



## Blandin Community Broadband Program

Blandin Foundation stands with Minnesota's rural leaders and communities as they create and claim futures that are resilient, vibrant and connected. Abundant and robust access to the Internet (broadband), and the digital literacy skills necessary to take full advantage of this access, now are essential as communities seek to compete and thrive in an ever more connected world.

### □ Background

Since making rural broadband use and access a focus in 2003, Blandin Foundation has partnered with leaders in more than 60 communities and 80 organizations across the state. At the core of every one of the hundreds of projects emerging from this work have been two core objectives:

- *Sustainable broadband adoption*
- *Enriched quality of life and place*

Through the Blandin Community Broadband Program, the foundation extends its broadband focus in 2013 and 2014 with up to \$1.5 million in grants and technical support available to rural Minnesota communities.

### □ Opportunities

The Blandin Community Broadband Program offers a robust set of resources for community-designed and -driven initiatives. Blandin Foundation matches community resources and vision with technical support, grants, access to peer community insights, conferences, workshops and webinars. Together we explore broadband possibilities in three ways:

**Blandin Broadband Communities.** Following on the success of the Demonstration Community component of the recent Blandin Foundation-administered, federally funded Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities program, the foundation seeks 10 rural Minnesota communities (cities, counties, tribal governments, geographic corridors or other self-identified communities of interest) to join us in an intensive, two-year partnership.

- Selected through a request-for-proposals process, Blandin Broadband Communities will define their technology goals, measure current levels of



broadband access and use, and connect with other technical assistance and resources to meet their goals.

- Each Blandin Broadband Community also will be invited to apply for Blandin Foundation matching grants for community-defined projects, up to \$100,000 per community.
- Applications are due to Blandin Foundation by October 15, with selections announced November 14, 2012 at the *"Building Our Connected Futures: Minnesota is Better with Broadband"* conference in Duluth.

**Community Project Grants.** In addition to grants available to Blandin Broadband Communities, Blandin Foundation continues to make matching grants available to all rural Minnesota communities for specific broadband-related projects.

**Robust Broadband Network Feasibility Fund**

\$25,000 – \$40,000 for broadband feasibility studies

**LightSpeed**

Up to \$50,000 for advanced application deployment

**Digital Inclusion Community Partnership**

Up to \$25,000 for efforts to increase computer ownership and broadband adoption among low-income populations

**Broadband Innovation**

Up to \$10,000 for community projects that support enhanced culture of broadband use

Eligible recipients are located in Minnesota, serve Minnesota residents, and are 501(c)3 organizations, units of government or tribal governments. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, beginning January 2013.

**Community Broadband Resources.** Technical, educational, informational and convening resources are available to assist communities as they identify, prioritize and act on their broadband-related objectives. Many resources are publicly accessible at the Foundation's broadband website and at the Blandin on Broadband blog. In addition, applications for up to 32 hours of flexible technical assistance are accepted on an ongoing basis (application is at website).

□ **For more information**

**Mary Magnuson (program administrator)**

218-326-0523 or [broadband@blandinfoundation.org](mailto:broadband@blandinfoundation.org)

**Blandin Foundation website:** [www.blandinfoundation.org](http://www.blandinfoundation.org)

**Broadband:** <http://broadband.blandinfoundation.org> and [www.blandinonbroadband.org](http://www.blandinonbroadband.org)

**Grants:** <http://grants.blandinfoundation.org>

**Blandin on Broadband blog:** [www.blandinonbroadband.org](http://www.blandinonbroadband.org)

