



# FUNDING ALERT!

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities



## Program Name

Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grants Program

## Purpose

Aims to foster last-mile broadband service to homes, schools, and businesses in unserved and underserved areas.

Iowa

## Funding Source

American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") - Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds ("CSLFRF")

\$200 million

## Administrator

Office of the Chief Information Officer ("OCIO" or "Office")

## Financials

Total Fund: **\$200 Million**

Match Requirement: At least 40% contributed by the Applicant

## Key Dates

**Application Submission Period Opens:** October 25, 2021

**Application Due Date:** November 22, 2021, 5:00 PM CST

**Application Review Period:** Ends December 31, 2021

**Grant Agreement Negotiations & Execution:** January 31, 2022

## Eligible Project Areas

**Speed Threshold:** Areas lacking access to 25/3 Mbps (download/upload) delivered by "wireline" technology.

**Mapping Data:** Eligible service areas were published on October 14, 2021

## Middle Mile Network Eligibility

Program allows for the acquisition of middle-mile network services from a third party, or construction of new middle-mile is necessary to enable the proposed speeds for the last-mile network.

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## Eligible Applicants

Any communications service provider as defined by Iowa Code chapter 8B, including but not limited to private sector carriers, local governments, utilities, and other entities that provide or intend to provide broadband service.

## Performance Requirements

**Speed:** Must deliver at least 100/100 Mbps; in cases where this speed is not practicable (e.g., excessive cost, other geography or topography barriers), project must deliver 100/20 Mbps.

\*Note: Projects proposing to Facilitate 100/20 Mbps must be scalable to 100/100 Mbps within 3 years of the project completion date.

**Wireless Last Mile Projects:** The main consideration is that the backhaul to the wireless network must be "future proof," meaning that the network backhaul is capable of facilitating the applicant's committed last-mile speeds of 100/100 Mbps (or 100/20 Mbps if selecting lower tier).

## Buildout Requirement

Projects must be fully completed by September 30, 2026

## Allowable Expenditures

### Allowed Expenditures

- Directly related to the installation of broadband infrastructure.
- Relating to the buildout or acquisition of middle-mile service necessary to support the last mile network.
- Identified as eligible expenditures pursuant to any CSLFRF requirements.
- Incurred after March 3, 2021 and prior to September 30, 2026.

### Disallowed Expenditures

- Land buildings, structures, improvements, or equipment not directly used in the transmission of data via Broadband.
- Related to the process of removing existing broadband Infrastructure, fixtures, or other real property in preparation of the installation of broadband infrastructure.
- Indirect labor costs or administrative overhead.
- Passthrough expenditures with respect to subcontractors or other third parties operating on an Applicants behalf to the extent they are not the result of arm's length transactions or are not reflective of fair market rates.
- Identified as ineligible expenditures pursuant to any CSLFRF requirements.

## Challenge Process

**Incumbent Challenge:** Incumbent ISP may challenge on specific grounds after application published on Development's website (not later than 65 days after submission period closes).

**Applicant Invitation to Revise & Resubmit:** A successful challenge leads to application suspension and notification; applicant can revise and resubmit within 14 days. Failure to resubmit application with the successfully challenged addresses removed may result in rejection of entire application.

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## Application Requirements

- Executive summary (e.g. project description)
- Certification that the proposed service area is not associated with prior federal funding initiatives designed to provide wireline 25/3 Broadband or faster
- Demonstrated experience
- Project worksheet
  - Total number of broadband units (homes, schools and businesses)
  - The new upload/download speeds
  - The type of delivery platform(s) - i.e., network technology
  - Key product attributes of the service offerings
- CSLFRF Form
  - Pricing
  - Grant funds requested
  - Metrics (e.g., served institutions, fiber miles, etc.)
- Budget plan
- Product pricing form
- Request for confidential treatment of portions of its Application
- Wireless project design worksheet
- Application checklist

## Scoring Framework

- **Degree of Rurality - 60%**
- **Completeness (degree of market penetration in proposed service area) - 10.43%**
- **Total broadband units facilitated - 8.7%**
- **Efficiency (cost) - 6.96%**
- **Relative speed - 5.22%**
- **Prospective Product Attributes (availability, latency, performance credits, hop count, data caps) - 3.48%**
- **Degree of grant amount requested relative to project budget - 3.48%**
- **CSLFRF Areas of Emphasis - 1.73%**
  - Fiber as a delivery platform
  - Application business structure (Applicants that are local governments, non-profits, or co-operatives will receive all of the points)
  - Affordability

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## Policies on Overlapping Projects

**Competing Projects:** The higher scoring project will receive an award if its buildout period is sooner than lower scoring project. If the lower scoring project proposes a shorter buildout period, then the lower scoring project will be awarded the overlapping portion.

**Overlap Removal:** The Office may remove in area in which any communications service provider meets any of the following situations:

1. Already commenced construction or buildout
2. Project overlaps with an area with preexisting broadband expansion commitments
3. Service area has been awarded by a state or federal program prior that those areas aim to deliver at least 25/3 Mbps via wireline.

**Partial Award:** The Office may choose to award a partial amount of the grant requested amount in the event of overlap with prior awarded projects.

## Key Reference Links

**Program Website:**

<https://ocio.iowa.gov/empower-rural-iowa-broadband-grant-program-notice-funding-availability-007>

**NOFO:**

[https://ocio.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/exhibit\\_a\\_-\\_notice\\_of\\_funding\\_availability\\_nofa\\_007.pdf](https://ocio.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/exhibit_a_-_notice_of_funding_availability_nofa_007.pdf)

**Eligible Areas Map:**

<https://ocio.iowa.gov/empower-rural-iowa-broadband-grant-program-notice-funding-availability-007#MAP>

**Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds:**

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-05-17/pdf/2021-10283.pdf>

**Application Submission Portal:**

<https://www.iowagrants.gov/index.do>

**Written Questions:**

Can be submitted to: [ociogrants@iowa.gov](mailto:ociogrants@iowa.gov)

- Opportunity Evaluation
- Effective Grant Writing
- Track Record of Success