

410,000 Wisconsin Homes and Businesses See New or Improved High-Speed Internet

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin

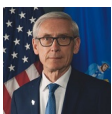
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Evers Administration announces latest grant awards from the Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC), today announced the award of \$43.2 million in grants funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to expand access to broadband across the state. The 30 projects awarded funding will expand high-speed internet access to approximately 16,000 residential and business locations in the state. Under Gov. Evers' leadership, since 2019, the PSC has now awarded grants to help more than 410,000 homes and businesses access new or improved broadband services.



"I'm proud that thanks to our efforts over the last several years, more than 410,000 homes and businesses will now be getting connected to new or improved high-speed internet in communities all across the state," said Gov. Evers. "In this day and age, that means helping folks log on to work, go to school, buy groceries, order prescriptions, see the doctor, connect with friends and loved ones, and so much more. We must remain steadfast in our efforts to expand access to affordable high-speed internet across the state and close the digital divide that is holding families and communities back once and for all."

"I am proud of the Commission's work to award funding from the Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program to communities that have long struggled with inadequate internet service and those most impacted by the pandemic," said PSC Chairperson Summer Strand. "We are connecting more homes and businesses to reliable, high-speed internet because of the investments that Governor Evers has delivered."

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In November 2023, Gov. Evers and PSC [announced](#) that 124 applications requesting \$221.6 million were submitted for the Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program, showing a continued strong demand for broadband infrastructure funding.

Gov. Evers' administration has done more to expand access to high-speed internet than any other administration in state history. With today's announcement, 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. These investments have made it possible for the Commission to award grants to help more than 410,000 homes and businesses access new or improved broadband services. In his most recent budget, the governor recommended allocating \$750 million in state funding for broadband expansion to supplement the federal funding being allocated to the state in coming years. Unfortunately, despite that the federal funds Wisconsin expects to receive will not be sufficient to address the broadband needs across the state, Republicans in the Wisconsin State Legislature removed this funding from the final budget and provided \$0 in new funding for broadband.

In addition to state and federal investments, in 2020, Gov. Evers created the [Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access](#)

to advise the governor and the Legislature on broadband actions, policies, and strategies to successfully expand high-speed internet in Wisconsin. In 2021, Gov. Evers declared it the

[Year of Broadband Access](#)

, and during that year, Gov. Evers

[directed](#)

\$100 million in federal funds to broadband expansion—the largest single round of broadband investment in state history. Further, last year, Gov. Evers, together with the PSC and the Department of Public Instruction, also announced the launch of the

[Internet Discount Finder](#)

website to help Wisconsin households find and access affordable internet.



The Evers Administration is continuing this work as the PSC prepares to implement President Biden's 'Internet for All' Initiative and reach Gov. Evers' goal of bridging Wisconsin's digital divide. In 2023, the PSC embarked on a statewide 'Internet for All' Listening Tour to prepare the state's plans for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program and the Digital Equity Program, which the PSC plans to begin implementing within the year.

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A list of the grant recipients announced today is available [here](#) . A flag map of 2023 grant recipients is available [here](#) .

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

Under 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 broadband construction and deployment that will provide high-quality internet to locations that lack access to adequate, affordable service. The Commission's awards announced today also incorporate \$1.3 million in additional funding from previous ARPA broadband allocations directed by Gov. Evers, which remain available due to administrative savings and underspending on previously awarded projects.

The CPF is designed to address the barriers to internet access that existed before but were made worse by the coronavirus pandemic. Broadband Infrastructure Grants will be used to make necessary investments in broadband infrastructure designed to provide consistent, reliable, and high-performance broadband service to areas most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic in Wisconsin. The Commission awarded funding consistent with Treasury program requirements to construct broadband infrastructure projects to deploy reliable internet service that will meet or exceed 100/100 Megabits per second symmetrical speed internet service and include at least one low-cost option for work, education, and health monitoring.

More information on the Capital Projects Fund can be found on the [Capital Projects Broadband page](#) on the PSC website.