

EXHIBIT 1.5

RUS Project Designation:

UT 1701-A61

ReCONNECT PROGRAM

GRANT AND SECURITY AGREEMENT

dated as of March 5, 2020

between

EMERY TELECOMMUNICATIONS & VIDEO, INC.

and

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE

**ReCONNECT PROGRAM
GRANT AND SECURITY AGREEMENT**

THIS GRANT AND SECURITY AGREEMENT (this "Agreement"), dated as of March 5, 2020 is between **EMERY TELECOMMUNICATIONS & VIDEO, INC.** ("Awardee"), a for-profit corporation existing under the laws of Utah, and the **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**, acting through the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service ("RUS").

The Awardee has applied for financial assistance ("Application") from RUS to finance the construction of a broadband infrastructure project to serve rural areas where at least 100% of the households are without sufficient access to broadband.

RUS is willing to extend financial assistance, in the form of a grant to the Awardee, pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, Pub. L. 115-141, § 779 (the "FY2018 Appropriations"), the Funding Opportunity Announcement published at 83 Fed. Reg. 64315 (Dec. 14, 2018), and Title VI of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. §§ 901 *et seq.*), and all applicable federal regulations, on the terms and conditions stated herein.

The Awardee is willing to secure the grant and its other obligations to RUS on the terms stated herein.

THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises and mutual covenants herein contained, the parties agree and bind themselves as follows:

ARTICLE I – DEFINITIONS

The terms defined herein include both the plural and the singular. Unless otherwise specifically provided herein or in the FOA, all accounting terms not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings assigned to them, and all determinations and computations herein provided for shall be made in accordance with Accounting Requirements.

"Accounting Requirements" shall mean compliance with U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) acceptable to RUS, as well as compliance with the requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. 200 and the system of accounting prescribed by RUS Bulletin 1770B-1.

"Advance" or "Advances" shall mean the disbursement of grant funds in accordance with this Agreement.

"Affiliate" or "Affiliated Company" of any specified person or entity means any other person or entity directly or indirectly controlling of, controlled by, under direct or indirect common control with, or related to, such specified person or entity, or which exists for the sole purpose of providing any service to one company or exclusively to companies which otherwise meet the definition of affiliate. This definition includes Variable Interest Entities as described in Financial Accounting Standards Board Interpretation (FIN) No. 46(R), *Consolidation of Variable Interest Entities*. For the purpose of this definition, "control" means the possession directly or indirectly, of the power to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of a company, whether such power is exercised through one or more intermediary companies, or alone, or in conjunction with, or pursuant to an agreement with, one or more other companies, and whether such power is established through a majority or minority ownership voting of securities, common directors, officers, or stockholders, voting trust, holding trusts (other than money exchanged) for property or services.

"Application" shall have the meaning as defined in the second paragraph hereof.

"Award" shall mean the grant described in Article III.

"Awardee" shall mean the grant recipient named in the first paragraph hereof.

"Buildout Timeline" shall mean the detailed schedule describing the Project build out, submitted with the RUS approved Application, as may be amended from time to time with prior written RUS consent.

"Business Day" shall mean any day that RUS and the Department of Treasury are both open for business.

"Collateral" shall mean any of the property financed with the grant, and pledged as security for the grant, described in Article IX.

"Composite Economic Life" means the weighted (by dollar amount of each class of facility in the Award) average economic life of all classes of facilities in the Award, as determined by RUS.

"Current ratio" shall mean the current assets divided by current liabilities, as set forth in Section 5.16 hereof.

"Distribution" shall have the meaning as defined in Section 7.4.

"Eligible Purposes" shall mean purposes and expenses which are specified in the FOA as being eligible for funding.

"Event of Default" shall have the meaning as defined in Article X.

"Expiration Date" shall have the meaning as defined in Section 3.1(b).

"FOA" shall mean the Funding Opportunity Announcement, published in the Federal Register at 83 Fed. Reg. 64315 (Dec. 14, 2018).

"Form 481" shall have the meaning as defined in Section 4.3(e).

"GAAP" shall mean generally accepted accounting principles in the United States.

"Grant" shall mean the grant described in Section 3.1.

"Grant Agreement" shall mean, collectively, this Agreement and the Security Documents.

"Laws" shall have the meaning as defined in paragraph (e) of Article II.

"Material Adverse Effect" shall mean a material adverse effect on, or change in, the condition, financial or otherwise, operations, properties, business or prospects of the Awardee or on the ability of the Awardee to perform its obligations under the Grant Agreement as determined by RUS.

"Network Design" shall mean the network as described in the RUS approved Application.

"Permitted Encumbrances" shall mean:

- (1) liens for taxes, assessments and other governmental charges which are not delinquent;
- (2) liens for taxes, assessments and other governmental charges already delinquent which are currently being contested in good faith by appropriate proceedings; PROVIDED the Awardee shall have set aside on its books adequate reserves with respect thereto;

- (3) mechanics', workmen's, repairmen's, materialmen's, warehousemen's and carriers' liens and other similar liens arising in the ordinary course of business and which are not delinquent, or which are being contested in good faith and have not proceeded to judgment; PROVIDED the Awardee shall have set aside on its books adequate reserves with respect thereto;
- (4) liens in respect of judgments or awards with respect to which the Awardee shall in good faith currently be prosecuting an appeal or proceedings for review and with respect to which the Awardee shall have secured a stay of execution pending such appeal or proceedings for review; PROVIDED the Awardee shall have set aside on its books adequate reserves with respect thereto;
- (5) liens or privileges of any employees of the Awardee for salary or wages earned but not yet payable;
- (6) any obligations or duties, affecting the property of the Awardee, to any municipality or governmental or other public authority with respect to any franchise, grant, license or permit;
- (7) any right which any municipal or governmental authority may have by virtue of any franchise, license, contract or statute to purchase, or designate a purchaser of or order the sale of, any property of the Awardee upon payment of cash or reasonable compensation therefor or to terminate any franchise, license or other rights or to regulate the property and business of the Awardee; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, that nothing in this clause 7 is intended to waive any claim or rights that RUS may otherwise have under Federal laws; and
- (8) any lien required by law or governmental regulations as a condition to the transaction of any business or the exercise of any privilege or license, or to enable the Awardee to maintain self-insurance or to participate in any fund established to cover any insurance risks or in connection with workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, old age pensions or other social security, or to share in the privileges or benefits required for companies participating in such arrangements; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, that nothing in this clause 8 is intended to waive any claim or rights that RUS may otherwise have under Federal laws.

"Pledged Deposit Account" shall have the meaning as defined in Section 5.4.

"Project" means all of the work, as approved by the Agency, to be performed to bring broadband service to all premises in the proposed funded service area under the Application, including construction, the purchase and installation of equipment, and professional services including engineering and accountant/consultant fees, whether funded by federal assistance, matching, or other funds.

"Project Completion" shall mean that all Award funds for construction of the broadband system, excluding those funds for subscriber drop connections and customer premises equipment, have been advanced to the Awardee by RUS.

"RE Act" shall mean the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*).

"ReConnect Program Construction Procedures" shall mean the procedures for construction and Advances, attached hereto as Attachment 1.

"Release of Funds Date" shall mean the date funds are first made available as evidenced by the notice sent by the Agency to the Awardee.

“Security Documents” shall mean, collectively, any security agreement, financing statement, deposit account control agreement or other document providing collateral for the grant and other obligations hereunder.

“Service Obligation” shall mean the period in which grant assets must be placed into service to carry out the purposes of the ReConnect Program, and the time period in which grant assets must be secured as an exclusive, first lien on behalf of the government.

"Subsidiaries" shall mean the subsidiaries listed in Schedule 1.

ARTICLE II - REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES

Recognizing that RUS is relying hereon, the Awardee represents and warrants, as of the date of this Agreement, as follows:

- (a) *Organization; Power, Etc.* The Awardee: (i) is the type of organization specified in the first paragraph hereof, duly organized, validly existing, and in good standing under the laws of the State identified in the first paragraph hereof; (ii) is duly qualified to do business and is in good standing in each jurisdiction in which the transaction of its business make such qualification necessary; (iii) has legal power to own and operate its assets and to carry on its business and to enter into and perform its obligations under the Grant Agreement; (iv) has duly and lawfully obtained and maintained all material licenses, certificates, permits, authorizations and approvals necessary to conduct its business or required by applicable Laws; and (v) is eligible to obtain the financial assistance from RUS contemplated by this Agreement.
- (b) *Authority.* The execution, delivery and performance by the Awardee of the Grant Agreement and the performance of the transactions contemplated hereby and thereby have been duly authorized by all necessary actions and do not violate any provision of law or any charter, articles of incorporation, organization documents or bylaws of the Awardee or result in a breach of, or constitute a default under, any agreement, security agreement, note or other instrument to which the Awardee is a party or by which it may be bound. The Awardee has not received any notice from any other party to any of the foregoing that a default has occurred or that any event or condition exists that with the giving of notice or lapse of time or both would constitute such a default.
- (c) *Consents.* No consent, approval, authorization, order, filing, qualification, license, or permit of any governmental authority is necessary in connection with the execution, delivery, performance or enforcement of the Grant Agreement, except such as have been obtained and are in full force and effect.
- (d) *Binding Agreement.* Each part of the Grant Agreement is, or when executed and delivered will be, the legal, valid, and binding obligation of the Awardee, enforceable in accordance with its terms, subject only to limitations on enforceability imposed in equity or by applicable bankruptcy, insolvency, reorganization, moratorium or similar laws affecting creditors' rights generally.
- (e) *Compliance with Laws.* The Awardee is in compliance in all material respects with all federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, codes and orders (collectively, "Laws").
- (f) *Litigation.* There are no pending or threatened legal, arbitration or governmental actions or proceedings to which the Awardee is a party or to which any of its property is subject which, if adversely determined, could have a Material Adverse Effect.

- (g) *Information Submitted with Application.* All information, reports, and other documents and data submitted to RUS in connection with the Application were, at the time the same were furnished, complete, and correct in all material respects. Any financial statements or data submitted to RUS in connection with the Application present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Awardee and the results of its operations in conformity with Accounting Requirements. Since the date thereof, there has been no material adverse change in the financial condition or operations of the Awardee.
- (h) *Principal Place of Business.* The principal place of business and chief executive office of the Awardee is at the address of the Awardee specified in Schedule 1 hereto.
- (i) *Organization Number.* The Awardee's organization number is correctly identified in Schedule 1 hereto.
- (j) *Subsidiaries and Parent.* Any subsidiaries or parent of the Awardee are disclosed on the attached Schedule 1.
- (k) *Defaults Under Other Agreements.* No default by the Awardee has occurred under any agreement or instrument to which the Awardee is a party or to which any of its property is subject that could have a Material Adverse Effect.
- (l) *Additional Representations and Warranties.* The Awardee further represents and warrants as set forth in Schedule 1.

ARTICLE III – THE GRANT

Section 3.1 Grant Amount and Expiration Date.

- (a) *Grant Amount.* RUS agrees to make and the Awardee agrees to accept, on the terms and conditions stated in this Agreement and subject to 31 U.S.C. 1551 and 1552, a grant, in the amount specified in Schedule 1 hereto (the "Grant").
- (b) *Expiration Date.* The obligation of RUS to advance the Award, or any portion thereof, shall expire on a date ("Expiration Date") five (5) years from the Release of Funds date.

Section 3.2 Security Documents

The Awardee shall execute the Security Documents, covering the Collateral, in form and substance satisfactory to RUS, and such other security instruments as required by RUS.

Section 3.3 Project

- (a) *Grant Purpose.* The grant has been made solely to finance the broadband infrastructure project specifically defined herein ("Project").
- (b) *Changes to Project.* The Awardee shall obtain the prior written approval of RUS for any material change to the network design, construction, buildout timeline, delivery of services, and/or objective(s) of the Project.

Section 3.4 ACH Payments

The Awardee consents to the use of the Automated Clearing House (ACH) Payment System and to the deposit of award funds directly into the Pledged Deposit Account.

ARTICLE IV – CONDITIONS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Section 4.1 Conditions Precedent to Closing

In connection with the execution and delivery of this Agreement, each of the following conditions shall be satisfied (all documents, certificates and other evidence of such conditions are to be satisfactory to RUS in its discretion):

- (a) *Legal Matters.* All legal matters incident to the consummation of the transactions hereby contemplated shall be satisfactory to counsel for RUS;
- (b) *Grant Agreement.* RUS shall receive duly executed originals of the Grant Agreement;
- (c) *Filed and Recorded Security Documents.* RUS shall have received executed, filed and indexed financing statements covering the Collateral;
- (d) *Articles of Incorporation, Charter, Bylaws and Organizational Documents.* With respect to corporate and cooperative Awardees, RUS shall have received certified copies of the Awardee's most recent articles of incorporation or charter and bylaws. With respect to limited liability companies or similar organizations, RUS shall have received certified copies of the Awardee's most recent organization documents;
- (e) *Authorizations.* RUS shall have received satisfactory evidence that all parts of the Grant Agreement and proceedings of the Awardee necessary for duly authorizing the execution, delivery and performance of the Grant Agreement have been obtained and are in full force and effect;
- (f) *Approvals.* RUS shall have received satisfactory evidence that the Awardee has duly registered when and where required by law with all state, Federal and other public authorities and regulatory bodies and obtained all authorizations, certificates, and approvals necessary for, or required as a condition of, the validity and enforceability of each part of the Grant Agreement;
- (g) *Title Evidence.* RUS shall have received satisfactory evidence that the Awardee has good and marketable title to its property, including the Project, and holds such franchises, permits, leases, easements, rights, privileges, licenses, or right-of-way instruments, reasonably adequate in form and substance, as may be required by law for the continued maintenance and operation of the existing facilities and Project;
- (h) *Management, Service, and Operating Agreements.* Except as otherwise provided in Sections 4.2 and/or 4.3 herein, RUS shall have received all management, service, and operating agreements, in form and substance acceptable to RUS, which shall be in accordance with fees or rates presented in the *pro forma* financial statements submitted to RUS in the RUS approved Application;
- (i) *Opinion of Counsel.* RUS shall have received an opinion of counsel for the Awardee (who shall be acceptable to RUS) in form and substance acceptable to RUS for each state in which the Awardee operates; and
- (j) *Additional Conditions.* The Awardee has met all additional conditions specified in Schedule 1 hereto.

Section 4.2 General Conditions Precedent to RUS' Obligations to Release Funds for Advance

The obligations of RUS hereunder are subject to the satisfaction of each of the following conditions precedent (all documents, certificates and other evidence of such conditions are to be satisfactory to RUS in its discretion):

- (a) *Fidelity Bond or Theft Insurance Coverage.* RUS has received copies of the fidelity bond or theft insurance policy from the Awardee, identifying RUS as a loss payee, from a surety doing business with the United States listed in 31 CFR Part 223, in the amount specified in Schedule 1, covering all officers, employees, or agents of the Awardee authorized to receive, disburse, or receive and disburse the grant;
- (b) *Current Financial Information and Certificate of Authority.* RUS has received from the Awardee: (i) its updated balance sheet, statement of cash flow, and income statement and (ii) a duly authorized and executed certification, Form 675, "Certification of Authority," designating an officer, employee, or agent of the Awardee as the person or persons authorized to execute and submit, on behalf of the Awardee, RUS Form 481, "Financial Requirement Statement;"
- (c) *Deposited Funds.* RUS has received from the Awardee evidence, satisfactory to RUS, verifying that the Awardee has on deposit in the Pledged Deposit Account, funds sufficient to fulfill the matching funds requirement and to complete the Project as specified on Schedule 1; and
- (d) *Additional Conditions.* The Awardee has met all additional conditions specified in Schedule 1 hereto.

Section 4.3 Conditions to Individual Advances

The obligations of RUS to approve any Advance are subject to the satisfaction of each of the following conditions precedent on or before the date of such Advance (all documents, certificates and other evidence of such conditions precedent are to be satisfactory to RUS in its discretion):

- (a) *Continuing Representations and Warranties.* That the representations and warranties of the Awardee contained in this Agreement be true and correct on and as of the date of such Advance as though made on and as of such date;
- (b) *Expenditure of Funds.* Notwithstanding Section 4.4, that all approved matching funds have been expended before a request for grant funds is made, as stipulated in the FOA.
- (c) *Material Adverse Effect.* That no event has occurred which has had or could have a Material Adverse Effect;
- (d) *Event of Default.* That no Event of Default and no event which with the passage of time or giving of notice, or both, would constitute an Event of Default shall have occurred and be continuing, or shall have occurred after giving effect to any Advances on the books of the Awardee;
- (e) *Requisitions and Supporting Documentation.* That RUS shall have received not more frequently than once a month, unless otherwise agreed to by RUS, a completed RUS Form 481, "Financial Requirement Statement" (hereinafter "Form 481"), bearing the original signature of the officer, employee, or agent of the Awardee authorized to receive, disburse, or receive and disburse the Award, with supporting documentation from the Awardee in accordance with the ReConnect Program Construction Procedures. Advances shall be limited to the minimum amounts required for the Awardee's immediate disbursement needs and shall be requested by the Awardee only for actual immediate cash requirements of the Awardee. Such grant advances shall be provided on a reimbursement basis, or based on unpaid third party invoices for Eligible

Purposes, or contracts approved by RUS, in accordance with the ReConnect Program Construction Procedures;

- (f) *Flood Insurance.* That for any Advance used in whole or in part to finance the construction or acquisition of any building in any area identified by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development pursuant to the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (the "Flood Insurance Act") or any rules, regulations or orders issued to implement the Flood Insurance Act as any area having special flood hazards, or to finance any facilities or materials to be located in any such building, or in any building owned or occupied by the Awardee and located in such a flood hazard area, the Awardee shall have submitted evidence, in form and substance satisfactory to RUS or RUS has otherwise determined, that (i) the community in which such area is located is then participating in the national flood insurance program, as required by the Flood Insurance Act and any related regulations, and (ii) the Awardee has obtained flood insurance coverage with respect to such building and contents as may then be required pursuant to the Flood Insurance Act and any related regulations;
- (g) *Current Financial Information.* That RUS has received from the Awardee: its current, updated balance sheets, income statements and statements of cash flow;
- (h) *Compliance with Buildout Timeline and Reporting Requirements.* That RUS has received from the Awardee evidence, satisfactory to RUS, that the Project is being constructed in accordance with the Buildout Timeline and Reporting requirements in Section 6.4;
- (i) *Compliance with Grant Agreement.* That the Awardee is in material compliance with the Grant Agreement;
- (j) *Permits, Licenses and Franchises.* That RUS shall have received satisfactory evidence that the Awardee has obtained the permits, licenses, franchises and other approvals identified on Schedule 1;
- (k) *Deposited Funds.* That Awardee has maintained on deposit in the Pledged Deposit Account the matching funds requirement as well as other funds to complete the Project as specified on Schedule 1, unless expended and withdrawn as authorized by RUS;
- (l) *Additional Documents.* That the Awardee agrees to provide RUS with such additional documents as RUS may request; and
- (m) *Additional Conditions.* That the Awardee has met all additional conditions specified in Schedule 1 hereto.

Section 4.4 First Advance to Pay Off Pre-Application Expenses

Funds to pay off certain pre-application expenses, as defined in the FOA, if any, must be included in the first Advance.

ARTICLE V – AFFIRMATIVE COVENANTS

Section 5.1 General

Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by RUS, while this Agreement is in effect, the Awardee shall duly observe each of the affirmative covenants contained in this Article V.

Section 5.2 Use of Advances

The Awardee shall expend Award funds only for Eligible Purposes in accordance with the RUS approved line item Project budget and Form(s) 481 submitted to RUS prior to the advance of funds.

Section 5.3 Unused and Disallowed Advances

- (a) The Awardee shall return to RUS forthwith all or any advanced portion of the grant not disbursed by the Awardee for the Project or not needed to complete the Project with any interest earned thereon when deposited in the Pledged Deposit Account.
- (b) The Awardee shall reimburse RUS for any advanced funds whose original expenditure has been disallowed by an RUS grant audit. Disallowances shall be satisfied, as directed by RUS, by either administrative offset against other approved purposes on Form(s) 481 or repaying the disallowed amount directly to the United States Treasury. Such disallowed amounts shall accrue interest payable to RUS from the date RUS delivers to the Awardee a written demand for payment. Interest shall accrue on disallowed grant Advances at the then current United States Treasury rate as prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. Closeout of the grant will not affect the right of RUS to disallow expenditures and recover, in full, any amount on the basis of a subsequent audit or other review or the Awardee's obligation to return any disallowed expenditures.

Section 5.4 Deposit of Advances into Pledged Deposit Account

- (a) The Awardee shall open and maintain a deposit account pledged to RUS ("Pledged Deposit Account,") in a bank or depository whose deposits are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or other federal agency acceptable to RUS and shall be identified by the RUS' designation of the Awardee followed by the words "Pledged Deposit Account." The Awardee shall promptly deposit proceeds from all Advances, including previously advanced funds whose original expenditure has been disallowed by an RUS audit into the Pledged Deposit Account. Moneys in the Pledged Deposit Account shall be used solely for the purposes for which Advances were made, or for such other purposes as may be approved in writing by RUS. Deposits and disbursements from the Pledged Deposit Account shall be made and recorded in accordance with the ReConnect Program Construction Procedures.
- (b) *First Lien on Pledged Deposit Account.* The Awardee shall perfect and maintain a first and prior lien in the Pledged Deposit Account (pursuant to a deposit account agreement or similar agreement or mechanism for perfecting as provided by applicable law) in form acceptable to RUS.

Section 5.5 Additional Project Funding

The Awardee shall ensure that adequate funding is in place to complete the Project and will, after obtaining the prior written approval of RUS, obtain additional loans or funds or receive binding commitments for supplemental funding in an amount needed to ensure completion of the Project.

Section 5.6 Miscellaneous Notices

The Awardee shall furnish to RUS:

- (a) *Notice of Default.* Promptly after becoming aware thereof, notice of the occurrence of any default under the Grant Agreement or the receipt of any notice given pursuant to the Grant Agreement with respect to the occurrence of any event which with the giving of notice or the passage of time, or both, could become an Event of Default hereunder or under any other part of the Grant Agreement.

- (b) *Notice of Litigation.* Promptly after the commencement thereof, notice of the commencement of all actions, suits or proceedings before any court, arbitrator, or governmental department, commission, board, bureau, agency, or instrumentality affecting the Awardee or any Affiliate which, if adversely determined, could have a Material Adverse Effect.
- (c) *Regulatory and Other Notices.* Promptly after receipt thereof, copies of any notices or other communications received from any governmental authority with respect to any matter or proceeding which could have a Material Adverse Effect.
- (d) *Material Adverse Effect.* Promptly after becoming aware thereof, notice of any matter which has resulted or may result in a Material Adverse Effect.
- (e) *Corporate Document Changes.* Thirty (30) days prior to their effectiveness, any amendments, supplements or modifications to the Awardee's Articles of Incorporation, Charter, Bylaws, Operating Agreement, Members Agreements or other Organizational Documents.
- (f) *Other Information.* Such other information regarding the condition, financial or otherwise, or operations of the Awardee as RUS may, from time to time, reasonably request.

Section 5.7 Service Obligation

The Awardee shall provide the level of broadband service described in the RUS approved Application commencing from the date of Project Completion until the end of the Composite Economic Life of the facilities financed by the Award as specified on Schedule 1. Awardee acknowledges that given the significant amount of government contribution to the Project in the form of a grant, the Service Obligation is a significant portion of the public benefit of the Award, and that a material breach of the Service Obligation shall be an Event of Default. Awardee also acknowledges that grant assets must be secured as an exclusive, first lien on behalf of the government, as required by the ReConnect Program.

Section 5.8 Obligations with Respect to the Construction, Operation and Maintenance of the Project

- (a) *Project Management and Operation.* The Awardee shall be responsible for the management of the Project and will operate the Project in an efficient and economic manner as well as maintaining the Project in good repair.
- (b) *Construction in Accordance with Network Design and Buildout Timeline.* The Awardee shall cause the Project to be constructed and/or built out, and completed in accordance with the Network Design submitted with the RUS approved Application, as such design may be amended with prior RUS consent, and the Buildout Timeline.
- (c) *General Insurance Requirements.* The Awardee shall take out and maintain insurance on the Project and any other property acquired with the grant in accordance with 7 CFR Section 1788 as well as maintaining the fidelity bond or theft insurance coverage required in Section 4.2(a) hereof.
- (d) *Contracting.* The Awardee may, in accordance with the ReConnect Program Construction Procedures, contract for goods and services to be funded by the Award, using RUS form contracts or private contracts; provided that private contracts must comply with equal employment opportunity and civil rights requirements.
- (e) *Commencement and Completion of the Project.*

- (1) Awardees are required to commence the Project within 180 days from the date that RUS notifies in writing that the environmental review process has been concluded; and
- (2) Project Completion shall occur within five years from the Release of Funds Date.

Section 5.9 Preservation of Existence and Rights

The Awardee shall take or cause to be taken all such actions as from time to time may be necessary to preserve its existence and to preserve and renew all franchises, contracts, rights of way, easements, permits, and licenses now or hereafter to be granted or conferred upon it, with respect to the Project, the loss of which would have a Material Adverse Effect.

Section 5.10 Compliance with Laws

Awardees shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, including but not limited to: (i) The nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.*, 7 CFR pt. 15); (ii) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794 *et seq.*; 7 CFR pt. 15b); (iii) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 6101 *et seq.*; 45 CFR pt. 90); (iv) Executive Order 11375, amending Executive Order 11246, Relating to Equal Employment Opportunity (3 CFR pt. 102); (v) The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 4151 *et seq.*); (vi) The Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS), as published by the United States Access Board; (vii) The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA and certain related federal environmental laws, statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders found in 7 CFR 1970; (viii) The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 USC 3001 *et seq.*, 43 CFR § 10.4); (ix) The Communications Act of 1934, as amended, (47 U.S.C. § 151 *et seq.*); (x) The Telecommunications Act of 1996, as amended (Pub. L. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996)); and (xi) The Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (47 U.S.C. § 1001 *et seq.*) (CALEA).

Section 5.11 Equal Opportunity Requirements

- (a) *Equal Opportunity Provisions in Construction Contracts.* The Awardee shall incorporate or cause to be incorporated into any construction contract, as defined in Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1965 and implementing regulations, which is paid for in whole or in part with funds obtained from RUS or borrowed on the credit of the United States pursuant to a grant, contract, loan, insurance or guarantee, or undertaken pursuant to any RUS program involving such grant, contract, loan, insurance or guarantee, the equal opportunity provisions set forth in Attachment 2 hereto, entitled Equal Opportunity Contract Provisions.
- (b) *Equal Opportunity Contract Provisions Also Bind the Awardee.* The Awardee further agrees that it shall be bound by such equal opportunity clause in any federally assisted construction work which it performs itself other than through the permanent work force directly employed by an agency of government.
- (c) *Sanctions and Penalties.* The Awardee agrees that it shall cooperate actively with RUS and the Secretary of Labor in obtaining the compliance of contractors and subcontractors with the equal opportunity clause and the rules, regulations and relevant orders of the Secretary of Labor, that it shall furnish RUS and the Secretary of Labor such information as they may require for the supervision of such compliance, and that it shall otherwise assist the administering agency in the discharge of RUS' primary responsibility for securing compliance. The Awardee further agrees that it shall refrain from entering into any contract or contract modification subject to Executive Order 11246 with a contractor debarred from, or who has not demonstrated eligibility for, Government contracts and federally assisted construction contracts pursuant to Part II,

Subpart D of Executive Order 11246 and shall carry out such sanctions and penalties for violation of the equal opportunity clause as may be imposed upon contractors and subcontractors by RUS or the Secretary of Labor pursuant to Part II, Subpart D of Executive Order 11246. In addition, the Awardee agrees that if it fails or refuses to comply with these undertakings RUS may cancel, terminate or suspend in whole or in part this Agreement, may refrain from extending any further assistance under any of its programs subject to Executive Order 11246 until satisfactory assurance of future compliance has been received from the Awardee, or may refer the case to the Department of Justice for appropriate legal proceedings.

Section 5.12 Purchases with Award Funds

Except as specifically authorized in writing in advance by RUS, all facilities, materials, equipment, supplies, replacements and all other items purchased with Award funds shall be purchased outright, and not subject to any conditional sales agreement, chattel mortgage, bailment lease or other agreement reserving to the seller any right, title or lien.

Section 5.13 Awardee to Defend Title and Remove Liens

Except for Permitted Encumbrances, the Awardee will maintain and preserve the lien of this Agreement superior to all other liens affecting the Collateral, and will forever warrant and defend the title to the Collateral against any and all claims and demands whatsoever. The Awardee shall make, execute, acknowledge, deliver, file and record all such mortgages, financing statements, continuation statements, security agreements, instruments and conveyances as is necessary to preserve the lien of this Agreement against the Collateral superior to all other liens. The Awardee shall maintain the Collateral free of all liens except for Permitted Encumbrances, and will promptly pay or discharge any and all obligations for or on account of which any such lien or charge might exist or could be created and any and all lawful taxes, rates, levies, assessments, liens, claims or other charges imposed upon or accruing upon any of the Collateral, as and when the same shall become due and payable; and whenever called upon so to do by RUS will furnish to RUS adequate proof of such payment or discharge; provided, however that this provision shall not be deemed to require the payment or discharge of any tax, rate, levy, assessment or other governmental charge while the Awardee is contesting the validity thereof by appropriate proceedings in good faith and so long as it shall have set aside on its books adequate reserves with respect thereto.

Section 5.14 Further Assurances

- (a) The Awardee shall from time to time upon written demand of RUS make, execute, acknowledge and deliver or cause to be made, executed, acknowledged and delivered all such further and supplemental financing statements, continuation statements, and security agreements with respect to the Grant Collateral as may be requested by RUS.
- (b) The Awardee shall cause this Agreement, financing statement, continuation statement and every additional instrument which shall be executed pursuant to subsection (a) immediately above, to forthwith upon execution to be filed and recorded and refiled and rerecorded as conveyances and security interests in personal property in such manner and in such places as may be required by law or requested by RUS in order to fully preserve the security for the grant, and to perfect and maintain the superior lien of this Agreement and all supplemental security instruments.

Section 5.15 Buy American

Awardee agrees to use in connection with the expenditure of award funds only such unmanufactured articles, materials, and supplies, as have been mined or produced in the United States or in any eligible country, and only such manufactured articles, materials, and supplies as have been manufactured in the United States or in any eligible country, substantially all from articles, materials, or supplies mined, produced, or manufactured, as the case may be, in the United States or in any eligible country. For purposes

of this section, an 'eligible country' is any country that applies with respect to the United States an agreement ensuring reciprocal access for United States products and services and United States suppliers to the markets of that country, as determined by the United States Trade Representative." The regulations may be found at, and any requests for waiver must be submitted pursuant to, 7 CFR 1787.

Section 5.16 Financial Requirements

The Awardee shall maintain a positive ending cash balance as reflected on the cash flow statement for each year in which grant funds are expended.

Section 5.17 Corrective Action

Within thirty (30) days of: (i) sending the financial reports required by Section 6.4(a) hereof that show the Financial Requirements of Section 5.16 were not met for the reported fiscal period; or (ii) being notified by RUS that such requirements were not met for the period, whichever is earlier, the Awardee, in consultation with RUS, shall provide a written plan satisfactory to RUS setting forth the actions that shall be taken to achieve the specified Financial Requirements on a timely basis and shall promptly implement said plan.

Section 5.18 Additional Affirmative Covenants

The Awardee shall comply with the additional affirmative covenants set forth in Schedule 1 hereto.

ARTICLE VI – ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

Section 6.1 Financial Records

- (a) Awardees must establish an accounting system satisfactory to RUS in compliance with Accounting Requirements. Such a system of accounts must account for all funds advanced under this Agreement separately from all other funds for the Project.

of this section, an 'eligible country' is any country that applies with respect to the United States an agreement ensuring reciprocal access for United States products and services and United States suppliers to the markets of that country, as determined by the United States Trade Representative." The regulations may be found at, and any requests for waiver must be submitted pursuant to, 7 CFR 1787.

Section 5.16 Financial Requirements

- (a) For Awardees with existing debt, during the period in which grant funds are expended, the following requirements will apply:
 - (1) At least two of the three requirements on the Financial Requirements Commencement Date, as specified in Schedule 1 hereto, until the Loan is repaid in full: (A) a minimum TIER requirement of 1.2; (B) a minimum DSCR requirement of 1.2; and (C) a minimum Current Ratio of 1.2;
 - (2) Positive cash flow from operations at the end of the fifth year of the award; and
 - (3) Positive ending cash balance as reflected on the cash flow statement for each year of the forecast period.
- (b) For Awardees with no existing debt and who are not proposing to borrow funds during the period in which grant funds are expended, the following requirements will apply:
 - (1) A minimum Current Ratio of 1.2;
 - (2) Positive cash flow from operations at the end of the fifth year of the award; and
 - (3) Positive ending cash balance as reflected on the cash flow statement for each year of the forecast period.

Section 5.17 Corrective Action

Within thirty (30) days of: (i) sending the financial reports required by Section 6.4(a) hereof that show the Financial Requirements of Section 5.16 were not met for the reported fiscal period; or (ii) being notified by RUS that such requirements were not met for the period, whichever is earlier, the Awardee, in consultation with RUS, shall provide a written plan satisfactory to RUS setting forth the actions that shall be taken to achieve the specified Financial Requirements on a timely basis and shall promptly implement said plan.

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The Awardee shall comply with the additional affirmative covenants set forth in Schedule 1 hereto.

ARTICLE VI – ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

Section 6.1 Financial Records

- (a) Awardees must establish an accounting system satisfactory to RUS in compliance with Accounting Requirements. Such a system of accounts must account for all funds advanced under this Agreement separately from all other funds for the Project.

- (b) The Awardee shall maintain, at its premises, such books, documents, papers, or other records and supporting documents, including, but not limited to, invoices, receipts, payroll records and bills of sale, adequate to identify the purposes for which, and the manner in which grant and other funds were expended on the Project. The Awardee shall at all times keep, and safely preserve, proper books, records and accounts in which full and true entries shall be made of all dealings, business, and affairs of the Awardee and its Subsidiaries, in accordance with its system of accounts complying with Paragraph (a) immediately above. The Awardee shall maintain copies of all documents submitted to RUS in connection with the Award until the longer of (i) all audits have been completed, (ii) the term of this Agreement or (iii) three years subsequent to close-out of the Award.

Section 6.2 Rights of Inspection

The Awardee shall afford RUS, the Office of the Inspector General of USDA, and the Government Accountability Office, through their representatives, reasonable opportunity, at all times during business hours and upon prior notice, to have access to and right to inspect the Project, any other property encumbered by the Security Documents, and any and all books, records, accounts, including electronic books, records, accounts and electronic mail messages, regardless of the physical form or characteristics, invoices, contracts, leases, payroll records, canceled checks, statements, and other documents, and papers of every kind belonging to or in any way pertaining to its property or business, including its Subsidiaries, if any, and to make copies or extracts therefrom.

Section 6.3 Annual Audit

- (a) Non-Federal Entities, which include Awardees that are States, local governments, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, or nonprofit organizations, shall provide RUS with an audit pursuant to 2 C.F.R. part 200, Subpart F (Audit Requirements). The Awardee must follow subsection .502 in determining federal awards expended. All RUS loans impose an ongoing compliance requirement for the purpose of determining federal awards expended during a fiscal year. In addition, the Awardee must include the value of new federal loans made along with any grant expenditures from all federal sources during the Awardee's fiscal year. Therefore, the audit submission requirement for this program begins in the Awardee's fiscal year that the loan is made and thereafter, based on the balance of federal loan(s) at the beginning of the audit period. All required audits must be submitted within the earlier of: (i) 30 calendar days after receipt of the auditor's report; or (ii) nine months after the end of the Awardee's audit period.
- (b) For all other entities, Awardees shall provide RUS with an audit within 120 days after the as of audit date in accordance with 7 C.F.R. part 1773, Policy on Audits of RUS Borrowers. Note that with respect to Advances that contain loan funds, the audit is required after an Advance has been made, and, thereafter, from the close of each subsequent fiscal year until the loan is repaid in full. With respect to Advances that only contain grant funds, the audit is required until all grants funds have been expended or rescinded. While an audit is required, Awardees must also submit a report on compliance and internal controls over financial reporting, as well as a report on compliance with aspects of contractual agreements and regulatory requirements.

Section 6.4 Reporting

- (a) *Quarterly Report.* No later than thirty (30) calendar days after the end of each calendar year quarter during the period in which grant funds are available for expenditure, the Awardee must submit to RUS utilizing RUS' online reporting system, the following

information: balance sheets, income statements, statements of cash flow, and the number of customers taking broadband service. In addition, the Awardee must provide RUS with such other reports concerning the financial condition or operation of the Awardee, including its Subsidiaries, as RUS may request.

- (b) *Annual Performance Report.* For three years starting the first January 31st after Project Completion, the Awardee must submit the following information utilizing RUS' online reporting system:
- (i) existing network service improvements and facility upgrades, as well as new equipment and capacity enhancements that support high-speed broadband access for educational institutions, health care providers, and public safety service providers;
 - (ii) the estimated number of end users who are currently using or forecasted to use the new or upgraded infrastructure;
 - (iii) the progress towards fulfilling the objectives for which the assistance was granted;
 - (iv) the speed and average price of the most subscribed tier of the Awardee's broadband service offerings in the Project's service area; and
 - (v) the average price of broadband service in the Project's service area.
- (c) *Annual Map Reporting:* No later than thirty (30) calendar days after the end of the Calendar Year, the Awardee shall be required to submit annually updated service area maps through RUS' online mapping tool showing the areas where construction has been completed and geospatial location of residences and businesses that are receiving new broadband service until the entire proposed funded service area can receive the broadband service.
- (d) *Close Out Report.* The Awardee shall deliver a close out report to RUS no later than ninety (90) days after the expiration or termination of the Award or expenditure of all Award funds. The close out report shall address: (i) a comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives set forth in the Application; (ii) a description of problems, delays, or adverse conditions that occurred, or which affected the attainment of overall Project objectives, prevented the meeting of time schedules or objectives, or precluded the attainment of particular Project work elements during established time periods; (iii) a comparison of how funds were spent against the original general budget submitted with the RUS approved Application, and (iv) a final buildout map on the RUS mapping tool indicating that all construction has been completed as proposed in the application. If parts of the proposed funded service area have not been constructed, RUS may require a portion of the award to be rescinded or paid back.

ARTICLE VII – NEGATIVE COVENANTS

Section 7.1 General

Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by RUS, while this Agreement is in effect, the Awardee shall duly observe each of the negative covenants set forth in this Article VII.

Section 7.2 Negative Pledge

The Awardee shall not create, incur or suffer any lien, mortgage, pledge, assignment, or other encumbrance on, or security interest in the Collateral, other than Permitted Encumbrances.

Section 7.3 Contracts

The Awardee shall not, without the prior written consent of RUS, enter into any contract or contracts for the operation or management of all or any substantial part of the Project, and shall not enter into any contract for the use by others of all or any substantial part of the Project.

Section 7.4 Distributions or Withdrawals

Before Project Completion, the Awardee shall not, without the prior written approval of RUS, make any dividend, stock, or capital distribution, or any membership withdrawals, unit redemptions, or other type of profit allocation to its members, or other distribution in the nature of an investment, guarantee, extension of credit, advance, or loan, nor make a capital credit distribution (all such distributions being hereinafter collectively called "Distributions;") *provided, however,* Distributions may be made in each company fiscal year as follows:

- (a) Aggregate, annual Distributions not to exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the prior company fiscal year's Net Income or Margins may be made if, after such aggregate annual Distributions, the Awardee's net worth is at least one percent (1%) of its Total Assets;
- (b) Aggregate annual Distributions not to exceed fifty percent (50%) of the prior company fiscal year's Net Income or Margins may be made if, after such aggregate annual Distributions, the Awardee's Net Worth is at least twenty percent (20%) of its Total Assets;
- (c) Aggregate annual Distributions not to exceed seventy-five percent (75%) of the prior company fiscal year's Net Income or Margins may be made if, after such aggregate annual Distributions, the Awardee's Net Worth is at least thirty percent (30%) of its Total Assets; or
- (d) There is no limit on aggregate, annual Distributions if, after making such aggregate, annual Distributions, the Awardee's Net Worth is at least forty percent (40%) of its Total Assets.

Section 7.5 Changing Principal Place of Business, Place of Conducting Business, or Type of Organization

The Awardee shall not change its principal place of business, place of conducting business, or type of organization without the prior written consent of RUS.

Section 7.6 Changing Name or Place of Incorporation or Organization

The Awardee shall not change its legal name or place of incorporation or organization without giving RUS sixty (60) days prior written notice.

Section 7.7 Historic Preservation

The Awardee shall not, without the prior written consent of RUS, use any Advance to construct any facility which shall involve any district, site, building, structure or object which is included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Section 7.8 Restrictions on Transfers of Property

- (a) Except as provided in Paragraph (b), and excluding any property which the Awardee must sell to customers in the ordinary course of business, the Awardee shall not sell, lease or transfer any Collateral to any other person or entity (including any subsidiary or affiliate of the Awardee) without the prior written consent of the RUS.
- (b) So long as the Awardee is not in default hereunder, the Awardee may, without obtaining the consent of RUS, sell or otherwise dispose of, free from the lien hereof, any of the Collateral which is neither necessary to, nor useful for, the operation of the Awardee's business, or which has become obsolete, worn out, damaged, or otherwise unsuitable for the purposes of the Awardee; provided, however, that the Awardee shall follow 2 C.F.R. 200 with respect to any proceeds.

Section 7.9 Restrictions on Changes to Line Item Budget

The Awardee agrees that the budget for the Project is a line item budget and agrees not to make any revisions to the RUS approved line item Project budget, including, without limitation, the part of the budget for construction, without the prior written approval of RUS.

Section 7.10 Additional Negative Covenants

The Awardee shall comply with the additional negative covenants set forth in Schedule 1 hereto.

ARTICLE VIII – GRANTOR'S RIGHTS

Section 8.1 Termination of Award Offer

RUS, in its sole discretion, may terminate the offer to make the grant if it does not receive the Grant Agreement, duly executed on behalf of the Awardee and all conditions in Section 4.1 hereof are not satisfied within sixty (60) days from the date that RUS notifies in writing that the environmental review process has been concluded.

Section 8.2 Audits and Compliance Reviews

After giving prior notification to the Awardee, RUS has the right to conduct compliance reviews and audits of the Awardee to assure compliance with the Grant Agreement, FOA, and the Accounting Requirements.

Section 8.3 Disallowed Expenditures

Upon a determination by RUS that the Awardee did not expend Award funds on Eligible Purposes in accordance with the RUS approved line item Project budget and the Form(s) 481 approved by RUS prior to the advance of funds, RUS may, in its sole discretion:

- (a) Disallow all or a part of the expenditures and disbursements of the Award and require the Awardee to deposit such funds in the Pledged Deposit Account to be applied toward other approved Project purposes on Form(s) 481 or to reimburse the Government, as provided in Section 5.3 hereof;
- (b) Suspend future Advances; and/or
- (c) Take any other action RUS determines to be necessary including, without limitation, exercising any right or remedy available under the Grant Agreement or law.

Section 8.4 Suspension of Advances

RUS may, in its absolute discretion, suspend approving Advances on the Award upon its making a determination that an event has occurred that is likely to have a Material Adverse Effect. RUS may also suspend approving advances of the Award upon the occurrence of an Event of Default.

Section 8.5 Right to Expend Money

RUS shall have the right (without prejudice to any of its rights with respect to any Event of Default) to advance or expend moneys for the purpose of procuring insurance, or for the payment of insurance premiums as required hereunder, or to advance or expend moneys for the payment of taxes, assessments or other charges, or to save the Collateral from sale or forfeiture for any unpaid tax or assessment, or otherwise, or to redeem the same from any tax or other sale, or to purchase any tax title thereon, or to remove or purchase any mechanics' liens or other encumbrance thereon, or to make repairs thereon or to comply with any covenant herein contained or to prosecute and defend any suit in relation to the Collateral or in any manner to protect the Collateral and the title thereto, and all sums so advanced for any of the aforesaid purposes with interest thereon at the highest legal rate, but not in excess of twelve per centum (12%) per annum shall be deemed a charge upon the Collateral and shall be forthwith paid to RUS upon demand. It shall not be obligatory for RUS in making any such advances or expenditures to inquire into the validity of any such tax title, or of any such taxes or assessments or sales therefor, or of any such mechanics' liens or other encumbrance.

Section 8.6 Right to File Financing Statements

RUS shall have the right to file such financing statements and continuation statements on its behalf, as secured party, and on behalf of the Awardee, as RUS deems necessary to perfect a first lien on the Collateral and to maintain and preserve such perfected first lien for the Composite Economic Life. The Awardee shall reimburse RUS for any expenses incurred in the exercise of this right.

ARTICLE IX - GRANT OF SECURITY INTEREST

Section 9.1 Collateral

To secure the payment and performance of the Service Obligation, the Awardee hereby pledges, assigns, and transfers to RUS, and grants to RUS a continuing security interest in the Collateral.

Section 9.2 Special Security with Respect to Grant Assets

- (a) Given the significant grant to the Project, the government must be provided an exclusive first lien on all grant assets during the Service Obligation of the Award, as defined in Section 5.7, which shall not be shared *pari passu* with any other entity. Thereafter, any sale or disposition of grant assets must comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, codified in 2 C.F.R. part 200. Awardee acknowledges that this part will apply to all grant funds of Awardee, regardless of Awardee's entity status or type of organization.
- (b) Awardee agrees and acknowledges that pursuant to the FOA, Awardee must repay all funds advanced under the grant to the government if the Project or Awardee is sold or merged without RUS approval during the Service Obligation of the grant.

ARTICLE X - EVENTS OF DEFAULT

Section 10.1 Events of Default

The following shall be events of default (each an "Event of Default") under this Agreement:

- (a) Representations and Warranties. Any representation or warranty made by the Awardee in the Grant Agreement, Form(s) 481 or any certificate furnished to RUS under the Grant Agreement, or in the Application shall prove to have been incorrect in any material respect at the time made;
- (b) Improper Expenditures. The Awardee expends Award funds on costs which are not Eligible Purposes in accordance with the RUS approved line item Project budget and the Form(s) 481 approved by RUS prior to the advance of funds;
- (c) Failure to Keep Adequate Records. The Awardee fails to keep adequate records, including the failure to document Award fund expenditures for Eligible Purposes as required herein;
- (d) Failure to Build in Accordance with Buildout Timeline. The Awardee fails to commence build out of the Project within 180 days from the date that RUS notifies in writing that the environmental review process has been concluded or otherwise fails to meet or exceed milestones established in the Buildout Timeline, as it may be amended with prior written RUS consent;
- (e) Failure to Comply with Accounting and Reporting Requirements. The Awardee fails to comply with the accounting and reporting requirements in Article VI;
- (f) Other Covenants. Default by the Awardee in the observance or performance of any other covenant or agreement contained in any part of the Grant Agreement, which shall remain unremedied for thirty (30) calendar days after written notice thereof shall have been given to the Awardee by RUS;
- (g) Adverse Effects. The Awardee shall forfeit or otherwise be deprived of its charter, articles of organization, franchises, permits, easements, consents or licenses required to carry on any material portion of its business or the Awardee files for or an event occurs which can reasonably be expected to result in its dissolution or termination;
- (h) Other Obligations. Default by the Awardee in the payment of any obligation, whether direct or contingent, for borrowed money in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) or in the performance or observance of the terms of any instrument pursuant to which such obligation was created or securing such obligation which default shall have resulted in such obligation becoming or being declared due and payable prior to the date on which it would otherwise be due and payable;
- (i) Bankruptcy. A court having jurisdiction in the premises shall enter a decree or order for relief with respect to the Awardee in an involuntary case under any applicable bankruptcy, insolvency, or other similar law now or hereafter in effect: (1) appointing a receiver, liquidator, assignee, custodian, trustee, sequestrator, or similar official, or (2) ordering the winding up or liquidation of its affairs; or the Awardee shall commence a voluntary case under any applicable bankruptcy, insolvency or other similar law now or hereafter in effect, or under any such law, or consent to the appointment or taking possession by a receiver, liquidator, assignee, custodian or trustee, of a substantial part of its property, or make any general assignment for the benefit of creditors;
- (j) Dissolution or Liquidation. Other than as provided in the immediately preceding subsection, the dissolution or liquidation of the Awardee, or the filing of such by the Awardee;

- (k) **Impaired Business.** The failure by the Awardee to promptly forestall or remove any execution, garnishment or attachment of such consequence as shall impair its ability to continue its business or fulfill its obligations and such execution, garnishment or attachment shall not be vacated within thirty (30) days; and/or
- (l) **Service Obligation.** The Awardee fails to provide the Service Obligation on the Project with respect to the grant; and/or
- (m) **Payment of Final Judgment.** A final judgment in an amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) or more shall be entered against the Awardee and shall remain unsatisfied or without a stay in respect thereof for a period of thirty (30) days.

ARTICLE XI - REMEDIES

Section 11.1 General

Upon the occurrence of an Event of Default, RUS may pursue all rights and remedies available to RUS that are contemplated by the Grant Agreement in the manner, upon the conditions, and with the effect provided in the Grant Agreement, and may pursue such other remedies that are generally available at law or in equity including, without limitation, a suit for specific performance, injunctive relief or damages. Nothing herein shall limit the right of RUS to pursue all rights and remedies available to a creditor following the occurrence of an Event of Default listed in Article X hereof. Each right, power and remedy of RUS shall be cumulative and concurrent, and recourse to one or more rights or remedies shall not constitute a waiver of any other right, power or remedy.

Section 11.2 Remedies

In addition to the remedies referred to in Section 11.1 hereof, upon the occurrence of an Event of Default, RUS may:

- (a) Refuse to make any advance or further advance on account of the Award, but any advance thereafter made by RUS shall not constitute a waiver of such default;
- (b) Terminate the obligation to further advance on account of the Award;
- (c) RUS shall have the right to enter and/or remain upon the premises of the Awardee without any obligation to pay rent to the Awardee or others, or any other place or places where any of the Collateral is located and kept and: (i) remove the Collateral therefrom in order to maintain, collect, sell, and/or liquidate the Collateral or, (ii) use such premises, together with materials, supplies, books, and records of the Awardee, to maintain possession and/or the condition of the Collateral, and to prepare the Collateral for sale, liquidation, or collection. RUS may require the Awardee to assemble the Collateral and make it available to RUS at a place to be designated by RUS;
- (d) RUS shall have, in addition to any other rights and remedies contained in this Agreement, all of the rights and remedies of a secured party under the Uniform Commercial Code in force in the state identified in the first paragraph hereof, as well as the state where the Collateral is located, as of the date hereof, all of which rights and remedies shall be cumulative, and nonexclusive.

ARTICLE XII - MISCELLANEOUS

Section 12.1 Notices

All notices, requests and other communications provided for herein including, without limitation, any modifications of, or waivers, requests or consents under, this Agreement shall be given or made in writing (including, without limitation, by email) delivered to the intended recipient at the "Address for Notices" specified below; or, as to any party, at such other address as shall be designated by such party in a notice to each other party. Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, all such communications shall be deemed to have been duly given when transmitted by email delivered or, in the case of a mailed notice, upon receipt, in each case given or addressed as provided for herein. The Addresses for Notices of the respective parties are as follows:

RUS
Rural Utilities Service
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-1510
Attention: Administrator
Email:reconnect@usda.gov

Awardee
See Schedule 1

With a copy to:
Rural Utilities Service
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Stop 1599, Room No. 2868
Washington, D.C. 20250-1599
Attention: Kenneth Kuchno

With a copy to:
See Schedule 1

Section 12.2 Notices of Actions Against Collateral

Any notice required to be given by RUS of a sale or other disposition or other intended action by RUS with respect to any of the Collateral, or otherwise, made in accordance with this Agreement at least five (5) days prior to such proposed action, shall constitute fair and reasonable notice to the Awardee of any such action.

Section 12.3 Expenses

To the extent allowed by law, the Awardee shall pay all costs and expenses of RUS, including reasonable fees of counsel, incurred in connection with the enforcement of the Grant Agreement or with the preparation for such enforcement if RUS has reasonable grounds to believe that such enforcement may be necessary.

Section 12.4 Filing Fees

To the extent permitted by law, the Awardee agrees to pay all expenses of RUS (including the fees and expenses of its counsel) in connection with the filing or recordation of all financing statements and instruments as may be required by RUS in connection with this Agreement, including, without limitation, all documentary stamps, recordation and transfer taxes and other costs and taxes incident to recordation of any document or instrument in connection herewith. The provisions of this section shall survive the execution and delivery of this Agreement.

Section 12.5 No Waiver

No failure on the part of RUS to exercise, and no delay in exercising any right hereunder shall operate as a waiver thereof nor shall any single or partial exercise by RUS of any right hereunder preclude any other or further exercise thereof or the exercise of any other right.

Section 12.6 Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with applicable federal law and, in the absence of controlling federal law, by the laws of the State identified in the first paragraph herein, except those that would render such choice of law ineffective.

Section 12.7 Consent to Jurisdiction

The Awardee hereby irrevocably submits to the jurisdiction of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (both the "DC Federal Courts") for any action or proceeding arising out of or relating to this Agreement, and hereby irrevocably agrees that all claims in respect of such action or proceeding shall be heard and determined in such federal courts. The Awardee irrevocably consents to the service of process out of any of the aforementioned courts in any such action or proceeding by the mailing of copies thereof by registered or certified mail, postage prepaid, to the Awardee's address set forth in Schedule 1. The Awardee hereby irrevocably waives any objection which it may now or hereafter have to the laying of venue of any of the aforesaid actions or proceedings arising out of or in connection with this Agreement brought in the DC Federal Courts and hereby further irrevocably waives and agrees not to plead or claim in such court that any such action or proceeding brought in any such court has been brought in a forum *non conveniens*. Nothing herein shall affect the right of the Government to serve process in any other manner permitted by law or to commence legal proceedings or otherwise proceed against the Awardee in its own jurisdiction.

Section 12.8 Waiver of Jury Trial

EACH PARTY HERETO HEREBY WAIVES, TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE LAW, ANY RIGHT IT MAY HAVE TO A TRIAL BY JURY IN ANY LEGAL PROCEEDING DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY ARISING OUT OF OR RELATING TO THIS AGREEMENT OR THE TRANSACTIONS CONTEMPLATED HEREBY (WHETHER BASED ON CONTRACT, TORT, OR ANY OTHER THEORY). EACH PARTY HERETO (A) CERTIFIES THAT NO REPRESENTATIVE, SECURED PARTY, OR ATTORNEY OF ANY OTHER PARTY HAS REPRESENTED, EXPRESSLY OR OTHERWISE, THAT SUCH OTHER PARTY WOULD NOT, IN THE EVENT OF LITIGATION, SEEK TO ENFORCE THE FOREGOING WAIVER AND (B) ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IT AND THE OTHER PARTIES HERETO HAVE BEEN INDUCED TO ENTER INTO THIS AGREEMENT BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE MUTUAL WAIVERS AND CERTIFICATIONS IN THIS SECTION.

Section 12.9 Rescission

The Awardee may elect to rescind the Award, in which event RUS shall release the Awardee from its obligations hereunder, provided the Awardee complies with such terms and conditions as RUS may impose for such release.

Section 12.10 Successors and Assigns

- (a) This Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the Awardee and RUS and their respective successors and assigns, except that the Awardee may not assign or transfer its rights or obligations hereunder without the prior written consent of RUS.
- (b) Pursuant to federal claims collection laws, RUS' claims hereunder may be transferred to other agencies of the United States of America; in the event of such a transfer, all

rights and remedies hereby granted or conferred on RUS shall pass to and inure to the benefit of any such successor agency.

Section 12.11 Complete Agreement; Waivers and Amendments

Subject to RUS Regulations, this Agreement and all parts of the Grant Agreement are intended by the parties to be a complete and final expression of their agreement. However, RUS reserves the right to waive its rights to compliance with any provision of this Agreement and any other part of the Grant Agreement. No amendment, modification, or waiver of any provision hereof or thereof, and no consent to any departure of the Awardee herefrom or therefrom, shall be effective unless approved in writing by RUS in the form of either a RUS Regulation or other writing signed by or on behalf of RUS, and then such waiver or consent shall be effective only in the specific instance and for the specific purpose for which given.

Section 12.12 Headings

The headings and sub-headings contained in the titling of this Agreement are intended to be used for convenience only and do not constitute part of this Agreement.

Section 12.13 Severability

If any term, provision, condition, or any part thereof, of this Agreement or the Security Documents shall for any reason be found or held invalid or unenforceable by any governmental agency or court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect the remainder of such term, provision, or condition nor any other term, provision, or condition, and this Agreement and the Security Documents shall survive and be construed as if such invalid or unenforceable term, provision or condition had not been contained therein.

Section 12.14 Schedules and Attachments

Each Schedule and Attachment attached hereto and referred to herein is each an integral part of this Agreement.

Section 12.15 Authority of Representatives of RUS

In the case of any consent, approval or waiver from RUS that is required under this Agreement or any other part of the Grant Agreement, such consent, approval or waiver must be in writing and signed by an authorized RUS representative to be effective. As used in this section, "authorized RUS representative" means the Administrator of RUS, and also means a person to whom the Administrator has officially delegated specific or general authority to take the action in question.

Section 12.16 Term


This Agreement shall remain in effect until one of the following two events has occurred:

- (a) The Awardee and RUS replace this Agreement with another written agreement; or
- (b) All of the Awardee's obligations under this Agreement, including the Service Obligation, have been discharged and paid.

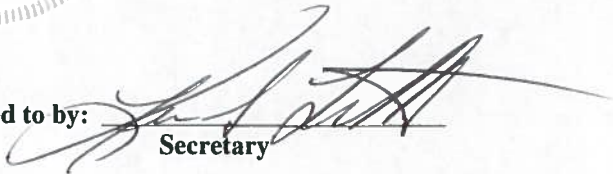
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be duly executed as of the day and year first above written.




EMERY TELECOMMUNICATIONS & VIDEO, INC.

by 
Name: Thomas Hansen
Title: President

(Seal)

Attested to by: 
Secretary

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

by 
Acting Administrator
of the Rural Utilities Service

SCHEDULE 1

Article II Representations and Warranties

1. Paragraph (h) Awardee's Principal Place of Business: **455 E State Road 29, Orangeville, Utah 84537**
2. Paragraph (i) Awardee's Organization Number: **1245804-0142**
3. Paragraph (j) Awardee's Subsidiaries: **N/A**
4. Paragraph (j) Awardee's Parent: **Emery Telephone, Emery Telecom HC**
5. Paragraph (l) Additional Representations and Warranties: **N/A**

Article III The Grant

1. Section 3.1(a) Grant amount: **\$2,735,224**

Article IV Conditions Precedent to Closing

1. The additional conditions referred to in Section 4.1(j) are as follows:
 - (a) **Awardee shall submit its complete audited financial statements from the latest completed fiscal year, including Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements to RUS, for validation against the ReConnect application.**
 - (b) **Pursuant to 7 CFR 1970.11(b), the Agency has determined that assurance of funding for this Project is necessary for economic rural development. As a result, this Agreement is subject to the completion of all necessary environmental procedures required by Federal law, and funds may not be disbursed until successful completion of such procedures. The Awardee acknowledges that it may not engage in any work on the Project until Awardee has received written notice from the Agency, except for work required to finalize the environmental reviews. Such environmental work, however, shall be done at the Awardee's own risk and may not be reimbursed if the environmental reviews cannot be completed as required by 7 CFR 1970.11(b). Awardee understands and acknowledges that unauthorized work will result in the termination of this Agreement. Awardee also acknowledges that any findings in the environmental reviews requiring significant changes to the Project will constitute an immediate deobligation of funding and termination of this Agreement, and will not result in an amended agreement until revised terms are agreed upon and funding is determined to be still available.**

Conditions Precedent to Release of Funds

2. Section 4.2(a) amount of fidelity bond coverage: **N/A**
3. Section 4.2(c) funds deposited for Project completion: **\$911,741**
4. The additional conditions referred to in Section 4.2(d) are as follows: **N/A**

Conditions Precedent to Individual Advances

5. Section 4.3(j) Required permits, licenses, franchise, and other approvals: **N/A**

Revised - Per Grant Agreement Substitution Letter dated April 3, 2020

6. The additional conditions to advance referred to in Section 4.3(m) are as follows: N/A

Article V Affirmative Covenants

1. Section 5.7 Composite Economic Life of RUS financed facilities: **14 years**
2. The additional affirmative covenants referred to in Section 5.18 are as follows: N/A

Article VII Negative Covenants

1. The additional negative covenants referred to in Section 7.10 are as follows: N/A

Article XII Miscellaneous

1. Section 12.1 Awardee's address for purposes of notification:

**Darren Woolsey
CFO
Emery Telecommunications & Video, Inc.
455 E State Road 29,
Orangeville, Utah 84537**

2. Section 12.1 Address for Awardee's notification copy:

**Blackburn & Stoll, LLC
257 East 200 South, Suite 800
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111**

ATTACHMENT 1

RECONNECT PROGRAM CONSTRUCTION PROCEDURES

**ReConnect Program
Construction Procedures
Version 2.0 – February 2020**

**Rural Utilities Service
Telecommunications Program**

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General

This guide implements and explains the provisions of the loan and grant documents containing the requirements and procedures to be followed by an Awardee performing work to be financed with ReConnect Program funds. The Awardee shall maintain accounting and plant records sufficient to document the cost and location of all construction and to support ReConnect Program advances and disbursements. The standard Award Documents also contain provisions regarding advances and disbursement of ReConnect Program funds. This guide also implements certain provisions by setting forth requirements and procedures to be followed by the Awardees in obtaining advances and making disbursements of funds.

Abbreviations

For the purposes of this guide:

C.F.R. stands for Code of Federal Regulations.

FRS stands for RUS Form 481, *Financial Requirement Statement*.

GFR stands for RUS General Field Representative.

Pub. L. stands for Public Law

RUS. stands for Rural Utilities Service

U.S.C. stands for United States Code.

Definitions

For the purposes of this guide:

Advance means transferring funds from RUS to the Awardee's Pledged Deposit Account.

Architect means a person registered as an architect in the state where construction is performed.

Award means a ReConnect award made by the Rural Utilities Service under the latest FOA.

Award Documents mean the documents covering an award made by RUS, including the award contract, note and mortgage or other security documents between the Awardee and RUS.

Awardee means any organization with an Award made by RUS under the ReConnect Program.

Bid Guarantee means a bid bond or certified check required of contractors bidding on construction work to ensure that the bidder, if successful, will furnish a performance bond.

Buy American Requirement means RUS' requirements for compliance with the "Buy American" provision of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*

Broadband Service means a minimum transmission rate as defined in the current FOA applicable to the ReConnect Program.

Closeout Documents mean the documents required to certify the satisfactory completion of all obligations under a contract.

Contract means the agreement between the Awardee and an independent contractor covering the purchase and/or installation of equipment or the construction of broadband facilities to deliver broadband services for an Awardee's system.

Contract Work means any work performed pursuant to a standard RUS contract, or a Non-RUS contract.

Contract Forms mean RUS requirements to use standard forms of contracts for construction, procurement, engineering services, and architectural services, if the construction, procurement or services are financed by RUS.

Disbursement means payment by the Awardee out of the Pledged Deposit Account for approved award purposes.

Domestic Product means a product that is manufactured in the United States or in any eligible country, substantially all from articles, materials, or supplies mined, produced, or manufactured, as the case may be, in the United States or in any eligible country. An "eligible country" is any country that applies with respect to the United States an agreement ensuring reciprocal access for United States products and services and United States suppliers to the market of that country, as determined by the United States Trade Representative.

Engineer means a person registered as an engineer in the state where construction and/or installation of facilities is performed, or a person on the Awardee's staff authorized by RUS to perform engineering services.

In-house Engineering means any post-award engineering services for the Award performed by the Awardee's staff.

Network and Access Equipment means any switching, routing, video, or transport equipment used primarily for the delivery of broadband service.

Network Design means the network as described in the approved award application.

Non-domestic Product means any product other than a domestic product.

Non-RUS Contract means a private contract for specific work that is submitted by the Awardee, which must be approved by RUS before execution, if it is to be funded.

Outside Plant means the part of the broadband network that is physically located outside of buildings. This includes cable, conduits, poles and other supporting structures and certain other associated equipment items.

Performance Bond means a surety bond on RUS Form 168b guaranteeing the contractor's faithful performance of a contract. (See 7 CFR Part 1788.)

Plans and Specifications means a copy of the appropriate contract, the specifications, and such additional information and documents needed to provide a clear, accurate, and complete understanding of the work to be performed.

Pledged Deposit Account means an account required by the award contract into which all RUS award funds, matching, and any funds required for project completion as stated in the award contract are deposited.

Responsive Bid means a bid that complies with the plans and specifications.

Subcontract means a secondary contract undertaking some of the obligations of a primary contract. Under an RUS contract, the primary contractor bears the full responsibility for the performance of the subcontractor.

Work Order Work means any work performed by the Awardee employees, pursuant to its work order procedure, with the Awardee furnishing all materials, equipment, tools, and transportation.

Construction Procedures

General

All work must conform to the approved Network Design and shall be covered by an Environmental Report prepared in accordance with 7 CFR Part 1970 and approved by RUS. No construction and/or installation activities shall commence until all necessary local, state and federal requirements have been satisfied.

Materials and/or equipment purchased or construction performed prior to an award offer accepted by the applicant will not be eligible for financing. Only new materials and equipment may be financed with award funds, unless otherwise approved in writing by RUS.

Buy American

All materials and equipment financed with award funds must comply with the "Buy American" provisions in 7 C.F.R. 1787.

Insurance

A performance bond is required for construction exceeding \$250,000, as indicated in 7 CFR Part 1788, Subpart C. or certain significant installation, as outlined in the Agency's memorandum found at http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/publications/pdf_files/Contractors-Bond-Requirement7-28-09.pdf. The Awardee is responsible for ensuring that its contractor and engineer comply with all the insurance and bond requirements of 7 CFR Part 1788, Subpart C.

Software License

As part of the equipment purchase, the original equipment manufacturer may require that the Awardee enter into a software license agreement for the use of the equipment.

Non-RUS Contracts

The Awardee may choose to use a Non-RUS (private) contract to perform work provided that the Non-RUS Contract must comply with equal employment opportunity and civil rights requirements. The Non-RUS Contract must include a provision that it will not be binding on the parties, until administrative approval by RUS has been granted. RUS will not approve use of the Non-RUS Contract if, in RUS' judgment:

- 1) The contract is for work not covered in the approved Application, or is not for an Eligible Purpose;
- 2) The contract terms and conditions are vague, inadequate, or unreasonable; or
- 3) The contract presents unacceptable loan security risk to RUS.

Subcontracts

RUS construction contract Forms 257, 395, and 515 contain provisions for subcontracting. The contractor should refer to the individual contracts for the amounts and conditions on subcontracting.

RUS Form 282, *Subcontract*, shall be used for subcontracts. Minor modifications or additions may be made to the subcontract form, as long as they do not change the terms and conditions of the primary contract. Any alterations to the subcontract shall be initialed and dated by the parties executing the subcontract. These alterations shall be noticeable by using italic print or any other means that accomplished this purpose.

Subcontracts shall be prepared in triplicate. All copies shall be executed by the contractor and subcontractor and consented to by the Awardee and surety, if applicable. Subcontracts are not subject to RUS approval provided that they are in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate RUS contract. Upon execution, one copy each will be sent to the Awardee, contractor, and subcontractor.

As stated in RUS Forms 257, 395, and 515, the contractor shall bear full responsibility for the acts and omissions of the subcontractor and is not relieved of any of the contractual obligations to the Awardee and to the Government.

Contract Amendments

Awardees shall use RUS Form 238, *Construction or Equipment Contract Amendment*, when an amendment to RUS Form 395, *Equipment Contract*, or RUS Form 257, *Contract to Construct Buildings*, is required. For amendments to RUS Form 515, *Telecommunications System Construction Contract (Labor and Materials)*, Awardees shall use RUS Form 526, *Construction Contract Amendment*. For Non-RUS contracts, Awardees must follow the same procedure as stated below. The Awardee shall obtain RUS approval before execution of any amendment for an approved contract if:

- 1) The amendment alters the terms and conditions of the contract or changes the scope of the project covered by the contract regardless of the amount of the contract before amendment;
- 2) The amendment by itself (or together with preceding amendments) increases the original contract price by 20% or more. In this case, a performance bond extension will be required to bring the penal sum of the bond to the total amended contract price; or
- 3) The amendment causes an unbonded contract to require a contractor's performance bond. This would occur when an amendment increases the contract price to an amount requiring a performance bond per 7 CFR Part 1788, Subpart C.

Prior RUS approval to execute other contract amendments is not required. These amendments can be submitted to RUS at any time prior to contract closeout.

Once RUS approval to amend the contract has been granted, or for any other contract amendments not requiring approval, the Awardee must submit three copies of the executed amendment to RUS for approval. For each amendment, the Awardee shall make certain that:

- 1) The performance bond covers the additional work to be performed; and
- 2) The contractor is licensed to do business in the county and state where the work will be performed.

Affiliated Transactions

With regard to the Project, the Awardee shall not enter into any transaction, contract, or dealing with an Affiliate of the Awardee or with the Awardee's or Affiliate's directors, trustees, officers, managers, members (if the Awardee is a limited liability company), or other corporate officials, without the prior written consent of RUS. RUS' consent to advance award funds for affiliated transactions will be limited to an amount which is the lower of cost or market rate and which is subject to verification by RUS and its representatives having access to the books and records of the Affiliate.

As defined in the appropriate award document, "Affiliate" or "Affiliated Company" of any specified person or entity means any other person or entity directly or indirectly controlling of, controlled by, under direct or indirect common control with, or related to, such specified person or entity, or which exists for the sole purpose of providing any service to one company or exclusively to companies which otherwise meet the definition of affiliate. This definition includes Variable Interest Entities as described in Financial Accounting Standards Board Interpretation (FIN) No. 46(R), *Consolidation of Variable Interest Entities*. For the purpose of this definition, "control" means the possession directly or indirectly, of the power to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of a company, whether such power is exercised through one or more intermediary companies, or alone, or in conjunction with, or pursuant to an agreement with, one or more other companies, and whether such power is established through a majority or minority ownership voting of securities, common directors, officers, or stockholders, voting trust, holding trusts (other than money exchanged) for property or services.

Records

Records supporting all assets financed by RUS shall be retained until audited and approved by RUS. Records must be sufficient to document the cost and location of all expenditures and to support advances and disbursement of award funds. The support records must include, but not limited to, contracts, third party invoices, timesheets, payroll records, material records, and overhead allocation records and summary schedules.

Records related to plant-in-service must be retained until the facilities are permanently removed from utility service, all removal and restoration activities are completed, and all costs are retired from the accounting records unless accounting adjustments resulting from reclassification and original costs studies have been approved by RUS or other regulatory body having jurisdiction.

Professional Services

General

Awardees shall only obtain professional services only from persons or firms who are not affiliated with, and have not represented a contractor, vendor or manufacturer who may provide labor, materials, or

equipment to the Awardee under any current award.

Engineering Services

All engineering services required by an Awardee, including inspection and certification, shall be rendered by an engineer selected by the Awardee and licensed in the state(s) where the facilities will be located or by qualified employees on the Awardee's staff authorized by RUS to perform such services.

- 1) *Outside Consultant.* Engineering services performed by a consulting engineering firm shall be covered under RUS Form 217, *Postloan Engineering Services Contract - Telecommunications*, RUS Form 245, *Engineering Service Contract Special Services-Telephone*, or a Non-RUS Contract.
- 2) *In-House Engineering.* When the proposed work is such that the engineering involved is within the capabilities of the employees on the Awardee's staff, Awardees may request RUS approval to provide such services. The request shall include:
 - a. A description of services to be performed;
 - b. The names and qualifications of each employee that will be performing the specific services. In addition, the Awardee shall identify an employee who will be in charge of the services. Such employee must meet the State experience requirements for a registered engineer in the State where facilities will be located. In the absence of specific State experience requirements, this employee should have at least eight years of experience in the design and construction of broadband network, with at least two years of the work experience at a supervisory level. RUS does not require professional registration of this employee, but this does not relieve the Awardee from complying with applicable state registration requirements, which may require a licensed individual to perform such services;
 - c. The names, qualifications, and responsibilities of other principal employee(s) who will be associated with providing the engineering services; and
 - d. A letter signed by an authorized representative of the Awardee requesting in-house engineering approval and certifying the supporting information.

RUS shall notify the Awardee by letter of approval or disapproval to perform in-house engineering. The letter shall set forth any conditions associated with an approval or the reasons for disapproval. RUS approval of in-house engineering services shall be only for the specific services covered by the approval.

Architectural Services

All architectural services required by an Awardee, shall be rendered by an architect selected by the Awardee and licensed in the state(s) where the facilities will be located. The Awardee shall use either RUS Form 220, *Architectural Services Contract*, RUS Form 217, *Postloan Engineering Services Contract*, or a Non-RUS contract when contracting for architectural services.

Other Professional Services

For all other professional services, the Awardee shall use RUS Form 245, *Engineering Service Contract – Special Services*, or a Non-RUS Contract.

Contract Documents

The Awardee shall submit three executed copies of the appropriate RUS Contract or the Non-RUS Contract, covering the professional services to be provided, for administrative approval. RUS will not approve the contract, if in RUS' judgment:

- 1) Unacceptable modifications have been made to the contract;
- 2) The contract will not accomplish award purposes;
- 3) The fees included in the contract are unreasonable; or
- 4) The contract presents unacceptable award risk to RUS.

Upon approval of the contract by RUS, one copy will be sent to the Awardee and one copy to the architect, engineer, or contractor.

Closeout Documents

Once all services and obligations required under the professional services contract have been completed, the Awardee shall submit two copies of RUS Form 284, *Final Statement of Cost for Architectural Service* or RUS Form 506, *Statement of Engineering Fees- Telecommunications* to close out the specific RUS contract. Awardees using RUS Form 245 or a Non-RUS Contract should provide a similar certification. RUS shall notify the Awardee and the engineer, architect, or contractor, in writing upon approval of the final statement of fees. Thereafter, the Awardee will make the final payment in accordance with the terms and condition of the contract.

Purchase and Installation of Equipment

General

When purchasing Network & Access Equipment or Customer Premises Equipment that is estimated to cost more than \$100,000, including installation, the Awardee shall use RUS Form 395, *Equipment Contract*, or a Non-RUS Contract. Equipment purchased under RUS Form 395, that does not include installation, may be installed by the Awardee using the its own employees as described under the Small-Scale Construction.

Equipment purchases for \$100,000 or less, including installation, can be purchased under a purchase order and reimbursed on an FRS through the Reimbursement method as described under Small-Scale Construction.

Under the terms of RUS Form 395, the prices do not include any amounts that are or may be payable by the supplier or the Awardee on account of taxes imposed upon the sale, purchase or use of equipment, material and software covered by the contracts. If any such tax is paid by the supplier, the contract requires that the amount is to be stated separately on all invoices and paid by the Awardee.

When purchasing and installing equipment using RUS Form 395 or a Non-RUS Contract, the Awardee shall follow the procedures below.

Plans & Specifications

The engineer shall prepare the plans & specifications (P&S) consisting of performance specifications and installation requirements, if applicable, along with RUS Form 395, *Equipment Contract* or Non-RUS Contract, prior to releasing them to prospective suppliers. The Awardee may negotiate with a single supplier, although RUS recommends that the Awardee obtain quotes from at least three different suppliers.

Contract Documents

The Awardee shall submit three executed copies of the RUS Form 395, *Equipment Contract*, or the Non-RUS Contract to RUS for administrative approval. RUS will not approve the contract, if in RUS' judgment:

- 1) Unacceptable modifications have been made to the contract;
- 2) The contract will not accomplish award purposes;
- 3) The fees included in the contract are unreasonable; or
- 4) The contract presents unacceptable award risk to RUS.

Upon approval of the contract by RUS, one copy will be sent to the Awardee and one copy to the contractor.

Closeout Documents

Upon completion of the equipment installation, the Awardee and its engineer shall arrange with the contractor for acceptance testing of the equipment. After completion of the acceptance tests by the Awardee and the contractor, the Awardee and its engineer should review the test results to ensure that the equipment is in conformance with the P&S. All deficiencies shall be documented and corrected before the contract can be closed out.

Once the equipment has been accepted, the Awardee, with the assistance from its engineer, shall complete the documents listed in the following table to closeout the RUS Form 395.

Documents Required to Closeout RUS Form 395						
RUS Form	Description	Copies Prepared by		Distribution		
		Supplier	Engineer	Awardee	Supplier	RUS
238	Construction or Equipment Contract Amendment (If not previously submitted, send to RUS for approval.)	---	3	---	---	3
395a	Certificate of Completion for Equipment Contract (Including Installation)	---	2	1	1	---
395b	Certificate of Completion for Equipment Contract (Not Including Installation)	---	2	1	1	---
395c	Certificate of Contractor and Indemnity Agreement (Use only for Installation Contracts)	1	---	1	---	---
213	Certificate (Buy American)	1	---	1	---	---
---	Report in writing, including all measurements and other information required under Part II of the applicable specifications	---	1	1	---	---
---	Set of maintenance recommendations for all equipment furnished under the contract	1	---	1	---	---

The Awardee shall obtain from the engineer, RUS Form 756, *Contract Closeout Certification* or a similar certification for a Non-RUS Contract, and submits it to RUS within 30 days. If the changes are made to the contract as a result of equipment or price changes during the course of the project, then RUS Form 238, *Construction and Equipment Amendment* reflecting those changes must be submitted to RUS for approval.

RUS shall notify the Awardee and the contractor, in writing, upon approval of the RUS Form 756. Thereafter, the Awardee shall make the final payment to the contractor in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.

Outside Plant Construction

General

The Awardee shall use RUS Form 515, *Telecommunications System Construction Contract*, or a Non-RUS Contract to finance outside plant construction projects estimated to cost over \$1 million, including all labor and materials. The Awardee shall follow either the sealed competitive bidding method or the negotiated procedures described below.

For projects estimated to cost \$1 million or less, including all labor and materials, the Awardee may use the same RUS Form 515, a Non-RUS Contract, or the two methods described under Small-Scale Construction. When using RUS Form 515, the Awardee can either follow the Sealed Competitive Bid or Negotiated Procurement methods.

When performing outside plant construction using RUS Form 515 or a Non-RUS Contract, the Awardee shall follow the procedures below.

Plans & Specifications

The engineer prepares P&S consisting of the RUS Form 515 and the applicable construction specifications listed below:

- 1) RUS Form 515a (Bulletin 1753F-150) - *Specifications and Drawings for Construction of Direct Buried Plant.*
- 2) RUS Form 515b (Bulletin 1753F-151) - *Specifications and Drawings for Construction of Underground Plant.*
- 3) RUS Form 515c (Bulletin 1753F-152) - *Specifications and Drawings for Construction of Aerial Plant.*
- 4) RUS Form 515d (Bulletin 1753F-153) - *Specifications and Drawings for Service Installation at Customer Access Locations.*

In addition, the P&S must also include the following items:

- 1) Description of special assembly units and guide drawings, if any;
- 2) Key, detail, and cable layout maps; and
- 3) If applicable, a list of any owner-furnished materials and the associated unit cost, using RUS Form 787.

When the Awardee furnishes materials under RUS Form 787, *Supplement A to Construction Contract (RUS Form 515)*, these steps should be followed:

- 1) Materials on hand to be furnished by the Awardee shall be released to the contractor at the start of construction. Materials on order, but not yet received, shall be provided to the contractor as they become available. The Awardee shall obtain from the contractor a written receipt for all such materials delivered.
- 2) Materials on hand, until released to the contractor, shall be covered by fire and either wind-storm or extended coverage insurance, exclusive of materials in the open and not within 100 feet of any building. Poles, wherever stored, shall be covered by fire insurance. All insured values must be at least 80 percent of the cash value of the property insured.
- 3) Subject to adjustment at the time of final settlement, the Awardee shall obtain from the contractor monthly invoices that show credit to the Awardee, at the prices quoted in RUS Form 787 for all materials furnished by the Awardee and installed by the contractor the preceding month.
- 4) Any materials furnished by the Awardee remaining as surplus at the completion of construction shall be returned to the Awardee. For such materials, the awardee shall furnish a written receipt to the contractor and credit the contractor at the prices quoted in RUS Form 787.

If the construction project is estimated to cost \$1 million or less, including all labor and materials, then RUS approval of the P&S is not required. The Awardee shall proceed with negotiations with one or more contractors under the Negotiated Procurement method or the Sealed Competitive Bidding method.

If the construction cost of the project is estimated to exceed \$1 million, including all labor and materials, the Awardee shall submit the P&S to RUS for approval. RUS shall approve the P&S in writing or notify the awardee of any reason for withholding approval. Upon approval of the P&S, the Awardee shall follow the Sealed Competitive Bidding method.

Procurement Methods

A. Negotiated Procurement

100% LOAN AWARD

If the Awardee will be using loan funds, and/or its own funds, for construction, then the Awardee can elect to negotiate with a single or multiple contractor(s) for construction. RUS approval to negotiate is not required but the Awardee must notify RUS of the amount of construction, the contractor selected and indicate if this is a new contract or an amendment to an existing contract.

50/50 LOAN GRANT COMBINATIONS

If the Awardee will be using only loan funds, or funds which have been substituted for the loan component of the award, for construction, then the Awardee can elect to negotiate with a single or multiple contractor(s) for construction. RUS approval to negotiate is not required but the awardee must notify RUS of the amount of the construction, the contractor selected and indicate if this is a new contract or an amendment to an existing contract. If a future contract amendment is required, then the Awardee must use loan funds or other funds for the amendment. Grant funds may not be used to fund or supplement contracts that have not been competitively bid.

Grant funds or a combination of loan/grant funds may not be used for contracts that have not been competitively bid unless the Awardee has requested RUS approval to negotiate with a single or multiple contractor(s) for construction. The Awardee must detail in writing the amount of the construction, the contractor selected, the rational and/or necessity for negotiating the contract, and if a new contract or an amendment to an existing contract will be used. The Awardee may not enter into any non-competitively bid contract which is to be reimbursed with grant funds unless and until it has received written approval from RUS.

100% GRANT AWARD

If the Awardee will only be using matching funds, then the Awardee can elect to negotiate with a single or multiple contractor(s) for construction. RUS approval to negotiate is not required but the Awardee must notify RUS of the amount of construction, the contractor selected and indicate if this is a new contract or an amendment to an existing contract. If a future contract amendment is required and all matching funds have been expended, then the Awardee must use other funds for the amendment. Grant funds may not be used to fund or supplement contracts that have not been competitively bid.

Grant funds may not be used for contracts that have not been competitively bid unless the Awardee has requested RUS approval to negotiate with a single or multiple contractor for construction. The Awardee must detail in writing the amount of the construction, the contractor selected, the rational and/or necessity for negotiating the contract, and if a new

contract or an amendment to an existing contract will be used. The Awardee may not enter into any non-competitively bid contract which is to be reimbursed with grant funds unless and until it has received written approval from RUS.

General

Upon preparation of the P&S, the Awardee shall schedule a conference to be attended by representatives of the engineer and the contractor(s) selected for negotiations. The purpose of the negotiation conference is to acquaint the contractor(s) with the scope and special considerations of the construction project and to answer any questions.

The Awardee shall ensure that the contractor selected meets all federal, state, and local licensing requirements, as well as bonding requirements, and that the contractor maintains the insurance coverage required by the contract for the duration of the work. (See 7 C.F.R. Part 1788.) If the contract amount exceeds \$250,000, a contractor's bond for the contract amount must be provided by the contractor.

After a satisfactory negotiated proposal has been obtained, the Awardee shall enter into a contract with the selected contractor.

B. Sealed Competitive Bidding

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. The Awardee shall solicit bids from at least six prospective bidders. The P&S shall clearly set forth all requirements including all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals that the bidder shall fulfill in order for the bid to be evaluated by the Awardee. The Awardee shall consider the same alternates in all bids in determining the low bid. Any and all bids may be rejected when it is in the Awardee's interest to do so.

Upon RUS approval of the P&S, the Awardee shall schedule the bid opening date. The Awardee shall allow sufficient time for the bidders to examine the project site and prepare their bids when scheduling the bid opening date.

The Awardee shall obtain from its engineer a list of prospective bidders and a recommendation indicating which bidders are considered qualified. If the notice and instructions to bidders require that bidders show evidence of meeting certain requirements, the Awardee shall qualify bidders before issuing P&S to them. When fewer than three bidders have been qualified to submit bids, RUS approval must be obtained to proceed with requesting bids.

The Awardee shall review all bids to determine that:

- 1) The bid guarantees are adequate;
- 2) The bids are responsive to the P&S;
- 3) All minor errors or irregularities made through inadvertence are corrected or waived. Failing this, the bid shall be rejected as non-responsive; and

- 4) In the event of non-minor errors or irregularities, the bid is rejected and the bid price not disclosed.

The Awardee shall reject:

- 1) All bids if quoted prices are not acceptable or if the specifications were ambiguous and resulted in bidders having different interpretations of the requirements; or
- 2) Any bid that is not responsive, or is incomplete, or submitted by an unqualified bidder, or unbalanced between labor and materials or other respects.

If fewer than three valid bids are received, the Awardee shall contact RUS to determine whether the bids are to be opened or returned unopened. RUS may require that the project be rebid if fewer than three bids are received and RUS determines that one or more other bidders with an express interest in bidding is available and could meet the bid requirements, but was not invited to bid. RUS shall also require rebidding if it is found that qualified bidders were discouraged from bidding by unreasonable bid requirements (such as late notification to bidders) or if the Awardee failed to follow the bid procedure.

The engineer shall review all the bids to make sure that the bid is in compliance with the P&S. The Awardee shall obtain from the engineer the determination of the selected bid, a tabulation of all bids and the engineer's recommendation for award of the contract. The Awardee may award the contract immediately if the following conditions are met:

- 1) The project is included in an approved award and adequate funds were budgeted in the award and are available;
- 2) All applicable RUS procedures were followed, including those in the *Notice and Instructions to Bid* in the standard forms of contract; and
- 3) The award is to the lowest responsive bidder.

If the above conditions are not satisfied, the bids along with the engineer's recommendation must be submitted to RUS for approval. The Awardee shall not enter into a contract until RUS has approved the bid.

Contract Documents

The Awardee shall submit three executed copies of the RUS Form 515, *Telecommunications System Construction Contract*, or the Non-RUS Contract to RUS for administrative approval. RUS will not approve the contract, if in RUS' judgment:

- 1) Unacceptable modifications have been made to the contract;
- 2) The contract will not accomplish award purposes;
- 3) The fees included in the contract are unreasonable; or

- 4) The contract presents unacceptable award risk to RUS.

Upon approval of the contract by RUS, one copy will be sent to the Awardee and one copy to the contractor.

Closeout Documents

After construction has been completed per the P&S, and acceptance tests have been made, the Awardee shall arrange the time for a final inspection to be conducted by the Awardee's engineer, the contractor, the GFR and a representative of the Awardee. The steps for closeout of the contract are included in the following table.

Step-by-Step Procedure for Closeout of RUS Form 515			
Sequence		By	Procedure
Step	When		
1	Upon Completion of Construction	Awardee's Engineer	Prepares the following: a set of Detail Maps and a set (when applicable) of Key Maps which show in red the work done under the RUS Form 515 contract; a Tabulation of Staking Sheet; and a tentative Final Inventory, RUS Forms 724 and 724a.
2	After acceptance tests are made	Awardee's Engineer	Forwards letter to the Awardee with copies to the GFR stating that the project is ready for final inspection. Schedules inspection date.
3	Upon receipt of letter from Awardee's Engineer	GFR	Advises Awardee whether attending the final inspection will be possible.
4	By inspection date	Awardee's Engineer	Obtains and makes available the following documents: a set of "as constructed" detail maps and (when applicable) "as built" key maps; a list of construction change orders; the final staking sheets; the tabulation staking sheets; the treated forest products inspection reports or certificates of compliance; the tentative final inventory, RUS Forms 724 and 724a; the tentative tabulation, and, a report of results of acceptance tests.
5	During inspection	Awardee's Engineer	Issues instructions to contractor covering corrections to be made in construction as a result of inspection.
6	During inspection	Contractor	Corrects construction on basis of instructions from the Awardee's engineer. The corrections should proceed closely behind the inspection in order that the Awardee's engineer can check the corrections before leaving the system.
7	During inspection	Awardee's Engineer	Inspects and approves corrected construction. Marks inspected areas on the key map, if available, otherwise on the detail maps.

Once all the acceptance tests and inspections have been completed and all deficiencies have been corrected, the Awardee, with assistance from its engineer, shall complete the documents listed in the following table to closeout the RUS Form 515.

Documents Required to Closeout RUS Form 515						
RUS Form	Description	Copies prepared by		Distribution		
		Contractor	Engineer	Awardee	Contractor	RUS
724	Final Inventory--Certificate of Completion	---	2	1	1	---
724a	Final Inventory--Assembly Units	---	2	1	1	---
None	Contractor's Bond Extension (send to RUS when required)	3	---	---	---	3
281	Tabulation of Materials Furnished by Borrower	2		1	1	
213	Certificate (Buy American)	1	---	1	---	---
---	Listing of Construction Change Orders		1	1	---	---
224	Waiver and Release of Lien (from each supplier)	1	---	1	---	---
231	Certificate of Contractor	1	---	1	---	--
527	Final Statement of Construction	---	2	1	1	---
---	Reports on Results of Acceptance Tests	---	1	1	1	---
---	Set of Final Staking Sheets	---	1	1	---	---
---	Tabulation of Staking Sheets	---	1	1	---	---
---	Correction Summary (legible copy)	---	1	1	---	---
---	Treated Forest Products Inspection Reports or Certificates of Compliance (prepared by inspection company or supplier).	---	---	1	---	---
---	Final Key Map (when applicable)	---	1	1	---	---
---	Final Central Office Area and Town Maps	---	1	1	---	---

The Awardee shall obtain from the engineer, RUS Form 756, *Contract Closeout Certification* or a similar certification for a Non-RUS Contract, and submits it to RUS within 30 days. If the contract included owner furnished materials, RUS Forms 281, 724, and 724a shall also be submitted with RUS Form 756. RUS shall notify the Awardee and the contractor, in writing upon approval of the RUS Form 756. Thereafter, the Awardee shall make the final payment to the contractor in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.

Building Construction

General

The Awardee shall use RUS Form 257, *Contract to Construct Buildings*, or a Non-RUS contract to finance the construction of all buildings estimated to cost more than 100,000. For unattended buildings that are estimated to cost \$100,000, or less and for all building improvements, the Awardee shall follow the RUS Form 773 method described under Small-Scale Construction. For unattended buildings estimated to cost over \$100,000, the Awardee shall use a Non-RUS Contract.

All construction pertaining to the building structure shall be performed under one contract. Separate contracts may be used for planting shrubbery, surfacing of roads and parking areas, and other identifiable parts of the project not pertaining to the building structure. These separate contracts shall also be subject to RUS approval.

When performing building construction using RUS Form 257 or a Non-RUS Contract, the Awardee shall follow the procedures below.

The site location, design, and construction of the facilities shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including:

- 1) Pub. L. 90-480 (42 U.S.C. 4151) (Access to Physically Handicapped), which requires certain buildings financed with Federal funds be designed and constructed to be accessible to the physically handicapped;
- 2) Pub. L. 91-596 (29 U.S.C. 651) the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. OSHA issues rules and regulations covering occupational safety and health standards for buildings. These regulations are codified in 29 CFR Chapter XVII;
- 3) 7 CFR Part 1970, which provides for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, as well as RUS conformance with other laws, regulations, and Executive Orders regarding environmental protection; and
- 4) 7 CFR Part 1792, Subpart C, which requires that the building design comply with applicable seismic design criteria. Prior to the design of buildings, Awardees shall submit to RUS a written acknowledgement from the architect or engineer that the design will comply.

Plans & Specifications

The engineer or architect shall prepare Plans & Specifications (P&S) for construction of all buildings. The P&S shall include the following:

- 1) RUS Contract Form 257, *Contract to Construct Buildings* or Non-RUS Contract;
- 2) Complete and detailed specifications covering materials and workmanship;
- 3) A detailed building plan. If the building is to house electronic apparatus, the detailed plan or specifications shall include the equipment environmental requirements and network equipment required; and
- 4) A site plan for each building showing the building location and giving the legal description of the site. Sufficient information shall be provided for the site to allow RUS to identify this site as the same property for which the Awardee submitted a title opinion to RUS. The legal description shall be typed on the site plan. The Awardee shall also furnish topographical information and a description of any proposed site development work and show proposed connections for public utilities.

The P&S shall show the identification and date of the model code used for seismic safety design considerations, and the seismic factor used. See 7 CFR Part 1792, Subpart C.

The Awardee shall submit the P&S to RUS for approval. RUS shall approve the P&S in writing or notify the Awardee of any reason for withholding approval. Upon RUS approval of the P&S, the Awardee shall solicit bids from at least three prospective bidders.

Bidding

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Awards shall be made to the bidder whose bid is responsive to the P&S and is most advantageous to the recipient, price, quality and other factors considered. The P&S shall clearly set forth all requirements including all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals that the bidder shall fulfill in order for the bid to be evaluated by the Awardee. The Awardee shall consider the same alternates in all bids in determining the low bid Any and all bids may be rejected when it is in the Awardee's interest to do so.

Upon RUS approval of the P&S, the Awardee shall schedule the bid opening. The Awardee should also allow sufficient time for the bidders to examine the project site and prepare their bids.

The Awardee shall obtain from its engineer a list of prospective bidders and a recommendation indicating which bidders are considered qualified. If the notice and instructions to bidders require that bidders to show evidence of meeting certain requirements, the Awardee shall qualify bidders before issuing the P&S to them.

The Awardee shall review all the bids to determine that:

- 1) The bid guarantees are adequate;
- 2) The bids are responsive to the P&S;
- 3) All minor errors or irregularities made through inadvertence are corrected or waived. Failing this, the bid shall be rejected as nonresponsive; and
- 4) In the event of non-minor errors or irregularities, the bid is rejected and the bid price not disclosed.

The Awardee shall reject:

- 1) All bids if quoted prices are not acceptable or if the specifications were ambiguous and resulted in bidders having different interpretations of the requirements; or
- 2) Any bid that is not responsive, or is incomplete, or submitted by an unqualified bidder, or unbalanced between labor and materials or other respects.

The architect or engineer will review all bids for compliance to the P&S. The Awardee shall obtain from the architect or engineer the determination of the selected bid, a tabulation of all bids and the architect's or engineer's recommendation for award of the contract. The Awardee may award the contract immediately if the following conditions are met:

- 1) The construction is included in an approved award and adequate funds were budgeted in the award and are available;
- 2) All applicable RUS procedures were followed, including those in the *Notice and Instructions to Bid* in the standard forms of contract; and
- 3) The award is to the lowest responsive bidder.

If the above conditions are not satisfied, the bids along with the architect's or engineer's recommendation and bid tabulations must be submitted to RUS for approval. Contracts cannot be executed until RUS has notified the Awardee of its approval of the bid.

Contract Documents

The Awardee shall submit three executed copies of the RUS Form 257, *Contract to Construct Buildings* or the Non-RUS Contract to RUS for administrative approval. RUS will not approve the contract, if in RUS' judgment:

- 1) Unacceptable modifications have been made to the contract;
- 2) The contract will not accomplish award purposes;
- 3) The fees included in the contract are unreasonable; or
- 4) The contract presents unacceptable award risk to RUS.

Upon approval of the contract by RUS, one copy will be sent to the Awardee and one copy to the contractor.

Closeout Documents

Upon completion of construction, the Awardee shall complete, with the assistance of its architect or engineer, the documents listed in the following table to closeout the RUS Form 257.

Documents Required to Closeout RUS Form 257						
RUS Form	Description	Copies prepared by		Distribution		
		Contractor	Architect/Engineer	Awardee	Contractor	RUS
238	Construction or Equipment Contract Amendment (if not previously submitted, send to RUS for approval)	---	3	---	---	3
187	Certificate of Completion (contract construction)	---	2	1	1	---
231	Certificate of Contractor	1	---	1	---	---
224	Waiver and Release of Lien from each Supplier	1	---	1	---	---
213	Certificate (Buy American)	1	---	1	---	---
---	"As Built" Plans and Specifications ²	---	1	1	---	---
---	Guarantees, Warranties, Bonds, Operating or Maintenance Instructions, etc.	1	---	1	---	---

The Awardee shall obtain from the architect or engineer, RUS Form 756, *Contract Closeout Certification* or a similar certification for a Non-RUS Contract, and submits it to RUS within 30 days. RUS shall notify the Awardee and the contractor, in writing upon approval of the RUS Form 756. Thereafter, the Awardee shall make the final payment to the contractor in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.

Tower Construction

General

The Awardee shall use RUS Form 773, *Miscellaneous Construction Work and Maintenance Services Contract*, or a Non-RUS contract to finance the construction of all new towers and any improvements on existing towers.

Plans & Specifications

The engineer will prepare the P&S which will consist of the RUS Form 773, diagrams, sketches, and detailed specifications covering materials and workmanship. RUS approval is not required for the P&S.

The Awardee will solicit proposals from at least three contractors. The engineer will review all the proposals for compliance to the P&S. The Awardee shall obtain from the engineer the determination of the selected contractor, bid, a tabulation of all quotes and the engineer's recommendation for award of the contract. The award shall be made to the contractor whose quote is responsive to the P&S and is most advantageous to the recipient, price, quality and other factors considered.

Neither the selection of the contractor nor the quote requires RUS approval; however, the Awardee shall ensure that the contractor selected meets all federal, state, and local licensing requirements, as well as bonding requirements, and that the contractor maintains the insurance coverage required by the contract for the duration of the work. (See 7 C.F.R. Part 1788.) If the contract amount exceeds \$250,000, a contractor's bond for the contract amount must be provided by the contractor. After a satisfactory proposal has been obtained, the Awardee shall enter into a contract with the selected contractor.

Contract Documents

The Awardee shall submit three executed copies of the RUS Form 773, *Miscellaneous Construction Work and Maintenance Services Contract*, or the Non-RUS Contract to RUS for administrative approval. RUS will not approve the contract, if in RUS' judgment:

- 1) Unacceptable modifications have been made to the contract;
- 2) The contract will not accomplish award purposes;
- 3) The fees included in the contract are unreasonable; or
- 4) The contract presents unacceptable award risk to RUS.

Upon approval of the contract by RUS, one copy will be sent to the Awardee and one copy to the contractor.

Closeout Documents

After construction has been completed per the P&S, and final inspection has been conducted by the Awardee's engineer, the Awardee shall obtain from the Contractor a final invoice and an executed copy of RUS Form 743, *Certificate of Contractor and Indemnity Agreement*.

The Awardee shall obtain from the engineer, RUS Form 756, *Contract Closeout Certification* or a similar certification for a Non-RUS Contract, and submits it to RUS within 30 days. RUS shall notify the Awardee and the contractor, in writing upon approval of the RUS Form 756. Thereafter, the Awardee shall make the final payment to the contractor in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.

Small-Scale Construction

General

Small-Scale Construction may be performed by either method below or in combination with other RUS Contracts or Non-RUS Contracts.

RUS Form 773

The Awardee shall prepare the RUS Form 773, *Miscellaneous Construction Work and Maintenance Services Contract*, without modifications, and attach any diagrams, sketches, and tabulations necessary to specify clearly the work to be performed and who shall provide which materials. Compensation may be based upon unit prices, hourly rates, or another basis agreed to in advance by the Awardee and the contractor.

Neither the selection of the contractor nor the contract requires RUS approval; however, Awardees are urged to obtain quotations from several contractors before entering into a contract to be assured of obtaining the lowest cost. The Awardee shall ensure that the contractor selected meets all federal and state licensing requirements, as well as bonding requirements, and that the contractor maintains the insurance coverage required by the contract for the duration of the work. (See 7 CFR Part 1788.) If the contract amount exceeds \$250,000, a contractor's bond for the contract amount must be provided by the contractor.

Upon completion and final inspection of the work, the Awardee shall obtain from the Contractor a final invoice and an executed copy of RUS Form 743, *Certificate of Contractor and Indemnity Agreement*.

The Awardee shall submit the RUS Form 771a, along with a description of the completed work to the RUS General Field Representative for review prior to submitting it for reimbursement. The RUS Form 771a shall be certified by an authorized representative of the Awardee and the engineer.

Work Orders

Work Order Work shall be performed to all local, state, and Federal requirements. As Work Order Work is performed, the Awardee shall keep daily timesheets and material reports, referenced by the work project number, to record labor and materials used. Cost accounting system must be in place to meet

the requirements of 7 CFR 200, as applicable, to show the source and summary records to support requested and expended funds.

Upon completion and final inspection of the work, the Awardee shall submit RUS Form 771a, along with a description of the completed work, to the RUS General Field Representative for review. The RUS Form 771a shall be certified by an authorized representative of the Awardee and the engineer.

Reimbursement Method

Unless otherwise approved by RUS, the Awardee shall finance all Small-Scale Construction with non-award funds and obtain reimbursement with ReConnect award funds when the work is completed. Funds for Small-Scale construction must be requested on RUS Form 481, *Financial Requirement Statement (FRS)*. To request funds, the Awardee shall submit RUS Form 771a, initialed by the GFR, along with a description of each project.

Advance and Disbursement of ReConnect Program Award Funds

General

The standard award documents contain provisions regarding advances and disbursement of award funds by Awardees. This section implements certain provisions by setting forth requirements and procedures to be followed by the Awardees in obtaining advances and making disbursements of award funds.

All matching and/or funds required for project completion as stated in the Award Documents must be deposited into the Pledged Deposit Account at award closing. For purposes of advances, all matching funds will be treated as award funds and recorded appropriately on the Financial Requirement Statement.

RUS is under no obligation to approve advances of award funds unless the Awardee complies with all terms and conditions of the award documents. The Awardee shall use funds in its Pledged Deposit Account funds only to make disbursements approved by RUS.

ReConnect Program Award Budget

When the award is approved, RUS will provide the Awardee with the award budget. This budget divides the award into budget categories that are associated with the proposed projects, such as equipment, outside plant, buildings, professional services, etc. Funds from one budget category may not be used for a different budget category without prior written approval from RUS.

Budget Adjustments

If more funds are required than are available in a budget category, the Awardee may request RUS' approval of a budget adjustment to use funds from another budget category. The request shall include an explanation as to why the adjustment is needed and the affected budget categories. RUS will not approve a budget adjustment unless the Awardee can demonstrate that all purposes can still be completed with the requested adjustment. RUS, at its discretion, may make a budget adjustment without a formal request to encumber funds for a contract, when funds within the budget category are insufficient, and when it determines that the budget adjustment is insignificant.

Pledged Deposit Account

The Awardee shall establish and maintain a Pledged Deposit Account to hold all Advances deposited by the Agency. The Pledged Deposit Account shall only be established in a bank or depository whose deposits are insured by the FDIC or other federal agency acceptable to RUS. Funds in the Pledged Deposit Account shall be used solely for the purpose approved in the Application and shall be withdrawn/dispensed for the approved purposes for which they were requested on the Financial Requirement Statement. All Advances will be electronically deposited into the Pledged Deposit Account.

RUS may require that other funds be deposited into the Pledged Deposit Account. These may include match, equity or general fund contributions for project completion, proceeds from the sale of property, interest received on award funds and similar types of receipts. Deposit slips for any deposits to the Pledged Deposit Account shall show the source and amount of funds deposited and be executed by an authorized representative of the bank. The disbursement of non-award funds deposited into the Pledged Deposit Account requires the same RUS approval as Advances on the award.

For accounting purposes, all withdrawals/dispensments from the Pledged Deposit Account must be evidenced by canceled checks or support for other forms of payment. Disbursements to reimburse the Awardee's general fund account shall be documented by a reimbursement schedule to be retained in the Awardee's records that lists the Pledged Deposit Account check number, date, and an explanation of amounts reimbursed for the Project.

Funds shall be dispensed only up to the amount approved for advance as indicated on the financial requirement statement.

Financial Requirement Statement (FRS)

To request advances the Awardee must submit to RUS Form 481, *Financial Requirement Statement*, a description of the advances desired, and other related information to the transactions as required by RUS.

The Awardee shall request funds in the first advance of award funds to pay any eligible pre-application expenses. This amount cannot exceed the amount approved in the ReConnect Program award budget.

The FRS is used by RUS and the Awardee to record and control transactions in the Pledged Deposit Account. Approved contracts and other items are shown on the FRS under "Approved Purposes." Funds are approved for advance as follows:

- A. Construction
 - (1) *Construction and Equipment Contracts*: Ninety percent (Ninety-five percent for Outside Plant Contract) of the contract amount approved by RUS with the final ten percent (five percent for Outside Plant Contract) approved upon approval of RUS Form 756, *Contract Closeout Certification*.
 - (2) *Small-Scale Construction*: The total amount shown on RUS Form 771a as determined by RUS for approved award purposes.
 - (3) *Rights-of-way, Make-ready, Permits*: Amount requested must be supported by

appropriate documentation, such as invoices, contracts, etc. Funds requested for compensation for acquiring rights-of-way are not eligible for financing.

B. Engineering

- (1) *Engineering Services Contracts*: Ninety percent of the contract amount approved by RUS. The final ten percent shall be approved upon RUS approval of RUS Form 506, *Statement of Engineering Fees – Telecommunications*.
- (2) *In-house engineering*: Ninety percent of the approved amount based on the In-house Engineering Proposal. The amount requested on the FRS must be supported by timesheets.
- (3) *Architectural Services Contracts*: Ninety percent of the contract amount approved by RUS. The final ten percent shall be approved upon RUS approval of RUS Form 284, *Final Statement of Cost for Architectural Services*.
- (4) *All other professional services contracts*: Ninety percent of the contract amount approved by RUS with the remaining amount approved upon RUS approval of the closeout documents.

C. Operating Equipment

Support Assets: Amount requested must be supported by copies of invoices.

D. General

Pre-application expenses: The final itemized invoice(s) from the person or firm for eligible pre-application expenses. The invoice(s) must clearly state the date and description of the services that were rendered.

E. Acquisitions

Amount requested must be supported by final itemized costs and cannot exceed the approved amount in the ReConnect Program award budget.

Funds other than award funds that are deposited in the Pledged Deposit Account are reported as a credit under total disbursements. Disbursements of these funds are subject to the same RUS approvals as award funds.

The Awardee shall request advances as needed to meet its obligations promptly. Generally, RUS does not approve an advance requested more than 60 days before the obligation is payable.

Funds should be disbursed for the item for which they were advanced. If the Awardee needs to pay an invoice for which funds have not been advanced, and disbursement of advanced funds for another item has been delayed, the latter funds may be disbursed to pay the invoice for up to the amount approved for advance for that item on the FRS. The Awardee shall make entries on the next FRS showing the changes under "Total Advances to Date" and shall explain the changes in writing before RUS will process the next FRS.

The FRS shall be certified by an authorized official of the Awardee who name and signature appears on RUS Form 675, *Certificate of Authority*. RUS will not process the FRS if it is signed by an individual whose name is not included on this form.

The documentation required for the FRS transactions are the deposit slip, the cancelled deposit account checks and the supporting invoices or reimbursement schedules. These shall be kept for in the Awardee's files for periodic audits by RUS.

Temporary Excess Award Funds

When unanticipated events delay the Awardee's disbursement of award funds from the Pledged Deposit Account, the funds may be used for other approved purposes or must remain in the account. If funds are disbursed for other approved purposes, then these amounts have to be clearly reflected on the FRS. If the account is an interest bearing account, all interest earned must remain in the deposit account and cannot be disbursed without RUS approval.

Method of Advancing Funds

The first or subsequent advances may be conditioned on the satisfaction of certain requirements stated in the Awardee's award contract.

All advances shall be made electronically using the Automatic Clearing House (ACH).

Account Number	Account Name	Account Type	Account Status
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Addendum to ReConnect Program Construction Procedures

Depreciation Rates

Code	Group	Letter	Type	Rate (%)
1000	1. Network & Access Equipment	a.	Switching Equipment	9.37
1001	1. Network & Access Equipment	b.	Routing Equipment	9.37
1002	1. Network & Access Equipment	c.	Transport Equipment	9.37
1003	1. Network & Access Equipment	d.	Access Equipment	9.37
1004	1. Network & Access Equipment	e.	Video Equipment	10.00
1005	1. Network & Access Equipment	f.	Power Equipment	10.00
1006	1. Network & Access Equipment	g.	Satellite Equipment	10.00
1007	1. Network & Access Equipment	h.	Other (specify)	
2000	2. Outside Plant	a.	Copper Cable - Aerial	6.00
2001	2. Outside Plant	b.	Copper Cable - Buried	5.15
2002	2. Outside Plant	c.	Copper Cable - Underground	5.00
2003	2. Outside Plant	d.	Coaxial Cable - Aerial	6.00
2004	2. Outside Plant	e.	Coaxial Cable - Buried	5.15
2005	2. Outside Plant	f.	Coaxial Cable - Underground	5.00
2006	2. Outside Plant	g.	Fiber Cable - Aerial	5.10
2007	2. Outside Plant	h.	Fiber - Buried	5.00
2008	2. Outside Plant	i.	Fiber - Underground Cable	5.00
2009	2. Outside Plant	j.	Fiber - Submarine Cable	5.00
2010	2. Outside Plant	k.	Conduit Systems	4.00
2011	2. Outside Plant	l.	Ducts (Vacant)	5.00
2012	2. Outside Plant	m.	Drops	5.00
2013	2. Outside Plant	n.	Cabinets/underground vaults	5.00
2014	2. Outside Plant	o.	Poles	5.00
2015	2. Outside Plant	p.	Make-ready	5.00
2016	2. Outside Plant	q.	Other (specify)	
3000	3. Buildings	a.	New Construction	3.30
3001	3. Buildings	b.	Pre-Fab Huts	5.00
3002	3. Buildings	c.	Improvements	6.67
3003	3. Buildings	d.	Other (specify)	

Code	Group	Letter	Type	Rate (%)
4001	4. Towers	a.	Guyed Towers	5.00
4002	4. Towers	b.	Lattice Towers	5.00
4003	4. Towers	c.	Monopole/Self-Supporting Tower	5.00
4004	4. Towers	d.	Wood poles	5.00
4005	4. Towers	e.	Improvements	5.00
4006	4. Towers	f.	Other (specify)	
5000	5. Customer Premises Equipment	a.	Video Set Top Boxes	20.00
5001	5. Customer Premises Equipment	b.	Modems and Routers	20.00
5002	5. Customer Premises Equipment	c.	Inside Wiring	10.00
5003	5. Customer Premises Equipment	d.	Multi-Terminal Adapter (VoIP)	20.00
5004	5. Customer Premises Equipment	e.	Smart Meters	20.00
5005	5. Customer Premises Equipment	f.	Other (specify)	
6000	6. Support Assets	a.	Construction Vehicles	12.00
6001	6. Support Assets	b.	Construction Equipment	12.00
6002	6. Support Assets	c.	Motor Vehicles	16.50
6003	6. Support Assets	d.	Special Purpose Vehicles	12.00
6004	6. Support Assets	e.	Office Equipment	10.00
6005	6. Support Assets	f.	Office Furniture	10.00
6006	6. Support Assets	g.	Billing System	10.00
6007	6. Support Assets	h.	Test Equipment	10.00
6008	6. Support Assets	i.	Portable Generators	10.00
6009	6. Support Assets	j.	Tools	10.00
6010	6. Support Assets	k.	Other (specify)	

ATTACHMENT 2

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CONTRACT PROVISIONS

During the performance of this contract, the contractor agrees as follows:

- (a) The contractor shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The contractor shall take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to the following: employment, upgrading, demotion, or transfer, recruitment, or recruitment advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. The contractor agrees to post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, notices to be provided setting forth the provisions of this non-discrimination clause.
- (b) The contractor shall, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor, state that all qualified applicants shall receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
- (c) The contractor shall send to each labor union or representative of workers with which he has a collective bargaining agreement or other contract or understanding, a notice to be provided advising the said labor union or worker's representative of the contractor's commitments under this section, and shall post copies of the notice in conspicuous place available to employees and applicants for employment.
- (d) The contractor shall comply with all provisions of Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1965 and of the rules, regulations, and relevant orders of the Secretary of Labor.
- (e) The contractor shall furnish all information and reports required by Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1965 and by the rules, regulations, and orders of the Secretary of Labor, or pursuant thereto, and shall permit access to his books, records, and accounts by the administering agency and the Secretary of Labor for purposes of investigation to ascertain compliance with such rules, regulation, and orders.
- (f) In the event of the contractor's non-compliance with the non-discrimination clauses of this contract or with any of the said rules, regulations, or orders, this contract may be cancelled, terminated, or suspended in whole or part by the Government, and the contractor may be declared ineligible for further Government contracts or federally assisted construction contracts in accordance with the procedure authorized in Executive Order 11246 of September 14, 1965, and such other sanctions may be imposed and remedies invoked as provided in said Executive Order or by rule, regulation, or order of the Secretary of Labor, or as otherwise provided by law.
- (g) The contractor shall include the provisions of paragraphs (a) through (g) in every subcontract or purchase order unless exempted by rules, regulations, or orders of the Secretary of Labor issued pursuant to Section 204 of Executive Order 11246, dated September 24, 1965, so that such provisions shall be binding upon each subcontractor or vendor. The contractor shall take such action with respect to any subcontract or purchase order as the administering agency may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions, including sanctions for non-compliance; provided, however, that in the event a contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the agency, the contractor may request the United States to enter into such litigation to protect the interests of the United States.