

Gov. Evers, PSC: Announce Capital Projects Fund grant program application period

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC), today announced the Broadband Infrastructure Program application period will begin Aug. 14, 2023. Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the U.S. Department of Treasury awarded Wisconsin \$42 million through the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) to administer the Broadband Infrastructure Program and invest in projects that will provide high-quality internet to locations that lack access to adequate, affordable service.

“No administration in state history has done more to expand access to high-speed internet than we have, and I’m darn proud of that. But we have more work to do in order to deliver the infrastructure needed for a 21st-century workforce and economy,” said Gov. Evers. “These federal investments will play a critical role in helping us build upon our efforts over the last four years as we keep working to close the digital divide and ensure every kid, family, and business has access to quality, high-speed internet, no matter where they live in our state.”

Since 2019, Gov. Evers has allocated more than \$345 million in state and federal funds to expand high-speed internet, including the largest state investment in state history, ensuring that more than 395,000 homes and businesses will have new or improved service. Even still, more work remains as, according to the [recently released](#) 2023 Governor’s Task Force on Broadband Access Annual Report, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) estimates there are more than 246,000 locations that are unserved in the state and more than 217,000 that are underserved.

Earlier this year, Gov. Evers [announced](#), as part of his 2023-25 biennial budget proposal, a historic investment of \$750 million for the state [Broadband Expansion Grant Program](#) to build upon his administration's previous record-setting investments in expanding broadband across the state. Unfortunately, Republican members of the Joint Finance Committee not only voted against adopting the governor's historic proposal but voted to provide \$0 state dollars for broadband expansion, citing forthcoming federal investments in broadband expansion allocated for Wisconsin. While federal funding through the CPF and other sources will help bolster the state's efforts to connect more Wisconsin homes and businesses to new or improved high-speed internet, state investment in broadband expansion is necessary to close the digital divide, and with a historic state surplus available to make such investments, it should be made a priority.

The CPF is designed to address pre-existing barriers to internet access that were exacerbated by the pandemic. Broadband Infrastructure Program grant funds will be used to make necessary investments in broadband infrastructure designed to provide consistent, reliable, and high-performance broadband service to areas in Wisconsin most impacted by the pandemic.

"Almost overnight, the pandemic demonstrated to us all the crucial need for connectivity in so many parts of our state," said PSC Chairperson Rebecca Cameron Valcq. "This funding will allow us to focus on bringing affordable and reliable broadband to the places that the pandemic hit the hardest."

Eligible entities for the competitive grant program include internet service providers, telecommunications utilities, cooperatives, local governments, and for-profit and non-profit organizations. The funding is available to construct broadband infrastructure projects to deploy reliable internet service that will meet or exceed 100/100 megabits per second (Mbps) symmetrical speed internet service and include at least one low-cost option for work, education, and health monitoring.

More information about the upcoming grant application period beginning August 14 will be made available by the PSC's [Wisconsin Broadband Office](#) soon. The deadline to apply will be in November 2023.

After this initial grant period, more than \$140 million in additional funding for Wisconsin under the CPF is expected to be authorized by the U.S. Department of Treasury and announced at a later date. This additional round of funding will

be available to carry out device deployment and digital navigator projects and to improve community access to essential equipment.

More information on the CPF can be found [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).