nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities

Funding Amount: **$350 Million**

Program Name

Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program

Funding Amount

Up to $350 million from the Build Illinois Bond Fund and ARPA for broadband infrastructure, health information technology, telemedicine, distance learning, and public safety

Key Dates

- Applications accepted on a rolling basis with quarterly windows:
  - June 30, 2023 – 6th Quarterly Window submission deadline
  - September 30, 2023 – 7th Quarterly Window submission deadline
  - December 31, 2023 – 8th Quarterly Window submission deadline
  - March 31, 2024 – 9th Quarterly Window submission deadline
  - June 30, 2024 – 10th Quarterly Window submission deadline

Eligible Applicants

- Incorporated business or partnerships
- Political subdivisions
- Nonprofits
- Cooperatives
- LLCs organized for the purpose of expanding broadband access

Eligible Areas

- **Unserved Area** – area with households, businesses, or community anchor institutions lacking wireline broadband service access of at least 25/3 Mbps
- **Underserved Area** – area with households, businesses, or community anchor institutions that have wireline broadband access of at least 25/3 Mbps but less than 100/20 Mbps

Eligible Projects

- Applications should be classified under one of three categories:
  - *Broadband Access* - for Illinois homes, businesses, and community anchor institutions in unserved or underserved areas
  - *Broadband Innovation* - for economic development and related applications
  - *Urban Broadband* - for expanded access and/or innovation in qualified Illinois cities or metropolitan areas of 75,000+ residents
- Maximum individual grant award amount is $10 million
- Projects must include be scalable to speeds of at least 100/100 Mbps upon deployment
- 3-year timeline for project buildout
- Grantees are required to participate in FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

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Mapping Review

- Applicants may challenge the accuracy of the broadband map
- Incumbents may challenge the eligibility of an application
- During the Mapping Review, challengers must provide shapefiles and/or specific location addresses demonstrating service at or above program speed thresholds of 25/3 Mbps and/or 100/20 Mbps per Unserved and Underserved areas reflected in maps:
    - Connect Illinois Eligibility Map
    - The Illinois Broadband Map
    - Illinois Interactive Broadband Map
    - Unserved eligible areas lacking 25/3Mbps (.shp)
    - Underserved eligible areas between 25/3Mbps and 100/20Mbps (.shp)
    - Served ineligible areas with 100/20Mbps (.shp)

Application Content

- Uniform Grant Application
- Uniform Capital Budget
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure
- Mandatory Disclosures
- Cover Page
- Broadband Application
- W-9 Form

Scoring Criteria

- 200 Points Total Possible
    - Applications receiving 150 points or more may be awarded immediately
    - Applications scoring between 100-149 points may be selected for an award on a quarterly basis
    - Applications receiving less than 100 points will not be funded
- Merit review selection criteria:
    - Project Impact (36 points)
    - Nonstate Match & Demonstration of Need (36 points)
    - Community Support (20 points)
    - Project Readiness (28 points)
    - Project Viability & Sustainability (32 points)
    - Affordability & Adoption Assistance (20 points)
    - Open Access, Shared Use & Business Strategy (28 points)
- Applications funded on a quarterly basis
- Priority given to projects leveraging nonstate funding (private, federal, and/or local) totaling 30% or more of eligible total project costs

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Middle Mile

- Middle mile expenses eligible

Budget Categories

- Design/Engineering
- Building/Land Purchase
- Equipment/Materials/Labor
- Construction Management/Oversight
- Construction
- Other Construction Expenses
- Contingency

Eligible Costs

- Network design
- Project planning
- Obtaining construction permits
- Construction of facilities – including deployment of middle mile and/or last mile infrastructure
- Durable equipment
- Installation and testing of broadband service

Ineligible Costs

- No compensation for indirect costs, overhead or administrative expenses

Links & Emails

- Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program
- Notice of Funding – Supplement
- Connect Illinois Round 3 Application Packet
- Broadband Expansion - Connect Illinois
- General questions, mapping or application questions: Broadband@illinois.gov (Subject Line: Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program Application Question)

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funding@nrtc.coop

Contact us for Funding Assistance. NRTC's Funding Practice offers key benefits including:
- Opportunity Evaluation
- Effective Grant Writing
- Track Record of Success

Telecom Companies: Contact Rodney Pugh at 703-464-5235 or rpugh@nrtc.coop

Electric Cooperatives: Contact Mark Davis at 703-464-5265 or mdavis@nrtc.coop