

Idaho Broadband Fund: CARES Act Broadband Grant

GUIDELINES

Grant applications will be posted to the Idaho Department of Commerce website for public review.

1. Program Description

The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board is soliciting projects that meet the CARES Act funding criteria for the \$10 million appropriated to the Idaho Department of Commerce from the Federal COVID Relief Fund. These funds may only be expended to provide financial assistance in broadband infrastructure consistent with CARES Act criteria. The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board seeks to fund broadband projects across the state that are necessary for the COVID-19 public health emergency, and may include assisting with or improving distance learning, telehealth, telework, and public safety. This Idaho Broadband Fund: CARES Act Broadband Grant (the “Broadband Grant”) is designed to meet the CARES Act criteria, helping Idaho rebound from the COVID-19 public health emergency.

2. Eligible Projects

A. To be eligible for funding under the Broadband Grant, projects must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- i. Projects must satisfy the CARES Act criteria, which is designed to address key areas of public health and safety by improving opportunities to telework, improving access to telehealth services, facilitating distance learning, and improving public safety (CARES Act Federal Register Guidance can be found [here](#). Frequently asked questions can be referenced [here](#).)
- ii. Projects must be necessary due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- iii. Projects must expand rural broadband capacity to assist with telework, telehealth, distance learning, and public safety. Projects that would not be expected to increase capacity to a significant extent until the need for telework, telehealth, distance learning, and public safety have passed due to this public health emergency would not be necessary due to the public health emergency and therefore would not be eligible uses of Broadband Grant funds. Projects must provide broadband service within the proposed project areas.
- iv. **Projects must be completed and operable and verified no later than December 31, 2021. Projects that are not completed, operable, and verified by December 31, 2021 will not be reimbursed.**
- v. Include broadband infrastructure and equipment costs meeting CARES Act criteria. Satellite service is not eligible for grant award.
- vi. Eligible applicants may apply for multiple grants. County governments may apply for grants on behalf of unincorporated communities.

Eligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Construction and materials.
- New and rehabilitative construction contracts.
- Architect, engineering, and legal services, if required to complete the project by December 31, 2021.
- Permitting fees.
- Validation of service expenses.
- Equipment related to broadband infrastructure.
- Installation of equipment related to broadband infrastructure.
- Expenses related to administering the Broadband Grant award not to exceed one percent (1%) of award and capped at five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

Grant funds may not be used to pay for:

- General broadband planning not associated with the project.
- Expenses related to providing broadband services.
- Ongoing overhead, operating costs, or staff costs.
- Political activities or lobbying.

3. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must be a local government or tribal government within the state of Idaho, or an Idaho state agency. For ease of administration, the Broadband Grant adopts the definition of local government as described in Idaho Code section 67-1226. Additionally, a county and an unincorporated community may agree in writing to have the county submit an application for a Broadband Grant award on behalf of the unincorporated community.

4. Terms and Limitations.

Broadband Grant applicants are subject to the following terms and limitations:

- i. Applicants may submit one project per application. However, applicants may submit more than one application. Applicants submitting more than one project must prioritize their projects in a cover letter submitted with each application.
- ii. The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board may award less than the funding amount requested.
- iii. There is no required match. Eligible applicants are encouraged to include any match in their application(s) along with any letters of support.
- iv. Approved projects must be completed by December 31, 2021. **The State will provide no funding and have no obligations for projects that fail to be completed by December 31, 2021.**

5. Important Dates:

- i. Anticipated dates for a public comment are 6/4/2021 – 6/11/2021.
- ii. Anticipated date and time Grant Portal will open for application submissions is 5:00pm MDT on 6/18/2021.
- iii. Anticipated date and time Grant Portal will close for application submissions is 5:00pm MDT on 07/16/2021.
- iv. Anticipated date and time all completed applications will be posted to the Idaho Department of Commerce website for public review is 5:00pm MDT on 07/20/2021.
- v. Anticipated grant challenge period is 5:00pm MDT on 7/20/2021 until 5:00pm MDT on 7/23/2021.

- vi. Anticipated date the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board will begin reviewing grants is 7/26/2021
- vii. Anticipated date by which applicants may be notified of award is 8/02/2021*
- viii. Deadline for signing agreements is 5 business days from award date. Any exceptions must be communicated to the Idaho Department of Commerce and approved in order to prevent funds from being reallocated.
- ix. Projects must be closed, completed, and verified, by 12/31/2021.
- x. All projects must submit complete documentation for reimbursement by January 31st, 2022.
- xi. Commerce will process payments within 30 days of receipt of completed documentation.

*applications are subject to legal review and may be awarded later if additional review is required.

6. Application Selection

The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board, the Office of Broadband, and the Director of the Idaho Department of Commerce, will review, evaluate, and rank eligible projects in accordance with the priorities and criteria set forth by the Board, and will make recommendations for approval. The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board shall determine which projects are approved for funding.

The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board may not award grant funds to a project up until the final notification date.

7. Challenge Process

The Idaho Department of Commerce will post all completed applications to the Idaho Department of Commerce website. Completed applications will be open to challenge for three (3) business days following posting. Any eligible applicant, or any internet service provider qualified and able to provide the broadband service proposed in the application, may submit a written challenge identifying the criteria the application does not meet and providing a basis for the challenge. Challenges must be submitted to the Idaho Department of Commerce Broadband Office at broadband@commerce.idaho.gov.

Upon receiving notice that the Idaho Department of Commerce has received a challenge, applicants may, within three (3) business days:

- Submit a response to the challenge containing specific evidence showing that the applicant meets the challenged criteria;
- Modify the application to meet the criteria; or
- Withdraw their application.

Upon review of the application, the challenge, the applicant's response, and any additional information requested or provided to the Idaho Department of Commerce, if any, the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board or Idaho Department of Commerce will issue a written determination concerning the challenge. Such determination shall be final and binding upon the applicant and the challenger.

The entire application, challenge(s), response to challenge(s), and the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board's determination will be posted to the Idaho Department of Commerce website.

8. Grant Administration

A. Recipients must administer their own grants. However, if approved by a resolution of their governing body, city and county governments may designate a non-profit organization to administer their grants.

B. The procurement of goods and services purchased with or reimbursed by funding under the Broadband Grant must comply with all laws applicable to the recipient, including where applicable:

[Idaho Code Title 54, Chapter 19](#) – Public works contractors

[Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 23](#) – Design professional qualification-based selection

[Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 28](#) – Purchasing by political subdivisions

[Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 92](#) – State Procurement Act

[Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 57, sections 67-5705 through 67-5713](#) – Division of Public Works

C. Prior to disbursement of funds, the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board shall instruct the Director of the Idaho Department of Commerce to enter into grant agreements with the chosen recipients.

D. In its discretion, the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board or Idaho Department of Commerce may establish special conditions in the grant agreement requiring additional reporting or documentation.

E. Grant funds shall be disbursed as a single “lump sum” payment after the project has been completed and verified, and after the recipient submits all required documentation to the Idaho Department of Commerce verifying terms of the grant agreement.

APPLICATION

NOTICE: Grant applications, challenges, and responses to challenges will be posted to the Idaho Department of Commerce website

Purpose:

1. Program Description

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Applicant Information

1. Applicant's contact information:
 - a. Name

- b. Title/Position
 - c. Mailing Address
 - d. Email Address
 - e. Phone Number
2. List the cities/communities in the census blocks where the project(s) will take place.
 3. Grant Administrator
 - a. Provide the name and title of the designated grant administrator.
 - b. Provide the email address of the designated grant administrator.
 - c. Provide the phone number of the designated grant administrator.

Project Requirements

1. Does your project meet the CARES Act criteria?
 - a. Y/N
2. [Check Box] I understand that the State of Idaho will provide no funding and have no obligations for CARES funded projects that fail to be completed by December 31, 2021.

Scored Criteria

1. Provide an overview of the project, including why the project is important and how it will address the broadband needs of the community. Include a scope of work description, along with a list of ISPs that can provide: the broadband service being sought, the required technologies and equipment, and the installation and operation of the new broadband service. **(30 Points)**
 - a. **Scope of Work:** outlines the detailed plans of the infrastructure build. This may include, but is not limited to, the following: project area, type of infrastructure installed, locations of underserved households, known existing infrastructure, known existing anchor institutions (schools, hospitals, public facilities, etc.), potential middle-mile infrastructure that will be utilized, and locations of existing infrastructure.
2. Explain how the project will promote equal access in economic development, public safety, telehealth, education, including why current infrastructure is inadequate or negatively impacts the community? **(25 Points)**
3. Explain how your project meets Cares Act Criteria, is necessary for the public health emergency, and mitigates similar disruptions in the future? **(20 Points).**
4. Will this project deliver broadband infrastructure to a rural Idaho population (less than 25,000) (Y/N) **(15 Points).**
5. Explain how your project delivers a cost-effective broadband infrastructure solution to the community **(10 Points).**

Additional Requested Information (if applicable).

1. Please detail any project match included to complete this project.
2. Estimated total project cost?
3. Number of households that will be connected to broadband service under the scope of the grant if applicable?
4. What is the average cost per household of new broadband service based on this project cost if applicable? (Divide total cost by household number)
5. What is the maximum broadband speed that will be provided by the project?
6. Are permits, permissions, and zoning requirements all obtainable in order for the project to be completed and paid for by December 31, 2021 if it is a CARES funded project? Y/N

- a. Please provide details.
7. Please describe who will be providing the broadband service and ownership of the broadband infrastructure.
8. Describe how the project will be administered and audited for completion, and how the accounting will be performed.
9. Has your project area received or been awarded any federal funds (including but not limited to CAFII/RDOF/USDA Reconnect) in the past two years, or will it receive federal funding over the next two years? If so, explain what federal funding has been/will be received and why the additional funding was/is necessary in the project area?
10. Has your project area received state funds (Cares Act Broadband Grants, E-Rate, etc.) in the past two years? If so, please explain what state funds were received and why the additional state funding was necessary in the project area.
11. Include any other relevant information as to why your project should be considered for funding.
12. Submit 10 or more, recent, fixed location (non-mobile) Speed Tests. Applicants can choose which speedtest application to use (such as [Idaho Ookla Application](#), [BroadbandNow](#), [M-Lab](#)) across the proposed project area with the application; and submit the same amount of speed tests across the project area immediately following completion of the new broadband project if applicable (attach pdfs of speed tests in application). (If not applicable please answer N/A)

Required Attachments:

1. **Project Area Identification Documentation:** Applicant must upload supporting documents identifying the scope of work for the proposed project(s). Applicant must include a map(s) clearly showing the location and details of the proposed project. (Specific requirements outlined below)
 - a. Maps:
 - **Shape File or KMZ Files:** Applicant must Provide Shape File or KMZ file with a shaded polygon of Census Block(s) in the project area, including the census block ID(s). **This information can be provided by your chosen ISP.**
 - **Map(s) must include:**
 - Proposed project area
 - Provide most current Census Blocks (2010) for your proposed project area.
 - Census Block Identification Number included in the proposed project area.
 - Number of households, served by the proposed project (if applicable.) If no households are being served, please enter N/A.
 - Current broadband speeds provided to the project area.
 - Proposed broadband speeds to be provided to the project area.
 - Current technology used to provide service to the project area.
 - Proposed technology to be provided to the project area.
 - **PDF Format:** All maps **must also** be provided electronically in PDF format.
2. **Grant Budget Template:** Complete, upload, and attach to the application a completed Grant Budget Template for the project that outlines each of the various costs. (Add Link to document/template)
3. **Project Schedule Form:** Complete, upload, and attach to the application the Project Schedule Form (Add Link to document/template)
4. **CARES Act Certification:** Upload and attach to the application a notarized CARES Act Certification that this project meets the CARES Act criteria. (Add Link to document/template)

Additional Supporting Documents May Include:

1. **Letters of Support:** Upload and attach to the application any Letters of Support or Community Match documentation.
2. **Letters of Commitments from Anchor Institutions:** Upload and attach to application letters of commitments from community anchor institutions or public safety networks which will utilize your service if the project is funded.
3. **Community Broadband Plan:** Upload and attach a copy of your Community Broadband Plan (if applicable).
4. **Any applicable Site Plans, studies, or photographs.**