

nrtc **FUNDING ALERT!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities



Program Name

WSBO Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program

Funding Amount

Approximately \$120 million from ARPA Capital Projects Fund (CPF)

Key Dates

- **November 22, 2022** - Application Opened
- **December 6, 2022, 2:30-4:00 pm PT** - Informational Webinar
- **January 17, 2023 - Application Deadline**
- **January 18, 2023, to February 20, 2023** - Applications Review
- **February 10, 2023** - Challenge Request Due
- **February 28, 2023** - Awards Released

Washington

\$120 million

Eligible Applicants

- Local governments (including public ports and public utility districts)
- Federally recognized Tribes
- Nonprofit organizations
- Nonprofit cooperative organizations
- Multiparty entities that consist of at least one public partner

Eligible Projects

- Projects that deliver service that reliably meets or exceeds 100 Mbps symmetrical
 - If impracticable (due to geography, topography, or excessive cost) the Project must be designed to reliably meet or exceed 100/20 Mbps speeds scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrical
- Last-mile connectivity
 - Last mile infrastructure - broadband infrastructure that serves as the final connection from a broadband service provider's network to the end-user's on-premises telecommunications equipment
- Projects can qualify for up to \$12M each
- Project location information must include a written description of the specific roads, streets, neighborhoods, or other bounding information describing the project area
- Applicants are encouraged to prioritize investments in FTTP where feasible
- Applicants should avoid locations that have existing service or a verifiable agreement to build reliable wireline service with minimum speeds of 100/20 Mbps, scalable to 150 Mbps symmetrical by 2028
- Anchor institutions to receive at least 1 Gbps symmetrical service by 2026
- A 10% cash match is required
- The match requirement is waived in Rural Counties and/or Indian Country
 - Rural counties are those with population density of fewer than 100 persons per square mile or a county smaller than

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Eligible Projects (continued)

225 square miles, as determined by the Office of Financial Management (RCW43.160.020)

- A project located in any of the listed 15 rural counties, or Indian Country qualify as distressed:
 - Distressed Counties: Clallam, Franklin, Jefferson, Okanogan, Stevens, Cowlitz Grant, Lewis, Pacific, Wahkiakum, Ferry, Grays Harbor, Mason, Pend Oreille, Yakima

Scoring Criteria

- Project Need – **30 points**
- Readiness to Proceed – **30 points**
- Sustainability – **20 points**
- Affordability and Adoption – **20 points**

Buildout Requirements

- Costs may be incurred from the date of the Award Letter (February 2023) to October 30, 2026
- Recipients must expend all funds by October 30, 2026
- Project completion is 3 years and 8 months

Existing Network Service Provider Notification

- Application must include evidence of consultation with existing network service providers in the area (Public Utility Districts and/or Internet Service Providers) and indicate the incumbent's position on the project (support, neutral, opposed)
- At least two attempts must be made to each incumbent network service provider in the project area
 - A good faith effort will be considered satisfied if the incumbent network service provider responds and provides the requested information, or if they have not responded within 30 days of the inquiry
- Applicant must provide documentation of contact with all existing network service providers:
 - Letters or emails must be submitted with the online grant application
 - Provide each document that was sent and responses from each existing network service provider (if received)
 - Indicate that no response was received
 - Phone contact is encouraged, but must be followed up with an email or direct mail confirming the content of the phone call

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Objection Process

- Within 3 days of grant application cycle closing on January 17, the WSBO will publish the proposed geographic broadband service area and the proposed broadband speeds for each application submitted
- An existing network service provider currently serving or that has begun construction to serve the proposed project area may object to an application unless one of the following is true:
 - Affected existing network provider confirmed in writing that end users in the proposed project area are not currently receiving broadband service at 100/20 Mbps or speeds equal to or greater than state speed goals
 - Affected existing network provider confirmed in writing that construction has begun, or will begin within a year of WSBO award issuance, to provide service in the proposed project area at 100/20 Mbps or speeds equal to or greater than state speed goals
 - Affected existing network provider did not engage in a timely manner with the project applicant after good faith attempts were made

Middle Mile

- Middle-mile projects are eligible and encouraged to have commitments in place to support new and/or improved last-mile service

Eligible Costs

Costs must be directly related to the scope of work of the project:

- Design, architectural & engineering work
- Building permits/fees
- Archeological/historical & cultural review
- Construction labor and materials
- Demolition/site preparation
- Equipment rental/lease, except covered communications equipment or services
- If equipment rental/lease cost exceeds the cost to purchase, contact your WSBO project manager for approval to purchase the equipment as allowed under 2 CFR § 200.439
- Indirect Rate: federal approved indirect rate or 10 percent of the modified total direct costs
- Capitalized equipment
- Construction or project management
- Landscaping
- Program Administrative Cost - costs incurred by a Recipient related to administration of Capital Projects Fund awards and/or provision of technical assistants to potential Sub-recipients
- Personnel costs including: salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants required project (project managers, program directors, subject matter experts, equity consultants, grant administrators, financial analysts, accountants, and attorneys)
- Real property purchased specifically for the project and associated costs
- Costs directly associated with property acquisition include: appraisal fees, title opinions, surveying fees, real estate fees, title transfer taxes, easements of record, and legal expenses

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Ineligible Costs

- Operating expenses, other than grant administration costs
- Fundraising activities
- Computers or office equipment
- Rolling stock (such as vehicles and generators)
- Lease payments for rental of equipment or facilities
- Mortgages and property leases (including long-term)

Links & Emails

- [WSBO Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program](#)
- [Washington Statewide Broadband Act - Washington State Department of Commerce](#)
- Please direct any questions to Tammy Mastro, Broadband Infrastructure Programs Senior Specialist tammy.mastro@commerce.wa.gov or (360) 791-2805

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