Broadband Expansion Grant Round Announced

Governor Tony Evers and Rebecca Cameron Valcq, Chairperson of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC), announced the next round of funding opportunities through the State Broadband Expansion Grant Program. The application period runs from December 7, 2022 through February 22, 2023 at 1:30 pm CT.

In this grant round, $14.1 million is available to applicants to help expand high-speed broadband Internet in the state through funding from the Universal Service Fund. These are the remaining state funds available for broadband expansion during the 2021-23 biennial budget period.

The application process for this grant round will have a new look. The PSC has developed an on-line application system to submit grant applications. The Commission has adopted the grants system to streamline the application process, produce grant applications that better respond to the questions, and provide applicants with better confidence that their submission meets the filing requirements for this grant cycle. PSC staff want this new application format to work well, and will provide a webinar and assistance on the grants system. An applicant in the FY 2023 grant cycle is required to submit the application using the new online PSC Grants System. The requirements of the new PSC Grants System and Application Instructions are on the Commission website. Full press release.

Broadband Expansion Grant Webinars

The Commission will offer a number of webinars for persons interested in the Broadband Expansion Grant Program FY2023 round. Recordings of the webinars will be available on the website after the webinar.

State Broadband Expansion Grant Application Information and Overview Webinar
Monday, December 12th at 11am CT
To register https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4464547600522722316

PSC Grants System Webinar
Thursday, December 15th at 9am CT
To register https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5080960207333084171

How to Map Your Broadband Project Webinar
Monday, December 19th at 11am CT
To register https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4934229281094795532

State Grant Expansion Grant Application Information and Overview Webinar (repeat of Dec. 12th)
Tuesday, January 10th at 10am CT
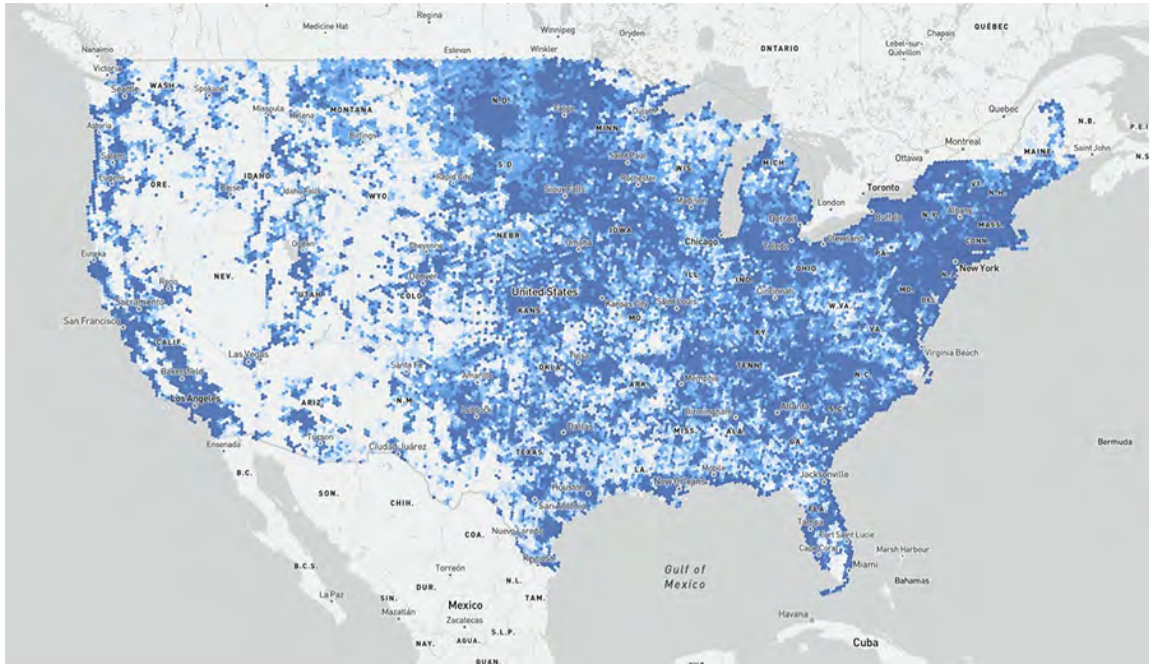To register https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6849276170982929935

Broadband Expansion Grant Docket 5-BF-2023

The official means by which the Commission will provide information related to the

FY2023 State Broadband Expansion Grant application is in the docket 5-BF-2023. Interested parties must proactively subscribe to the docket on the Commission's ERF system to ensure they receive timely information related to the process.

Help improve the National Broadband Map

In November, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) unveiled the pre-production draft of the new national broadband map. The new map is the most granular and up to date federal map of where broadband is and is not available across the country.

The FCC is seeking help to improve the data on the map by asking communities and individuals to submit a challenge or request a correction. The FCC has recently published a National Broadband Map Outreach Toolkit with materials that are available for public use. The Broadband Office encourages Wisconsin residents to check the map and submit a challenge in cases where the map is not accurate.

More information on How to Submit an Availability Challenge is available on the FCC website.

The FCC's new broadband maps will be used to determine the allocation of Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) funds that Wisconsin will receive. An accurate map is critical to ensure Wisconsin receives our fair share of federal funding. To ensure valid challenges are incorporated into the map before federal funding allocations are made, the public are encouraged to **submit challenges by January 13, 2023**. Please spread the word.

National Broadband Map

Digital Equity and Inclusion Updates

FCC Affordable Connectivity Program Competitive Outreach Grants Due Jan. 9
On November 10th, the Federal Communications Commission released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), a formal announcement of the availability of grant funds to develop innovative outreach strategies to reach historically underserved and unserved communities, raise awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), and help eligible individuals enroll in the program. The FCC has set aside up to $70 million in the NOFO for these two programs, $60 million for the National Competitive Outreach Program and $10 million for the Tribal Community Outreach Program. The grant program could support in-person enrollment assistance, digital campaigns, outreach materials, direct

mail, and other outreach activities. **The grant is due January 9th, 2023. If you are considering applying for a grant and wish to notify the PSC please** email **us.** Additional resources: **NOFO**, **Webinar recording**, and **Fact Sheet**.

Recommendations and Best Practices to Prevent Digital Discrimination and Promote Digital Equity
In November, the FCC's Working Groups of the Communication Equity and Diversity Council adopted a report that includes recommendations to the FCC on public policies, programs, and other strategic initiatives to advance access to digital communications. The report and recommendations are available **here**.

Items of Interest

National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Ways for Stakeholders to get Involved: Local Governments
A 2-page overview of stakeholder roles and ways they can get involved in the Internet for All programs.

Metropolitan New York Library Council
Colin Rhinesmith Ph.D. and Rafi Santon Ph.D.
Digital Equity Ecosystems Measurement Framework
This tool helps communities assess their preparedness for federal funding and growth. The tool looks at coalition health, member strength, and community impact. The worksheets and action steps for communities may serve as a useful resource.

Governor's Task Force - December Meeting

The December meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access is scheduled to take place on Wednesday December 14th from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. The Task Force will host a discussion on Workforce Development. Please check the PSC calendar to confirm the meeting date and time.

The meeting and agenda will be posted on the PSC calendar.

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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