

PSC: Takes first step toward awarding \$100 million for ARPA broadband access grants

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MADISON - On Thursday, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC or Commission) met to discuss the eligibility, overall priorities, and the timeliness of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Broadband Access Grant applications. [In July](#), the PSC received 240 applications requesting more than \$420 million for projects that will expand high-speed broadband internet to unserved and underserved locations in the state. The Commission is expected to make award decisions for the \$100 million by the end of October 2021.

“We know all too well that the lack of broadband in parts of our state is leaving many people behind,” said PSC Chairperson Rebecca Cameron Valcq. “This funding will get people connected and help Wisconsin bounce back stronger. I want to thank Governor Evers for making these ARPA dollars available to get Wisconsinites access to broadband.”

Due to the high volume of requests, the PSC split the deliberations related to the grants over at least two meetings. The discussion on Thursday was in preparation for subsequent meetings when the Commission will make final grant awards. Along with discussing project priorities, the Commission decided that six projects submitted late would not be considered for funding, and five projects did not meet U.S. Department of Treasury eligibility guidelines. A list of those projects can be found on page 4 and 9 in the [Commission staff memorandum](#).

Internet service providers, telecommunications utilities, cooperatives, local governments, and for-profit and non-profit organizations were eligible to apply for grants from June 1, 2021, to July 27, 2021. The Commission will approve projects that will be completed by December 31, 2024.

In addition to the \$100 million in ARPA funding, the 2021-2023 Biennial State Budget, approved by Governor Evers in July, provides \$129 million in state grant

funding over the next two years for the Broadband Expansion Grant Program. Details about that funding will be announced in the near future.