Broadband Infrastructure

Broadband Infrastructure grants assist projects that help households and businesses reach the State of Minnesota broadband Speed Goal.

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Eligible Applicants: Cities, townships, nonprofits, tribal governments and governmental entities created pursuant to Minnesota Statutes located within the agency’s service area. Multi-organization collaboration is encouraged.

Funding

- Funded up to $2,000,000 for FY2023.
- 1:1 match per project required.
- In-kind materials and/or labor are not eligible toward the project match.
- Consideration will be given to projects that leverage greater amounts of funding for a project from other sources.
- Agency grant funding is contingent upon the award of all funding sources and must be confirmed by contributing source prior to execution of contract.
- Architectural and engineering fees in excess of 10% of the total project costs are ineligible for reimbursement.
- Applications should be submitted nine months prior to the project construction start date.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- The Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation works to improve economic opportunities in support of diversity, equity and inclusion in our service area.
- Diverse populations served by this program include economically distressed communities, tribal nations, black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), veterans, low to moderate income neighborhoods and disabled individuals.
- Additional points are awarded to projects that serve a diverse population as listed above or utilize state certified Targeted Group (TG), Economically Disadvantaged (ED) area or Veteran-Owned (VO) vendors.

Evaluation Criteria (100 points)

Grants are awarded to the highest scored application using the following criteria. All evaluation criteria must be addressed in the project narrative.

1. **Anticipated broadband service improvements. (40 points)**
   - Anticipated improvements in broadband speed offerings will take the household or business from unserved or underserved to service levels that will be served at the 2026 State of Minnesota Speed Goal.
   - Evidence that the broadband service provider is capable and fully prepared to build, implement, operate and sustain the project.

2. **Leverage and partnerships. (25 points)**
   - Project is leveraging and building off other federal, state, county or private investment. Higher points are awarded based on leverage.
• Provide a list of federal, state, county, local or private grants, loans or other financing applications that have been committed or are pending approval. The list must align with the budget table in the application and include contact information for the contact person responsible for the funding.

3. Regional and community benefit. (20 points)
   • Identify how project will impact the economic climate of the agency’s service area.
   • Identify number of households, businesses and education institutions that will be served by the project.
   • Letters of support from businesses, residents, farms, community anchor institutions, educational facilities, local unit of government, county and other community stakeholders.

4. Diversity, equity and inclusion. (10 points)
   • Project incorporates a state certified targeted group, economically disadvantaged area or veteran owned vendor.
   • Project serves an underserved community/population.
   • Diverse populations that include:
     o BIPOC.
     o Tribal nations.
     o LGBTQI.
     o Disability status.
     o Veterans.
     o Geographic.

5. Job creation and retention. (5 points)
   • Describe how the project supports job creation or retention, if any that will result from this project. (Minnesota Statute 298.22 subd. 13)
   • Identify how the project will contribute to business as it relates to remote workers, entrepreneurs, home-based businesses and assist business/workforce attraction/retention.

Application Checklist
• Project narrative.
  o Narrative must address evaluation criteria.

• IRS Form W-9 – Request for Taxpayer ID Number and Certification.

• Financial documents.
  o IRS 990 Form: For organizations with an annual revenue below $750,000, the most recent IRS 990 form must be uploaded.
  o Certified Financial Audit: For organizations with an annual revenue of over $750,000, the most recent certified financial audit must be uploaded.

• If you are filing for a State Border to Border Grant, provide evidence of the pre-application notification and responses from existing wireline providers.

• Exhibits, reports or studies to support the application.

• Preliminary project design, engineering and cost estimates, any service contract and/or materials must follow the state contracting and bidding requirements below. The final design,
engineering and costs must be approved by a licensed engineer in Minnesota before release of agency funds.

**Non-Governmental Entity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract or Cost of Material or Service</th>
<th>Quotes/Cost Estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>One – provide explanation of costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $24,999</td>
<td>Two – upload with application or provide verbal quote detail in project narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>Three – upload with application or provide verbal quote detail in project narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
<td>Must undergo formal notice and bidding process.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Municipality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract or Cost of Material or Service</th>
<th>Quotes/Cost Estimates <em>Per Minnesota Statute 471.345</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $25,000</td>
<td>Two – may be upon quotation or open market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $175,000</td>
<td>Two – may use competitive bidding process or direct negotiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $175,000</td>
<td>Sealed bids shall be solicited by public notice in the manner and subject to the requirements of the law governing contracts by the particular municipality or class thereof.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Resolution authorizing applicant to apply for and accept funds.
- Historic preservation requirements, must be completed prior to release of agency funds.
  - If your project is listed in or located on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the State Register of Historic Places (specific to public buildings and landmarks), it must be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and the response letter uploaded to your application.
  - Contact the State Historic Preservation Office with questions at 651-201-3287.
- Other documentation to support the application.

**Application and Award Process**

- **Application process.**
  - Applications must be submitted through the FLUXX grants portal.
  - A short pre-application is required to determine eligibility of project.
  - A full application will be available in FLUXX once eligibility is determined.

- **Application deadline.**
  - Applications are accepted July 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023 on a rolling basis subject to the availability of remaining program funds.
  - Projects that are phased require an application for each phase. The project title stated in the application should indicate the phase.
  - Notify grant program administrator of any changes to application after final submission.

- **Application review.**
  - Initial review is completed by the grant program administrator for eligibility and application requirements.
Eligible applications are subject to a competitive review process. They are evaluated and scored based on the evaluation criteria by a minimum of three reviewers. Grant program administrators do not score applications for their respective program. Grant program administrator finalizes recommendations based on the completed evaluations, past performance of grantee and availability of program funds. Applications that meet the minimum required score may be presented to the agency’s board for review and recommendation. Applicant may be required to attend board meeting for project approval and will be notified when their application is to be presented.

- **Application award.**
  - Grants are awarded to the most competitive applications.
  - The agency reserves the right to award all or partial funding per application.
  - Applicants will be notified by email within 30 days following application review and recommendation.
  - Grant award is subject to the Commissioner’s final approval and must meet objectives, priorities and policies established by the Commissioner.
  - Agency grant funds will be reimbursed upon confirmation of locations passed. A location is considered “passed” when the broadband provider’s fiber cable is installed on the property or on either side of the road that adjoins the location, and the provider is accepting orders for service at that location that can be fulfilled within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed six months.

**Grant Outcome Expectations**
- Upon receiving a grant award that is over $175,000, it must be publicly bid. The contractor is required to be licensed and insured.
- The agency reserves the right to require signage/logo acknowledging financial assistance from the Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation. Details are outlined in the grant agreement.
- Awarded projects must meet the Minnesota Prevailing Wage Statutes and the agency’s board policy as stated in the grant agreement.
- Spending for project expenses within the agency’s service area is encouraged.

**Reporting Requirements**
- A progress report is required if grant period is to exceed 12 months and annually thereafter.
- A monitoring report will be conducted by the program administrator if the grant is over $50,000.
- A site visit may be conducted by the program administrator.
- A final report is required before final payment.
- A close out acknowledgement form may be required if there is a grant balance remaining.

**Public Information**
- All application information submitted is presumed to be public information pursuant to the Minnesota Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statute Chapter 13.