

# nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities

## Program Name

Realizing Opportunities in Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN)

## Funding Amount

Up to \$238.7 million from ARPA Capital Projects Fund (CPF)

## Key Dates

- January 12, 2023 – Application Window Opens
- **March 14, 2023 – Application Window Closes at 4:00pm EDT**
- March-April – Application Review and Scoring
- End of April – Initial Grant Recommendations Published
- April-May 2023 – 45 day Comment/Objection Period
- May-June 2023 – Comment/Objection Validation
- June 2023 – Final Grant Awards Announced

## Eligible Applicants

- Internet service providers defined as:
  - Entities licensed under the MI Telecommunications Act
  - Franchise holders under the Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act
- Any entity currently providing broadband service in the state
- Governmental entities may apply for grants only as a public-private partnership (P3) with an internet service provider
  - P3s must demonstrate a competitive bidding process and comply with applicable state laws
- All ROBIN grantees must participate in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program

## Eligible Areas

Unserved locations are homes, businesses, and institutions lacking access to service speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps from at least one internet service provider

## Eligible Projects

- Projects to expand high-speed internet service to unserved locations
- Locations do not need to be contiguous, but must be reasonably adjacent
- Last mile projects can contain middle mile deployment but those deployments must not exceed 40% of the total grant request



**Michigan**

**\$238.7 million**

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## Scoring Criteria

- Experience and financial wherewithal
  - Financial wherewithal – 10 points
  - Organizational Capacity – 15 points
  - Viability – 10 points
- Readiness to build, operate, and maintain the project
  - Demonstration of project readiness – 10 points
  - Technical Demonstration – 10 points
  - Scalability – 10 points
- Community support
  - Evidence of community support – 10 points
  - Benefits to Community Anchor Institutions – 10 points
  - Economic Impact – 10 points
- Locations Passed
  - Total number of locations to be served – 15 points
  - Proportion of total locations that “currently have no internet access” – 15 points
  - Speed of service – 15 points
- Digital Equity and Inclusion
  - Monthly cost of service – 10 points
  - Data caps – 10 points
  - Low-cost service offering – 10 points
  - Opportunity zones – 10 points
  - Training – 10 points
  - Awareness – 10 points
- Grant to project costs – 40 points
- Comprehensive proposal – 10 points
- **Total possible points – 250 points**

## Match Requirements

- Any eligible project expense can be counted as part of the project match
  - Must provide documentation to support match
  - Must provide evidence that in-kind contributions are directly related to deployment of eligible service to eligible locations
  - Must complete and approve a resolution or affidavit authorizing the application and guaranteeing the project match

## Buildout Requirements

- Funded projects must deliver 100/100 Mbps symmetrical internet speed
  - Unless significant topographic, geographic, or financial impracticability exists in the project area
- All program funds must be expended by December 31, 2026

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## **Middle Mile**

- Up to 35% of ROBIN funds (\$83.3M) can be used for middle-mile projects that support deployment of broadband service to unserved areas
- Applications will be scored using the same criteria as last mile applications
- Applicants should have partnerships with one or more last mile ISPs
- Last mile costs must not be more than 15% of the total grant request
- Overall scores for middle mile projects dependent on proposed last mile service through partner ISPs

## **Eligible Costs**

- Up to 85% of project costs for a qualifying project can be covered by the grant
  - Pre-project but post-award, development costs and uses, including data-gathering, feasibility studies, community engagement and public feedback processes, equity assessments and planning, and needs assessments
    - Includes: permitting, planning, architectural design, engineering design, and work related to environmental, historical, and cultural reviews
  - Costs of repair, rehabilitation, construction, improvement, and acquisition of real property, equipment, and facilities (e.g., telecommunications equipment, including infrastructure for backhaul, middle, and last mile networks)
  - Cost of long-term leases including IRU agreements and capital leases
  - Personnel costs including salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants required for the project
  - Costs to increase broadband adoption and improve digital literacy
  - Compliance costs associated with monitoring of and reporting on projects, including award closeout costs
  - Costs associated with maintaining a performance management and evaluation regime

## **Ineligible Costs**

- Indirect or operational expenses that exceed 10% of total project costs or \$2 million (whichever is less)
- Costs associated with completing or filing an application for the grant
- Expenses related to the provision of telephone or video services not necessary for the delivery of broadband services
- Any expense incurred prior to the formal acceptance and execution of a grant agreement
- MIHI and U.S. Treasury will make the final determinations for ineligible costs

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## Links & Email

- [ROBIN Fact Sheet \(govdelivery.com\)](https://govdelivery.com)
- [Realizing Opportunities with Broadband Infrastructure Networks \(ROBIN\) Program Guidance \(michigan.gov\)](https://michigan.gov)
- [Last Mile Application Instructions](#)
- [Middle Mile Application Instructions](#)
- [ROBIN Eligibility Map](#)
- [US Treasury Guidance for the Capital Projects Fund](#)
- [MIHI - Michigan High Speed Internet Office](#)
- [LEO - Infrastructure and Digital Inclusion Funding Opportunities \(michigan.gov\)](https://michigan.gov)
- Please direct any questions to the MIHI Office at: [LEO-MIHighSpeedInternet@michigan.gov](mailto:LEO-MIHighSpeedInternet@michigan.gov)

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