



## Funding Amount: \$120 million

### Program Name

Bringing Online Opportunities to Texas (BOOT)

### Funding Amount

- Up to \$120 million from ARPA Capital Projects Fund (CPF)

### Key Dates

- March 6, 2023 - NOFA Issued and questions regarding NOFA/Application can be submitted
- March 17, 2023 - Deadline for submitting questions regarding NOFA
- March 31, 2023 - Publication of clarification responses
- April 3, 2023 - First day to register/submit applications
- **May 5, 2023 – Application Submission Deadline**
- December 31, 2026 - Proposed projects must be completed

### Eligible Applicants

- Political subdivisions of the State of Texas
- Commercial broadband service providers
- Non-commercial broadband services providers
- Partnerships between political subdivisions, commercial broadband service providers, noncommercial broadband service providers or any combination

### Eligible Areas

- **Unserved Area** - Area or location within a designated area (Census Block) that does not have access to 25/3 Mbps or faster
- **Underserved Area** - Area or location within a designated area that has access to 25/3 Mbps but lacks access to internet service offered with speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps
- A designated area on the Texas Broadband Development Map is eligible if:
  - Fewer than 80% of the addresses in the designated area have access to broadband service; and
  - Federal government has not awarded funding under a competitive process

### Eligible Areas

- Project area must consist of the entirety of one or more contiguous designated areas that are eligible to receive funding as of the date this Notice of Funds Availability is issued as determined by the Texas Broadband Development Map
  - Applicants will be required to provide broadband service to all unserved and underserved locations
  - Application may not contain a designated area that is ineligible to receive funding



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- Projects that bring connectivity to one or more locations within an ineligible area will be disqualified from eligibility
- Eligible areas with the lowest percentage of addresses that have access to broadband service will be prioritized

## Eligible Projects

- Upon completion, must deliver service that reliably meets or exceeds speeds of 100/100 Mbps
  - If impracticable, because of geography, topography, or excessive cost, must be designed to reliably meet or exceed 100/20 Mbps and be scalable to a minimum of 100/100 Mbps
  - Signed engineering certification on letterhead requesting exemption from minimum network requirements of 100 /100 Mbps is required
  - Applicant must submit the request with the application form, no request may be made after notice of award
- Minimum grant award is \$200,000 and maximum grant award is \$4,999,999
- No match requirement, however preferential consideration will be given to applications match contributions (including in-kind) as a percent of the total project costs
- Must be designed to provide last-mile broadband service to end users
- Applicants selected for award will be required to provide an irrevocable, stand-by letter of credit for the grant award to be finalized

## Buildout Requirements

- Project areas overlapping with proposed project areas in other applications may provide notice to the office of their intent to resolve the overlapping areas
- Applicants choosing to resolve must jointly notify BDO of such efforts no later than the 10th business day after the applicant received notice from the office of the overlapping area
- BDO will provide notice to each applicant of the removal of overlapping areas from the application

## Buildout Requirements

- If removal of the overlapping area results in retaining less than 50% of the original project area, BDO may, at its sole discretion, remove the application from grant funding consideration
- If BDO removes an overlapping project area from an application, an applicant may amend and resubmit an application without the overlapping area if:
  - Remaining project area is greater than 50% of the original project area; or
  - Remaining project area is less than 50 percent of the original project area and the office does not remove the application from grant funding consideration
- Applicants must propose and offer a low-cost option with a minimum of 100/20 Mbps

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



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- Awardees must participate in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Awardees receiving funds must offer non-discriminatory access to, and use of, its proposed network on a wholesale basis, at just and reasonable wholesale rates

## Selection Criteria

- Expansion of Broadband Service – 25%
- Project Plan Feasibility – 25%
- Applicant Qualifications – 15%
- Community Support & Involvement – 15%
- Community Need & Social Impact – 20%

## Eligible Costs

- Costs associated with completing the grant application
- Pre-project development costs and uses such as: data-gathering, feasibility studies, community engagement and public feedback processes, digital equity assessments and planning, and needs assessments; 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 (e.g., devices and office equipment), and facilities (e.g., telecommunications equipment, backhaul infrastructure )
- Cost of long-term leases (for terms greater than one year) of facilities required to provide qualifying broadband service, including infeasible right-of-use (IRU) agreements and capital leases
- Personnel costs including salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants
- Costs to increase broadband adoption and improve digital literacy
- Costs associated with monitoring of and reporting on projects in compliance with Treasury requirements, including award closeout costs
- Costs associated with collecting and measuring performance data and conducting activities needed to establish and maintain a performance management and evaluation regime for project(s)

## Ineligible Costs

- Acquisition of spectrum licenses
- Operating expenses and overhead
- Short-term operating leases
- Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments, or other debt service costs incurred prior to March 15, 2021
- Fees or issuance costs associated with the issuance of new debt

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- Satisfaction of any obligation related to a settlement agreement, judgment, consent decree, or judicially confirmed debt restructuring plan in a judicial, administrative, or regulatory proceeding
- Expenses to support or oppose collective bargaining

## Links & Emails

- [NOFA](#)
- [Texas Broadband Development Office](#)
- [Apply for Grants \(texas.gov\)](#)
- [Bringing Online Opportunities to Texas \(BOOT\) Program](#)
- [Texas Broadband Development Map](#)
- [Texas Register September 23, 2022 issue \(state.tx.us\)](#)
- Please submit questions to: [bdo.nofa@cpa.texas.gov](mailto:bdo.nofa@cpa.texas.gov)



[funding@nrtc.coop](mailto: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

**Telecom Companies:** Contact Chick Kennedy at 352-552-1317 or [ckennedy@nrtc.coop](mailto:ckennedy@nrtc.coop)

**Electric Cooperatives:** Contact Matthew Timmons at 620-330-6178 or [mtimmons@nrtc.coop](mailto:mtimmons@nrtc.coop)