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citing any information that is incomplete. To be considered for a combination loan and grant assistance, the applicant must submit any additional information requested to complete the application within 15 working days of the date of the RUS written response. If the applicant fails to submit such information, the application will be returned to the applicant.

(2) Within 30 days of the determination of a completed application in accordance with paragraph (c)(1) of this section, review the application to determine suitability for financial assistance in accordance with §1703.135, and other requirements of this subpart. Based on its review, RUS will work with the applicant to resolve any questions or obtain any additional information. The applicant will be notified, in writing, of any additional information required to allow a financial assistance recommendation and will be provided a reasonable period of time to furnish the additional information.

(3) If the application is determined suitable for further consideration by RUS, conduct a review of the application and financial assistance recommendation. A final determination will be made within 15 days. If the Administrator determines that a combination loan and grant can be approved, the applicant will be notified. A combination loan and grant will be processed, approved, and serviced in accordance with §§1703.105 through 1703.112 of subpart D.

(4) If RUS determines that the application is not suitable for further consideration, notify the applicant with the reasons for this determination. The applicant will be able to appeal in accordance with §1703.137 of this subpart.

§ 1703.137 Appeals.

Any appeal must be made, in writing, within 10 days after the applicant is notified of the determination to deny the application. Appeals shall be submitted to the Administrator, RUS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1590, Washington, DC 20250-1590. Thereafter, the Administrator will review the appeal to determine whether to sustain, reverse, or modify the original determination. Final determinations will be

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made after consideration of all appeals. The Administrator's determination will be final. A copy of the Administrator's decision will be furnished promptly to the applicant.

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Subpart G—Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan Program

SOURCE: 64 FR 14369, Mar. 25, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1703.140 Use of loan funds.

A loan may be used by eligible organizations as defined in §1703.103 for distance learning and telemedicine projects to finance 100 percent of the cost of approved purposes contained in §1703.141 provided that no financial assistance may exceed the maximum amount for the year in which the loan is made. Entities seeking a loan must be able to provide security and execute a note with a maturity period greater than one year. The following entities are eligible for loans under this subpart:

(a) Organizations as defined in §1703.103. If a RUS telecommunications borrower is seeking a loan, the borrower does not need to submit all of the financial security information required by §1703.144(d). The borrower's latest financial report (Form 479) filed with RUS and any additional information relevant to the project, as determined by RUS, will suffice;

(b) Any non-profit or for-profit entity, public or private entity, urban or rural institution, or rural educational broadcaster, which proposes to provide and receive distance learning and telemedicine services to carry out the purposes of this subpart; or

(c) Any entity that contracts with an eligible organization in paragraphs (a) or (b) of this section for constructing distance learning or telemedicine facilities for the purposes contained in §1703.141, except for those purposes in §1703.141(h).

(d) Applicants must meet the minimum eligibility requirement for determining the extent to which the project serves rural areas as contained in §1703.126(b)(2) (the applicant must receive at least 20 points to be eligible to

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receive financial assistance under this subpart).

[64 FR 14369, Mar. 25, 1999, as amended at 64 FR 25423, May 12, 1999]

§ 1703.141 Approved purposes for loans.

The following are approved purposes for loans:

(a) Acquiring, by lease or purchase, eligible equipment or facilities as defined in § 1703.102;

(b) Acquiring instructional programming;

(c) Providing technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment, including any related software; developing instructional programming; providing engineering or environmental studies relating to the establishment or expansion of the phase of the project that is being financed with the loan (financial assistance for this purpose shall not exceed 10 percent of the requested financial assistance);

(d) Paying for medical or educational equipment and facilities which are shown to be necessary to implement the project, including vehicles utilizing distance learning and telemedicine technology to deliver educational and health care services. The applicant must demonstrate that such items are necessary to meet the purposes under this subpart and financial assistance for such equipment and facilities is not available from other sources at a cost which would not adversely affect the economic viability of the project;

(e) Providing links between teachers and students or medical professionals who are located at the same facility, provided that such facility receives or provides distance learning or telemedicine services as part of a distance learning or telemedicine network which meets the purposes of this subpart;

(f) Providing for site development and alteration of buildings in order to meet the purposes of this subpart. Loans for this purpose must be necessary and incidental to the total amount of financial assistance requested;

(g) Purchasing of land, buildings, or building construction, where such costs are demonstrated necessary to con-

struct distance learning and telemedicine facilities. The applicant must demonstrate that funding from other sources is not available at a cost which does not adversely impact the economic viability of the project as determined by the Administrator. Financial assistance for this purpose must be necessary and incidental to the total amount of financial assistance requested;

(h) Acquiring of telecommunications transmission facilities provided that no telecommunications carrier will install such facilities under the Act or through other financial procedures within a reasonable time period and at a cost to the applicant that does not impact the economic viability of the project, as determined by the Administrator;

(i) Any project costs, except for salaries and administrative expenses, not included in paragraphs (a) through (h) of this section, incurred during the first two years of operation after the financial assistance has been approved. The applicant must show that financing such costs are necessary for the establishment or continued operation of the project and that financing is not available for such costs elsewhere, including from the applicant's financial resources. The Administrator will determine whether such costs will be financed based on information submitted by the applicant. Loans shall not be made exclusively to finance such costs, and financing for such costs will not exceed 20 percent of the loan provided to a project under this section; and

(j) All of the costs needed to provide distance learning broadcasting to rural areas. Loans may be used to cover the costs of facilities and end-user equipment dedicated to providing educational broadcasting to rural areas for distance learning purposes. If the facilities are not 100 percent dedicated to broadcasting, a portion of the financing may be used to fund such facilities based on a percentage of use factor that approximates the distance learning broadcasting portion of use.

[64 FR 14369, Mar. 25, 1999, as amended at 64 FR 25423, May 12, 1999]