



Line Extension Grant Program

APPLICATION GUIDE



**Department of
Development**

BroadbandOhio



Program Contact

bbohgrants@development.ohio.gov

Application Process Overview

This guide is provided to help broadband providers (“providers”) understand the application process and requirements of the **Line Extension Grant Program** (the “Grant program”).

Prospective grantees will submit a Grant program application to Development via electronic mail. The instructions and application documentation can be found on the BroadbandOhio website www.broadband.ohio.gov -> Grant Opportunities. The application must be on a form prescribed by Development. Development will review each application to determine that the application contains all the required information. If an application is incomplete, Development will notify the applicant and permit the provider to complete and refile the application.

Application Timeline

- Applications will be received on a rolling basis until available funding has been exhausted.



Purpose

The funds for the Line Extension Grant Program come from the The Capital Projects Fund (CPF). CPF provides \$10 billion to states, territories, freely associated states, and Tribal governments to fund critical capital projects that enable work, education, and health monitoring in response to the public health emergency. CPF Funds will be used to expand the current state-funded program to serve additional locations. You can find more information on CPF here: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/capital-projects-fund>. You can also find the Ohio Award Fact Sheet here: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/OH-Broadband-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

The Grant Program is an opportunity for Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to receive funding for line extension construction costs to run fiber to homes that are set back from main roads. Rural areas of Ohio see the most need for line extensions, and is another way Ohio can bring internet access to unserved homes in Ohio. Access to high-speed reliable internet is imperative for families who do schooling and work from their homes. The disparities of not having access to the modern economy were laid bare for Ohioans during the COVID-19 pandemic when thousands of Ohioans had to do remote work and schooling. It is important to make sure families who are still remote have the same access to internet.

This program is set to begin in 2024. All funds must be expended and projects substantially completed and operational before December 31, 2026.

Every project is subject to all State and CPF reporting guidelines.

Initial Application Review

Development will evaluate the information and documents submitted in the applications. If an application is incomplete, Development will provide notice to the applicant, listing what information is incomplete, and provide the guidelines for a procedure to refile a completed application.

Grant Awards Based on Competitive Scoring

Development has established a scoring system to evaluate and select applications for program grants. Applications will be scored and awarded to the applicants based on scores and until funding is exhausted.

After the Grant Award

Grant program awards will be disbursed based on mutually agreed upon project milestones. All funds must be spent and all projects must be operational by December 31st, 2026. The projected start date for the project will be mutually agreed to between the Authority and the broadband provider.

Reporting and Compliance

For the duration of the project, BroadbandOhio will schedule check-ins with the grantee to make sure the project is on schedule. Quarter reports will be due throughout the duration of the project. A final report will be due upon verification of the project completion.

If Development determines that a project is non-compliant, Development will give the applicant an opportunity to explain and cure the non-compliance, or else provide a refund of grant award funds.

Every project is subject to all CPF guidance. For more information please see:

- i. CPF Guidance for States, Territories, and Freely Associated States
- ii. CPF Compliance and Reporting Guidance
- iii. CPF & SLFRF Supplemental Broadband Guidance



Eligible Applicants

- Internet Service Providers are the only eligible applicants for this grant. The applicant should be able to show in their application the project plans, timeline, details, and costs.

Eligible Projects

- An eligible project under this program would be an infrastructure deployment project designed to bring broadband access to unserved homes, where the last mile connection is longer than normal installation and as a result is cost prohibitive to the internet service provider.
- Once established, the project must provide broadband service speeds of 100/100 Mbps to every connected residence.
- Eligible infrastructure deployment must be fiber.
- Eligible project areas are areas where homes are considered unserved. Addresses are considered unserved when the available broadband to addresses is below 25/3 Mbps according to the FCC Broadband availability map.
- Projects should not serve areas where there is already a future funding commitment of 100/20 Mbps.
- Applicants must submit evidence that the addresses applied for have requested the service.
- Applicants cannot apply for any addresses for which they or another entity has received an Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant program award.

Project Requirements

- Projects must provide speeds at a minimum of 100/100 Mbps
- Eligible project addresses must be considered unserved (25/3 Mbps) according to the FCC Broadband availability map
- Affordable plan requirement or \$30 a month low-cost option for end users that qualify.
- The grantee is required to participate in either the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or in a Treasury-designated successor program. Evidence for this could be: participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)/commitment to participation in the ACP or its successor program if awarded funding through the CPF Project.
- Completed and operational by December 31, 2026
- Program and Fiscal Reporting and Monitoring
- Ongoing check ins with the ISPs and the state
- Installation fees for the customer cannot exceed the normal installation fees for the company.

Costs

Line extension construction costs are eligible.

Grant funds will be provided for line extension project costs beyond the first 200 feet, for which the internet service provider is responsible for construction costs. The program is offering a standard payment calculation of \$9.50 per foot, with a maximum payment of \$5,000 per extension to the home.

Eligible project activities and costs include:

1. Network and access equipment costs;
2. Outside plant costs;
3. Reasonable make-ready costs,
4. Equipment shelter, land, site preparation, and site restoration costs;
5. Customer premises equipment: Funding only covers up to the network demarcation point (e.g., NID or ONT);
6. Professional services: Includes engineering and project management costs involved in designing and constructing the proposed project;
7. Testing;
8. Other upfront costs: Includes any other upfront costs not covered in other categories

Costs that appear excessive and/or without justification and costs not considered eligible will not be reimbursed.

Ineligible costs include:

1. Internal administrative activities;
2. Fundraising activities;
3. Computers or office equipment;
4. Vehicles;
5. Equipment owned or leased by the customer, including routers and modems, and any other costs beyond the network interface point,
6. Operating expenses;
7. Expenses incurred prior to the date of the grant award announcement;
8. Short-term operating leases;
9. Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments, or other debt service costs;
10. Fees or issuance costs associated with the issuance of new debt;

Application Sections

Applications must be submitted using the Development prescribed application form.

Section 1: Application Information

Please complete this section and include contact information for the ISP applying and contact information for the grant project manager.

Section 2: Project Information

Please respond to requested information. If you need more space to respond you may add additional pages to your responses.

Project Description: Please provide a detailed description of the proposed project, type of technology, and how the installation of broadband infrastructure will meet the needs of the projects. Proposed routes submitted must include all new routes needed to connect to the applicant's existing network. Proposals must also show the applicant's existing fiber or cable network, or other routes within the area in or from which the applicant is proposing to extend its network.

Note: Project must provide speeds of 100/100 Mbps to the home of end users.

Project Plan: Applications must include a proposed project plan and timeline with major milestones showing that the proposed project can be substantially completed and operation by December 31, 2026. The plan should include any major contingencies. It should include, at a minimum, major milestones related to engineering, pole make-ready (including timely submission of pole attachment applications), permitting (including timely submission of required permits) construction of routes, and activation of customers.

Project Location: Describe the locations of the proposed project. Please attach an excel spreadsheet of the addresses that will be affected by this project.

Section 3: Reimbursement

Total reimbursement amount requested for line extension. Line extension fees are incurred after the first 200 feet. Funding amount will be the lesser of \$5,000 per address or the total cost to be incurred by the customer. (The maximum per foot cost is \$9.50.) Reimbursement will be milestone based and milestones will be agreed to during the grant agreement process and based off of the awarded application.

Please provide the number of unserved homes that will be connected by the project as well as the amount to be reimbursed. Please also include how the addresses are in a unique position where they require line extension funds to become serviceable.

Attachments

The following attachments must be included in each application:

Attachment A: BroadbandOhio prescribed excel list of all address locations within application to include FCC location ID for every address. If the template is not used application will be rejected. This can be found on the BroadbandOhio website.

Attachment B: A notarized statement, from an officer or agent of the applicant, that the contents of the application are true and accurate, and that the applicant accepts the requirements of the program as a condition of receiving a program reimbursement.

Attachment C: A notarized letter of intent by the applicant that none of the funds provided by the program grant will be used to extend or deploy facilities to any residences other than those having received completed line extension projects. Addresses where the applicant is under any obligation to provide service are ineligible for line extension funds.

Attachment D: Budget establishing cost estimates of construction for the project, including itemized estimates for all materials and installation costs.

Attachment E: Please submit any additional information including milestones and timelines for the projects.

Attachment F: Please submit proof of low cost broadband plan.

Attachment G: Applicant must provide evidence was requested at the applied for addresses.

Scoring

Please see the scoring guidelines on the BroadbandOhio website

Project Contact

Please email all questions to the BroadbandOhio Grant inbox at bbohgrants@development.ohio.gov

Definitions

For more information about terminology and definitions please visit our BroadbandOhio website to review the Broadband 101 Handbook.

<https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/broadband.ohio.gov/Broadband-101-Handbook.pdf>