

Minnesota Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program



STATE BROADBAND GRANT AWARDS ANNOUNCED JANUARY 21

ST. PAUL – The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) will award grants totaling \$23,270,933 to 30 projects in the fifth year of the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant program. State grant dollars are matched by \$35,935,870 in local funds, for a total investment in broadband infrastructure of \$59,206,803.

The funding, which was approved during the 2019 legislative sessions, goes to broadband providers and communities to build broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved locations across the state. The following is a brief description of each of the grant projects awarded this round:

AcenTek – Rural Houston Exchange FTTH – GRANT \$2,895,318

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 485 unserved and 424 underserved locations in areas of Houston and Winona Counties. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Houston County, AcenTek will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. These investments will bring the benefits of high speed broadband to the many farms in the project area, enable employees in healthcare to work remotely, and allow students to be more successful.

Total eligible project cost is \$9,651,059

Local match is \$6,755,741

Arvig (Loretel Systems, Inc.) – Cormorant Lakes Area Project – GRANT \$430,780

This middle and last mile project will upgrade approximately 481 unserved locations near Pelican Lake, Lake Ida, Turtle Lake, and Big Cormorant Lake in Otter Tail, Becker, and Clay Counties. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Otter Tail County, Arvig will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. These investments will improve quality of life and business development opportunities.

Total eligible project cost is \$1,230,800

Local match is \$800,020

Arvig (Melrose Telephone Company) – Eden Valley & Melrose Area Project – GRANT \$393,890

This middle and last mile project will upgrade approximately 84 unserved and 336 underserved locations in the Rice Lake and Brown Lake areas in rural Stearns County, and part of the Melrose industrial park near Interstate 94. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and the City of Melrose, Arvig will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Having this advanced access to the Melrose industrial park will address the needs of existing businesses and attract additional businesses. The rural Eden Valley portion of the project will see improved quality of life, including opportunities for business, education, health care, and telecommuting options.

Total eligible project cost is \$1,125,400

Local match is \$731,510

Benton Cooperative Telephone Company – Ramey Phase I – GRANT \$936,759

This last mile project will serve approximately 253 unserved households, nine unserved businesses, two unserved town halls, and 97 unserved farms in the Ramey ILEC exchange in portions of Alberta and Granite Ledge Townships in Benton County, and portions of Hillman, Lakin, and Morrill Townships in Morrison County, and a portion of Page Township in Mille Lacs County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Benton Cooperative Telephone Company will improve broadband service levels to at least 25 Mbps download and 25 Mbps upload, and a maximum speed of 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload, meeting or exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. These homes and businesses will have faster access to needed crop prices, ordering parts, educational opportunities, and telemedicine services.

Total eligible project cost is \$2,676,454

Local match is \$1,739,695

BEVCOMM (Eckles Telephone Company) – Le Sueur County Project – GRANT \$1,857,376

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 417 unserved households, 88 unserved farms, 59 unserved businesses, and 4 community anchor institutions in rural areas around the communities of Montgomery, Heidelberg, and New Prague in Le Sueur, Rice, and Scott Counties. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Le Sueur County, BEVCOMM will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Sustainable broadband adoption will transform these unserved areas into highly-productive rural communities. This use and development of broadband will provide various home-based business options, stimulate economic growth, and stimulate innovation and investment. Education, health care, agriculture, energy efficiency, and public safety will improve with high-speed Internet access.

Total eligible project cost is \$3,714,752

Local match is \$1,857,376

BEVCOMM (Pine Island Telephone Company) – NE Pine Island Fiber Project Phase I – GRANT \$222,222

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 54 unserved households, eight unserved farms, 14 unserved businesses, and one underserved household in areas of Pine Island and New Haven Townships in Goodhue County, and a small portion in Olmsted County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Goodhue County Economic Development Authority, BEVCOMM will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. The use and development of broadband will provide various home-based business options, stimulate economic growth, innovation, and investment. Education, health care, agriculture, energy efficiency, and public safety will improve with high-speed Internet access.

Total eligible project cost is \$634,920

Local match is \$412,698

BEVCOMM (Blue Earth Valley Telephone Company & Easton Telephone Company) – Rural Faribault County Project – GRANT: \$579,781

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 112 unserved and six underserved households, 50 unserved farms, and eight unserved businesses in areas of Faribault and Martin Counties. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Faribault County Economic Development Authority, BEVCOMM will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Sustainable broadband adoption will transform these unserved areas into highly-productive rural communities.

Total eligible project cost is \$1,449,451

Local match is \$869,670

Bois Forte Tribal Government – Bois Forte FTTH – GRANT: \$1,248,790

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 10 unserved and 468 underserved locations throughout four sectors of the Bois Forte Reservation in northeastern Minnesota: Nett Lake, Palmquist, Indian Point, and Vermilion. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Iron Range Resource & Rehabilitation Board, and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Bois Forte will improve broadband service levels to at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload, meeting or exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. This project will help increase jobs, wealth, and revenue throughout the entire reservation.

Total eligible project cost is \$2,497,580

Local match is \$1,248,790

CenturyLink (Qwest Corporation) – Nessel Township FTTH Project – GRANT \$1,657,550

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 956 unserved and 64 underserved locations in Nessel Township in Chisago County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Nessel Township, CenturyLink will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Building a fiber-to-the-premise network that provides advanced, high speed broadband services to households, businesses, and farms in the proposed grant area improves access to critical school e-learning applications while also making agricultural operations more efficient and enhancing crop production through enabled precision agriculture tools. The broadband network will improve access to rural health care resources and will stimulate a more robust local area economy.

Total eligible project cost is \$5,525,167

Local match is \$3,867,617

Charter Communications – Lake Carlos Project – GRANT \$74,540

This middle and last mile project will upgrade approximately 43 unserved households, two unserved businesses, and two unserved farms on the eastern side of Lake Carlos in Douglas County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Charter Communications will improve broadband service levels up to 940 Mbps download and 35 Mbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Consumers will be able to work from home, have better access to education and healthcare, and businesses will be better able to compete locally and globally.

Total eligible project cost is \$149,081

Local match is \$74,541

Charter Communications – Rosemount North Project – GRANT \$499,072

This middle and last mile project will upgrade approximately 40 unserved and 225 underserved locations in northwestern Rosemount in Dakota County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Dakota County, Charter Communications will improve broadband service levels up to 940 Mbps download and 35 Mbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Project area residents have been actively engaged in an effort to improve broadband service offerings in their neighborhood.

Total eligible project cost is \$998,144

Local match is \$499,072

CTC (Consolidated Telephone Company) – Fort Ripley/Executive Acres Project – GRANT \$830,587

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 279 unserved and 120 underserved locations in Morrison and Crow Wing Counties. A funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, SourceWell, IronFire Inc., Rub My Rack BBQ LLC, and CTC will help to bring reliable high-speed fiber internet services to several unserved and underserved areas within north central Minnesota. The new services will provide residents and businesses with internet speeds of 1Gbps download and upload, exceeding the Minnesota 2026 speed goal. Building a fiber-to-the-premise network that provides advanced, high-speed broadband services to households, businesses and farms in the proposed grant area will enable students to better access educational resources, families to communicate with loved ones who may be homebound or deployed by the military, businesses to grow and thrive, aging residents to live longer and healthier lives, workers to telecommute and be more productive employees. The broadband network will stimulate a more robust local area economy.

Total eligible cost is \$1,661,175

Local match is \$830,588

Emily Cooperative Telephone Company – Round Lake Fiber Project – GRANT \$376,000

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 242 unserved and 103 underserved locations in the Esquagamah Lake and Round Lake areas of Aitkin County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Aitkin County, Emily Cooperative Telephone Company will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. The use and development of broadband will provide various home-based business options, stimulate economic growth, and stimulate innovation and investment.

Total eligible cost is \$752,000

Local match is \$376,000

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa – Big Lake Road Project – GRANT \$602,916

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 37 unserved and 99 underserved locations in a portion of Carlton County located within the boundaries of the Fond du Lac Reservation, including the western part of the City of Cloquet and Perch Lake Township. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, meeting or exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. By building a fiber to the home network, faster internet speeds will open up many opportunities such as telemedicine, home health care, electronic health records, online schooling, business development and more. All of these factors will assist in creating a more vibrant community and region.

Total eligible cost is \$1,205,832

Local match is \$602,916

Gardonville Cooperative Telephone Association – Krohnfeldt Drive FTTH Project – GRANT \$42,921

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 24 unserved locations in the Miltona Township area of Douglas County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Gardonville Cooperative Telephone Association will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, meeting or exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Providing customers with adequate speeds to perform daily activities, along with improving their functionality, will enhance the quality of life in this neighborhood for years to come.

Total eligible cost is \$95,380

Local match is \$52,459

Halstad Telephone Company – Rural East Grand Forks Expansion Project – GRANT \$440,000

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 79 unserved and 22 underserved locations in areas of Rinehart, Huntsville, Sullivan, and Grand Forks Townships in Polk County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Halstad Telephone Company will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Families living in the project area will improve their education and health with access to e-learning, e-medicine and other quality-of-life opportunities provided through a robust broadband connection. Farms will be more efficient and reduce their impacts on the environment by utilizing precision farming techniques due to the increased ability to transfer large amounts of agricultural data to consultants in shorter periods of time. Businesses can increase productivity, allow remote working, and better compete on a worldwide scale as they use the improved broadband for operations, marketing, data analytics, and expanded e-commerce opportunities.

Total eligible cost is \$1,067,362

Local match is \$627,362

Mediacom Minnesota LLC – Independence MN Project – GRANT \$139,039

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 105 unserved locations in areas of Independence in Hennepin County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Mediacom will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 50 Mbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. These investments will improve quality of life and business development opportunities.

Total eligible cost is \$278,079

Local match is \$139,040

Meeker Coop. Light & Power Assoc. (Vibrant Broadband) – Lake Louisa/Lake Marie Project – GRANT \$297,940

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 206 unserved locations in rural South Haven in Wright County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Vibrant Broadband will improve broadband service levels up to 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload, meeting or exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Building a fiber-to-the-premise high-speed broadband services network that will assist households, businesses and farms in the proposed grant area by providing access to critical school e-learning applications, making agricultural operations more efficient and enhancing crop production through enabled precision agriculture tools, and providing effective telemedicine options that offset rising health care costs. The broadband network will improve the lives of all the citizens of the area, lessening the “technological divide” between urban and rural areas.

The total eligible cost is \$993,134

Local match is \$695,194

Midco (Midcontinent Communications) - Renville Project – GRANT \$230,835

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 644 unserved households and 33 unserved businesses, farms and community anchor institutions in areas of the town of Renville in Renville County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Midco will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 20 Mbps upload, meeting or exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. The broadband network will improve access to e-learning applications, and rural health care resources; make agricultural operations more efficient; and will stimulate a more robust local area economy.

The total eligible cost is \$923,338

Local match is \$692,503

Midco (Midcontinent Communications) - Scandia Project – GRANT \$510,358

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 64 unserved households and 155 underserved households in areas of Scandia in Washington County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and the City of Scandia, Midco will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 20 Mbps upload, meeting or exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. The broadband network will improve access to critical school e-learning applications, and health care resources; enable telecommuting options for residents; and make businesses and city institutions more efficient.

Total eligible cost is \$1,020,717

Local match is \$510,359

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative (MLEC) – MLEC Phase 3 FTTH Project with CTC – GRANT \$1,253,955

This last mile project will serve 282 unserved and 225 underserved households, businesses and farms in areas of Farm Island and Nordland Townships in Aitkin County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, CTC, and Aitkin County, MLEC will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. The use and development of broadband will provide new and improved home-based business options, stimulate economic growth, and encourage innovation and investment in the area. Education, health care, energy efficiency, and public safety will also be advanced with access to broadband Internet.

Total eligible cost is \$2,819,899

Local match is \$1,565,944

MVTC (Minnesota Valley Telephone Company, Inc.) – Rural Lucan Fiber Project – GRANT \$635,400

This middle and last mile project will upgrade approximately 23 unserved households, 99 unserved farms, and three unserved businesses in portions of Vesta, Granite Rock, Johnsonville, Waterbury, Westline, and Vail Townships in Redwood County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, MVTC will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Sustainable broadband adoption will transform these unserved areas into highly productive rural communities, including the ability to make full use of precision agriculture advancements. Education, health care, energy efficiency, and public safety will improve with high-speed internet access.

Total eligible cost is \$1,412,000

Local match is \$776,600

Nuvera Communications, Inc. – Hutchinson W Project – GRANT \$346,282

This last mile project will serve 43 households, 11 businesses, and 55 farms in areas of Cedar Mills Township in Meeker County, and Boon Lake and Brookfield Townships in Renville County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Nuvera Communications, Inc. will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. This fiber-to-the-premises network will provide reliable, affordable, high quality broadband to rural farms, businesses, and homes. Residents will also have increased access to health care and education, and the opportunity to telecommute or start their own businesses.

Total eligible cost is \$910,704

Local match is \$564,422

Nuvera Communications, Inc. – New Ulm SW Project – GRANT \$385,600

This last mile project will serve 51 unserved households, 13 unserved businesses, and 64 unserved farms in the New Ulm area in Brown County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Nuvera Communications, Inc. will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2026 state speed goal. This fiber-to-the-premises network will provide reliable, affordable, high quality broadband to rural farms, businesses, and homes. Broadband access will enable these businesses and residences to utilize new technology and tools to grow and enhance their business and community. Residents will also have increased access to health care and education, that will allow them to thrive in a modern world.

Total eligible cost is \$1,101,713

Local match is \$716,113

Otter Tail Telcom LLC – Long and Fish Lakes Project – GRANT \$156,954

This last mile project will serve 70 unserved households and 18 unserved businesses, telecommuters, and farms in the Elizabeth Township area of Otter Tail County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Otter Tail County, Otter Tail Telcom will improve broadband service levels up to 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload, meeting Minnesota's 2026 state speed goal. Building a fiber-to-the-premise network that provides advanced, high-speed broadband services to households, businesses and farms in the proposed grant area improves access to critical school e-learning applications while also making agricultural operations more efficient and enhancing crop production through enabled precision agriculture tools. The broadband network will improve access to rural health care resources, will stimulate a more robust local area economy and improve public safety through IPAWS.

Total eligible cost is \$448,440

Local match is \$291,486

Paul Bunyan Communications – North Central Minnesota Fiber Project– GRANT \$2,562,916

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 914 unserved and 439 underserved locations in parts of the Leech Lake Indian Reservation and rural portions of Cass, Itasca, Koochiching, and St. Louis counties. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Iron Range Resource & Rehabilitation Board, Koochiching County, and Morcom Township, Paul Bunyan Communications will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. A fiber-to-the premise project, the proposed project areas are a response to consumer demand and will provide relief in economically distressed communities that need new alternatives to diversify and strengthen.

Total eligible cost is \$6,268,400

Local match is \$3,705,484

Runestone Telecom Association – South Alexandria Project – GRANT \$1,760,423

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 908 unserved locations in areas of Lake Mary, Hudson, and La Grand Townships in Douglas County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Runestone Telecom will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. This project proposal began in late 2017 with three residents approaching Runestone in search of a solution to their lack of broadband service. By improving internet connectivity in rural Minnesota, this project addresses how providing broadband access can increase economic development and reduce factors contributing to the population exodus from unserved rural locations.

Total eligible cost is \$4,401,058

Local match is \$2,640,635

SCI Broadband (Savage Communications Inc.) – Glen Township Broadband Expansion Project – GRANT \$195,848

This last mile project will serve 269 unserved homes, three unserved businesses, three unserved farms, one unserved community institution and five underserved homes in areas of Glen Township in Aitkin County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota and Aitkin County, SCI Broadband will improve broadband service levels up to 250 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. SCI will leverage its existing middle mile infrastructure to deploy a last mile fiber to the premise network to local businesses and residents. Building the fiber to the premise network will improve access to education, telemedicine, telecommuting, and economic development as a whole within the region.

Total eligible cost is \$401,695

Local match is \$205,847

WCTA (West Central Telephone Association) – Rural Staples Phase I Project – GRANT \$555,355

This last mile project will serve 69 unserved households and 40 unserved businesses, farms, and community anchor institutions in areas of Staples and Villard townships in Todd County; areas of Thomastown township in Wadena County; and areas of Becker township in Cass County. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Sourcewell, and Region 5, WCTA will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. Broadband access will allow farmers and ranchers to follow markets, talk with customers and reach new markets, and use the latest precision agriculture tools to enhance their operations. The broadband network will improve access to health care, specifically mental health and senior care through e-visits and tele-health applications. Broadband will also help business owners manage remotely and could stimulate the local economy.

Total eligible cost is \$1,234,123

Local match is \$678,768

Wikstrom Telephone - Wiktel NW MN Broadband Project – GRANT \$1,151,526

This last mile project will upgrade approximately 316 unserved locations in areas of Kittson, Marshall, Lake of the Woods, Pennington, and Roseau Counties. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Wikstrom Telephone will improve broadband service levels up to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload, exceeding the 2022 and 2026 state speed goals. This project will provide service to an area with 1.6 subscribers per route mile of cable, in some cases extending from routes placed under the 2016 and 2017 Border to Border State Grant program. Broadband service is the key to economic development, successful education services for children, and allows at-home health care monitoring in this remote area.

Total eligible cost is \$2,558,946

Local match is \$1,407,420