Broadband Expansion Grant Program

FY 2020 Broadband Expansion Grant Webinar

Cathy Kittle * Dennis Klaila * Jaron McCallum
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
November 6th, 2019
Broadband Expansion Grant Program

To encourage the deployment of advanced telecommunications capability in underserved areas of the state.
What’s the Purpose

After six years, it is possible to identify specific benefits that the Broadband Grant program has brought to underserved areas of the state.

- Added value to existing homes and expanded construction locations for new homes.
- Improved internet access for businesses that depend upon the internet for sales and product development, or communication with other company locations.
- Allows seasonal residents to spend more time in their summer homes and campgrounds.
- Permits clinics and hospitals to use telemedicine devices, including home health monitoring units, to better assess the health status of chronic patients without having to travel to a clinic.
- Provides students with the internet access they need to complete assignments, and contact teachers and fellow students by e-mail and social media.
FY 2020 Round 1 Broadband Expansion Grants

PSC is currently accepting applications for FY20 broadband grants:

• $24 million in grant funds available

• Deadline to apply is 4:00pm CT, Thursday, December 19, 2019
  • Applications must be submitted online via PSC’s Electronic Records Filing (ERF) system
  • Last day for ERF assistance is December 18

ERF upload MUST be complete by 4pm CT, December 19!
Eligibility
Who may Apply for a Broadband Grant?

Applicants must fall within one of the following three applicant categories:

• An organization operated for profit or not-for-profit, including a cooperative.

• A telecommunications utility.

• A city, village, town, or county that has entered into a partnership with an eligible organization or telecommunications utility.
What Geographic Areas of the State May Receive a Broadband Grant?

For an area to be considered eligible for a grant, it must be considered “underserved.”

- “Underserved” = Area served by fewer than 2 providers offering Broadband Service
- Broadband Service = 25 Mbps Down / 3 Mbps Up
“The Wisconsin Broadband Map is not accurate with respect to my location.”

The data for the Wisconsin Broadband Map is provided by census block. A provider indicates coverage of a census block when the provider serves at least 1 customer in the block.

The grant application instructions provide:

• Where the State Broadband Map indicates that a proposed project area is underserved, the PSC will accept the Map as sufficient evidence that the project area is in fact underserved.

• Where the Map indicates that an area is served by two or more broadband service providing 25/3 service, the applicant is permitted to provide additional information to show that the Map is not accurate with respect to the proposed project area.

• This additional information can be just a statement from a customer, but more elaborate presentations will be accepted as well.
Mapping Resources

All WBO Maps: https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/BroadbandMaps.aspx

Wisconsin Broadband Map
  • https://maps.psc.wi.gov/apps/WisconsinBroadbandMap/

View and Print Internet Coverage PDF Maps (County, Assembly, Senate, U.S. Congress)
  • https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/BroadbandMaps.aspx

Wisconsin CAF-II Funded Areas
  • https://maps.psc.wi.gov/apps/SimpleCaf/

Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Recipients
  • https://maps.psc.wi.gov/apps/ExpansionGrantAwardees/
Wisconsin Broadband Map
Application Contents & Scoring
How Does the Commission Evaluate Grant Applications?

The record that the Commission considers to make its grant award decision consists of the following 4 items:

• Grant applications
• Comments of interested persons in support or in opposition to one or more specific applications
• Ranking of the grant applications prepared by a preliminary evaluation committee
• Discussion memo prepared by Commission staff

The Commission meets in an open session to discuss the record and to decide which applications should be awarded grants.
The statute that authorizes the Broadband Grant Program requires that the Commission give priority to applications that include any of seven factors listed in the statute:

- Matching funds
- Existing broadband services
- Scalability
- Will not delay broadband service in adjacent areas
- Public/private partnerships
- Project impact
- Economic impact

To date, the Broadband Grant program has been quite competitive. The Commission has received many more applications than it can fund. The discussion of priority factors has been the key element of the application that the Commission has used to decide which applications to fund.
Matching Funds

• An application will receive higher priority based on the amount and type of matching funds the applicant proposes to invest in its project.

• Matching funds can include in-kind contributions. The Commission may give less weight to some in-kind contributions as circumstances demand.

• Matching funds may include customer premises equipment.

• There is no minimum amount of matching funds required.

• Applicants may wish to look at past applications to see what successful grant applicants offered to contribute as matching funds.
Public-Private Partnerships

- An application that includes a city, village, town, or county as a participating partner, in partnership with a telecommunication provider or other private organization, will receive priority.

- To receive priority credit, the grant application must offer more than a simple letter of support from a town or village.

- A public applicant must engage the active participation of at least one private partner. The Commission has decided that contracting for a service by itself is not sufficient. There must be some indication in the application that a private partner has agreed to participate in the application.
No Existing Broadband Service

- An application proposing to serve an unserved area receives priority.

- An unserved area is an area of the state that is not served by a fixed wireless of wireline broadband service provider offering a service with a speed of at least 5 mbps down and 600 kbps up.
Scalability

• An application that demonstrates a commitment to increase the size or scope of its broadband network in the future shall receive priority.

• The application instructions on this point permit a variety of answers. Applicants are invited to provide a sensible description of the potential for continued future development of customer base and service options not captured specifically by the description of the project proposal itself.
Economic Development

• An application that demonstrates the potential to promote job growth or retention, expand the property tax base or improve the overall economic vitality of the municipality or region shall receive priority.

• Some grant proposals target business customers, and the economic impact the application hopes to accomplish is evident on its face.

• Other impacts can be a bit indirect, but no less important. For example, a fixed wireless service in a rural county could impact the decisions of tourists and seasonal residents to use the facilities or extend their stay in the area.
Affect upon broadband service to adjacent areas

• A grant application that demonstrates that the proposed broadband project will not impair the ability of a broadband service provider or competing broadband service provider to extend broadband service to areas adjacent to the proposed project area shall receive priority.
Project Impact

• An application that proposes to serve a larger geographic area or a larger number of customers or communities in an area shall receive higher priority than one that serves a comparatively smaller geographic area or a fewer number of potential customers or communities in an area.
Other Relevant Information

In its review and decision, the Commission is free to give more weight to any priority factor(s), or give weight to other information in the application. Some items of additional Information that the Commission could take into account include:

- The total number of persons served by a given application when compared to applications of equal priority.
- Duplication of existing broadband infrastructure.
- Access to health care service from home.
- Access to educational materials from home.
- Certification as a Broadband Forward! Community. However, applicant should note that the Commission has not made any determination that such certification is specifically or necessarily applicable to grants for broadband facilities under Wis. Stat. § 196.504.
- The download and upload transmission speeds the application proposes to provide.
- Any one or more of the factors in Wis. Stat. § 196.03(6) that the applicant believes its project would specifically and materially advance for benefit of the public interest with respect to communications facilities. However, applicant should note that the Commission has not made any determination that the criteria in Wis. Stat. § 196.03(6) respecting telecommunications services and facilities are specifically or necessarily applicable to grants for broadband facilities under Wis. Stat. § 196.504.
Public Comments

• The Commission has changed the procedure for filing supportive comments. To be included in the record, supportive comments must be included as an attachment to the application, and uploaded to ERF along with the rest of the application. Supportive comments that are submitted separately from the application will not be part of the record and will not be given weight in the evaluation process.

• The Commission will only receive Comments in Opposition to specific grant applications during the comment period from Dec 20, 2019 to Jan 9, 2020.

• The Commission will only accept public comments. Criticism of applications based upon non-public service data will not be given weight.
Application Budget and Income Summary
Budget and Income Summary

• Standardized template on PSC’s website at: https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/BroadbandGrants.aspx

• Limited to five budget lines (categories)

• Total Project Cost on both pages must agree

Include in application body (PDF format) AND Submit separate copy in Excel format
Submitting Your Application
Electronic Records Filing System (ERF)

• Save documents to be uploaded to your desktop
  • Path and filename cannot exceed 255 characters
  • 20Mb limit per file; 10 files per upload
  • Upload your PDF’d application plus your spreadsheet

• Go to https://PSC.wi.gov > E-Services > ERF Upload Documents
  • First time filers must establish a user account – Individual is recommended
  • Returning users can retrieve Username and Password
  • Must always log on to upload

  • PSC Home Page > E-Services > Electronic Records Filing System > Help box (bottom right)
Documents are date-stamped upon upload in ERF. Refer to Section 2.0 of the Application for details.

Existing Docket 5-BF-2020

- **Document Type**: Application
  - **Description**: Broadband Expansion Grant Application of Acme Broadband, Any County

- **Document Type**: Application
  - **Description**: Broadband Expansion Grant Application of Acme Broadband, Any County, Budget Spsht

- **Document Type**: -- Select Document Type --
More ERF Tips

• Documents are date-stamped upon upload in ERF
• Refer to Section 2.0 of the Application for details
  • Existing Docket 5-BF-2020
  • Document Type is Application (for all – PDF and spreadsheet)
  • Description
    • Broadband Expansion Grant Application of Identify project and applicant(s)
    • Identify parts (numerical or descriptive)

Do NOT wait until the last minute to ERF!
Post Award
Budgets and Grant Agreements

• Grant Agreements contain requirements:
  • Project scope and budget
  • Commission Order
  • Expense support requirements (invoices, receipts, labor documentation, etc.)
  • Recordkeeping and audit requirements
  • Reporting requirements
  • Amendment requirements
# Reimbursement Process

## Project Budget

### FY2020 Broadband Expansion Grant (Docket 5-BF-2020) Payment Request Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name:</th>
<th>Acme Broadband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Name:</td>
<td>FTT Project in Any County, Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application ERF Reference:</td>
<td>456789</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Amount Awarded by PSC:** $300,000.00  
**Match %:** 56.96%

### Contact Information

| Contact's Name: | |
| Contact's Email: | |
| Telephone No.: | |

### Budget Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Line</th>
<th>Budget Line Description/Category</th>
<th>Total Projected Cost</th>
<th>Grant(^1)</th>
<th>Match(^1)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Line 1</td>
<td>Fiber</td>
<td>$550,235</td>
<td>$236,816.40</td>
<td>$313,418.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line 2</td>
<td>Engineering, Permits &amp; Inspection</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$30,333.98</td>
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<td>Line 4</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line 5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Projected Cost:** $687,040.00  
**Grant\(^1\): $300,000.00**  
**Match\(^1\): $397,040.00**

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\(^1\) **NOTE:** When reimbursing grant funds, the match percentage will ALWAYS be applied to every expense, regardless of how the budget was submitted in the application. In other words, if the budget in your application contained an expense line with no recipient match (e.g., an expense that is 100% funded by grant funds), the recipient match will still be applied to that expense during the Commission’s reimbursement process per the grant Agreement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total Expense</th>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Match</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Request Number Description (i.e. Invoice Number)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inv 345766 Fiberco</td>
<td>$88,542.00</td>
<td>$38,451.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Acme Field Crew, $60 hr. X 4 X 8 hrs per day 5/18-5/20</td>
<td>$5,760.00</td>
<td>$2,479.05</td>
<td>$3,280.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Insert rows above (and do not use this row)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Remaining Budget</td>
<td>$455,154.00</td>
<td>$195,885.75</td>
<td>$259,268.25</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Line 2 Engineering, Permits &amp; Inspection</td>
<td>$67,800.00</td>
<td>$29,180.53</td>
<td>$38,619.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Request Number Description (i.e. Invoice Number)</td>
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<td>8</td>
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# Acme Broadband, FTTP Project in Any County, Wisconsin

## Docket 5-BF-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Grantee's Match Percent: 56.96%</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Total Expense</td>
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<td>$70,480.00</td>
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### Acme Broadband, FTTP Project in Any County, Wisconsin

#### Docket 5-BF-2020

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*Grant agreement amendment may be needed.*

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Manage to Your Budget – Request Amendments If Needed
Questions Regarding the Application Process

Contact the Wisconsin Broadband Office by e-mail at PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov

Deadline for submitting questions and requests for clarification is December 5, 2019
Conclusion

• Address all required areas
• Sufficiently address the 7 factors
  1. Matching Funds
  2. Public/Private Partnerships
  3. Existing broadband services
  4. Scalability
  5. Project Impact
  6. Economic Impact
  7. Will not delay service in adjacent areas
• Budget you propose is used throughout life of grant
• ERF
  • Remember to log on
  • Don’t wait until the last minute to familiarize and upload
• December 19 at 4 p.m. CT is deadline for applying