

USDA Rural Broadband, Electric, and Water Programs: FY2022 Appropriations

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) programs build and enhance infrastructure in rural areas. RUS programs provide grants, loans, loan guarantees, and technical assistance that help develop and modernize systems in rural areas, including water, waste disposal, electric, broadband, and telemedicine systems. Congress funds RUS programs through Title III and Title VII of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, also known as the Agriculture appropriations bill.

Over the past two years, Congress increased funding by \$191.6 million (+16%) for RUS programs, from \$1.2 billion (FY2019) to \$1.4 billion (FY2021). During that time, Congress increased funding by \$77.9 million (+14%) for RUS water and waste disposal programs, by \$1.6 million (+3%) for RUS electric and telephone programs, and by \$112.2 million (+18%) for RUS broadband and telephone programs. Congress also increased funding for the ReConnect Program that helps increase broadband access in rural areas by \$85 million (+15%), from \$550 million in FY2019 to \$635 million in FY2021.

On May 28, 2021, the Biden Administration released its FY2022 budget request. The Administration's request would increase funding by \$590.6 million (+42%) for RUS programs, from \$1.4 billion (FY2021) to \$2 billion. The Administration's proposal would increase funding by \$90 million (+14%) for RUS water and waste disposal programs and by \$435.8 million (+936%) for RUS electric and telephone programs. The Administration's request would also increase funding by \$64.8 million (+9%) for RUS broadband and telemedicine programs. The increase in funding for RUS broadband and telemedicine programs would be allocated to the ReConnect Program, increasing its funding from \$635 million (FY2021) to \$700 million.

On July 29, 2021, the House approved the FY2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R. 4502), which includes the Agriculture Appropriations Act. The House bill would increase funding by \$484.8 million (+35%) for RUS programs, from \$1.4 billion (FY2021) to \$1.9 billion. The House bill would increase funding by \$105.6 million (+17%) for RUS water and waste disposal programs and by \$177.8 million (+382%) for RUS electric and telephone programs. The House bill would also increase funding by \$201.4 million (+28%) for RUS broadband and telemedicine programs. The increase to RUS broadband and telemedicine programs would be allocated to the ReConnect Program, increasing its funding from \$635 million (FY2021) to \$836.6 million.

On August 4, 2021, the Senate Appropriations Committee reported the FY2022 Agriculture Appropriations Act (S. 2599). The Senate committee-reported bill would increase funding by \$109.7 million (+8%) for RUS programs, from \$1.4 billion (FY2021) to \$1.5 billion. The bill would increase funding by \$39.1 million (+6%) for RUS water and waste disposal programs, by \$293,000 (+1%) for RUS electric and telephone programs, and by \$70.3 million (+10%) for RUS broadband and telemedicine programs. In addition, the bill would increase funding for the ReConnect Program by \$65 million (+10%), from \$635 million in FY2021 to \$700 million. The \$700 million would be funded through Title VII (General Provisions) rather than through Title III (Rural Development) and Title VII as it was in FY2021.

The House FY2022 Agriculture appropriations bill and the Senate FY2022 committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill include funding guidelines and policy-related provisions that direct how the executive branch is to carry out the appropriations. For example, H.Rept. 117-82 that accompanies H.R. 4356, the bill that became the FY2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R. 4502), would direct the executive branch to use funding allocated to the Rural Energy Savings Program for activities that contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases. Another provision states that for the ReConnect Program, rural areas without sufficient broadband would be defined as rural areas with less than 25 megabits per second (Mbps) downstream and 3 Mbps upstream rates. S.Rept. 117-34 that accompanies S. 2599 would direct that \$1 billion of funding for the Water and Waste Disposal Technical Assistance and Training Grants be used to support manufactured homes. The Senate committee report also requests that USDA prioritize applications for the Community Connect Program for projects serving areas with mountainous terrain.

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Introduction

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act—also known as the Agriculture appropriations bill—funds the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), except the Forest Service, and the Food and Drug Administration. The bill includes funding for USDA’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS). RUS programs develop and enhance rural infrastructure systems. RUS programs also provide grants, loans and loan guarantees, and technical assistance to help develop and modernize systems in rural areas, including water, waste disposal, electric, broadband, and telemedicine systems.¹

President Joe Biden’s FY2022 budget request was released on May 28, 2021.² The House passed a seven-bill minibuss appropriation (H.R. 4502) on July 24, 2020, with Agriculture appropriations as Division B. The minibuss incorporated the text, as amended, of the committee-reported bill for agriculture (H.R. 4356, H.Rept. 117-82). The Senate Appropriations Committee reported its bill (S. 2599, S.Rept. 117-34) on August 4, 2021, after subcommittee approval on August 2. This report provides a brief overview of the Administration’s budget request, the House Agriculture appropriation bill’s funding levels for RUS programs, and the Senate committee-reported Agriculture appropriation bill’s funding levels for RUS programs. The report also highlights selected funding guidelines and policy-related provisions from the House and Senate reports (see “Policy-Related Provisions”).

Appropriations for RUS programs were increased by \$191.6 million (+16%), from \$1.2 billion in FY2019 to \$1.4 billion in FY2021 (**Figure 1**). From FY2019 to FY2021, funding for RUS water and waste disposal (WWD) programs increased by \$77.9 million (+13%), from \$548.7 million to \$626.6 million. During that time, funding increased by \$1.6 million (+3%) for RUS electric and telecommunications programs (from \$45 million to \$46.5 million), and funding increased by \$112.2 million (+18%) for RUS broadband programs (from \$619.8 million to \$732 million).

The Biden Administration’s FY2022 request would increase funding by \$590.6 million (+42%) for RUS programs, from \$1.4 billion (FY2021) to \$2 billion. The Administration would increase funding by

- \$90 million (+14%) for RUS WWD programs,
- \$435.8 million (+936%) for RUS electric and telecommunications programs, and
- \$64.8 million (+9%) for RUS broadband and telemedicine programs.

Similarly, the House FY2022 Agriculture appropriations bill would increase funding by \$484.8 million (+35%) for RUS programs, from \$1.4 billion (FY2021) to \$1.9 billion. The House bill would increase funding by \$105.6 million (+17%) for RUS WWD programs, by \$177.8 million (+382%) for RUS electric and telecommunications programs, and by \$201.4 million (+28%) for RUS broadband and telemedicine programs.

The Senate FY2022 committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill would increase funding by \$109.7 million (+8%) for RUS programs, from \$1.4 billion (FY2021) to \$1.5 billion. The bill would increase funding by \$39.1 million (+6%) for RUS WWD programs, by \$293,000 (+1%)

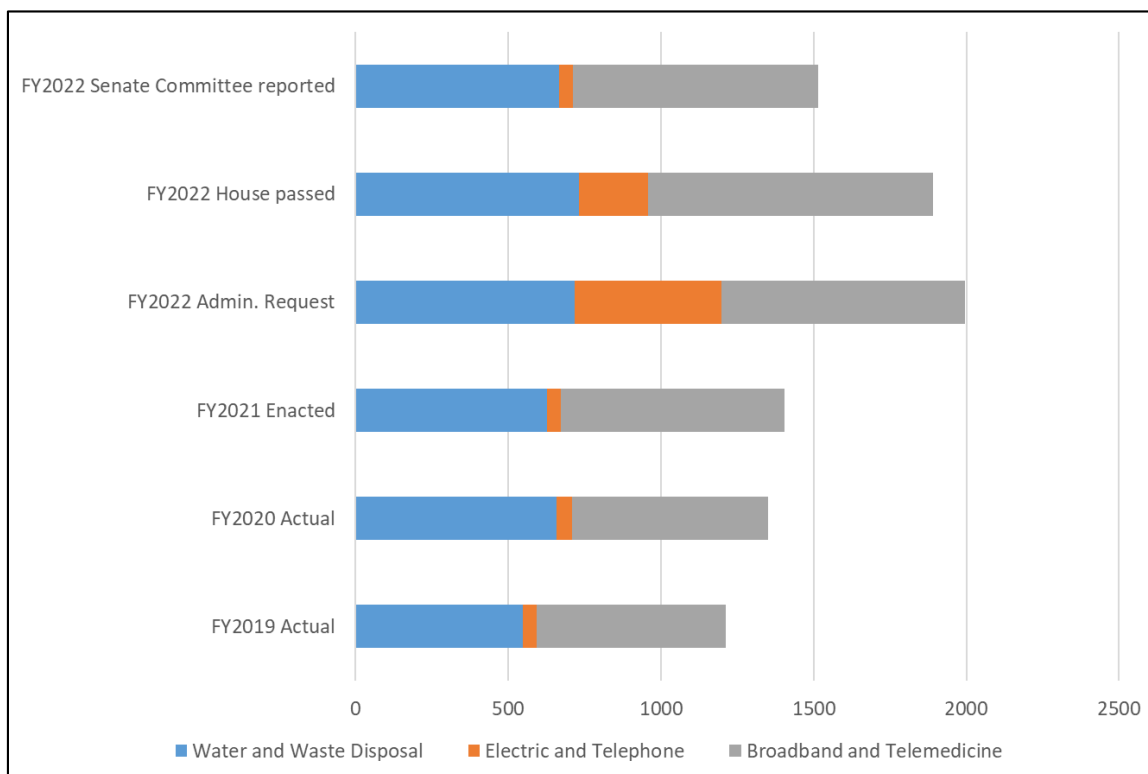
¹ USDA Rural Development, “Rural Utilities Service,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/agencies/rural-utilities-service>.

² White House, Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the U.S. Government, Fiscal Year 2022*, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/budget_fy22.pdf.

for RUS electric and telephone programs, and by \$70.3 million (+10%) for RUS broadband and telemedicine programs.

Funding proposals for RUS WWD programs, RUS electric and telecommunications programs, and RUS broadband and telemedicine programs are provided in **Table 3**, **Table 4** and **Table 5**, respectively.

Figure 1. Appropriations for USDA Rural Utilities Service Programs, FY2019-FY2022
(in millions of dollars)



Source: Compiled by CRS using FY2019, FY2020, and FY2021 appropriations acts; the FY2022 Administration's budget request; the FY2022 House Agriculture appropriations bill (H.R. 4502); and the FY2022 Senate committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill (S. 2599).

Notes: Funding includes grants and loan subsidies. Funding does not include loan authority. Water and Waste Disposal (WWD) = programs funded in the Rural WWD Program account (Title III of the Agriculture appropriations bill); Electric and Telephone = programs funded through the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Program account and General Provisions (Title III and Title VII of the Agriculture appropriations bill, respectively); and Broadband and Telemedicine = programs funded in the Distance Learning, Telemedicine and Broadband Program account and General Provisions (Title III and Title VII of the Agriculture appropriations bill, respectively).

USDA Rural Utilities Service and Rural Infrastructure

The mission of USDA Rural Development is to enhance the quality of life in and economic well-being of rural communities through its programs.³ USDA Rural Development administers programs through RUS, the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS), and the Rural Housing

³ USDA Rural Development, "About RD," at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd>.

Service (RHS).⁴ RBCS programs enhance business development and the development of cooperatives, and RHS supports the development of housing and essential community facilities.

RUS programs develop critical infrastructure in water, waste disposal, electric, telephone, broadband, and telemedicine systems. RUS WWD programs provide access to safe and reliable drinking water, sanitary sewers, solid waste facilities, and storm drainage facilities in rural areas.⁵ RUS electric and telephone programs help maintain, expand, and modernize electric and telephone systems.⁶ RUS broadband (i.e., high-speed internet) programs help rural communities construct, improve, and acquire facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service to rural households and businesses.⁷ RUS telemedicine programs connect rural residents to medical staff and services via broadband.

Defining Rural

RUS programs provide funding for projects located in rural areas. The definition of *rural* varies across RUS programs, ranging from areas with 2,500 or fewer residents to areas with 50,000 or fewer residents. Many of the RUS water programs providing grants and direct loans define rural as communities with populations of 10,000 individuals or fewer, while water programs providing loan guarantees define rural as areas of 50,000 residents or fewer.⁸ RUS electric programs, such as the Electric Infrastructure Loan Program, define rural as communities with 20,000 or fewer people.⁹ Most RUS broadband programs providing grants and direct loans define *rural areas* as areas with populations of 20,000 or fewer inhabitants. (The specific definitions of rural used by the broadband programs are provided in the program funding announcements.)¹⁰ A few RUS programs target very small rural communities. For example, the SEARCH - Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households Program restricts eligibility to areas with 2,500 or fewer residents, and the Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program is available to communities with 5,000 or fewer residents.¹¹

Congress allows for exceptions to the rural areas definitions through a provision in the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act. This provision states that a local unit of government may petition the Undersecretary for Rural Development to designate an area to be a

⁴ USDA Rural Development, “Agencies,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/about-rd/agencies>.

⁵ USDA Rural Development, “Water and Environmental Programs,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/water-environmental-programs>.

⁶ USDA Rural Development, “Electric Programs,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/electric-programs>.

⁷ For more information on rural broadband programs, see CRS Report RL33816, *Broadband Loan and Grant Programs in the USDA’s Rural Utilities Service*, by Lennard G. Kruger and Alyssa R. Casey.

⁸ USDA Rural Development, “Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>; and USDA Rural Development, “Water and Waste Disposal Loan Guarantees,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-guarantees>.

⁹ USDA Rural Development, “Distributed Generation Energy Project Financing Program,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distributed-generation-energy-project-financing>; and USDA Rural Development, “Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-efficiency-and-conservation-loan-program>.

¹⁰ USDA Rural Development, “Telecom Programs,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/telecom-programs>.

¹¹ USDA Rural Development, “SEARCH – Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households,” at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/search-special-evaluation-assistance-rural-communities-and-households>.

“rural area” even though it does not meet program population requirements if the area has other characteristics that make it “rural in character” (7 U.S.C. §1991(a)(13)(D)).

Rural Infrastructure Funding

Congress funds RUS programs through *discretionary* funding, the levels of which are set annually in the Agriculture appropriations bills. Congress funds RUS programs primarily through Title III (Rural Development) of the Agriculture appropriations bill and includes funding for some programs—typically temporary or pilot programs—in Title VII (General Provisions).

RUS programs provide grants, loans, loan guarantees, and technical assistance. For grants, Congress sets a funding level to be distributed through RUS programs. For RUS programs’ loans and loan guarantees, Congress sets the loan authority (i.e., amount of loans that can be issued through the programs) and loan subsidies (i.e., cost of subsidies required to issue the loans and loan guarantees through the programs).¹² In Agriculture appropriations bills, budget authority includes grants and loans subsidies, but budget authority does not include loan authorities for RUS programs. The following sections provide an overview of the accounts within Title III and Title VII of the Agriculture appropriations bills that fund RUS programs.

Rural Water and Waste Disposal Programs

RUS WWD programs help build or enhance systems that provide clean, reliable drinking water and the disposal of waste in rural areas. Such programs include the WWD Direct Loan Program, the WWD Grant Program, and the WWD Guaranteed Loan Program.

The WWD Direct Loan Program and the WWD Grant Program provide funding and financing to develop and extend clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, and stormwater drainage to rural households and businesses. Some WWD grants are provided to targeted communities, such as colonias, tribal lands, Alaska Native and rural villages, and Hawaiian homeland communities.¹³ The WWD Guaranteed Loan Program helps private lenders provide affordable financing to borrowers to improve access to clean, reliable water systems and waste disposal systems that serve rural households and businesses.

RUS WWD programs have statutory authority in the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act of 1926 (7 U.S.C. §1926 et seq.). Congress funds these programs through the Rural WWD Program account included in Title III of the Agriculture appropriations bill. This account includes funding that is directed to the account for the High Energy Costs Program, which provides support to energy providers and other entities to help lower energy costs for families and individuals experiencing costs at least 275% above the national average. Funding for RUS water and water disposal grants and loan subsidies has fluctuated over the past three fiscal years, from \$548.7 million (FY2019) to \$659.5 million (FY2020) to \$626.6 million (FY2021).

From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress provided consistent loan authority for the RUS WWD loan and loan guarantee programs with varying levels of loan subsidies to support the loan authority

¹² The federal cost of making direct loans and loan guarantees is called the loan subsidy. Loan subsidies are calculated by taking any interest rate subsidy provided by the government and the projection of anticipated loan losses from recipient defaults of the loans. Loan authority is the amount of loans that can be made and is several times larger than the subsidy level. RUS must reestimate the subsidy cost of the outstanding portfolio of direct loans and loan guarantees each year. For more information, see White House, Office of Management and Budget, “Analytical Perspectives – Budget Concepts,” at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/analytical-perspectives/>.

¹³ The term *colonia* refers to state-designated, low-income, unincorporated areas along the U.S.-Mexico border that lack basic drinking water and wastewater, housing, or other infrastructure (7 U.S.C. 1926c(c)).

based on the programs' carryover funds (e.g., no subsidies were appropriated when the programs' carryover funds were able to support the loan authority). Congress authorized \$1.4 billion annually in loan authority for the WWD Direct Loan Program for FY2019-FY2021. For this program, Congress provided no loan subsidy in FY2019 and FY2021 because the program's carryover funds were sufficient to support the loan authority; for FY2020, Congress appropriated a loan subsidy of \$63.8 million.

Congress appropriated \$50 million annually in loan authority for the WWD Guaranteed Loan Program for FY2019-FY2021. For this program, Congress has provided loan subsidies of \$190,000 in FY2019, \$70,000 in FY2020, and \$60,000 in FY2021.

From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress increased the annual amount appropriated for the WWD Grant Program from \$400 million to \$463.4 million. During that time, Congress kept combined appropriations at \$68 million annually for the WWD Grants set-aside for colonias, tribal lands, and Alaska Native and rural villages. From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress appropriated \$10 million annually to be transferred from the Rural WWD Program account to the Higher Energy Costs Program account.

Rural Electric and Telephone Programs

RUS electric programs provide financing to help maintain, expand, and modernize the electric infrastructure in rural areas. RUS telephone programs provide loans and loan guarantees to help service providers build, enhance, or expand telephone and broadband networks in rural areas. In addition, the Rural Energy Savings Program provides loans to rural utilities and other entities that provide subloans to consumers to implement energy efficiency actions.¹⁴

RUS electric and telephone programs have statutory authority in the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. §§901 et seq.). Congress funds the majority of these programs through the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loans Program account in Title III of the Agriculture appropriations bill. In addition, Congress has funded the Rural Energy Savings Program in Title VII of the Agriculture appropriations bill.

From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress provided annual funding for RUS electric and telephone grants and loan subsidies in the amounts of \$45 million in FY2019, \$49 million in FY2020, and \$47 million in FY2021. Congress authorized RUS to provide direct loans through two programs, one program administered by RUS and one program administered by the Federal Financing Bank (FFB) with those loans guaranteed by RUS.¹⁵ The direct loan program administered by RUS and the direct loan program administered by FFB operate with their own loan authority and associated loan subsidies. Congress also authorized RUS to provide loan guarantees to intermediary lenders providing loans to other entities.

From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress did not authorize loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program administered by RUS. During that time, Congress authorized \$5.5 billion annually in loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program administered by FFB and did not provide loan subsidies because carryover funds were sufficient to support the loan authority. Congress authorized \$750 million annually from FY2019 to FY2021 in loan authority for the Electric Guaranteed Loan Program and did not provide loan subsidies because carryover funds were sufficient to support the loan authority.

¹⁴ For more information about the Rural Energy Savings Program, see CRS In Focus IF10288, *Overview of the 2018 Farm Bill Energy Title Programs*, by Kelsi Bracmort.

¹⁵ The Federal Financing Bank (FFB) is a federal corporation under the authority of the Secretary of the Treasury that finances certain federal loan programs and centralizes federal borrowing.

Congress authorized \$345 million annually for the Telecommunications Direct Loan Program, with loan subsidies to support that loan authority of \$1.7 million in FY2019, \$3.8 million in FY2020, and \$2.3 million in FY2021. Congress authorized \$345 million annually for the Telecommunications Direct Loan Program financed through FFB. Congress did not authorize loan subsidies because carryover funds were sufficient to support the loan authority.

Over the past three years, Congress provided funding for loans for the Rural Energy Savings Program in varying amounts: \$71.3 million in FY2019, \$69.6 million in FY2020, and \$107.3 million in FY2021.

Rural Broadband and Telemedicine Programs

RUS rural broadband programs support the building and expansion of high-speed internet networks that provide service to rural households and businesses. The ReConnect Program provides loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to fund construction and improvement of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service to rural areas.¹⁶ The Community Connect Program and Rural Broadband Program are similar to the ReConnect Program. Community Connect focuses on connecting community facilities to broadband,¹⁷ and the program's grants help rural residents to access broadband for noncommercial uses, such as education, health care, and public safety. The Rural Broadband Program provides loans only,¹⁸ which are available to communities with some internet access at slow speeds (unlike the ReConnect Program, which targets communities with negligible broadband access). The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program helps rural communities access technology and training to connect medical professionals with patients, teachers, and students in rural areas. The DLT Delta Health Care Services Program focuses on connecting rural communities in the Delta region to medical services.¹⁹

Congress has authorized RUS broadband and telemedicine programs through different pieces of legislation. The DLT Grant Program has statutory authority in the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. §§950aaa et seq.). Congress authorized the DLT Delta Health Care Services Grant Program through the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. §2008u). The Rural Broadband Program and Community Connect Program have statutory authority through the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. §§950bb et seq.). Congress established the Rural eConnectivity Pilot Program, also known as the ReConnect Program, through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141). Funding for these programs is provided in the Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program account in Title III of the Agriculture appropriations bill (except for the ReConnect Program, which Congress funds through Title VII of the bill). From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress increased funding by \$112 million (+18%) for RUS broadband and telemedicine grants and loan subsidies, from \$619.8 million in FY2019 to \$732 million in FY2021 (**Figure 1**).

¹⁶ For more information on the ReConnect Program, see CRS In Focus IF11262, *USDA's ReConnect Broadband Pilot Program*, by Alyssa R. Casey.

¹⁷ For more information on the Community Connect Program, see CRS Report RL33816, *Broadband Loan and Grant Programs in the USDA's Rural Utilities Service*, by Lennard G. Kruger and Alyssa R. Casey.

¹⁸ USDA Rural Development, "Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program," at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-broadband-access-loan-and-loan-guarantee>.

¹⁹ The Delta region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. See Delta Region Authority, "About DRA," at <https://dra.gov/about-dra/dra-states/>.

ReConnect Program Funding

From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress appropriated an increasing amount of funding for the ReConnect Program: \$550 million in FY2019, \$555 million in FY2020, and \$635 million to FY2021 (**Table 1**). Congress appropriated funding as follows:

- **FY2019.** \$125 million in discretionary funding and \$425 million in funding accrued through the Cushion of Credit account for the ReConnect Program.²⁰ The \$125 million in discretionary funding included \$26.3 million in loan subsidies to support \$93.2 million in loan authority, \$90 million for grants, and \$8.8 million for technical assistance and administrative expenses.
- **FY2020.** \$300 million in discretionary funding and \$255 million in funding accrued through the Cushion of Credit account. The \$300 million in discretionary funds included \$51 million for loan subsidies to support \$175 million in loan authority, \$227.7 million in grants, and \$21 million for technical assistance and administrative expenses.
- **FY2021.** \$531 million in discretionary funding and \$104 million in funding accrued through the Cushion of Credit account. The \$531 million in discretionary funding included \$52.1 million in loan subsidies to support \$200 million in loan authority, \$441.7 million for grants, and \$37.2 million for technical assistance and administrative expenses.

Table 1. ReConnect Program Funding, FY2019-FY2021

(in thousands of dollars)

Category	FY2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Enacted
Appropriated funding			
Administrative expenses	\$5,000	\$12,000	\$21,240
Grants	\$90,000	\$227,653	\$441,730
Loans	\$26,250	\$51,348	\$52,100
Technical assistance	\$3,750	\$9,000	\$15,930
Total appropriated funding ^a	\$125,000	\$300,001	\$531,000
Cushion of Credit account funding ^b	\$425,000	\$254,999	\$104,000
Total Budget Authority	\$550,000	\$555,000	\$635,000

Source: FY2022 USDA Office of Budget & Program Analysis, Explanatory Notes.

- Appropriated funding includes funding for grants, loan subsidies, technical assistance, and administrative expenses.
- The Cushion of Credit account contains funds RUS accrues when the Federal Financing Bank, an entity within the Department of the Treasury, purchases RUS loans. RUS uses the funds from these purchases to fund economic development projects.

²⁰ The Cushion of Credit account contains funds RUS accrues when the FFB purchases RUS loans. RUS uses the funds from these purchases to fund economic development projects.

Funding for Other RUS Broadband and Telemedicine Programs

From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress appropriated varying levels of funding for the Rural Broadband Program. In FY2019, Congress appropriated a \$5.8 million loan subsidy to support \$29.9 million in loan authority for this program. In FY2020, Congress appropriated \$2 million in loan subsidy to support \$11.2 million in loan authority for the program. In FY2021, Congress appropriated \$2 million in loan subsidy to support \$11.9 million in loan authority for the program.

Congress appropriated \$30 million for the Community Connect Program in FY2019 and increased funding to \$35 million annually in FY2020 and FY2021. From FY2019 to FY2021, Congress increased appropriations for the DLT Grant Program from \$31 million in FY2019 to \$57 million in FY2021. During that time, Congress appropriated \$3 million annually for the DLT Delta Health Care Services Grant Program.

The Administration's FY2022 Budget Request

The Biden Administration's FY2022 budget request would increase funding by \$591 million (+42%) for the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Program account, Rural WWD Program account, and DLT Program account (**Figure 1**). The following sections breakdown the impact of the funding requests within these accounts on individual RUS programs.

The Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account

The Administration's request would increase funding for the Rural WWD Program account by \$90 million (+14%), from \$626.6 million (FY2021) to \$716.6 million (**Table 2**). The Administration's request also includes \$1.4 billion in loan authority for the WWD Direct Loan Program; it does not include a loan subsidy because carryover funds could support the loan authority for that program. The Administration's request includes \$45,000 in loan subsidy to support \$50 million in loan authority for the WWD Guaranteed Loan Program. The Administration's request also would increase funding for the WWD Grant Program by \$65 million (+14%), from \$463.4 million (FY2021) to \$528.4 million.

The Administration's request would increase funding by \$25 million (+37%), from \$68 million (FY2021) to \$93 million, for WWD Grants for colonias communities, tribal lands, and Alaska Native and rural villages. The WWD Grants for targeted communities also would include \$5 million to support communities in Hawaiian homelands. In FY2021, Congress did not set aside funding specifically for communities in Hawaiian homelands through this grant program. In addition, the Administration's request would increase funding by \$5 million (+14%), from \$35 million (FY2021) to \$40 million, for the WWD Technical Assistance and Training Grants.

The Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs Account

The Administration's request would increase funding by \$435.8 million (+936%), from \$46.5 million (FY2021) to \$482.3 million, for the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs account (**Table 3**). The Administration requests \$400 million for modifications to RUS electric grants and loans to transition projects to renewable energy. Modification funds would be used for incentives to increase the transition of projects to renewable energy (including new loans or grants), expenses associated with refinancing existing loans, and administrative expenses associated with changing loans. The Administration's request proposes to eliminate loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program financed through the FFB, instead funding the Electric Loan

Program financed through RUS. The Administration's request did not include loan subsidies to support \$6.5 billion in loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program because program carryover funds could support the loan authority. The Administration requests \$2.1 million in loan subsidies to support \$690 million in loan authority for the Telecommunications Direct Loan Program. In addition, the Administration proposes to eliminate funding for the Electric Loan Guarantee Program.

The Administration also requests \$25 million for modifications to RUS telecommunication loans. The modification funds would support borrowers experiencing financial distress. Funds would be used to re-amortize the loan terms, lower the interest rates of the loans, and provide principal and interest deferments to borrowers as needed. The funds would also be used to enhance broadband accessibility.

For the Rural Energy Savings Program, the Administration would increase the loan authority by \$291 million (+271%), from \$107.3 million (FY2021) to \$398.6 million. The Administration would increase the loan subsidy to support this loan authority from \$11 million (FY2021) to \$22 million. The Administration also would move funding for the Rural Energy Savings Program from Title VII (General Provisions) of the Agriculture appropriations bill, where Congress has funded the program in the past, to within the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs account in Title III (Rural Development).

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program Account

The Administration's request would increase funding for the DLT Program account by \$65 million (+9%), from \$732 million (FY2021) to \$796.8 million (**Table 4**). The Administration would keep funding at FY2021 levels for the Community Connect Grant Programs (\$35 million), DLT Grant Program (\$57 million), and DLT Delta Health Care Services (\$3 million). The Administration also requests \$1.8 million in loan subsidies to support \$11.9 million in loan authority for the Rural Broadband Program, which is the same amount of loan authority that Congress supported in FY2021.

The Administration would increase funding for the ReConnect Program by \$65 million (+10%), from \$635 million (FY2021) to \$700 million. The Administration's request includes \$650 million in discretionary funding and \$50 million in Cushion of Credit funding.²¹ The \$650 million in discretionary funding includes \$71.8 million in loan subsidies to support \$300 million in loan authority for ReConnect loans and \$532.7 million for ReConnect grants.

House Appropriations

The House FY2022 Agriculture appropriations bill would increase funding by \$485 million (+35%) for the Rural WWD Program account, Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs account, and DLT Program account. The text that follows breaks down the funding levels included in the Agriculture appropriations bill for each account and the impact on the programs within those accounts.

²¹ The Cushion of Credit account contains funds RUS accrues when the FFB purchases RUS loans. RUS uses the funds from these purchases to fund economic development projects.

The Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account

The House bill would increase funding for the Rural WWD Program account by approximately \$105.6 million (+17%), from \$626.6 million (FY2021) to \$732.2 million (**Table 2**). The bill includes \$45,000 in loan subsidy to support \$50 million in loan authority for WWD loan guarantees. The bill did not include a loan subsidy to support \$1.4 billion in loan authority for WWD loans because program carryover funds could support the loan authority.

The House bill would increase funding for

- WWD grants by \$75 million (+16%), from \$463.4 million (FY2021) to \$538.4 million;
- WWD grants for tribal lands, colonias communities, Alaska Native and rural villages, and communities in Hawaiian homelands by \$25 million (+37%), from \$68 million (FY2021) to \$93 million;
- WWD technical assistance and training grants by \$5 million (+14%), from \$35 million (FY2021) to \$40 million; and
- the Circuit Rider Program by \$605,000 (+3%), from \$20.2 million (FY2021) to \$20.8 million.

The bill also would maintain funding at \$5 million for the Technical Assistance for Innovative Regional Wastewater Treatment Solutions Grant Program.

The Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs Account

In FY2021, Congress included \$6.5 million in loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program administered by FFB and no loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program administered by RUS. The House bill would increase funding for the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs account by \$177.8 million (+382%), from \$46.5 million (FY2021) to \$224.3 million (**Table 3**). The House bill would provide \$5.5 billion of loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program. No loan subsidy was requested because carryover funds would be able to support the loan authority. The bill would not provide loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program financed through the FFB.

The House bill would provide \$750 million in loan authority for the Electric Loan Guarantee Program, the same level as FY2021. No loan subsidy was requested because carryover funds would be able to support the loan authority. The bill also includes \$150 million for grants and modifications to rural electric loans to help offset energy costs associated with severe weather, finance energy efficiency measures, and help facilitate reductions in carbon pollution.

The bill would provide \$2.1 million in loan subsidies to support \$690 million in loan authority for the Telecommunications Direct Loan Program. The bill did not include loan authority for the Telecommunications Direct Loan Program financed through the FFB. In addition, the bill includes \$25 million for modifications to telecommunication loans.

The bill would increase loan authority for the Rural Energy Savings Program by \$147.7 million (+138%), from \$107.3 million (FY2021) to \$255 million. The bill also includes a \$14 million loan subsidy to support the program's loan authority.

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program Account

The House bill would increase funding for the DLT Program account by \$201 million (+28%), from \$732 million (FY2021) to \$933.4 million (**Table 4**). The bill would keep funding at FY2021 levels for the Community Connect Grant Program (\$35 million), DLT Grant Program (\$57 million), and DLT Delta Health Care Services (\$3 million). The bill also includes a \$1.8 million loan subsidy to support \$11.9 million in loan authority for the Broadband Loan Program, which is the same loan authority supported in FY2021.

The bill would increase funding for the ReConnect Program by \$201 million (+32%), from \$635 million (FY2021) to \$836.6 million.²² The bill would allocate \$36.6 million of the ReConnect Program funding for Community Project Funding.²³

Senate Appropriations

The Senate FY2022 committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill would increase funding by \$109.7 million (+6%) for the Rural WWD Program account, Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs account, and DLT Program account. Below is a breakdown of the funding levels included in the Agriculture appropriations bill for each account and the impact on the programs within those accounts.

The Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account

The Senate committee-reported bill would increase funding for

- the Rural WWD Program account by approximately \$39.1 million (+6%), from \$626.6 million (FY2021) to \$665.7 million (**Table 2**);
- the WWD Grant Program by \$36.7 million (+8%), from \$463.4 million (FY2021) to \$500 million;
- WWD grants for tribal lands, colonias, Alaska Native and rural villages, and communities in Hawaiian homelands by \$5 million (+7%), from \$68 million (FY2021) to \$73 million; and
- WWD technical assistance and training grants by \$2.5 million (+7%), from \$35 million (FY2021) to \$37.5 million.

The Senate committee-reported bill would also provide \$1.4 billion in loan authority for the WWD Direct Loan Program. The bill does not include loan subsidies for this program because program carryover funds could support the loan authority. The bill would provide \$50 million in loan authority for the WWD Loan Guarantee Program with \$45,000 in loan subsidies.

The Senate committee-reported bill would keep funding at the FY2021 levels for the remaining RUS WWD programs, including the Circuit Rider Program (\$20.2 million), High Energy Cost Grant Program (\$10 million), and the Emergency and Imminent Community Water Assistance Grant Program (\$15 million).

²² The FY2021 funding for the ReConnect Program includes \$531 million in discretionary funding and \$104 million in funds accrued in the Cushion of Credit account.

²³ Congress designated Community Project Funding earmarks for the ReConnect Program and Community Facilities Program. For a list of projects designated by Congress to receive Community Project Funding, see U.S. Congress, *Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2022*, report to accompany H.R. 4356, 117th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 117-82 (Washington, DC: GPO, 2021), p.177.

The Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs Account

The Senate committee-reported bill would increase funding by \$293,000 (+1%), from \$46.5 million (FY2021) to \$46.8 million, for RUS electric and telephone programs funded in the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loan Programs account and Title VII (General Provisions) (**Table 3**).

The bill would increase loan authority for the Rural Energy Savings Program by \$101 million (+94%), from \$107.3 million (FY2021) to \$208.3 million. The bill would also increase the loan subsidy to support the loan authority for this program by \$500,000, from \$11 million (FY2021) to \$11.5 million. In addition, the bill would fund the Rural Energy Savings Program in Title III of the Agriculture Appropriations Act rather than in Title VII (General Provisions).

The Senate committee-reported bill would provide \$6.5 billion in loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program. No associated loan subsidy was requested for this program because program carryover funds would support the loan authority. The bill did not include loan authority for the Electric Direct Loan Program funded through the FFB. The bill would provide \$750 million in loan authority for the Electric Guaranteed Loan Program. No associated loan subsidy was requested for this program because program carryover funds would support the loan authority.

The bill would provide \$690 million in loan authority for the Telecommunications Direct Loan Program. No associated loan subsidy was requested for this program because program carryover funds would support the loan authority. The bill did not include loan authority for the Telecommunications Direct Loan Program funded through the FFB.

Unlike the Administration's FY2022 request and the FY2022 House bill, the Senate committee-reported bill does not include funding for modifications to the RUS rural electric loans and grants or to RUS telecommunication direct loans.

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program Account

The Senate committee-reported bill would increase funding by \$70.3 million (+10%), from \$732 million (FY2021) to \$802.3 million, for RUS broadband and telemedicine programs funded in the DLT Program account and Title VII (General Provisions) (**Table 4**). The bill would increase funding for the Community Connect Grant Program by \$2.5 million (+7%), from \$35 million to \$37.5 million. The bill would keep funding for the DLT Grant Program and DLT Delta Health Care Services at FY2021 levels (\$57 million and \$3 million, respectively). The bill would carve out \$2.5 million in funding provided for the DLT Grant Program for congressionally directed spending. The bill did not include loan authority for the Rural Broadband Loan Program.

The bill would increase funding for the ReConnect Program by \$65 million (+10%), from \$635 million (FY2021) to \$700 million. The \$700 million would be funded through Title VII (General Provisions) rather than Title III. The program funding includes \$50 million of Cushion of Credit funding.²⁴

²⁴ Section 313 funding comes from funds accrued in the Cushion of Credit account. The Cushion of Credit accrues funds as USDA Rural Development loans are repaid.

Table 2. Rural Utilities Service WWD Program Funding, FY2021-FY2022

(in thousands of dollars)

Program	FY2021		FY2022		
	P.L. 116-260	Admin. request	House passed (H.R. 4502)	Senate Committee reported (S. 2599)	Enacted
Grants, loan subsidies, and technical assistance					
Circuit Rider Technical Assistance Grants	\$20,157	\$20,157	\$20,762 ^a	\$20,157	
Emergency and Imminent Community Water Assistance Grants	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	
High Energy Cost Grants ^b	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Rural Decentralized Water Systems Grants (also known as Household Water Well System Grants)	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	
Solid Waste Management Grants	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	
Technical Assistance for Innovative Regional Wastewater Treatment Solutions Grants	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	
Water and Waste Disposal (WWD) Direct Loan Subsidy	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
WWD Grants	\$463,350	\$528,355	\$538,355 ^d	\$500,000	
WWD Grants for Colonias, Tribal Lands, Alaska Native and Rural Villages, and Hawaiian Homelands ^c	\$68,000	\$93,000	\$93,000	\$73,000	
WWD Loan Guarantee Subsidy	\$60	\$45	\$45	\$45	
WWD Revolving Loan Fund Grants	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	
WWD Technical Assistance and Training Grants	\$35,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$37,500	
Total grants and loan subsidies for RUS water programs	\$626,567	\$716,557	\$732,162	\$665,702	
Loan authority					
WWD Direct Loans Program	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	
WWD Loan Guarantee Program	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Total loan authority for RUS water programs	\$1,450,000	\$1,450,000	\$1,450,000	\$1,450,000	

Source: Compiled by CRS using the enacted FY2021 Agriculture appropriations bill, FY2022 Administration's budget request, FY2022 House Agriculture appropriations bill, and FY2022 Senate committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill.

- a. Funds include \$605,000 approved in an amendment to Division B of Rules committee print 117-12 (Agriculture Appropriations Division) offered by Rep. Pete Stauber.
- b. The High Energy Cost Grants Program includes the Denali Commission High Energy Grant Program and the State Bulk Fuel Revolving Loan Fund.
- c. The WWD Grants for FY2021 include only grants for colonias communities, tribal lands, and Alaska Native and rural villages. The WWD Grants for the FY2022 Administration's request and House FY2022 Agriculture appropriations bill include grants for colonias communities, tribal lands, Alaska Native and rural villages, and Hawaiian homeland communities.
- d. Funds include \$5 million approved in an amendment to Division B of Rules committee print 117-12 (Agriculture Appropriations Division) offered by Rep. Ron Kind.

Table 3. Rural Utilities Service Electric and Telephone Program Funding, FY2021-FY2022

(in thousands of dollars)

Program	FY2021	FY2022			
	P.L. 116-260	Admin. request	House passed (H.R. 4502)	Senate committee reported (S. 2599)	Enacted
Grants, Loan Subsidies, and Other Expenses					
Administrative expenses	\$33,270	\$33,270	\$33,270	\$33,270	
Electric decarbonization pilot grants and loan subsidy ^a	\$0	\$400,000	\$150,000	\$0	
Electric Direct Loan Subsidy	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Electric Direct Loan Subsidy, Federal Financing Bank (FFB)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Electric Guaranteed Loan Subsidy	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Rural Energy Savings Subsidy	\$111,000 ^b	\$22,000	\$14,000	\$111,500	
Telecommunications Direct Loan modifications pilot subsidy ^a	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	
Telecommunications Direct Loan Subsidy	\$2,277	\$2,070	\$2,070	\$2,070	
Telecommunications Direct Loan Subsidy, FFB	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total grants, loans subsidies, and other expenses for selected RUS electric and telephone programs	\$46,547	\$482,340	\$224,340	\$46,840	
Loan Authority					
Electric Direct Loan Program	\$0	\$6,500,000	\$5,500,000	\$6,500,000	
Electric Direct Loan Program, FFB	\$5,500,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Electric Guaranteed Loan Program	\$750,000	\$0	\$750,000	\$750,000	
Rural Energy Savings Program ^b	\$107,317	\$398,551	\$255,000	\$208,333	
Telecommunications Direct Loan Program	\$345,000	\$690,000	\$690,000	\$690,000	
Telecommunications Direct Loan Program, FFB	\$345,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total loan authority for selected RUS electric and telephone programs	\$7,047,317	\$7,588,551	\$7,195,000	\$8,148,333	

Source: Compiled by CRS using the enacted FY2021 Appropriations bill, FY2022 Administration's budget request, FY2022 House Agriculture appropriations bill, and FY2022 Senate committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill.

- a. The Administration's budget request and the FY2022 House-passed bill do not specify loan authorization levels for the proposed Electric and Telecommunications pilot programs.
- b. Rural Energy Savings Program funding for FY2021 includes funding provided in Title VII (General Provisions) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.

Table 4. Rural Utilities Service Broadband and Telemedicine Program Funding, FY2021-FY2022

(in thousands of dollars)

	FY2021		FY2022		
Program	P.L. 116-260	Admin. request	House passed (H.R. 4502)	Senate committee reported (S. 2599)	Enacted
Grants and Loan Subsidies					
Community Connect Grants	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000		\$37,500
Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) congressionally directed spending	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$2,510
DLT Delta Healthcare Services Grants	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000		\$3,000
DLT Grants	\$57,000	\$57,000	\$57,000		\$57,000
ReConnect Grants and Loan Subsidy ^a	\$635,000 ^b	\$700,000 ^b	\$836,605 ^b		\$700,000 ^b
Rural Broadband Direct Loan Subsidy	\$2,000	\$1,772	\$1,772		\$2,272
Total loan subsidies and grants for RUS broadband programs	\$732,000	\$796,772	\$933,377		\$802,282
Loan Authority					
Rural Broadband Direct Loan Program	\$11,869	\$11,869	\$11,869		\$0
Total loan authority for RUS broadband programs	\$11,869	\$11,869	\$11,869		\$0

Source: Compiled by CRS using the enacted FY2021 Appropriations bill, FY2022 Administration's budget request, FY2022 House Agriculture appropriations bill, and FY2022 Senate committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill.

- a. Congress authorized \$200 million in loan authority for the ReConnect Program for the FY2021 enacted budget. The Administration's request for FY2022 would increase the loan authority to \$300 million for this program. The FY2022 House Agriculture Appropriations Act and the FY2022 Senate committee-reported Agriculture Appropriations Act did not include information on the loan authority for the ReConnect Program.
- b. FY2021 funding includes \$531 million of discretionary funding and \$104 million from the Cushion of Credit account. The Administration's FY2022 funding request includes \$650 million in discretionary funding and \$50 million from the Cushion of Credit account. FY2022 House bill includes \$786.6 million of discretionary funding and \$50 million from the Cushion of Credit account. The FY2022 Senate committee bill includes \$650 million of discretionary funding and \$50 million from the Cushion of Credit account.

Policy-Related Provisions

Agriculture appropriations bills set funding levels and can include policy-related provisions that direct the executive branch on how to carry out the appropriations. These provisions provide guidance for the fiscal year in which they are enacted. **Table 5** compares the policy provisions in the FY2021 Agriculture appropriations bill (P.L. 116-260) with the policy provisions included in the House FY2022 Agriculture appropriations bill (H.R. 4356) and the Senate FY2022 committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill (S. 2599). **Table 5** separates the policy provisions by the following RUS accounts: (1) the Rural WWD Program account, (2) Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loans Program account, and (3) Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program account.

Table 5. Rural Utilities Service Program Policy-Related Provisions

FY2021		FY2022	
H.Rept. 116-446 for P.L. 116-20		H.Rept. 117-82 for H.R. 4356	S.Rept. 117-34 for S. 2599
Rural Water and Waste Disposal (WWD) Program Account			
WWD Grants for tribal lands, colonias, Alaska Native and rural villages. Directs not more than 2% of the funding provided to be used by the State of Alaska for training and technical assistance programs, and not more than 2% may be used by a consortium formed to provide training and technical assistance programs.		Same as FY2021 enacted.	Same as FY2021 enacted.
WWD Technical Assistance and Training Grants. Allows the Secretary of Agriculture to determine if there is extreme need, in which case \$8 million shall be made available to qualified nonprofit, multistate organizations with experience in working with small communities on WWD issues. The grant shall be used to assist rural communities with populations of 3,300 residents or less to improve planning, financing, development, operation, and management of WWD systems. Not less than \$800,000 of the funding shall be for a qualified national Native American organization to provide technical assistance to tribal communities.		Same as FY2021 enacted.	Same as FY2021 but provides \$9 million, rather than \$8 million, to be made available if the Secretary determines there is extreme need.
No comparable provision.		No comparable provision.	Directs up to \$1 million of the \$2.5 million increase for technical assistance to be used to support manufactured homes.

FY2021		FY2022	
H.Rept. 116-446 for P.L. 116-20	H.Rept. 117-82 for H.R. 4356	S.Rept. 117-34 for S. 2599	
<p>High Energy Costs Program. Directs that \$10,000,000 of the appropriations within this account be transferred to and merged with the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) High Energy Costs Grants account. It also directs that any prior year money remaining in the High Energy Costs Grants Program be transferred to the RUS High Energy Costs Grants account.</p> <p>No comparable provision.</p>	<p>Same as FY2021 enacted.</p> <p>Rural WWD Program account programs. RUS shall apply the Environmental Protection Agency's definition of <i>public water systems</i> while implementing the domestic preference provision for utilizing iron and steel products produced in the United States.</p>	<p>Same as FY2021 enacted.</p> <p>No comparable provision.</p>	
<p>No comparable provision.</p>	<p>Urges USDA to prioritize funding rural water systems that are out of compliance with federal and/or state drinking water and/or wastewater standards and to bring those municipalities back into compliance.</p>	<p>No comparable provision.</p>	
<p>No comparable provision.</p>	<p>No comparable provision.</p>	<p>Encourages USDA to prioritize proposed projects that mitigate and reduce septic-related pollution and establish comprehensive sewer services to homes and businesses in rural areas where such projects would be essential to preserving environmental health and the health, safety, and general welfare of local citizens.</p>	
<p>No comparable provision.</p>	<p>WWD Loan and Grant Program. Encourages USDA to make better use of the authority provided by the 2018 farm bill to utilize its Water and Wastewater Loan and Grant Program to help address the needs of rural communities impacted by PFAS pollution.</p>	<p>Encourages Treasury to fund pilot projects intended to provide decentralized small-scale water and wastewater services to communities in distressed counties within Central Appalachia.</p>	

FY2021		FY2022	
H.Rept. 116-446 for P.L. 116-20		H.Rept. 117-82 for H.R. 4356	S.Rept. 117-34 for S. 2599
Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loans Program Account			
Electric Direct Loan Program, Federal Financing Bank. Directs that up to \$2,000,000 be used for the construction, acquisition, design and engineering or improvement of fossil-fueled electric generating plants (whether new or existing) that utilize carbon subsurface utilization and storage systems.		No comparable provision.	
No comparable provision.		Modifications of electric grants and loans. Directs \$150 million for the modification of electric loans and grants to transition them to renewable energy. Five percent of this amount is designated for administrative expenses (i.e., \$7.5 million).	
No comparable provision.		Modifications of telecommunication loans. Directs \$25 million to modify telecommunication direct loans. Funds would be used to modify terms of existing RUS telecommunications loans where the borrower is under financial distress. The funds would also be used to refinance outstanding RUS telecommunications loans.	
No comparable provision.		Rural Energy Savings Program. Directs that the \$14 million allocated for this program shall contribute to reducing greenhouse gases. The current program funds projects that increase energy efficiency but does not specify that projects must reduce greenhouse gases.	
No comparable provision.		Telecommunications Direct and Guaranteed Loans. Up to \$2 billion shall be used for the construction, acquisition, design, and engineering or improvement of new or existing fossil fueled electric generating plants that utilize carbon subsurface utilization and storage systems.	

FY2021		FY2022
H.Rept. 116-446 for P.L. 116-20	H.Rept. 117-82 for H.R. 4356	S.Rept. 117-34 for S. 2599
Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Program Account		
No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.	DLT Account. Directs USDA to provide quarterly updates on the progress of the interagency agreement between the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and USDA.
ReConnect Program. The Secretary may consider communities that do not meet the eligibility requirements to be “rural in character” and be considered eligible for the ReConnect Program. Up to 10% of funds may be used for “rural in character” communities.	No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.
Directs that at least 90% of households to be served by a project be in a rural area without sufficient access to broadband. <i>Sufficient access</i> is defined as 10 megabits (Mbps) downstream and 1 Mbps upstream. The Secretary of Agriculture shall reevaluate and redefine the definition as needed on an annual basis.	Directs that at least 90% of households to be served by a project be in rural areas without sufficient broadband access. Sufficient access shall be defined as 25 Mbps downstream and 10 Mbps upstream. The Secretary of Agriculture shall reevaluate and redefine the definition as needed on an annual basis.	No comparable provision.
Encourages USDA to take action to increase access to broadband on rural tribal lands and supports consultation with federally recognized Indian Tribes, Alaska Native villages and corporations, and entities related to Hawaiian homelands.	Same as FY2021 enacted.	No comparable provision.
Encourages USDA to explore alternative map options that use more accurate information to determine eligibility until Congress and FCC are able to produce higher quality broadband access maps for rural areas.	No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.
DLT Delta Health Care Service Grants Program. Directs that funding for grants in this program may be provided only to entities that meet the eligibility criteria for a consortium as established by §379G of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.	Same as FY2021 enacted.	Same as FY2021 enacted.

FY2021		FY2022
H.Rept. 116-446 for P.L. 116-20	H.Rept. 117-82 for H.R. 4356	S.Rept. 117-34 for S. 2599
No comparable provision.	Entities receiving loans or grants shall not use funds to overbuild or duplicate broadband service in a service area by any entity that has received a broadband loan from RUS, unless service does not meet minimum service threshold.	Same as FY2022 House bill.
No comparable provision.	Encourages USDA to examine and appropriately adjust and lower the collateral requirements within ReConnect Program loan agreements, grant agreements, or loan/grant agreements to ensure greater program access.	No comparable provision.
No comparable provision.	Directs that \$36,604,792 of the program funding be used for Community Project Funding.	No comparable provision.
No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.	Community Connect Program. Requests that the Secretary prioritizes awarding funding in areas with mountainous terrain.
No comparable provision.	No comparable provision.	DLT Program. Congressionally directed spending shall be provided for certain activities and locations. Recipients of these funds are still required to apply for the funding and must meet all statutory and regulatory requirements.

Source: Compiled by CRS using the enacted FY2021 appropriations bill, FY2022 House-passed Agriculture appropriations bill, and FY2022 Senate committee-reported Agriculture appropriations bill.

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