

nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional assistance for today's unprecedented funding opportunities



Funding Amount: \$50 million

Program Details

Program Name: MN Border-to-Border Broadband Development (B2B) and Low-Density Population (LDP) Pilot Grant Programs Round 10

Administrator: MN DEED Office of Broadband Development

Authorizing Legislation: Appropriated from State General Revenue Funds

Funding Details

Award: Up to \$10 million

Match Requirement: Preference to applicants leveraging funds from other sources

- B2B requires a minimum 50% match, extra points if match is 55% or more
- LDP requires a minimum 25% match

Key Dates

March 12, 2024 – Application guidelines and information released

March 21, 2024 – Round 10 [Overview Webinar @ 11 am CT](#)

March 29, 2024 – **Last day to notify existing providers of intent to file**

April 23, 2024 – Application portal opens for submissions (based on pre-application notification)

May 10, 2024 – **Application window closes at 1:30 pm CT**

May 15, 2024 – Challenge process begins

June 14, 2024 – Challenge process ends at 4:00 pm CT

Summer 2024 – Anticipated award announcements

December 31, 2026 – Projects must be completed

Eligible Applicants

- Incorporated business or partnership
- Political subdivisions
- Indian Tribes
- Nonprofits (317A)
- Cooperatives (308A or 308B)
- Limited liability corporations (322C) organized for the purpose of expanding broadband

Eligible Areas

- Any area with unserved or underserved households or businesses
 - Unserved: Lack access to wire-line broadband speeds of at least 25/3 Mbps
 - Underserved: Lack access to wire-line broadband speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps
- Applicants may submit multiple projects, but each project can only be submitted for either B2B funding or LDP funding

Eligible Projects

- Middle mile and/or last mile projects that expand broadband infrastructure supporting at least 100/20 Mbps, scalable to 100/100 Mbps, to unserved and underserved populations

Eligible Costs

- Project planning
- Obtaining construction permits
- Construction of facilities
- Equipment
- Installation and testing of service
- B2B grants may not exceed 50% of the total project cost
- LDP grants may not exceed 75% of the total project cost

Selection Criteria

Scoring (maximum of 120 points):

- **Anticipated broadband improvements (up to 20 points):** Based on overall speed improvements and number of passings.
 - **19 points** for upgrading <25/3 to 100/100 (highest)
 - **9 points** for upgrading <100/20 to 100/20 (lowest)
 - **1 point** for upgrading 100+ passings
 - Mixed upgrades will be scored separately and averaged
- **Grant funding request amount (up to 10 points*):** Matching funds of 55% or more will result in a higher score
 - **10 points** for requesting 30% or less of total project cost
 - **8 points** for 31 to 35% request
 - **5 points** for 36 to 40% request
 - **3 points** for 41 to 45% request
 - **0 points** for 46 to 50% request

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

Selection Criteria (cont'd)

- **Critical need/Community participation (up to 15 points):** Identify critical need related to access, affordability and reliability and/or consistency (required), financial commitment from community partner(s), serve tribal lands (with Tribal approval), and evidence of substantive community support
- **Project readiness (up to 25 points):** Demonstrate comprehensive preparation and ability to build, implement, and operate the project, provide a detailed budget, PE certified design and diagrams, document scalable equipment, identification and inclusion of preconstruction requirements in the project schedule, proposed speed tiers, service pricing and 5-year commitment to serve, marketing strategies, complete project schedule and financial requirements
- **Project sustainability (up to 25 points):** Provide evidence of technical expertise, organization support, and financial viability
- **Economic development and community impact (up to 15 points):** Demonstrate economic and community impact, including how the project will impact businesses, farms, ranches, CAIs and educational facilities, and support telehealth, education and agricultural uses
- **Broadband adoption assistance (up to 10 points):** Document technical assistance and training outreach in support of broadband adoption, and affordability (participation in the FCC ACP required)

**only applicable to B2B grant applications*

Additional Scoring for LDP (maximum of 30 points):

- **Passings per mile (up to 10 points):** Submit map validating the passings per mile (ppm)
 - **10 points** for 0-1 ppm
 - **6 points** for 1-2 ppm
 - **4 points** 2-3 ppm
 - **2 points** for 3-5 ppm
 - **0 points** for 5+ ppm
- **Explanation of need for higher funding (up to 15 points):** Demonstrate the need for the project to be considered under LDP, higher costs associated with construction in project area, cost per passing, demand that will guarantee a high take rate, and why the application should be funded over others
- **New application area (up to 10 points):** OBD staff will review prior year grant submissions and award 5 points if an application for this area has not been submitted previously as this is an indication that the 50%/\$5 million cap of eligible costs per project is a barrier to an application for this area

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Application Process

- Completed applications should be submitted to <https://mn deedgrants.mn.gov>
 - Refer to the [Grant Management System Quick Start Guide](#) for help

Links & Contacts

- [Program Website](#)
- [Call for Applications](#)
- [Grant Instructions and Application Guide](#)
- [Selection and Scoring Criteria](#)
- [MN Broadband Map](#)
- Submit questions to deed.broadband@state.mn.us

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