

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2447

To reauthorize the distance learning and telemedicine grant program, and
for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 20, 2023

Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Ms. LUMMIS) introduced the following bill; which
was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry

A BILL

To reauthorize the distance learning and telemedicine grant
program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Strengthening Tele-
5 health and Education for Rural Communities Act of
6 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE GRANT**
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 (a) USE OF GRANTS FOR OPERATING EXPENSES.—
4 Section 2333 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and
5 Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa–2) is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a), by inserting “and oper-
7 ation” after “construction”;

8 (2) in subsection (c)—

9 (A) in paragraph (1)(B), by adding “and”
10 at the end; and

11 (B) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “or
12 extend” each place it appears and inserting
13 “extend, or operate”;

14 (3) in subsection (f)—

15 (A) in paragraph (3), by striking “or” at
16 the end;

17 (B) by redesignating paragraph (4) as
18 paragraph (5); and

19 (C) by inserting after paragraph (3) the
20 following:

21 “(4) operation of the programming, equipment,
22 or facilities referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2);
23 or”; and

24 (4) by striking subsection (g) and inserting the
25 following:

1 “(g) OPERATING EXPENSES.—Not more than 15
2 percent of the amount of financial assistance provided to
3 a recipient under this chapter may be used for recurring
4 or operating expenses, including salaries or administrative
5 expenses, that are reasonable and allocable to the project
6 carried out by the recipient.”.

7 (b) WAIVER OF MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—Section
8 2334 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade
9 Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa–3) is amended by adding
10 at the end the following:

11 “(g) WAIVER OF MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The
12 Secretary shall waive any requirement for a recipient of
13 financial assistance under this chapter to provide non-
14 Federal matching funds—

15 “(1) in a case of demonstrated need or if the
16 matching requirement would create a substantial
17 burden, as determined by the Secretary; or

18 “(2) if the recipient is a federally recognized In-
19 dian Tribe.”.

20 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section
21 2335A of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade
22 Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa–5) is amended by striking
23 “2019 through 2023” and inserting “2024 through
24 2028”.

1 (d) SET-ASIDE FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER
2 TREATMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—

4 (A) SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER SET-
5 ASIDE.—Subject to subparagraph (B), for each
6 of fiscal years 2024 through 2028, the Sec-
7 retary of Agriculture shall make available not
8 less than 20 percent of amounts made available
9 under section 2335A of the Food, Agriculture,
10 Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C.
11 950aaa–5) for financial assistance under chap-
12 ter 1 of subtitle D of title XXIII of that Act
13 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa et seq.) for telemedicine
14 projects that provide substance use disorder
15 treatment services or mental health services.

16 (B) EXCEPTION.—In the case of a fiscal
17 year for which the Secretary of Agriculture de-
18 termines that there are not sufficient qualified
19 applicants to receive financial assistance for
20 projects providing substance use disorder treat-
21 ment services or mental health services to reach
22 the 20-percent requirement under subparagraph
23 (A), the Secretary of Agriculture may make
24 available less than 20 percent of amounts made
25 available under section 2335A of the Food, Ag-

1 riculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
2 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa-5) for those services.

3 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section
4 6101(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Agriculture Improvement
5 Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334; 132 Stat. 4726)
6 is amended—

7 (A) by inserting “for each of fiscal years
8 2019 through 2023,” before “the Secretary”;
9 and

10 (B) by striking “(7 U.S.C. 950aaa-2)”
11 and inserting “(7 U.S.C. 950aaa-5)”.

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