



St. Louis County, MN

# Draft St. Louis County Broadband Infrastructure Grant PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Form

# 9002

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**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/broadband](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/broadband)

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

**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.

**Contact Information**

Brad Gustafson Planning and Community Development St. Louis County, Minnesota	Phone: (218) 742-9563 Email: <a href="mailto:gustafsonb@stlouiscountymn.gov">gustafsonb@stlouiscountymn.gov</a> Web: <a href="http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/broadband">www.stlouiscountymn.gov/broadband</a>
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