

Pursuant to Executive Order 14058 (December 13, 2021)
on *Transforming Federal Customer Experience and
Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government*

2023 HISP CX Action Plan

Rural Development

As a High Impact Service Provider (HISP), RD focuses on service assessments, collecting customer feedback, and making measured improvements for two designated services:

- 1) Filing an application under the OneRD Guarantee Loan Initiative:** The OneRD Guarantee Loan Initiative provides government-backed loans through commercial lenders to rural small business owners, agricultural producers, community organizations, utility providers, or municipalities seeking financing to develop a project and who may have challenges securing a loan without a guarantee. RD annually issues over \$2 billion in loan guarantees.
- 2) Receiving technical assistance for broadband deployment:** RD, through the Rural Utilities Service, provides hundreds of millions of dollars annually to support modern broadband in rural communities, including through the ReConnect Program. ReConnect has invested over \$1 billion to expand high-speed broadband infrastructure in unserved rural areas and tribal lands.

What we delivered in 2023:

- **Developed an interactive Application Checklist for OneRD Guarantee lenders**

Based on customer pain points, RD designed an application checklist, providing lenders with a resource that helps to align and determine what constitutes a complete application. RD anticipates that this checklist will result in time savings for lenders and RD staff and reduce the number of contact points with RD staff from the time an application is filed to when it is determined to be complete.

- **Launched a \$20 million technical assistance pilot program for rural broadband expansion**

RD launched a technical assistance pilot program to help address upfront burdens felt by new customers when preparing financial assistance applications for broadband deployment projects. This new program will provide comprehensive and customized technical assistance to rural communities and less represented entity types, such as broadband cooperatives. The pilot aims to reduce upfront costs for customers during the application preparation phase and increase the number of unserved rural populations with access to high-speed, affordable, and reliable broadband service funded by the agency.

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What we commit to deliver in 2024:

- **Launch digital “Start Here” webpage for OneRD Guarantee lenders**
Based on customer feedback from new commercial lenders, RD will design, develop, and launch a digital “Start Here” webpage to streamline the process of participating in the OneRD Guarantee initiative. This public webpage will provide a customized digital task list for lenders to guide them through the process of preparing a complete application on a self-serve basis and will estimate the length of time needed to complete each step. RD anticipates that this streamlined digital product will reduce the time users spend on the RD website searching for information and answers.
- **Conduct customer research to improve the ReConnect funds dispersal and reimbursement process**
RD will gather feedback to develop a greater understanding of customer experiences, pain points, and needs related to navigating the ReConnect program’s funds dispersal and reimbursement process. Insights from this discovery research process will help to identify opportunities for RD to implement service delivery improvements that result in positive customer experiences and reduced customer burdens.
- **Increase RD’s CX Capacity through tools and best practice sharing**
RD will conduct a CX assessment to better understand and baseline staff mindsets and behaviors related to customer experience, and develop a set of tools to support RD’s workforce in growing their CX capacity and culture. RD also plans to design and launch a CX Knowledge Management System to make it easier to share trainings and resources needed for a customer-centric workforce.