



State Funding Opportunities

State Broadband Expansion Grant

The State Broadband Expansion Grant Program aims to deploy high performance broadband in underserved areas of the State. On December 1, 2021 the Commission announced that it is now accepting applications for FY2022 Broadband Expansion Grants. This round will make available \$100 million for grants. Eligible applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.

Application Deadline: *Thursday, March 17, 2022, 4 p.m. CT*

[How to apply and more information](#)

[View the State Broadband Expansion Grants – Information & Overview Webinar](#)

Telemedicine Grant

The Medical Telecommunications Equipment Program is a grant program under the Universal Service Fund that enables non-profit medical clinics or public health agencies to apply for funding to purchase medical telecommunications equipment.

The Commission will make up to \$1,000,000 available to purchase medical telecommunications equipment that will promote technologically advanced medical services, enhance access to medical care in rural or underserved areas of the state or to underserved populations or to persons with disabilities.

Application Deadline: *Thursday, February 10, 2022, 4 p.m. CT*

[How to apply and more information](#)

[View the Telemedicine Application and Grants System Webinar](#)

Nonprofit Access Grant Program

The program enables nonprofit groups to apply for partial funding of programs or projects that will facilitate affordable access to telecommunications and digital inclusion activities. The project must assist low-income households, people with disabilities or customers in areas of the state that have relatively high costs of services in obtaining affordable access to a basic set of essential telecommunications services. The Commission may award up to \$500,000 in grants under this program on a fiscal year basis.

Application Deadline: *Tuesday, March 1, 2022, 4 p.m. CT*

[How to apply and more information](#)

[Register for the Nonprofit Access Application and Grants System Overview](#)

[Wednesday, January 12, 2022 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.](#)

Federal Infrastructure Act

NTIA Broadband Grant Programs Listening Sessions

NTIA will host broadband grant program public virtual listening sessions in connection with the five new broadband grant programs authorized and funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program; the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program; and the Digital Equity Act Programs, which include the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, and Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. These public virtual listening sessions are designed to collect stakeholder input to help inform program development and implementation.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Broadband Programs Public Virtual Listening Sessions:

- Wednesday, January 12, 2022, from 2:30–4 p.m. ET;
- Wednesday, January 26, 2022, from 2:30–4 p.m. ET;
- Wednesday, February 9, 2022, from 2:30–4 p.m. ET; and
- Wednesday, February 23, 2022, from 2:30–4 p.m. ET.

Registration for future listening sessions will open on **Monday, January 3, 2022**
A recording of the first listening session is linked below.

Future Registration

Recorded Session

Other Federal Grants and Funding Updates

More Resources on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

- The National Telecommunications and Information Administration released a [one-pager](#) explaining their role in the administration of funds.
- The firm Keller & Heckman has posted a [simple summary](#) of the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment grants.

USDA ReConnect Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) announced more than \$1 billion in funding to promote broadband access in rural, Tribal and socially vulnerable communities through the [ReConnect program](#). The program will offer eligible recipients a mix of grants, grants and loans combined and just loans to support the construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment to deploy robust, high performance broadband capable of 100/100 Mbps.

Applications are open now and due February 22, 2022.

FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Funding Authorizations

The FCC continues to review long-form applications of winning bidders in the [RDOF Auction 904](#) on a 'rolling basis.' As of [December 16, 2021](#) the following winners have been *authorized* for funding, Baldwin Telecom, Inc., Bruce Telephone Company, Inc.; Cuba City Telephone Exchange Co.; La Valle Telephone Cooperative, Inc. and Somerset Telephone Co., Inc.. The following winners are *ready to authorize*, Richland-Grant Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Lakeland Communications Group, LLC.; Marquette-Adams Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; and Reedsburg Utility Commission.

Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) [announced](#) that they received over 200 applications for the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program. Requests totaled more than \$833 million for the \$268 million grant program meant to serve Historically Black Colleges or Universities, Tribal Colleges or Minority-serving institutions.

Emergency Broadband Benefit to Transition to Affordable Connectivity Program

Starting on December 30, 2021, the FCC will enact a number of changes to the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program as the program transitions to the longer-term broadband affordability program: the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The Affordable Connectivity Program will retain the basic structure of the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, with some changes. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act both removes and adds specific qualifying eligibility programs and changes the benefit level—from \$50/month in the current Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to \$30/month in the longer-term Affordable Connectivity Program.

For the over 150,000 households in Wisconsin enrolled in Emergency Broadband Benefit

Program, Congress has created a 60-day transition period beginning on December 31, 2021. During the transition, anyone who was eligible for and signed up for the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program remains eligible and will continue to receive a subsidy of up to \$50/month until February or March 2022. Starting December 31, 2021, eligible households can apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program. The FCC is currently accepting reply comments on the transition from the ECB to the ACP and will release additional information and guidance in mid-January.

The Public Service Commission and the Department of Public Instruction will host a joint webinar on the [Transition to the Affordable Connectivity Program](#) Wednesday, January 26, 2022, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. CT to provide more information for schools, libraries, nonprofits, and other organizations that work with eligible households.

Webinar Registration

Digital Equity and Inclusion Updates

More resources on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance has created an [FAQ, slide deck and presentation](#) related to digital inclusion funding in the new act.

FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund

The FCC's Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) is a \$7.17 billion program to help schools and libraries provide the tools and services their communities need for remote learning. Funding can be used to purchase laptops and tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, and off campus broadband connections. Wisconsin schools and libraries have requested \$82,990,396 in ECF funds during the 2021-2022 school year. As of December 9th, Wisconsin has received **\$54,193,830**.

FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit

Wisconsin has **152,080** households enrolled in the [Emergency Broadband Benefit \(EBB\)](#) program as of December 13th, 2021. In Wisconsin, more than 20% of likely eligible households are enrolled and Wisconsin is ranked 19th in the nation for enrollment. **Starting December 31, 2021 the Emergency Broadband Benefit will transition to become the permanent Affordable Connectivity Program.** More information above on the transition.

Digital Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder Group

The State of Wisconsin Digital Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group meets monthly to inform the State Digital Equity and Inclusion Plan and work to strengthen the digital equity ecosystems in the State. In addition, the group has been discussing developing a digital navigator model, how to increase participation in the Emergency Broadband Benefit and learning from other members. If you are interested in joining the stakeholder group please [email](#).

Worth Checking Out



National Broadband Resource Hub

Currently, in beta testing, the recently launched National Broadband Resource Hub is a free online platform designed to support government and nonprofit leaders as they work to bridge the digital divide and build broadband infrastructure in their communities. The hub offers a curated resource library, community forum and virtual help desk.

The hub is an initiative of [HR&A Advisors](#) and [CTC Technology & Energy](#). It is not endorsed or maintained by the Wisconsin Broadband Office, but may be a useful resource for community leaders and nonprofits seeking broadband resources.

In Case You Missed It...WI Broadband Summit



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

On November 16, 2021, UW Extension hosted a free Broadband summit. The Wisconsin Broadband Summit was organized to help Wisconsin communities enhance broadband access. The summit included information on Enhancing Broadband Access, Broadband and the Wisconsin Economy, Digital Equity and Inclusion, Active Networking, Mapping and Funding. A recording of the summit is available to watch online.

[Watch the Summit](#)

Grant Recipient Corner: Federal Broadband Team

Jennifer Smith (Federal Grants Supervisor) and Sawyer Boldt (Grants Specialist) are the first two hires for the PSC Wisconsin Broadband Offices' new Federal Broadband Grants team. Many of you working on ARPA grants will have seen their names already through email and working documents.



Sawyer and Jennifer will be your points of contact for questions regarding your ARPA grants. Any questions, forms or reimbursement requests going forward can be sent to PSCFederalBroadbandGrantReimbursement@wisconsin.gov. Please note the "Federal" in that email address, the key difference from the state reimbursement mailbox.

For your state-funded Broadband Expansion grants, be sure to continue contacting Jason and Cath with reimbursement-related questions at PSCBroadbandGrantReimbursement@wisconsin.gov and dennis.klaila@wisconsin.gov with non-reimbursement questions.

WBO 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](#)

[Join Our Mailing List](#)