



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 20-0307, **Version:** 1

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Chief Administrative Office recommending the Board approve and authorize the Chair to sign Resolution **033-2020**, authorizing the County to submit an Authorized Representative Request to assign a Representative-Signature-Certifier and Administrator as required by the USDA ReConnect grant procedures, to enable system access to the application for grant funding under the USDA Reconnect Program, in order to allow staff to prepare for potential grant application opportunities that could facilitate broadband deployment in areas of the County that do not have sufficient access to broadband. (Est. Time: 5 Min.)

**FUNDING:** N/A for gaining access to the grant application system.

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Rural Utilities Service administers federal programs that support the development and improvement of necessary infrastructure in rural areas, including loan and grant funding for Broadband infrastructure. In March 2018 Congress appropriated \$600M in budget authority to establish the Rural Connectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect Program). In fiscal year 2019 an additional \$550M was appropriated for ReConnect 1. In fiscal year 2020 Reconnect 2 was announced to include \$600M in appropriations, and it is expected that another large appropriation will be made for ReConnect 3 later in 2020.

El Dorado County has priority areas that would be eligible for this grant funding under the terms of the grant. The County has also contracted with NEO Fiber, dba NEO Connect to research eligible areas within the County and make recommendations of what areas qualify most for the grant opportunity.

The individual identified as the Rep-Sign-Cert will have the authority to provide signatures, authorize certifications, enter/update applications, submit applications for consideration, and assign access to new users. If awarded, the Rep-Sign-Cert will also have the authority to enter/update compliance reports, submit compliance reports, and assign access to new users.

The individual(s) identified as Administrator(s) will have the authority to enter/update applications in the online application system, enter/update compliance reports in the financial reporting and compliance system, and assign access to new users in both the online application and financial reporting and compliance system.

The 100% grant option is competitive and includes a 25% match of County funds, and the maximum award is \$25M. There is also a 50% loan/50% grant option and a 100% loan option. The County would apply for the 100% grant opportunity.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The Board could disallow the resolution, thereby declining the County from obtaining access to the application portal.

**PRIOR BOARD ACTION**

20-0288 2/25/20 Authorizing and amendment to the NEO Connect contract to assist with grant research and preparation.

**OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

County Counsel

**CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS**

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

This Board action authorizes access to USDA's grant application system for the ReConnect grant program and has no fiscal impact. However, if a grant is submitted there would be a 25% County match required. Prior to grant submittal staff, will obtain direction from the Board regarding what priority area(s) should be included in a grant application.

**CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Return board-approved resolution to Mollie Purcell in the Chief Administrative Office.

**STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Infrastructure

**CONTACT**

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