Broadband Initiative Funding Report

June 30th, 2006

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Funded by: The John Adams Innovation Institute of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
Executive Summary

There are two main USDA RUS programs available to help fund broadband connectivity initiatives – the Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program and the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program.

The Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program is designed to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible applicants in communities of 20,000 people or less that do not currently have access to broadband technology (other than satellite service). This program is highly competitive and not well-funded. In fiscal year 2006, only $8.9 million in grant funding was available and the average grant was $474,263. Evaluation criteria are strict and include the rurality of the community, the economic need of the community and the community benefits derived from the proposed service. Attachment B lists the communities in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties, their eligibility for funding under the RUS grant program and whether or not they would receive a high rating according to the evaluation criteria. Based on these criteria the only town that seems well-suited to apply for grant funding is the Town of Monroe in Franklin County. The per capita income levels of the other communities are too high to satisfy these strict evaluation criteria. There has been at least one other application to this program from a rural New England community, that of Hanover, New Hampshire. Although the application was approved by the USDA, the public-private partnership subsequently dissolved and this project was never completed. There have been no other successful New England applicants.

The Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program was established in January 2003 to provide loans and loan guarantees to fund the cost of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment for the provision of broadband service in eligible rural communities of 20,000 or less people. Top priority for these loans is given to rural communities in which broadband residential service is currently unavailable. Any completed application that meets this criterion will be evaluated for expedited approval. Second priority is given to those areas that are receiving service but at a higher cost or poorer quality than neighboring urban or suburban areas.

Although the eligibility requirements for the fixed 4% loans are so stringent that no community in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, or Hampden County would qualify, as shown in Attachment B, there are 32 communities that would qualify for a cost-of-money loan under this program. Cost of money loans pay interest at the Treasury bill rate for the appropriate term (currently 5.05% for 10 years). No New England communities have been successful in accessing these funds, although one large application from Open Range Ventures, a venture capital firm, is pending. The regional USDA representative hopes that new guidelines will improve the ability of underserved New England communities to compete successfully for these funds.

In the event that an applicant is proposing service in an area currently served by an existing RUS borrower, that borrower has a two-year window in which to construct residential broadband service in its local exchange territory, before the new applicant’s grant can be approved. This could be a means of encouraging incumbent providers to build-out their residential broadband services.
In addition to the broadband connectivity initiatives, telecommunications equipment and training is available through the *USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program* and the *Beaumont Foundation Equipment Grant Program* (please see Attachment A for a summary of funding sources).

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program’s objectives are to encourage and improve telemedicine and distance learning services in rural areas through the use of telecommunications, computer networks and related advanced technologies. The RUS awards loans and grants to projects that will improve access of people residing in eligible areas to improved educational, learning, training and health care services. In FY 2006, $20 million in grants were available. The minimum loan or grant is $50,000. The maximum grant is $500,000 and the maximum loan is $3 million. The average grant in 2005 was $372,279. Although, this grant program would not directly address the broadband connectivity funding needs of underserved communities, it could be an important part of the overall broadband strategy of a community.

The Beaumont Foundation provides state-of-the-art wireless laptops and technology equipment to schools, community-based organizations and individuals in low-income communities. The Foundation believes that computer and Internet technologies are the essential tools for progress in the 21st century, and that given access to digital information, people will have a more equal opportunity to advance socially, economically, and intellectually. Massachusetts is not one of the 29 states currently eligible for funding, though previous grants have been made to organizations throughout Massachusetts including Boys & Girls Clubs, Franciscan Hospital for Children, RFK Children’s Action Corps, Stonehill College, Swansea Senior Center and UMASS Boston.
Broadband Initiative Funding Report

Introduction

Purpose of this Study

Bill Ennen of the John Adams Innovation Institute (JAlI) of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative engaged Janette Kessler Dudley of Williamstown to prepare this report. The purpose of the study was to identify potential grant and loan funding sources that might be available to facilitate the deployment of broadband telecommunications services in underserved communities, particular in Western Massachusetts. Nathaniel Karns, Executive Director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, and Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments provided additional guidance for this report.

Methodology

The consultant performed extensive on-line research to first identify possible funding sources for broadband and then to investigate the eligibility, program requirements, eligible uses, scoring of applications, funding amounts, and examples of successful applicants for each funding source. The consultant also extensively interviewed Stephen McKenzie of the USDA Rural Utilities Service about eligibility requirements, the history of the programs, and the difficulty of funding these types of projects in New England. A summary of findings is shown in Attachment A.

In addition, the consultant obtained Census data from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and combined it with the Broadband Availability Database, funded by the John Adams Innovation Institute, found on the Berkshire Connect website. With this data, the consultant was able to ascertain the eligibility and likelihood of funding from the USDA Rural Utilities Service programs for every community in Western Massachusetts (please see Attachment B).

Recommendations

The consultant recommends the following steps be taken by JAII, Berkshire or Pioneer Valley Connect (the Connects), a broadband authority or the individual municipalities:

1. The Town of Monroe, with assistance from the Connects or JAII should consider applying for the Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program for fiscal year 2007;

2. The Connects, JAII, or a broadband authority should consider developing a business plan for providing backhaul services to underserved rural communities in Western Massachusetts;

3. JAII should continue to liaise with Stephen McKenzie of the USDA (see Attachment A for contact information) to determine when funding might be available for
backhaul services (these are not currently covered under the RUS programs, but are expected to be soon).

4. If and when funding criteria for RUS programs are modified to allow funding of backhaul costs, a broadband authority, or JAI should prepare a proposal to the Rural Broadband Access Loan Program for funding to construct a backhaul system to serve underserved rural communities in Western Massachusetts.

5. Assistance and guidance should be provided to communities wishing to apply for the Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant program.

6. Continued monitoring of funding opportunities should be undertaken by JAI, the Connects or a broadband authority.

**Broadband Connectivity Loan and Grant Programs**

There are two main USDA RUS programs available to help fund broadband connectivity initiatives – the *Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program* and the *Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program*.

**Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program**

**General Program Information:**

The Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant Program is designed to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible applicants that will provide currently unserved areas, on a “community-oriented connectivity” basis, with broadband transmission service that fosters economic growth and delivers enhanced educational, health care, and public safety services.

In Fiscal Year 2006, $8.9 million in grant funding was available. To date, the Community Connect Program has provided 109 grants and invested $39 million to provide service to local communities.

**Eligibility:**

- The following types of entities are eligible:
  - An incorporated organization
  - An Indian Tribe or tribal organization
  - A state or local unit of government
  - A cooperative, private corporation, or LLC organized on a for-profit or non-profit basis.
- Individuals and partnerships are **not** eligible
- Must serve a rural area of 20,000 inhabitants or less
Must serve a community where broadband transmission service does not currently exist anywhere in the community (satellite service is not considered broadband for purposes of the grant)

Must serve one and only one community

Applicant must have the legal capacity and authority to own and operate the broadband facilities as proposed in its application, to enter into contracts and to otherwise comply with applicable federal statutes and regulations

Program Requirements:

- Matching funds of 15% of requested grant amount
- Applicant must provide basic broadband service, free of charge for 2 years, to all critical community facilities
- Applicant must offer basic broadband transmission service to residential and business customers within the proposed Service Area
- Applicant must provide a community center with at least 10 computer access points, free from charges for two years

Eligible Uses:

- Construction, acquisition, or lease of facilities to deploy broadband transmission services
- Improvement, expansion, construction, or acquisition of a community center (Limited to the greater of $100,000 or 5% of the grant amount)
- End-user equipment to carry out project
- Operating expenses for critical community facility for the first two years (not to exceed $200,000)
- Purchase of land, buildings, or building construction
- Facilities financed may not be used, in any way, to provide local exchange telecommunications service to any person or entity where it currently exists

Scoring of Applications:

All eligible applications receive points based on the following scoring criteria:

- The *Rurality* of the Project (up to 40 points)
- The *Economic Need* of the Project’s Service Area (up to 30 points); and
- The “*Community-Oriented Connectivity*” benefits derived from the proposed service (up to 30 points)

*Rurality* is based on 2000 US Census Data and is scored as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Range</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 500 people</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 – 1,000 people</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,001–2,000 people</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,001–3,000 people</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3,001 – 4,000 people  20 points
4,001 – 5,000 people  15 points
5,001 – 10,000 people  10 points
10,001 – 20,000 people  5 points

Economic need is based on per capita income (PCI) for the municipality based on 2000 US Census Data and is scored as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCI Range</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCI 75% or greater than national average</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI 70 – 74.9% of national average</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI 65 – 69.9% of national average</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI 60 – 64.9% of national average</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI 55 – 59.9% of national average</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI 50 – 54.9% of national average</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI less than 50% of national average</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community-Oriented Connectivity benefits from the proposed service are scored based on the documentation provided in support of the need for services, benefits derived from the services proposed by the Project, and local community involvement in the planning and implementation of the Project. RUS will consider the economic, education, health care, and public safety issues facing the community and the applicant’s plan to address these challenges. Please see Attachment B for a list of the four counties in Western Massachusetts and their eligibility for these funds.

Grant Amounts:

- 2005 Grants ranged from $198,292 - $795,630
- The average grant in 2005 was: $474,263

Examples of Successful Applicants:

Town of Davy, West Virginia
$280,360 awarded in 2005
Contact: Ken Gentry, Mayor, 304-656-7145
Congressional District: WV-03
County: McDowell

This wireless broadband project will bring broadband service to the community of Davy, West Virginia, population 373. High unemployment, chronic health issues, and geographical isolation have led to out-migration leaving only those who cannot move on. The project will utilize microwave transmission as the main connection for the community and use 900 Mhz license-free wireless to connect with the individual user facilities. The project will connect the town’s police department, fire department, and community center. Free computer and software training classes will be offered at the community center. This grant will provide the town with much needed
access to distance health care, job training assistance, and a portal to grow a local arts and crafts business and to attract tourists to a nearby ATV trail.

**Lenowisco, Inc.**
Rose Hill, VA
$506,048 awarded in 2005
Contact: Ron Flanary, Secretary, 276-431-2206
Congressional District: VA-09
County: Lee

This project will serve the community of Rose Hill, population 714, located in the central Appalachian Mountains of southwestern Virginia. The project will expand the Lenowisco Rural Area Network fiberoptic Ethernet backbone infrastructure to deploy broadband to this currently unserved area. The project will provide free access to the public library and the elementary school. A community center will be created through the expansion of the library building. The new computer center will provide on-site instruction and technical support in the use of broadband internet service, ranging from beginner computer and Internet introduction for senior citizens to advanced e-commerce strategies for businesses. The project intends to bring affordable broadband connections to at least 40 homes and 10 businesses. Broadband will be an economic stimulus for retaining the region’s businesses and creating new jobs in this impoverished area.

**Town of Oakland**
Oakland, PA
$1,140,772 awarded in 2003
County: Garrett

The town was awarded funding to finance the “Oakland Community Connectivity Broadband Project. In partnership with Allegheny Communications Connect (Greensburg, PA) the town will offer high-speed Internet access that will greatly improve the information infrastructure in the area and provide an anchor for further development in the region. This new communications “point-of-presence” in Oakland will provide affordable, world-class Internet access to an underserved region. The Maryland Technology –Development-Corporation (TEDCO) was the sole State sponsor of the grant application and committed a $25,000 match to the effort and continues to monitor the progress.
RUS Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program

General Program Information:

The Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program was established in January 2003 to provide loans and loan guarantees to fund the cost of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment for the provision of broadband service in eligible rural communities.

The Rural Development Broadband Access Program has made 56 loans for more than $868 million since the program was created in 2002.

Eligibility:

- The following types of entities are eligible: cooperatives, municipalities, non-profits, limited dividend or mutual associations, LLCs, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and commercial organizations
- Individuals and partnerships are not eligible
- Must serve a rural area of 20,000 inhabitants or less
- Applicant must have the legal capacity and authority to own and operate the broadband facilities as proposed in its application, to enter into contracts and to otherwise comply with applicable federal statutes and regulations
- Applicant cannot be currently serving more than 2% of the telephone subscriber lines installed in the US

Types of Broadband Loans:

- **Direct Cost-of-Money Loan** – This loan will bear interest at a rate equal to the cost of borrowing to the Department of Treasury for obligations of comparable maturity (currently 5.05% for 10 years)
- **Private Loan Guarantee** – This loan is a third party loan which bears interest at the rate set by the lender consistent with the current applicable market rate for a loan of comparable maturity. RDUP guarantees up to 80% of the principal amount of the loan.
- **Direct 4% Loan** – This loan bears a fixed 4% interest rate for the life of the loan. Eligibility requirements for the 4% loan are stringent and include the following:
  - Must be a rural community that:
    a. has a population of less than 2,500 inhabitants;
    b. is not currently receiving any broadband service;
    c. is located in a county with a per capita personal income (based on 2000 US Census Data) less than or equal to 65% of the national average per capita personal income (currently $21,600); and
    d. has a maximum population density of 20 people/square mile.

As shown in Attachment B, no community in the four counties of Western Massachusetts qualifies for the Direct 4% Loan, but 32 would qualify for the Direct Cost-of-Money Loan.
Loan. To date, no New England communities have been successful in accessing these funds, although one large application from Open Range Ventures, a venture capital firm, is pending.

**Eligible Uses:**

- Finance the construction, improvement, and acquisition of facilities and equipment to provide broadband service in eligible rural communities;
- Finance broadband facilities leased under the terms of a capital lease, as defined in generally accepted accounting principles; financing will be limited to 5 years of lease costs;
- Finance the acquisition by and eligible entity of another system, lines or facilities to furnish or improve rural broadband service (cannot exceed 50% of requested loan amount); and
- Refinance an outstanding obligation on another telecommunications loan made under the RE Act. The refinancing cannot exceed 40 percent of the loan amount.

**Ineligible Uses:**

- Acquisition of any stock, facilities or equipment of an affiliate of the applicant;
- Customer terminal equipment (including modems) and any associated inside wiring not owned by the applicant during its economic life;
- Vehicles not used primarily in construction;
- Broadband facilities leased under the terms of an operating lease;
- Merger or consolidation of entities; and
- Operating expenses of the project.

**Competition with Existing RUS Telecom Borrowers**

- RUS will give existing telecom borrowers a two-year window in which RUS will not consider applications proposing to offer broadband service in an existing borrower’s service area if the existing borrower submits a letter of intent to RUS to provide or begin to construct residential broadband service in its local exchange service territory within two years. This must be submitted within 90 days after the receipt of an application from a competing provider.

**Credit Support Requirements:**

To be eligible for a loan, an applicant must provide credit support equal to 20% of the requested loan amount. This requirement can be met in one of four ways:

- Cash
- Net Tangible Assets in the name of the applicant
- Licenses at the lower of cost or market value
- Letters of Credit for five years
If the applicant is a start-up company or an existing company that does not have a positive cash flow, the applicant must have as part of the 20% an amount of cash equal to the first full year of operating expenses.

**Scoring of Applications:**

- RUS gives top priority to eligible rural communities in which broadband residential service is not currently available. Any completed application which meets the priority criteria will be evaluated for expedited approval.
- Lesser priority is given to those areas which are receiving service but at higher rates or worse service than neighboring urban or suburban areas.

**Allocation of Funds:**

- In October of each fiscal year, RUS will allocated amounts within its reserve fund to each State or territory based on the ratio of the number of communities with a population of 2,500 or less in the State or territory to the number of communities with a population of 2,500 or less in all states or territories.
- Applications postmarked by January 31st of each fiscal year will be eligible for funding from the State reserve.
- On April 1st, unallocated amounts from each State reserve will be returned to the national reserve.
- Applications postmarked by July 31st of the fiscal year will be considered for funding from the national reserve.

**Loan Amounts:**

- Loans are limited to the lesser of 100% of the applicant’s assets or $24 million.
- The minimum loan amount is $100,000
- The range of loans made in 2005 were:

**Examples of Successful Applicants:**

**Mid-Hudson Cablevision, Inc.**
Catskill, New York

Mid-Hudson Cablevision, Inc., headquartered in Catskill, New York was awarded a $5.2 million loan to provide advanced communications services to over 7,000 subscribers. The loan will be used to provide data, video and Voice over Internet Protocol, as well as upgrade existing cable TV systems in Ashland, Greenville, Prattsville, and Westerlo. The funds will also be used to expand existing service to a small portion of the town of Taghanic and acquire and upgrade the systems in Durham and Rensselaerville.
**Telecommunications Equipment and Training Programs**

Telecommunications equipment and training is available through the *USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program* and the *Beaumont Foundation Equipment Grant Program* (please see Attachment A for a summary of funding sources).

**Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program**

**General Program Information:**

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program was established in June, 1997. The program’s objectives are to encourage and improve telemedicine and distance learning services in rural areas through the use of telecommunications, computer networks and related advanced technologies by students, teachers, medical professionals and rural residents. The RUS will award loans and grants to projects that will improve access of people residing in eligible areas to improved educational, learning, training and health care services. Since the 2000 over $177 million has been invested in learning and telemedicine programs. In FY 2006, $20 million in grants were available.

**Eligibility:**

- Applicant must be an incorporated organization, partnership, Indian tribe and tribal organization, or other legal entity, including a municipal corporation or a private corporation organized on a for-profit or non-profit basis
- Applicant must operate in a rural area with less than 10,000 people
- Applicant must operate or plan to operate a school, university, learning center, training facility or other education institution (may include libraries, hospitals, clinics)

**Program Requirements:**

- For grant funding, a 30% matching contribution is required. No match is required for loans.

**Eligible Uses:**

- Acquiring, by lease or purchase, learning and telecommunications equipment (i.e. computers, software, audio/visual, computer network components, telecommunications equipment (land, buildings, or building construction)
- Instructional programming
- Providing technical assistance for using project equipment including related software
Scoring of Applications:

All eligible applications receive points based on the following scoring criteria:

- The *Rurality* of the Project (up to 45 points)
- The *Economic Need* of the Project’s Service Area (up to 35 points); and
- *Special Communities* (up to 15 points)
- *Matching Funds* (up to 35 points)
- *Community Needs and Project Benefits* (up to 45 points)
- *Innovativeness of the Project* (up to 15 points)
- *Cost Effectiveness of the Project* (up to 35 points)

*Rurality* is based on 2000 US Census Data. The rurality is determined for each hub and averaged in order to determine the application’s overall score. The minimum average score for the grant program is 20 points. Scoring is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than 5000 people</th>
<th>45 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5001 – 10,000 people</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001– 20,000 people</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20,000</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Economic need* is based on the number of students on the National School Lunch Plan (NSLP) and is scored as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSLP &lt; 25%</th>
<th>0 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25% &lt;= NSLP &lt; 50%</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% &lt;= NSLP &lt; 75%</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% &lt;= NSLP</td>
<td>35 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Special Communities* receive the following additional points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EZ/EC Community</th>
<th>10 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Champion Community</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Matching Funds* are awarded the following additional points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15% &lt; Match % &lt;= 30%</th>
<th>0 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30% &lt; Match % &lt;= 50%</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% &lt; Match % &lt;= 75%</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% &lt; Match % &lt;= 100%</td>
<td>30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match &gt; 100%</td>
<td>35 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Community Needs and Project Benefits* points are awarded based on the extent to which the proposed project meets the goals and objectives of the DLT Program.
Innovativeness of the Project – points are awarded based on how the objectives of the proposed project are met in new and creative ways. Projects can be innovative in either their choice of technology or their application.

Cost Effectiveness of the Project – points are awarded based on the efficiency with which the proposed project deliver educational and medical benefits to beneficiaries.

Grant Amounts:
- Grants and loans may fund up to 70% of the total project cost
- Minimum loan or grant is $50,000
- Maximum is $3 million loan and $500,000 grant
- 2005 Grants ranged from $53,885 - $500,000
- The average grant in 2005 was $372,279

Examples of Successful Applicants:

Rural Northeastern Pennsylvania School Districts Connect Resources
State: Pennsylvania
Grantee: Northern Tier Rural Distance Learning Consortium
Borrower Name/ID: Commonwealth Telephone Company
Counties: Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wyoming & Tioga

In 1992, six school district superintendents from northern Pennsylvania formed the northern Tier Rural Distance Learning Consortium (NTRDLC) to identify solutions to improve the quality of education in their rural and economically disadvantaged communities. Their research revealed that small, rural school districts on average have half the money available per students than do suburban school districts.

NTRDLC believes that the answer to improving the quality of education in their schools is combining the resources of the schools and utilizing distance learning technology. In 1993, the NTRDLC applied for and was awarded a Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant award for $500,000. Common Wealth Telephone, a RUS borrower, lent their financial support to the project as well.

RUS funds were used to develop a two-way interactive television network that permits six rural school districts, two colleges, and the State Museum of Pennsylvania to share personnel and access resources in ways not previously possible. The project serves over 15,000 students in the six rural area school districts. The technology has also assisted the six rural school districts to enhance teacher training and improve high school curriculum. One hundred and ten students are enrolled in high school credit courses shared among the project’s schools and 9 students are participating in dual enrolled high school level course work and college level courses. In the 1995-96 school year, 30 students will have earned college level credits prior to their high school graduation. Penn State, for example, plans to offer at least 25 college level courses to high school students.
Small, rural school systems across the country are facing the similar problem of being unable to deliver a quality educational program to these students because of geographic isolation, insufficient funding, limited course offerings (especially advanced courses) and shortages of qualified teachers. RUS funds assist distance learning projects such as the NTRDLC resource sharing network because new avenues of opportunity become available that help rural students prepare for their future.

**Beaumont Foundation Equipment Grants**

The Beaumont Foundation believes that computer and Internet technologies are the essential tools for progress in the 21st century, and that given access to digital information, people will have a more equal opportunity to advance socially, economically, and intellectually. The Foundation is dedicated to the principle of digital inclusion. The Foundation provides state-of-the-art wireless laptops and technology equipment to schools, community-based organizations and individuals in low-income communities. 29 states are currently eligible for funding (not presently Massachusetts). Previous grants have been made to organizations throughout Massachusetts including Boys & Girls Clubs, Franciscan Hospital for Children, RFK Children’s Action Corps, Stonehill College, Swansea Senior Center and UMASS Boston.