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
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

October 9 – Application guidelines and information released
October 11 – Broadband Grant Round 9 Webinar
October 26 – Last day to notify existing providers of intent to file
November 20 – Application portal opens for submissions (based on pre-application notification)
December 7 – Application window closes at 1:30 pm CT
December 12 – Challenge process begins
January 11, 2024 – Challenge process ends at 4:00 pm CT
Winter 2024 – Anticipated award announcements
June 30, 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

- **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 140 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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funding@nrtc.coop

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

Telecom Companies: Contact Brad Koester at **(615) 260-6933** or **bkoester@nrtc.coo**

Electric Cooperatives: Contact Steve Hanson at **(703) 464-5307** or **shanson@nrtc.coop**

Application Process

- Completed applications should be submitted to https://mndeedgrants.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
- Submit questions to deed.broadband@state.mn.us