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## Mark Your Calendar!

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October 1-4

[Rural Health Clinic & CAH Conferences](#)

Austin, TX

October 8-10

[Annual Rural Recruitment & Retention Network Conference](#)

St. Louis, MO

Oct 10-12

[Annual Collaborative Family Healthcare Assn. Conference](#)

Broomfield, CO

October 24

[Annual American Indian Health Research Conf.](#)

Grand Forks, ND

November 2-6

[Annual American Public Health Association Meeting and Expo](#)

Boston, MA

December 4-5

[Rural Multiracial and Multicultural Health Conference](#)

San Antonio, TX

February 4-6

[Rural Health Policy Inst.](#)

Washington, DC

## NCFC Joins One Country Connected Coalition in Support of Frontier and Rural Broadband Access

At a time when 80 percent of Americans have broadband connections in their homes, accessing the internet is still a challenge in many frontier communities. A recent [article in the Daily Yonder](#) shows how the nation's most rural counties have the lowest broadband availability. This is worrying because broadband is becoming increasingly necessary for business, schools and health care organizations.

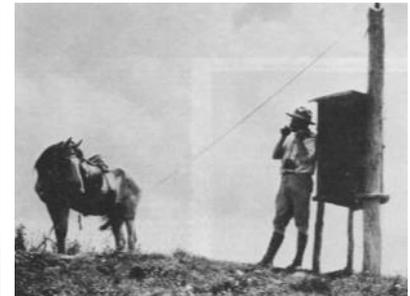
The Federal Communications Commission Connect America Fund (CAF) program was designed to close this gap in broadband availability. The Fund will eventually provide up to \$1.8 billion a year from 2014 to 2018 to support broadband expansion in underserved areas, replacing \$1 billion per year that the FCC currently provides to support the expansion of voice-oriented technologies.

The first phase of CAF support was designed to kick-start

broadband expansion. Since it was established in 2011, CAF phase I support has funded broadband expansion in [37 states](#). However, in many frontier areas broadband is still largely unavailable.

That's why the National Center for Frontier Communities recently joined a [coalition of over 50 organizations](#) that support the expansion of broadband in rural and frontier areas.

The One Country Connected Coalition advocates for federal programs like the CAF that increase broadband availability in underserved communities. According to the [One Country Connected website](#), "it remains vitally important that the FCC realizes that Connect America Fund dollars are essential to our nation's economic competitiveness and a fundamental requirement for rural communities to participate in commerce, ex-



Communications needs in frontier communities have changed a lot since the FCC was established in 1934. Image source: [foresthstory.org](#)

pand opportunities and overcome the challenges of a rapidly changing communications environment."

Thanks in part to the advocacy efforts of One Country Connected, the FCC released a second round of phase I CAF support this spring. Along with its second round funding decisions, FCC released an [interactive map](#) of the census blocks it considers underserved and eligible for broadband expansion.

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## Two New Websites Provide Access to Rural Health Research, Policy Analysis

*The websites, launched this spring, aim to provide "easy and timely access" to rural health research findings and policy analysis.*

The first of the websites, the [Rural Health Research Gateway](#), "provides access to research and findings of the ORHP-funded Rural Health Research

Centers." The website has information about both ongoing and completed research projects.

The [RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis](#) "conducts original research [on] access to health care services, Medicare policies, development of rural delivery systems..., and public health." The Center's website

includes a list of past and current projects and a catalog of the Center's publications and presentations.

Both of the sites have a number of frontier-specific publications in their catalogues. They are worth checking out for anyone interested in current frontier research! ♦

## Two Frontier Organizations Awarded ACA Navigator Grants

*The grantees will help people enroll in insurance through the newly created insurance exchanges.*

The Department of Health and Human Services this August announced that 105 organizations had been awarded navigator grants in states with Federally-facilitated and State Partnership Marketplaces. According to the announcement, “navigators will serve as an in-person resource for Americans who want additional assistance in shopping for and enrolling in plans in the Health Insurance Marketplace this fall.” States that opted for State-based Marketplaces are offering their own grants and implementing their own programs.

NCFC reviewed all 105 abstracts and found that two of the organizations that were funded will focus their navigation efforts in frontier communities: Rural Health Development of Montana and Wyoming Senior Citizens, Inc.

Rural Health Development of

Montana will use its \$143,076 grant to train hospital staff as insurance exchange navigators. [According to the Missoulian newspaper](#), a spokesman for the organization explained that “people in rural communities are going to the hospitals anyway to ask for health information, so we’re training staff on site at those facilities to be those navigators.”

Wyoming Senior Citizens, Inc. will use their \$198,719 award to hire three enrollment counselors to do enrollment outreach in rural, frontier, and farming communities across the state. The counselors will offer assistance to both seniors and younger Wyomingites. [Read more here.](#)

We would love to know how organizations in your state are approaching ACA outreach and enrollment. If you want to share a program, story, or issue related to the rollout of the ACA in your state, please tell us about it! E-mail us at [frontier@frontierus.org](mailto:frontier@frontierus.org). ♦

## NCFC Awarded Grant for Rural & Frontier Capacity Building Network

For years the National Center for Frontier Communities (NCFC) has heard from constituents about the need for technical assistance and capacity building aimed to meet the unique needs of frontier and rural health care providers. Now, we can do something about it. NCFC was recently awarded a grant from the Office of Rural Health Policy to develop a national network for rural and frontier capacity building. The project is in partnership with the National Organization

for State Offices of Rural Health and the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. The National Network for Rural and Frontier Capacity is a nationwide project with the potential to reach all rural and frontier health care service areas in all 50 states. The Network will provide capacity building to rural health care providers, with a special interest in developing services for underserved frontier counties.

The Network plans to assess the capacity and resources of

## NCFC Joins Broadband Coalition (Continued from p. 1)

Carriers can contest the map if they believe that a census block is designated incorrectly, so the map could change in the coming months.

Now that FCC has released a second round of phase 1 funding, One Country Connected is focusing on the next phase of CAF funding, which is set to be distributed starting next year. The FCC is designing a new model that will be used to distribute phase 2 CAF support.

The FCC will use the phase 2 CAF model to determine how much CAF support each broadband carrier is eligible for. The support amount is based in part on how much of a carrier’s service area is currently underserved. If a broadband carrier turns down some of the funds the FCC offers to them to expand service to their underserved areas, those funds will be distributed through a competitive bidding process.

One Country Connected is

keeping a close eye on the development of the second phase of CAF. “It’s more critical than ever that our coalition grow in size and that it monitor developments regarding Phase 2 issues,” says Mark Rubin, Executive Director of the One Country Connected Coalition.

For the most remote frontier communities, a Remote Areas Fund was created within the CAF. The \$100m Fund will pay for alternative technologies like satellite broadband in frontier areas where the build-out costs of wired broadband exceed the FCC’s price cap. Remote communities can also receive funding from the Mobility and Tribal Mobility Funds, which help pay for the expansion of mobile coverage.

We’ll keep you posted as FCC releases more information on these important programs for frontier communities. To learn more, visit [onecountryconnected.org](http://onecountryconnected.org) and [fcc.gov](http://fcc.gov). ♦



This snapshot of the northwest shows census blocks that the FCC considers underserved and eligible for wired broadband expansion. Source: [FCC interactive map](#).

rural and frontier health care providers to respond to the rapidly changing health care environment and their ability to plan, expand and sustain essential health care services. The capacity of State Offices of Rural Health (SORH) to address the needs and priorities of rural and frontier health care

providers will also be assessed.

Five SORHs will be selected to assist the Network in designing resources, materials, tools, and methods and in the development of a train-the-capacity builder course. The 12-month project will be launched in September 2013 and run through August 2014. ♦