



EMPLOYMENT AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Governor's Broadband Task Force, Annual Report 2025

January 22, 2026

# 2025 Annual Report Overview

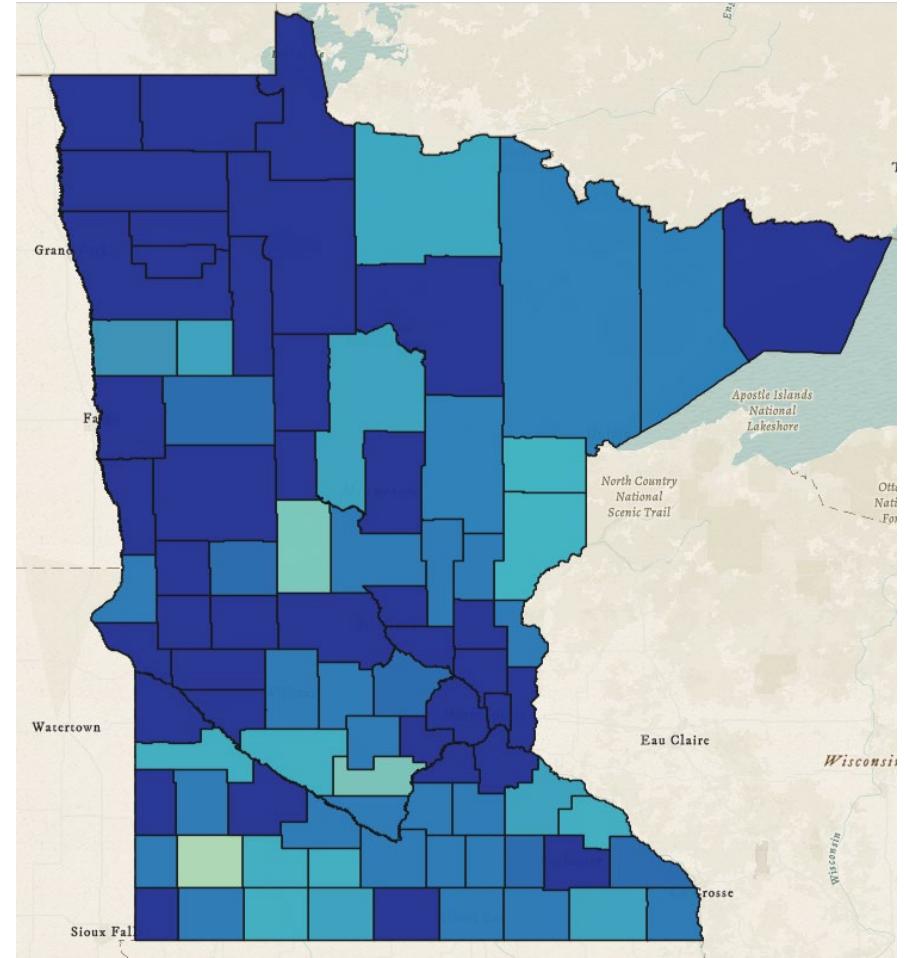
The Broadband Task Force works each year on a report that includes an inventory and assessment of broadband in Minnesota, established under the Governor's Executive Order (EO19-10).

Combined, this report and the work of the Task Force look to **improve the likelihood of the state achieving its broadband goals.**

The full report will be posted to the [Broadband Task Force webpage](#).

# 2025 Annual Report Key Context

- As of 2025, 93.84% of homes and businesses have access to broadband at 25/3 Mbps, and 92.11% can reach speeds of 100/20 Mbps. Yet, **more than 121,000 households remain without basic service, and nearly 155,000 are underserved at higher speeds.**
- Workforce shortages, permitting delays, and policy gaps—such as the absence of sales tax exemptions for broadband materials—continue to hinder deployment, especially in rural and remote areas where costs are highest.
- While our state has invested in innovative programs like the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant and the Line Extension Connection Program, the demand for funding far exceeds available resources



# Affordability, Economic Opportunity, and Workforce Development

## **Subgroup Statement of Purpose:**

Access to high-speed broadband is essential for full participation in modern life and the economy. **This section's recommendations are grounded in the belief that closing the digital divide requires a holistic strategy focused on affordability, adoption, and the creation of a robust digital workforce.** Our proposals aim to transform Minnesota's broadband investment into tangible, equitable economic opportunities for all Minnesotans. Our recommendations provide a framework for the Governor and Legislature to:

- 1. Ensure Affordability** of service for all households.
- 2. Maximize Economic Opportunities** by leveraging new connectivity to support small businesses, telemedicine, education, and remote work.
- 3. Cultivate a Skilled Workforce** to sustain and grow the state's digital future, creating family-supporting jobs in every region.
- 4. Invest in Digital Skills and Adoption** through support systems, like digital navigator programs, to ensure all residents can safely, effectively, and confidently leverage broadband access to evaluate information and maximize its personal and economic benefits.

# Affordability, Economic Opportunity, and Workforce Development Recommendations

- ***Modernize Federal Affordability Programs*** - Advocate for federal reforms to the Lifeline program, increasing the monthly subsidy to match the former ACP levels (\$30 for most households, \$75 for Tribal lands). This would make broadband service genuinely affordable for low-income Minnesotans and help prevent service cancellations due to cost.
- ***Workforce Development and Local Hiring*** - Develop and fund Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and registered apprenticeships with Minnesota schools and colleges to address labor shortages and build local capacity for broadband deployment. Encourage grant recipients to implement workforce best practices (outlined in Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 116J.395) and prioritize local hiring provisions, ensuring jobs created are family-supporting with fair wages and benefits.
- ***Support for Anchor Institutions*** - Prioritize funding for anchor institutions (libraries, schools, community centers) to provide digital literacy training, including resources for software, hardware, staff (such as digital navigators), outreach, and business alignment with these initiatives.
- ***Statewide Digital Inclusion Initiative*** - Launch a coordinated, multi-faceted initiative to systematically eliminate barriers to digital literacy and adoption. This includes expanding affordable broadband access, providing devices, and funding community-based programs that address non-technical challenges, such as transportation, childcare, language barriers, and trust-building with service providers. The initiative should prioritize digital skills training for all residents, regardless of foundational literacy level.

# Mapping, Policy, and Funding

## **Subgroup Statement of Purpose:**

The purpose of the group is to **advance digital access, opportunity and inclusion across Minnesota by coordinating state-supported efforts that leverage existing policy tools, federal and state resources, and community partnerships.** This includes expanding high-speed broadband access to every Minnesotan and working toward the state's 2026 speed goal of ensuring every address has access to service levels of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

We support:

- Continued broadband mapping efforts, exploring cost-reduction strategies for deployment—especially in rural and remote areas.
- Advocating for sustained funding of successful programs like the Line Extension Connection Program.

Through collaborative planning and targeted investment, we aim to ensure that all communities can access affordable, reliable broadband and the opportunities it enables.

# Mapping Policy and Funding Recommendations

- ***Advance Inclusive Broadband Deployment*** - Align deployment strategies with community needs, prioritizing underserved and unserved populations. Strengthen state-supported coordination of community and nonprofit efforts and explore cost-reduction policies to lower barriers in high-cost, low-density areas.
- ***Expand and Sustain Broadband Mapping*** - Continue and expand mapping efforts to provide accurate, transparent data that informs policy decisions, identifies service gaps, and supports targeted infrastructure development. As BEAD and other grant programs are completed, ensure mapping efforts evaluate actual locations served, speeds delivered, and infrastructure capabilities.
- ***Prioritize Funding for Line Extension Connection Program*** - Provide continued and increased funding for the Line Extension Connection Program, which has proven to be a cost-effective and targeted solution for last-mile deployment. This program empowers consumers, meets demand, and ensures no household or business is left behind as BEAD funding rolls out.

# Moving forward into 2026

The recommendations in this report chart a clear path forward: **modernizing affordability programs, expanding digital literacy and device access, investing in local workforce development, continuing mapping efforts, and sustaining targeted funding for last-mile connections**. These actions are not just about infrastructure – they are about opportunity, equity, and the future of Minnesota.

With the state's statutory speed goals set to expire in 2026, the Task Force will be working in the next year more to understand the broadband landscape and suggestions around updates for future revised goals.

# Questions?

# Summarized 2026 Recommendations

## Affordability, Economic Opportunity, & Workforce Development

- **Advance Inclusive Broadband Deployment** - Align deployment strategies with community needs, prioritizing underserved and unserved populations. Strengthen state-supported coordination of community and nonprofit efforts and explore cost-reduction policies to lower barriers in high-cost, low-density areas.
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## Mapping Policy & Funding

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