

nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities

Program Name

Tennessee Emergency Broadband Fund Grant Program

Funding Amount

- Up to \$400 million in ARPA funds for broadband infrastructure, no funding cap
- Grant is a 70/30 match (30% of the project costs contributed by grantee)

Key Dates

Last Day for Application Questions & Clarifications: March 14, 2022 - 2 PM CT

Completeness Review Deadline: March 14, 2022

Applications Due: **March 15, 2022 - 2 PM CT**

Public Notice Period Begins for Comment: April 4, 2022

Public Notice Period Ends (last day for public comment): April 15, 2022

Response Period for Finalists Begins: May 16, 2022

Response Period for Finalists Ends: June 3, 2022

Tennessee

\$400 million

Eligible Applicants

- Applicants must be authorized to provide retail broadband in proposed funding service area including non-profit, for-profit, and municipal government entities
- This includes but is not limited to telecommunications providers such as cable, electric and telephone cooperatives, fixed wireless, municipal broadband, and satellite
- Grantees are required to participate in FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or a commensurate program
- Documentation of wages and labor standards for infrastructure contracts over \$10 million are required (Davis-Bacon Act requirements)

Eligible Areas

- **Unserved Area** is a geographic area in which at least 80% of the households and businesses within it lack a fixed, terrestrial 100/20Mbps.
- Areas lacking 25/3Mbps or 10/1Mbps connection receive priority scoring
- **Note:** Proposed service areas are not required to be contiguous. However, applications with non-contiguous areas, more than 10 miles apart, must include an explanation of how the economic and community impact is the same for the proposed areas

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Eligible Projects

- Projects must reliably deliver at least 100/20 Mbps scalable to 100/100 Mbps
- Must be reviewed by professional engineer or qualified individual
- 3-year timeline for project buildout
- Existing inventory is eligible for reimbursement if procured after March 3, 2021, per US Treasury Interim Final Rule
- Make ready work performed prior to starting construction is eligible dating back to March 3, 2021
- RDOF designated areas are eligible, but will not be prioritized
- USDA ReConnect Grant funded areas are **NOT** eligible

Mapping Issues

- The most recent FCC Form 477 will be used to determine existing service levels
- Applicant is permitted to provide additional information to demonstrate that the proposed service area is in fact unserved. Additional information must be sufficient to conclude that an area is eligible and may include but is not limited to statistically significant survey data for the designated area, or documentation of existing infrastructure locations within a given census block
- [Statewide eligibility map](#)
- [Eligible areas lacking 25mb/3mb \(.shp\)](#)
- [Eligible areas lacking 100mb/20mb \(.shp\)](#)
- Ineligible area shapefiles and additional maps at [this link](#)

Application Contents

- Page 1: Cover Sheet (Includes Portal Instructions)
- Page 2-4: Project Overview
- Page 4-5: Financials
- Page 5-6: Community Impact

Scoring

210 Total Possible Points

Need for Grant Funding (50 points)

- Description of need including an evaluation of eligibility for the grant, why the area is difficult to serve and the likelihood the area will not be served without grant funding (30 Points)
- Percentage of grant area lacking fixed, terrestrial 25/3 Mbps and 10/1 Mbps (20 Points)

Leveraged and Matched Funds (15 points)

- Additional match or other leveraged funds

Speed, Scalability and Affordability (25 points)

- Applicants must demonstrate the project is scalable, provides competitive speeds that are affordable, and serves the long term needs of the community

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Scoring (continued)

Sustainability & Implementation Readiness (30 points)

- Technical, managerial, and financial capabilities of the applicant demonstrating the ability to complete the proposed project

Economic and Community Impact (30 points)

- Economic development impact and tailoring of project to meet community needs relative to the overall cost of the project **(25 Points)**
- Service to a previously unserved or underserved community anchor institution **(5 Points)**

Community Support (20 points)

- Partnerships and support from local community

Adoption Strategy (20 points)

- Plan to encourage adoption of broadband services beyond traditional marketing, offer low-cost service plan or participate in FCC's Affordability Connectivity Program

Broadband Ready (10 points)

- Serves a political subdivision designated as a Broadband Ready Community

County Designation (10 points)

- Project primarily serves a federally designated "Distressed" county – or – "At-Risk" county

Middle Mile

The grant will not fund middle mile only projects. Middle mile expenses are eligible for grant funding only when necessary for the provision of last-mile services

Budget Categories

- Construction
- Legal Services
- Appraisals
- Acquisition of Real Property
- Capital Purchase
- Project Contingency (cannot exceed 15% of total grant funds)
- Note: Applicants must use the TEBF budget template spreadsheet on the application portal

Ineligible Expenses

- Costs to provide service to an area that already has 100/20Mbps service
- Operational expenses
- Middle mile infrastructure that is not directly connected to service provision for an end user in a grant eligible area
- Expenses related to the provision of telephone or video services

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Links & Emails

- tn.gov/broadband
- [TNECD TEBF-ARPA Grant](#)
- [TEBF-ARPA Program Guidelines](#)
- [TEBF-ARPA Application Webinar](#)
- General questions or application questions: ECD.Broadband@tn.gov
(Subject Line: TNECD Emergency Broadband Fund Application Question)
- Mapping questions: ECD.Broadband@tn.gov
- Taylre Beaty, TNECD Broadband Director: taylre.beaty@tn.gov
- Emily You, TNECD Broadband Grants Manager: emily.h.you@tn.gov

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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 Todd Ishee at 256-520-7965 or tishee@nrtc.coop

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