


# Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program 2016 Overview

**Welcome!**

For questions today, please use CHAT function on webinar screen or email [david.j.thao@state.mn.us](mailto:david.j.thao@state.mn.us) or [diane.wells@state.mn.us](mailto:diane.wells@state.mn.us)



# **Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program 2016 Overview**

Webinar

June 23, 2016

Minnesota Office of Broadband Development

# Intro to Office of Broadband Development

Office (OBD) was created in 2013 legislation

## Charge:

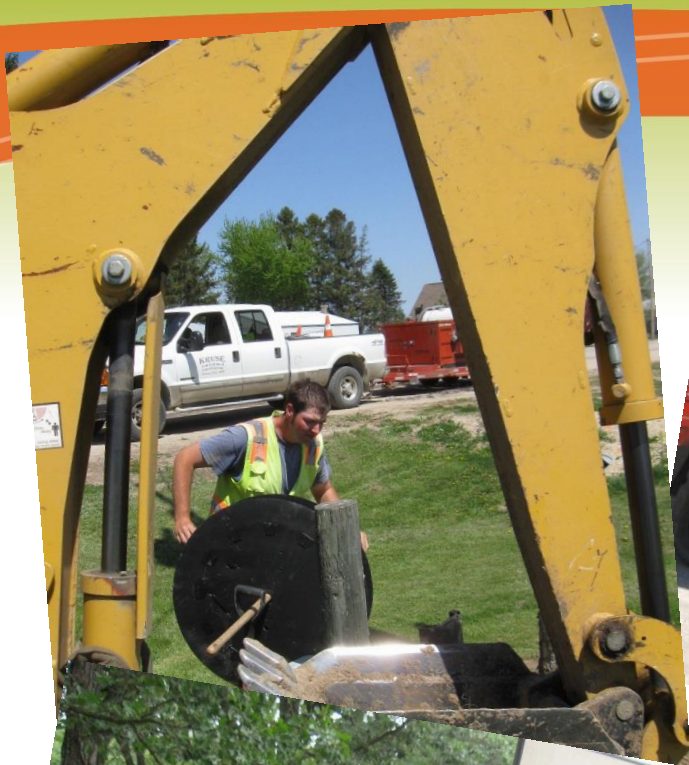
- Encourage, foster, develop, and improve broadband within the state.

## Purpose:

- To drive job creation, promote innovation, and expand markets for Minnesota businesses.
- To serve the ongoing needs of Minnesota's education systems, health care systems, public safety systems, industries and businesses, governmental operations, and citizens.

# Border to Border Broadband Development Grant – Infrastructure Purpose

- **Grant purpose:** To provide financial assistance for the acquisition and installation of middle-mile and last-mile broadband infrastructure to areas of the state that do not have wireline access at federal and state minimum standard speeds.
- **Allowable costs:** Examples of allowable costs include: project planning; obtaining construction permits; purchase and/or construction of facilities, including construction of both “middle mile” and “last mile” infrastructure; and installation and testing of the equipment used to provide broadband service.



# New in 2016:

## Funding for Low Income Areas

- \$500,000 for Broadband Availability and Adoption Projects in Low Income Areas
- Low Income households defined as at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines
- Funding can be used for infrastructure and adoption costs
- Adoption costs eligible for reimbursement include examples such as discounted monthly service cost, digital literacy training, public computing center, discounted devices.

# Border to Border Broadband Development Grant – Overview

- \$35 M one-time appropriation
- \$5 M for underserved, \$500,000 for low income, remainder for applications for unserved areas
- Distributed in single competitive grant round
- Technology must be scalable to at least 100Mbps Up/Down
- Cap of \$5M per grant award
- At least 1 to 1 match (50% of eligible expenses) required (More points awarded for higher match)
- Grant awards will be geographically dispersed
- All invoiced work must be complete by June 30, 2019

# Border to Border Broadband Development Grant – Overview - Eligibility

- Who is eligible to apply?
  - An incorporated business or partnership
  - A political subdivision
  - An Indian tribe
  - A Minnesota nonprofit organized under 317A
  - A Minnesota cooperative organized under 308A or 308B
  - A Minnesota limited liability corporation organized under 322B for the purpose of expanding broadband access

# Border to Border Broadband Development Grant –Application Process and Timeline

- Application period opens on July 22, 2016
- Deadline: October 3, 2016 at 4 p.m., into the OBD offices, St. Paul.
- Application project areas and broadband speeds posted by October 6, 2016.
- Challenges due by November 7 at 4 p.m.
- Application review & scoring period
- Target to make awards by late November

# Application Requirements

1. Description of area to be served by proposed project (unserved, underserved, low income, or some combination)
2. Whether the project is middle-mile, last mile or both
3. Documentation that existing providers were contacted and their replies
4. Kind and amount of broadband infrastructure to be purchased (and broadband adoption costs, if requesting funding from \$500,000 set aside for projects in low income area)
5. Amount and type of funding requested (funding for an unserved, underserved and/or low income project)
6. Evidence regarding the unserved or underserved nature of the community

# Application Requirements (continued)

7. Number of households, businesses & community institutions passed that will have access to broadband as result of the project and the improvement in broadband speeds that will be provided
8. Significant community institutions that will benefit from the proposed project
9. Evidence of community support and economic impact for the project
10. Total cost of the project
11. Sources of funding or in-kind contributions for the project that will supplement the B2B grant award

# 2016 Challenge Process

- 3 days after close of application window, proposed projects and speed offerings posted on our website
- Challenges due in 30 days by provider in or proximate to proposed project area
- Provider must be providing, have begun construction, or commit to complete construction at speeds equal to or greater than speed goals within 18 months after grant awards made (May 2018)
- DEED prohibited from awarding a grant to a project where a credible challenge has been received

# Scoring Criteria—Points Awarded for the Following

- Amount of increase of broadband speeds and number of passings
- Is an economically distressed area served?
- Community partnerships & evidence of economic development benefits
- Sustainability of the project over time

# Scoring Criteria (continued)

- Financial and organizational capability
- Evidence of community support
- Project plan and timeline
- Comparability (price and speed) to service offered in urban areas
- Community anchor institutions that will benefit
- Provide information on broadband programs for low-income residents

## Scoring Criteria (continued)

- Specific evidence of health and public safety benefits
- Technical support and training on broadband provided in the community
- Information on how the broadband service will be promoted when it becomes available

# Summary of Changes for 2016

- Funding amount is \$35M
- New definition for underserved (25/3 and up to less than 100Mbps down/20Mbps upload)
- Requirement to contact existing providers 6 weeks before submitting an application
- Pre-set amounts of funding (\$5M for underserved, \$500,000 for low income)
- Scoring criteria published 30 days before application period opens
- Updated challenge process
- Prevailing wage exemption for last mile infrastructure

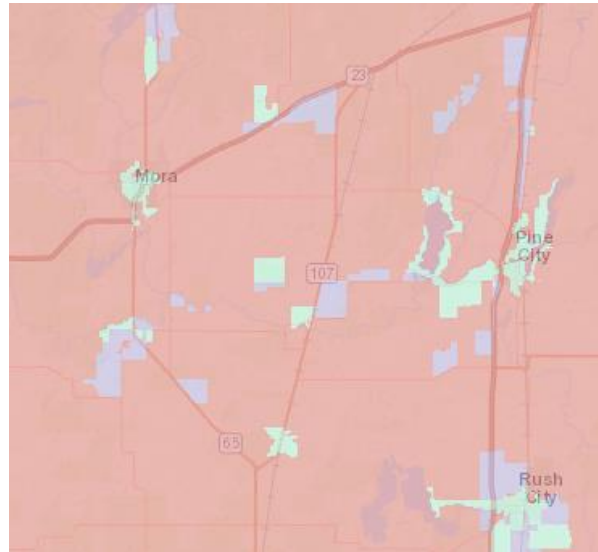
# What Stage Should Your Application Preparation be at Now?

- Finalize locations/areas to include in application
- Identify and plan your communications with existing broadband providers
- Confirm project partners (provider partner, community partner)
- Complete project design, timeline, budget
  - if applicable, include cost and time for environmental reviews, railroad crossings, and prevailing wage implications
- Obtain financial commitments and verifications for match
- Continue to gather and document community support

# Maps showing unserved and underserved areas are available:

Maps available on the  
OBD website:

<http://map.connectmn.org/>



If your information differs from what current data shows, please contact Diane Wells at [diane.wells@state.mn.us](mailto:diane.wells@state.mn.us)

## In closing.....

- Thank you for your interest in this program
- We are here to answer your questions and listen to your input
- Keep us busy with lots of applications!
- Any more questions at this point?

# Thank You & Contact Information

## For more information, contact:

–Jane Leonard, Broadband Grants Administrator,  
651-259-7635 [jane.leonard@state.mn.us](mailto:jane.leonard@state.mn.us) or

–Diane Wells, Telecommunications Manager (can answer policy,  
challenges, & mapping questions), 651-259-7613  
[diane.wells@state.mn.us](mailto:diane.wells@state.mn.us) or

–Danna Mackenzie, OBD Director, 651-259-7611  
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