



## Emergency Broadband Benefit Starts May 12

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is an FCC program to help families and households struggling to afford internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic. This new benefit will start enrolling households on May 12th. The program offers temporary discounts of up to \$50 per month (\$75 on Tribal Land) off of eligible household's internet access bills. Some households may also get discounts on a laptop, desktop, or tablet computer.



Information about the program can be found on [FCC's website](#) and the [Commission's Emergency Internet Resource website](#)

A list of Wisconsin participating providers is [here](#).

Households should work with their provider or go to <https://getemergencybroadband.org/>

[EBB Overview](#)

[More Info for Providers](#)

## PSC Awards \$28.4 Million Broadband Expansion Grants

### Fifty-eight projects to receive funding

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) announced the FY21 round of recipients for the Broadband Expansion Grant Program in March. The PSC awarded \$28.4 million for 58 projects to expand high-speed broadband internet access to unserved and underserved locations in 44 counties. This is the second round of funding from the 2019-2021 biennium budget signed by Governor Evers in 2019. That budget provided an historic investment of \$48 million for the Broadband Expansion Grant Program

The awarded projects range in size from \$40,000 to \$2.2 million. The PSC funded 49 fiber to the premises projects, six fixed wireless projects, one fiber middle mile project and two cable projects. The \$28.4 million of state investment is leveraging \$49.2 million of private and local money to build-out needed broadband infrastructure to unserved and underserved areas of the state.

The PSC's Broadband Office made the second round of grant applications available on September 1, 2020, and due on December 1, 2020. 124 applications were received requesting more than \$62 million, which is the highest request for broadband expansion grants in state history. Congratulations to the grant awardees, we are looking forward to your projects.

[A list of the projects](#)

[A map of the projects](#)

## State Digital Inclusion Group Seeking Members

The Wisconsin Broadband Office is seeking people and organizations to join the State Digital Inclusion Stakeholder Group.

This group will:

- Shape and inform the [Wisconsin Digital Equity and Inclusion Plan](#)
- Grow and strengthen the digital inclusion ecosystem in Wisconsin
- Develop and disseminate best practices for broadband affordability, device access, internet adoption and digital literacy skills training in Wisconsin.

We are looking for digital inclusion practitioners, community connectors, policy experts, and people with strong connections to groups with historical and structural barriers to information technology. This would likely be people or organizations with experience and knowledge of: digital literacy, internet adoption and use, community technology centers, internet affordability, access to internet enabled devices, quality technology support and any other relevant digital equity topics.

We may ask stakeholders to distribute information, complete a survey, host listening sessions, join a workgroup or committee, participate in an interview, or other stakeholder engagement. We are seeking people throughout the state to join our digital equity stakeholder group. Interested parties should email [alyssa.kenney@wisconsin.gov](mailto:alyssa.kenney@wisconsin.gov).

## Reminders for Current Grant Recipients

**Fiscal Year 2021 Recipients:** All grant recipients should have received an email with customized Reimbursement forms, and there is a link on our expansion grants webpage of a [webinar](#) to help familiarize you with post-award grant management work. Grant agreements will be forthcoming shortly as well.

**Fiscal Year 2020 Recipients.** The second progress status report is due **tomorrow**, April 30<sup>th</sup>. Find the interim and final project status report forms on our [website](#) File your completed forms on our the Commission's Electronic Records Filing system.

Interim progress status reports are due the last day of October and April throughout the life of the grant. And a final status report is due with your final payment request.

**Fiscal Year 2019 and Prior Recipients.** Just a reminder that an up-to-date status report is due with each payment request.

Regardless of the grant round, no payment can be processed if you are out of compliance with reporting requirements in the grant Agreement.

### Important Links

[Grant Recipient Forms](#)

[Webinar on grant reimbursement process](#)

### Need Help

Please e-mail grant questions to [Dennis Klaila](#)

Please e-mail reimbursement questions to the [grant specialist team](#)

## Governor's Task Force Next Meeting

The May meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access is scheduled for Wednesday May 26, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. - noon. The Task Force will continue work on preparing their inaugural report on Broadband Access to the Governor and Legislature which is due by June 30th.

The meeting will be posted on the [PSC calendar](#) and the agenda will include information for the public to listen. The meeting is available in Spanish, Hmong and American Sign Language.

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## Federal Funding Information and Webinars

## Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2021

*Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grants*, National Telecommunication and Information Administration, \$1 billion for tribal governments and organizations to expand broadband adoption and deployment on tribal lands, as well as to support distance learning, remote work, and telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant is not open yet, it will have a 90 day application period.

NTIA *Tribal Broadband Connectivity* Webinar Schedule

May 19 & 20, June 16 & 17 and July 21 & 22 at 1:30 p.m. CT

[Registration](#)

*Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grants*, National Telecommunication and Information Administration, \$300 million for state-and-provider partnerships to support broadband infrastructure deployment to areas lacking broadband, especially rural areas.

NTIA *Broadband Infrastructure Deployment* Webinar Schedule

May 12 & 13, June 9 & 10 and July 14 & 15 at 1:30 p.m. CT

[Registration](#)

*Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program*, National Telecommunication and Information Administration. \$285 million for Historically Black College and Universities, Trial Colleges and Universities, and Minority Serving Institutions to help students and communities get connected to the internet through affordable broadband service.

NTIA *Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program* Webinar Schedule

May 5 & 6, 26 & 27, June 23 & 24 and July 28 & 29 1:30 p.m. CT

[Registration](#)

## American Rescue Plan Act

*Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund*, Department of the Treasury, \$10 billion for capital projects directly enabling work, education, and health monitoring, including remote options, in response to the public health emergency. Guidance is scheduled to be released on May 11th.

*Emergency Connectivity Fund*. Federal Communication Commission, \$7.2 billion for E-Rate support to reimburse schools and libraries for provision of eligible equipment and advanced telecommunications and information services during the pandemic, including for locations other than schools and libraries.

*Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*, \$219.8 billion for states, \$45.6 billion for rural community development block grants, \$19.5 for rural areas and \$65.2 billion for counties, allowable use including for investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure. [Information about the distribution of funds by community.](#)

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## WBO E-Newsletter



The Wisconsin Broadband Office will send out regular communication to internet service providers, grant applicants and broadband stakeholders. We aim to be relevant and share timely information from our office.

Please reach out if anyone from the Wisconsin Broadband Office can be of assistance. [Email Us](#)