



Round 2 Applications Now Being Accepted By DCEO

December 4 2020 3:14 PM



MARYVILLE – To mend digital inequities in rural areas of the Metro East region, State Senator Christopher Belt (D-Centreville) and State Senator Rachelle Crowe (D-Glen Carbon) are urging local organizations to apply for a portion of \$50 million in available funding through the second round of the Connect Illinois broadband expansion program.

“High-speed internet is one of the most important resources for households and businesses, especially in our current climate,” Belt said. “To ensure that no child, family or business is left behind, I encourage eligible applicants in the Metro East area to apply for the Connect Illinois program.”

The second round of Connect Illinois grants will award up to \$5 million per project. At least 50 percent of total project expenses must be provided as nonstate match, be it from private, local or other nonstate sources, to accelerate the delivery of broadband investments. Internet service providers, rural cooperatives, nonprofits and local governments are eligible to apply.

“To ensure small businesses are able to compete and residents are able to connect at work and school, access to reliable, high-speed internet is critical,” Crowe said. “Communities must have the resources to support local digital demands, and applying for this grant is a simple way to expand broadband opportunities to those living in rural and underserved areas.”

Funding for the Connect Illinois program is made possible through Rebuild Illinois, the state’s historic, bipartisan \$45 billion statewide construction program, which has dedicated \$420 million to expanding broadband infrastructure.

The application will remain open through February 2021. The application and more information on this grant program can be found on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s website.