

## Office of Broadband Development

### Call for Border to Border Broadband Applications

#### Program Description and Background

In order to continue to promote broadband infrastructure expansion for areas of Minnesota that remain unserved or underserved, public sector investment is necessary. The Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program was initially established by the 2014 legislature to assist with costly deployment projects that might not occur without public financial assistance. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §§ 116J.394-116J.398, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has the authority to award grants to assist broadband providers with eligible infrastructure installation costs.

#### Funding Availability for 2019

As designated in the 2019 legislative session, \$20 million has been appropriated as available funding for this round of the Minnesota broadband grant program. Priority consideration will be given to projects that leverage greater amounts of funding for a project from other private and public sources. The maximum individual grant amount is \$5 million. The maximum grant funding award cannot exceed 50% of the eligible total project costs.

#### Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this program are an incorporated business or partnership, a political subdivision, an Indian tribe, a Minnesota nonprofit organization organized under chapter 317A, a Minnesota cooperative association organized under chapter 308A or 308B, or a Minnesota limited liability corporation organized under chapter 322B for the purpose of expanding broadband access.

#### Eligible Project Areas

Broadband development projects located in unserved or underserved areas are eligible. An unserved area is an area of Minnesota in which households or businesses lack access to wire-line broadband service at speeds that meet the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) threshold of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 megabits per second (Mbps) upload. An underserved area is an area of Minnesota in which households or businesses do receive service at or above the FCC threshold of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up, but lack access to wire-line broadband service at speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

## Eligible Program Costs

The Broadband Development Grant Program can pay up to 50 percent of the eligible costs for a qualifying project. Eligible costs refer to the costs associated with the acquisition and installation of middle mile and/or last mile infrastructure that can support broadband service scalable to speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload.

## Matching Funds Requirement

To obtain a broadband development grant, the applicant must provide for the funding not covered by the grant with matching funds. The match can come from any private and/or public sources available to the Applicant. The state grant funding period begins after the grant application is received, evaluated, and officially approved by the DEED Commissioner with an award letter and executed contract.

## Selection Criteria

The prospective applications are eligible for a maximum 120 reviewer scoring points, and will be ranked on the following categories:

- Anticipated broadband improvements – up to 20 points
- Grant funding request amount – up to 10 points
- Community participation – up to 15 points
- Project readiness – up to 25 points
- Project sustainability – up to 25 points
- Economic development and community impact – up to 15 points
- Broadband adoption assistance – up to 10 points

## Application Filing Window and Deadlines for 2019

The Minnesota Broadband Grant Program is a competitive grant award cycle for this 2019 legislative appropriation. The grant application window for 2019 will open on July 3, 2019.

***All applications must be received at DEED on or before the application deadline of  
September 13, 2019 no later than 4 p.m.***

[Completed applications and all required supporting documentation – 3 paper copies and one electronic copy in Microsoft Word format on a USB drive – must be received by DEED’s Office of Broadband Development on or prior to 4 p.m. on September 13, 2019 to be deemed eligible for funding.]

## Contact Information

For more information and application instructions and template forms, consult our website, under Broadband Grant Program – Application details, or contact our OBD Staff at 651-259-7610. OBD/DEED will be hosting three webcast listening sessions during July to provide potential Applicants with more information about the program and to answer questions. Details about these webcasts will be available soon.