

Secretary Perdue has set new strategic goals for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Among them are increasing rural prosperity; working efficiently, effectively, and with integrity; and customer service. Infrastructure, particularly, broadband deployment in rural areas is critical to achieving rural prosperity. To meet the Secretary's call for action, USDA Rural Development (RD) is embarking on a review of the programs it administers that enable the build-out of broadband across rural America. The review is being led by the Telecommunications Programs Office in collaboration with the Risk Office.

Given your experience with USDA's rural broadband deployment programs, you can provide valuable insights to RD on its broadband programs, the needs for broadband in rural areas, and challenges to deployment. This review provides a valuable opportunity to understand the challenges facing USDA's rural broadband deployment programs and ultimately improve the economy and quality of life in rural America.

USDA will ask eight questions to understand the challenges facing its rural broadband deployment programs. The questions fall under three categories:

- Category 1 asks a single question about your involvement in rural broadband deployment
- Category 2 asks four questions about the rural broadband landscape
- Category 3 asks three questions about USDA's rural broadband deployment programs

For the first seven questions, USDA will provide a list of responses. If you do agree with the listed responses, you may freely provide your response and it will be recorded. Whether you select a response from the list or provide a free response, USDA encourages you to clarify your response and provide additional supporting information. If you choose to provide additional information, your response will be recorded.

Question one, what is your role/involvement in rural broadband deployment?

- List of responses: Former USDA Employee, Federal Government Employee (non-USDA), (Potential/Current/Former) Awardee, Non-Government Employee Hired by USDA (Potential/Current/Former) Awardee, Interest Group Representative

Question two, what is rural America's most critical struggle to obtaining reliable, affordable broadband internet service (broadband internet service is defined as the minimum rate of data

transmission of twenty-five megabits downstream and three megabits upstream for both mobile and fixed service)?

- List of responses: Access (i.e. no service), increased speed, consistent service, low-cost service
- If you do not agree with the listed responses, what is your response?
- Do you have additional information to provide for this question?

Question three, what is the greatest benefit to rural America in obtaining reliable, affordable broadband internet service?

- List of responses: Increase economic prosperity, attract new businesses, enhance job growth, extend the reach of affordable, high-quality healthcare, enrich student learning with digital tools, facilitate access to the digital marketplace
- If you do not agree with the listed responses, what is your response?
- Do you have additional information to provide for this question?

Question four, what is the greatest challenge to deploying reliable, affordable broadband internet service in rural areas?

- List of responses: Deployment cost, regulatory uncertainty, low customer demand, obtaining financing
- If you do not agree with the listed responses, what is your response?
- Do you have additional information to provide for this question?

Question five, in what area could federal government action most effectively assist rural America in obtaining reliable, affordable broadband internet service?

- List of responses: Reduce barriers to capital investment, remove obstacles to broadband services, more efficiently employ Government resources
- If you do not agree with the listed responses, what is your response?
- Do you have additional information to provide for this question?

Question six, how do the USDA rural broadband deployment programs make the greatest impact on rural America?

- List of responses: Increase economic prosperity, attract new businesses, enhance job growth, extend the reach of affordable, high-quality healthcare, enrich student learning with digital tools, facilitate access to the digital marketplace
- If you do not agree with the listed responses, what is your response?
- Do you have additional information to provide for this question?

Question seven, how do the USDA rural broadband deployment programs most effectively assist rural America in overcoming its struggle to obtaining reliable, affordable broadband internet service?

- List of responses: Access (i.e. no service), increased speed, consistent service, low-cost service
- If you do not agree with the listed responses, what is your response?
- Do you have additional information to provide for this question?

Question eight, how could the USDA Rural Broadband Deployment Programs make changes to more effectively assist rural America's in obtaining affordable, reliable broadband internet service?

- What is your response?

Thank you for providing your input.

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