

# nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities



**Maine**

## Program Name

ConnectME Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program

## Funding Amount

- \$6.5 million drawn from state bond approved by voters to expand availability of broadband service in Maine.

## Key Dates

**1/12/22 - Application Window Opens**  
**3/20/22 - Application Deadline at 11:59 PM EST**

**\$6.5 million**

## Eligible Applicants

- One or more multiple entities from the private and/or public sectors include the following entities:
  - Communications Service Providers/Internet Service Providers
  - A unit of local government, including town, city, county or regional council of governments
  - A broadband utility district or corporation, wholly or partially owned by unit of local government

## Eligible Areas

- **Unserved Area** - no service of 50/10 Mbps
- **Underserved Area** - broadband service of 50/10 Mbps or greater but less than 100/100 Mbps, from two providers

## Eligible Projects

- **Subscriber Location** - any location with one or more communications subscribers including: a house, apartment, apartment complex, condo complex, other dwelling unit, a business, business complex, medical facility, community building, government facility, or other facility
- Projects must serve subscriber locations in unserved or underserved areas
- Minimum financial commitment of \$700 per subscriber location
- Total financial commitment is equal to total project cost minus grant amount requested, divided by number of subscriber locations to be served
- The number of potential subscriber locations must include all of the following counts within the project area(s):
  - Subscriber locations within the unserved areas
  - Subscriber locations within unserved areas to be served by project
  - Subscriber locations within served areas to be served by project

# nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities

## Buildout Requirements

- Projects of less than \$1.5 million must be completed within one year of initial funds disbursement, or within 180 days of necessary licenses, permits and governmental approvals, whichever is later, unless an extension is approved
- Projects that are over \$1.5 million will have a contractually agreed to completion date

## Mapping Issues

- Use of VETRO FiberMap is required to select a project area from unserved and underserved areas identified by ConnectMaine as eligible. FiberMap will contain eligible project areas and a layer of potential subscriber locations, classified as unserved, underserved or served areas
- Use FiberMap to outline the following:
  - Project Area - select one or more project area(s)
  - Proposed Design - Design must include fiber routes (including fiber strand count) and interconnection with existing networks
  - Project Focus - Identify potential subscriber locations in the project area, identify each as being unserved, underserved or served areas
- VETRO will provide a FiberMap user guide upon request
- [Maine Broadband Availability Map](#)
- [ConnectME Broadband Mapping](#)

## Application Contents

- Grants Portal (Legal Applicant, Executive Summary, Project Information)
- Interactive FiberMap (Proposed Area, Design, Focus)
- Application Data Form
- Application Narrative
- Supplemental Files

## Scoring

- ConnectMaine will give preference to projects in unserved and underserved areas that provide the greatest relative improvement to existing internet service. The three preference groups:
  1. Least Served: Project areas where a majority of subscriber locations lack service of at least 25/3 Mbps
  2. Greatest Improvement: Projects proposing to offer at least 90% of subscriber locations broadband service of at least 1/1 Gbps
  3. All other proposed projects

# nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities

## Scoring (continued)

- Preference Criteria
  - Cost-Benefit
    - Applications are judged based on the cost-benefit of the proposed project
    - An unweighted cost-benefit is calculated as the grant amount requested divided by the number of potential subscriber locations in unserved and underserved areas to be served by the project
  - Project Scope
    - Density of Project Area
    - Community Financial Commitment
    - Applicant Financial Commitment
  - Project Value
    - Subscription Prices
    - Affordability Offering

## Budget Categories

- Professional Services
- Outside Plant
- Drop and Customer Premise Equipment
- Network and Access Equipment
- Wireless
- Long-term Leases

## Allowable Costs

- Eligible project costs include:
  - Professional Services including engineering, permitting, easements and encroachment acquisition, project and construction management
  - Outside Plant including fiber optic and coaxial cable, pole placement and pole make-ready, aerial and underground materials, and aerial and underground construction labor
  - Drops and CPE service drops and other costs of connection up to network interface points, including subscriber connection materials, subscriber connection equipment, subscriber connection labor, subscriber management equipment
  - Network and Access Equipment including headend, central office, or remote cabinet equipment and installation
  - Land and Buildings including equipment shelters, land, site preparation and site restoration costs
  - Wireless Equipment and Facilities including towers, tower improvements and installations, backhaul and access radios, and powering equipment
  - Long-term Leases with term not less than one year, including land required for network, building or space to house network equipment, and network elements such as dark fiber
- Ineligible costs include but aren't limited to:
  - Expenses incurred prior to date of awarded grants announcement
  - Administrative and fundraising activities, computers and other office equipment, vehicles and other operating expenses
  - Equipment owned or leased by the subscriber, including routers, modems and other costs beyond the network interface points
  - Operating expenses

# nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities

## Links & Emails

- [Home | ConnectME \(maine.gov\)](#)
- [Infrastructure Application Guide.pdf \(maine.gov\)](#)
- [Application Data Form](#)
- [Application Narrative Form](#)
- [Grant Application Announcement.pdf \(maine.gov\)](#)
- Please submit questions to [Connect.ME@maine.gov](mailto:Connect.ME@maine.gov)

**nrtc**  
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

**Electric Cooperatives:** Contact Kevin Fitzgibbons at **717-814-0840** or **kfitzgibbons@nrtc.coop**

**Telecom Companies:** Contact Byron Tuley at **319-298-4754** or **btuley@nrtc.coop**