

nrtc **FUNDING UPDATE!**

Professional Assistance for Today's Unprecedented Funding Opportunities



Wisconsin

Program Name

Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program

Eligible Applicants

Up to \$14.1 million from funds appropriated by the Wisconsin Budget Act, 2021

Key Dates

Application window open: December 7, 2022

Questions and requests for clarification due: January 17, 2023

Grant System assistance deadline: February 21, 2023

Applications due: February 22, 2023 - 1:30 PM CT

Deadline for submitting objections: March 12, 2023

Response to objections deadline: March 27, 2023

\$14.1 million

Eligible Applicants

- For profit or not for profit, including cooperatives
- Telecommunications utility
- Political subdivisions** in partnerships with eligible applicants

** Political subdivisions mean a city, village, town, or county

Eligible Areas

- **Unserved Area** – not served by an ISP offering service that includes the following:
 - Fixed wireless service or wired service
 - Speeds of at least 5 Mbps download and 600 Kbps upload
- **Underserved Area** – served by fewer than 2 ISPs, providing speeds of 25/3 Mbps
- Eligible areas map: <https://maps.psc.wi.gov/apps/WisconsinBroadbandMap/>

Mapping Issues

- Proposed project area(s) must indicate the wireline route and/or location of tower placement
- The geospatial file(s) of the proposed project area must be emailed to PSCBroadbandData@wisconsin.gov as an attachment (in a zipped file for geospatial data) or as a URL reference to a downloadable file
- The geospatial file(s) of the project area must be shapefiles or a geodatabase with feature classes
 - Google Earth KMZ files are an acceptable substitute, if necessary
- A static map must be uploaded to the Grants System and included in the application
- Applicants are encouraged to submit an additional file listing the proposed served locations including the associated latitude/longitude and addresses
 - The data can be in a geospatial file or CSV format

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Application Contents

- Section 1 – Eligibility
- Section 2 – Project Description
- Section 3 – Merit
 - Responses to questions in this section will contribute to the overall merit rank assigned to the application
- All application information filed with the Commission is considered public
- Only accepting letters, signatures, and other comments in support of an application

Evaluation Criteria

- Matching Funds
 - Higher priority given based on the percentage of matching funds (contributions) proposed by the applicant and the variety of sources of matching funding Public-Private Partnerships
 - Priority given to an application that includes a city, village, town, or county, in partnership with a telecommunication provider or other private organization and exhibits active community engagement
- Existing Broadband Service
 - Priority given to an application proposing to serve an unserved area
 - Wireless broadband service provider's applications with significant overlap with existing broadband service in addition to service to an unserved area is not entitled to priority under this subsection
- Project Impact
 - Higher priority given to applications that propose to serve a larger geographic area, a larger number of customers or communities in an area, or provide a higher speed of service
- Scalability
 - Priority given to an application that demonstrates a commitment to increase the size or scope of its broadband network in the future
 - Lower priority given to an application that discusses possible growth potential, but declines to make a specific commitment regarding future growth of the broadband network
- Economic Development
 - Priority given to an application that demonstrates the potential to promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base, or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region
- Effect Upon Broadband Service to Adjacent Areas
 - Priority given to an application that demonstrates that it will not impair the ability of a competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project

Objection Period

- Objections are due by 1:30 PM CT on March 13, 2023, and must be filed via the [Electronic Regulatory Filing \(ERF\) System](#)
- If an objection or response is from an applicant with the intent to modify an application then a new budget, project summary, and map are required
- Responses are due by 1:30 PM CT on March 27, 2023

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Middle Mile

- Must identify last-mile broadband service providers that will connect to the middle mile facility
- If the participation of last-mile providers is uncertain or cannot be disclosed publicly at the time of the application, describe the providers that could interconnect

Buildout Requirements

- Due to the size of available grant funds, applicants should size their requests accordingly
- Performance period is expected to end in late 2025
- Provide a schedule of significant activities by month(s) after the Order date (yet to be determined)

Ineligible Costs

Costs of preparing an application are not reimbursable

Links & Emails

- [Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program](#)
- [State Broadband Expansion Grant Instructions](#)
- [State Broadband Eligibility Grant Map](#)
- [Public Service Commission Grants System User's Guide](#)
- [Electronic Regulatory Filing \(ERF\) System](#)
- Questions concerning this application must be submitted via email on or before January 17, 2023, at 1:30 PM CT to: PSCStateBroadbandOffice@wisconsin.gov

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