



St. Louis County, MN

St. Louis County Broadband Infrastructure Grant PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Form

9002

Rev. 7-25-2023

Background: The St. Louis County "Broadband Infrastructure Grant" supports local broadband initiatives by providing financial assistance to eligible projects. Application and additional information can be found online at: www.stlouiscountymn.gov/economicdevelopment

Funding Up to \$400,000 for eligible projects (\$1.75 million total available for grants countywide).

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Program Purpose To assist communities with financing broadband infrastructure in **unserved or underserved** areas in St. Louis County, Minnesota (refer to eligible project areas below).

Program Goal Provide high-speed, reliable, and affordable internet access that establishes or improves broadband service to unserved or underserved populations throughout St. Louis County.

Eligible Applicants Cities, townships, tribal units, and non-profits located within St. Louis County. Private businesses are eligible to apply with the support and on behalf of government entities and non-profit organizations. *Multi-organization collaborations are encouraged.*

Eligible Project Areas
Unserved or Underserved Areas in St. Louis County
An **unserved area** is an area in which households or businesses lack access to wire-line broadband service at speeds that meet the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) threshold of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 megabits per second (Mbps) upload.
An **underserved area** is an area in St. Louis County in which households or businesses do receive service at or above the FCC threshold of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload but lack access to wire-line broadband service at speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

Eligible Projects

- ✓ Broadband infrastructure construction.
- ✓ Broadband service designed to deliver, upon project completion, service that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical **upload and download speeds of 100 Mbps** as required by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act guidelines.

Note: Under ARP guidelines, there may be instances in which it would not be practicable for a project to deliver such service speeds because of the geography, topography, or excessive costs associated with such a project. In these instances, service delivery speeds must reliably meet or exceed 100 Mbps download and between at least 20-100 Mbps upload speeds and be scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrically for download and upload speeds.

Project Costs	Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Architectural and engineering fees, consulting costs and services, personnel costs, surveys, construction costs, broadband equipment, and similar costs associated with infrastructure construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Acquisition of property, non-related construction equipment purchases, right-of-way, food, rent, travel, conferences.✓ Infrastructure cost/expenses incurred outside of St. Louis County.

Match Funds Requirement Requires a 1:1 financial match (one part applicant and one part County). The match must be committed and can come from any private and/or public source.

Priorities Scoring Criteria

- ✓ Leverages provider partnership/investment (20 pts)
- ✓ Serves unserved and/or underserved areas (20 pts)
- ✓ Number of households and businesses served (20 pts)
- ✓ Speeds reach or exceed ARPA download and upload speeds (20 pts)
- ✓ Project readiness (10 pts)
- ✓ Strong citizen participation and support (5 pts)
- ✓ Leverages government investment (5 pts)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Deadline All eligible applications will be reviewed on an on-going basis subject to grant funding availability. St. Louis County reserves the sole right to select and fund broadband projects.

Application Requirements All applicants must provide an approved resolution to apply for, accept and match grant funds.

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