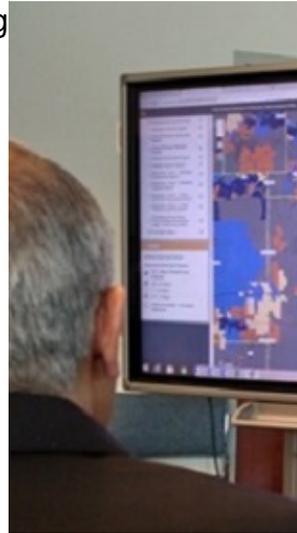


Applicants Request More than \$221 Million from Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
Thursday, 16 November 2023 10:52 -

<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/broadband-map-northwoods-s459.jpg>



Requests for broadband expansion funding remain strong as demand continues to outpace available dollars.

MADISON — On Wednesday, Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC), announced the Wisconsin Broadband Office received 124 applications requesting \$221.6 million for the Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program. PSC is expected to award up to \$42 million under the American Rescue Plan Act’s Capital Projects Fund (CPF) to administer Broadband Infrastructure Grants and invest in broadband construction and deployment that will provide high-quality internet to locations that lack access to adequate, affordable service. The ratio of requested funding to available funding is the highest for any grant round since the first in 2014.



“The Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program will help build upon our progress to connect over 395,000 homes and businesses to new or improved high-speed internet by helping close the digital divide in communities that have long struggled with inadequate service,” said Gov. Evers. “That said, clearly, the need far outweighs the resources available, and we must keep

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making meaningful state investments to prioritize and invest in the robust broadband infrastructure needed to meet our state's 21st-century needs.”

“I want to thank Gov. Evers for his ongoing commitment to addressing the internet access and affordability challenges in our state,” said PSC Chairperson Rebecca Cameron Valcq. “We know that continued investments are necessary to meet the clear, consistent demand for broadband infrastructure and help us connect more communities as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.”

The CPF is designed to address the barriers to internet access that existed before but were made worse by the coronavirus pandemic. Broadband Infrastructure Grant funds will be used to make necessary investments in broadband infrastructure designed to provide consistent, reliable, and high-performance broadband service to areas most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic in Wisconsin. The funding is available to construct broadband infrastructure projects to deploy reliable internet service that will meet or exceed 100/100 Megabits per second (Mbps) symmetrical speed internet service and include at least one low-cost option for work, education, and health monitoring.

During the application review, PSC will evaluate each grant based on, among other factors, affordability of service, project design and technology, applicant capacity to complete the work, and community engagement and support. PSC is expected to announce grant recipients by spring 2024.

Since 2019, Gov. Evers has allocated more than \$345 million in state and federal funds to expand high-speed internet, including the largest state investment in state history, ensuring that more than 395,000 homes and businesses will have new or improved service. In his most recent budget, the governor recommended allocating \$750 million in state funding to supplement the federal funding being allocated to the state in coming years. Republicans in the Wisconsin State Legislature removed this funding from the final budget that made it to the governor's desk. More work remains as, according to the most recent estimates from the Federal Communications Commission, there are more than 251,000 unserved locations and more than 211,000 underserved locations in the state.

A list of Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program applicants is available [here](#). A flag map of proposed project areas is available [here](#).

More information on the Capital Projects Fund can be found on the [Capital Projects Broadband page](#) on the PSC website.