

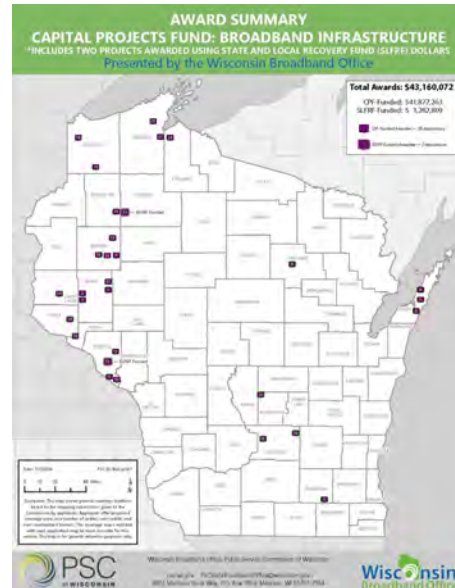


Commission Awards 30 Projects Capital Projects Fund Broadband Grants

On March 7, 2024 at their open meeting, the Public Service Commission awarded \$43.2 million in grants funded by the Capital Projects Fund Infrastructure grants to expand access to broadband across the state.

In November 2023, Gov. Evers and PSC announced that 124 applications requesting \$221.6 million were submitted for the Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program, showing a continued strong demand for broadband infrastructure funding. The 30 projects awarded funding will expand high-speed internet access to approximately 16,000 residential and business locations in the state.

[Press Release](#)
[Summary Table](#)



Wisconsin's Digital Equity Plan Accepted



Gov. Tony Evers and the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) announced that Wisconsin’s [Digital Equity Plan](#) was accepted by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The NTIA’s acceptance of the plan marks an important step toward implementing the plan, which will guide the state’s strategy to improve digital opportunities and support digital equity, helping ensure every Wisconsinite has the skills, resources, and broadband service necessary to fully participate in society and the economy. With today’s announcement, Wisconsin is now eligible to receive approximately \$24 million to \$30 million in Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding to implement the state’s Digital Equity Plan over a five-year period. The Commission anticipates it will open related grant opportunities in late 2024. See the [full press release](#). Read [the plan](#).

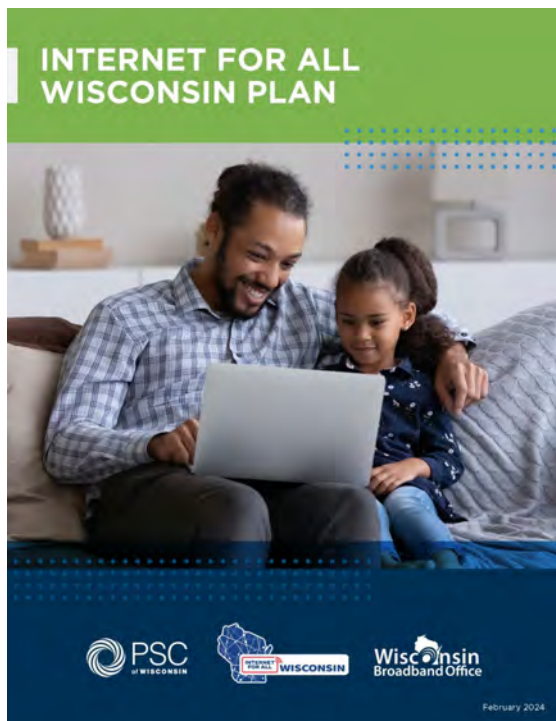
Digital Connectivity and Navigator Grant Opportunity Opening in April

The Commission will soon be accepting applications for the Capital Projects Fund Digital Connectivity and Navigators Grant Program. Under the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), the U.S. Department of Treasury awarded Wisconsin \$33 million through the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) to deploy computing devices, install Wi-Fi equipment in targeted apartment buildings or housing units, and provide digital navigation services to make use of the devices for work, education, and health monitoring.

The Commission docket for the Capital Projects Fund Digital Connectivity and Navigators Grant Program is 5-CPF-2024. To ensure you receive communication regarding the grant program, [please subscribe to the docket](#). The application instructions and additional information will be posted in the docket and available on the [Capital Projects Digital Connectivity and Navigators Program](#) webpage in early April.

The WBO will host a [“Digital Connectivity and Navigators Application Overview”](#) Webinar on Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 1:00 PM CDT.

Internet For All Wisconsin Plan



Throughout 2023 and into early 2024 the Commission engaged in robust and comprehensive outreach, data collection, and planning to develop two federally required plans for Internet for All:

1. The Five-Year Action Plan establishes the State's broadband goals and priorities for NTIA for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program.
2. The Wisconsin Digital Equity Plan establishes the digital equity goals, values, and measurable objectives for the State for the Digital Equity Act Programs.

The Commission has created a single executive summary of both plans together in the [Internet for All Wisconsin Plan](#).

Internet for All Wisconsin Plan

Getting Ready for BEAD Regional Workshops

UW Extension hosting Getting Ready for BEAD Funding: Permitting, Engagement, and Learning from Experience

Join UW Extension, the Wisconsin Broadband Office and other stakeholders for regional workshops. These events focus on equipping attendees with the essential knowledge and tools required to successfully navigate the complexities of broadband expansion. The workshops are ideal for elected officials, community leaders, and volunteer committee members involved in broadband expansion efforts.



Upcoming regional workshops will be held:

- April 10, STEM Innovation Center in Green Bay
- April 16, Vernon County Sheriff's Office in Viroqua
- April 25, Portage County Annex in Stevens Point
- May 1, Flat Creek Lodge in Hayward
- May 14, CESA 10 Offices in Chippewa Falls
- May 22, Northcentral Technical College in Antigo

Registration for each session is \$25 and covers lunch, refreshments and materials.

Learn More

Telemedicine Equipment Grant Accepting Applications

The [Telemedicine Equipment Grant Program](#) is accepting applications from non-profit medical clinics and hospitals and public health agencies to apply for funding to purchase medical telecommunications equipment. Funding may be used to promote technologically advanced medical services, and/or enhance access to medical care in rural or underserved areas of the state, or to underserved populations or to persons with disabilities. Applications are due **at 1:30 p.m. on April 2, 2024**. More information and application instructions on the [Program](#) webpage.

Federal Broadband Updates

FCC Increases Broadband Speed Benchmark

On March 14, 2024 the FCC raised the benchmark for high-speed fixed broadband to download speeds of 100 megabits per second and upload speeds of 20 megabits per second – a four-fold increase from the 25/3 Mbps benchmark set by the Commission in 2015. The Report also sets a 1 Gbps/500 Mbps long-term goal for broadband speeds to give stakeholders a collective goal towards which to strive – a better, faster, more robust system of communication for American consumers. [Press Release](#).

FCC Comment Period on RDOF amnesty

The FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau has published a public notice opening a comment period soliciting responses to a letter filed last week requesting the FCC grant a short amnesty period to providers seeking to relinquish their awards through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) and Connect America Fund II (CAF II). Comments are due on March 26, 2024 and reply comments on April 9, 2024.

USDA ReConnect Program Round 5 Due May 21, 2024

The application window for Round 5 of the USDA ReConnect program will open March 22, 2024 and remain open until May 21, 2024. The ReConnect program provides grants and loans to construct broadband to unserved areas. Application materials and program information can be found [here](#).

Affordable Connectivity Program Wind Down Resources

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) stopped accepting new applications and enrollments on February 7, 2024. Unless additional funding is authorized, the last fully funded month of the program will be April 2024. The following resources are to assist Wisconsin consumers impacted by the end of ACP support.

Affordable Connectivity Program Wind Down Resources from the FCC

The FCC has created a number of resources including a [fact sheet](#), and [frequently asked questions](#) document. Consumers must receive notice from their internet service provider regarding the end of the program. Households may opt out of service or continue to receive the same service after the ACP ends.

Digital Resource Navigator from 211 Wisconsin

The [Digital Resource Navigator \(DRN\)](#) assists individuals with Lifeline and Affordable Connectivity Program eligibility and enrollment, these programs can make internet and phone access more affordable for low-income households. The DRN can assist households as the ACP winds down. The navigator may also assist with identifying and enrolling in phone or internet service with providers participating in these programs. Assistance is provided via phone by calling 833-882-0174 or completing the [intake form](#).

Internet Discount Finder from the PSC

Internet service providers offer a variety of discounted options based on your location and eligibility. The [Finder](#) can search and provide a list of options available to Wisconsin households. [Link to the finder](#).

April Meeting

The April meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 17, 2024, from 1:00 - 3:00 pm CT**. The meeting will be virtual.

The meeting agenda will be posted on the [PSC Events Calendar](#) and will include information on how members of the public can watch and listen to the meeting. Public comments are invited at the beginning of the meeting.

Grant Recipient Corner

State Funded Broadband Expansion Grants Reminders

Interim Project Status Reports: An [interim project status report](#) is due April 30 for all open state-funded grant awards.

Filing Project Status Reports: All Project Status Reports must be submitted via the Public Service Commission's electronic record filing system, [ERF](#), to your grant year docket. When uploading, use this naming convention in your filename and in ERF's description field: UID # BBEG FYXX Recipient, Name of grant. You can find the UID number in the [lookup table](#) on our webpage.

ARPA Funded Broadband Access Grants

Reminder that the deadline to file your ARPA federal quarterly report for Quarter 1 of 2024 is April 10, 2024. Failure to submit reports in a timely manner may result in a delay in reimbursement payment or non-compliance measures. Please submit all ARPA quarterly reports to the Public Service Commission's Electronic Records Filing system (ERF). If you experience any issues submitting documentation to ERF to docket 5-BF-2022, please contact the PSC Records Mail Helpdesk by email at PSCRecordsMail@wisconsin.gov. As always, if you have questions or need assistance completing the report, please email us at PSCFederalBroadbandGrantReimbursement@wisconsin.gov.

All Commission Funded Grants

Beginning early April all users of the Public Service Commission's Grant Management System who are submitting reimbursement requests will be required to certify that the submitted expenses align with the project grant agreement. This will be a pop-up box that you will be required to check each time you submit grant reimbursements.

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 or if you would like to request a staff member attend a meeting or make a presentation to your group. [Email Us](#)

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