



Transition to Affordable Connectivity Program

Congress created the [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) building on the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program created in 2021. The programs' goal is to help low-income households pay for internet service and connected devices. The Affordable Connectivity Program will retain the basic structure of the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, with some changes to eligibility, rules and the benefit level. The discount will decrease from \$50/month in the current Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to \$30/month in the longer-term Affordable Connectivity Program.

For the over 160,000 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 March 1, 2022. After March 1, many households will remain eligible and the benefit will continue. Some households may need to requalify and other households may need to opt-in to service. More information for consumers is [here](#).

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, local governments and other organizations that work with eligible households.

[Governor's Press Release](#)

[Webinar Registration](#)

State Broadband Expansion Grant Information

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 up to \$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. **The Wisconsin Broadband Office recently posted [updated information](#) regarding changes to the grant agreement in FY2022 related to the source of funds.**

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

Past Webinars

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

Upcoming Webinars

Broadband Expansion Grant Information and Overview: An introductory webinar that reviews grant eligibility, merit, Commission process, and how to file an application.

Thursday, February 10, 2022 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

[Register](#)

How to Map Your Broadband Project: A webinar for grant applicant about how to map and submit spatial file to the Commission as part of a grant application.

Friday, February 11, 2022 11:00 a.m. - noon

[Register](#)

Other PSC Grant Opportunities

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](#)

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

Federal Updates and Funding

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act 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 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.

[Register for listening sessions](#)

Request for Comment

NTIA is seeking comment from the public and industry stakeholders on the broadband infrastructure grant programs within the IIJA. These include the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program, Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure and the Digital Equity grant programs.

Comments are due February 4, 2022

[Notice of Request for Comment](#)

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 [January 14, 2022](#), 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. Richland-Grant Telephone Cooperative, Inc. and Somerset Telephone Co., Inc.. The following winners are *ready to authorize*: Lakeland Communications Group, LLC, Marquette-Adams Telephone Cooperative, Inc., and Reedsburg Utility Commission.

Worth Reading



The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) recently released the first **ACCESS BROADBAND Report**, which highlights the accomplishments of NTIA's recently established Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) over the past year. The report, mandated by the ACCESS BROADBAND Act as part of the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2021, also covers investments in federal broadband support programs and Universal Service Fund (USF) programs.

ACCESS BROADBAND Report

Success Expanding Reliable, Affordable Broadband in 2021 “Year of Broadband Access”



2021 IS THE YEAR OF BROADBAND ACCESS.



GOVERNOR
TONY EVERS

2021 was the "Year of Broadband Access" and Wisconsin has made tremendous progress towards connecting every Wisconsin household to broadband service. Gov. Evers made historic investments in broadband infrastructure. Read the full press release on the great success achieved in our State.

Press Release

Governor's Task Force on Broadband - Next Meeting

The February meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access is scheduled for Wednesday, February 9, 2022 from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. The Task Force will continue work on preparing their annual 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.

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](#)

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