percent of the service population) and make free broadband services available to center users for at least two years

Generally, funds may be used to construct, acquire, expand, or improve facilities and to cover end-user and operating costs. There is a 15 percent minimum matching requirement.

The application deadline is November 5, 2002. The Federal Register notice is available at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002_register&docid=02-17018-filed.pdf.

Restructuring of the Indian Health Service—The Restructuring Initiatives Workgroup (RIW), formed in January 2002 to assess the functions of the Indian health care system and make restructuring recommendations, has submitted a preliminary report to the IHS entitled, "Transitions 2002—A 5-year Initiative to Restructure Indian Health." In keeping with the IHS Tribal Consultation and Participation Policy, consultation meetings on the RIW

preliminary report will be scheduled by each Area Director in collaboration with tribes in their region. Please contact your IHS area office for more information.

Office of Justice Local Law Enforcement Block Grant - The Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance is soliciting applications for FY2002 Local Law Enforcement Block Grants. Applications are available on the Office of Justice Website, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/application_instructions.html. For additional information and instructions, applicants may call (202) 514-6638.

SAMHSA Funding Available for Technical Assistance Center to Address Older Adult Mental Health - The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has announced the availability of funding for a national technical assistance center for the mental health needs of older adults. Approximately \$900,000 in funding will be available to fund one cooperative agreement for a period of up to three years. Tribes and tribal organizations are encouraged to apply. Applications are available from SAMHSA's website at www.samhsa.gov or by phone at 1-800-789-2647. Completed applications must be received by August 8, 2002. For additional information, tribes may contact Betsy McDonel Herr, Ph.D. at 301-594-2197.

New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Launches Website -- On July 8, 2002, the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health launched its new website on mental health, www.MentalHealthCommission.gov. The Commission is charged with conducting a comprehensive study of the mental health service delivery system in the U.S., including both private and public sector providers, and providing recommendations for improving current systems. The website is designed to allow interested parties to follow the progress of this first comprehensive study of the nation's public and private mental health service delivery system in nearly 25 years.