

Gov. Pritzker Announces \$47 Million In Broadband Capital Investments To Advance State's Largest-ever Broadband Expansion

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SPRINGFIELD – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) [Office of Broadband](#) today announced \$47 million in funding for 22 projects in every region of the state through the second round of Connect Illinois, the state's broadband expansion plan. To promote broadband access, the Illinois Office of Broadband is making \$350 million in funding available through a third round of grants, which will be accepted and awarded on a rolling basis through 2024, or until funds are depleted. Funding for Connect Illinois is made possible by Governor Pritzker's

s bipartisan \$45 billion Rebuild Illinois capital plan, the first comprehensive infrastructure program in Illinois in nearly a decade, as well as federal broadband funding available through the American Rescue Plan Act.

Round Two funding includes \$23 million in Connect Illinois grant awards matched by \$24 million in nonstate funding for a total of over \$47 million, with plans to expand broadband access to approximately 13,000 homes, businesses, farms, and community institutions across Illinois – through 22 new projects, with at least one in every region of the state.

“Thanks to these investments, thousands more families and businesses will have access to the economic opportunity, education, and healthcare that come with 21st century connectivity,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Connect Illinois is all about opening doors and closing gaps for our residents, delivering demonstrable change to people’s lives and real opportunity for new business development and new jobs. I’m grateful to our partners in making this round of projects possible – and with another \$350 million already available for the next round, this impact is just the beginning.”

The second round of Connect Illinois grant awards includes 14 different internet service providers, rural cooperatives, and local governments– a diverse group of recipients representing every region of the state, with projects supporting fully scalable broadband infrastructure that will serve these areas for decades into the future.

Round Two Grant Awards:

Adams Telsystem Inc. \$1,252,041 Adams, Pike
Bspeedy Wireless \$152,108 Richland, Edwards, Jasper, Wabash, Lawrence,
Century Enterprises \$215,120 Knox
Charter Spectrum - Bella Vista \$29,555 Madison
Charter Spectrum - Briars \$99,556 St Clair
Charter Spectrum - Equus Lane \$109,320 Madison
Charter Spectrum - Huey \$107,416 Clinton
Charter Spectrum - New Minden \$250,198 Washington
Charter Spectrum - Nichols Woods \$50,750 Winnebago, Clay, Crawford, Wayne
Clearwave \$500,000 Saline, Williamson, Johnson
Comcast - Leisure Time Est \$630,903 Vermilion
Comcast - Sterling \$595,300 Whiteside
East Moline CUSD \$1,706,494 Rock Island, Henry
Jo-Carroll Energy \$4,688,840 Jo Daviess, Carroll, Whiteside
Mediacom - Dewey \$117,054 Champaign
Mediacom - Valley View Est \$52,434 Rock Island
Mediacom - Wolf Creek \$45,905 LaSalle

Metro Communications \$292,118 Livingston
ProTek Communications \$2,000,000 Williamson
Strada Communications \$5,000,000 Rock Island, Whiteside
Village of Palatine \$101,387 Cook
WKT Telecom Cooperative \$5,000,000 Union, Pulaski

“Connect Illinois grants continue to help expand broadband infrastructure across the state, bringing resources to communities that need it most,” said Acting DCEO Director, Sylvia I. Garcia. “We are investing in meaningful capital projects to provide high-speed, reliable internet to households and businesses that have lacked access – boosting education, jobs, and economic opportunity for communities across Illinois in the process.”

Grant applications were reviewed and evaluated on a competitive basis, with proposals evaluated in seven categories: project impact; nonstate match and demonstration of need; community support; project readiness; project viability and sustainability; affordability and adoption assistance; and open access, shared use and business strategy.

"I couldn't be more thrilled for the 400 households in the Village of Flanagan who will be connected to essential, high quality broadband" said Rep. Tom Bennett. "This Rebuild Illinois investment is making an incredible impact on the everyday lives of families in my district."

"We all know about children who are unable to complete schoolwork because internet access isn't widely available" said Rep. Mike Halpin (D-Rock Island). "Rebuild Illinois' investment in East Moline School District to install a network of 985 wireless Wi-Fi access points will go a long way in making sure that a relic of the past."

”We are very excited about the state’s continued commitment to broadband expansion throughout Illinois, especially in the southwestern region,” said Gary Hoelscher, President, Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois. “Increasing equity in access, adoption, and use is an important step in ensuring people can pursue work and education opportunities despite other challenges they may face. Broadband growth also spurs economic development, which is a win for all.”

The \$350 million available through the third round largely mirrors requirements of the first two notice of funding opportunities, with the exception that grant matching minimums will no longer be a requirement for applicants. The program’s merit review process places value on qualified projects that also include significant nonstate match, thereby incentivizing applicants to contribute as much nonstate match as possible. To

promote program efficiency and effectiveness, the maximum grant award will increase from \$5 million to \$10 million, with applicants invited to seek multiple grant awards over the next several years

“Through our participation in the Illinois Connected Communities program, we were given the tools and framework we needed to create a vision for our community’s broadband needs, and we’re happy our plan is coming to fruition,” said Village of Flanagan President Jeff Wallace. “We look forward to working together with the State of Illinois and Metro Communications to bring high-speed broadband access to all our residents.”

To complement its historic \$420 million broadband capital investment, the State of Illinois has introduced an increasingly robust portfolio of programs focused on local capacity building and planning ([*Illinois Connected Communities*](#) and [*Accelerate Illinois*](#)), regional engagement and resource integration ([*Broadband READY*](#)), digital literacy and skills building (*Digital Navigators*), and used computer refurbishment and distribution (*Connect Illinois Computer Equity Network*). These programs often combine state grant funding with stakeholder collaboration and expert consultation to put Illinois communities, organization, and households in a strong position to benefit from historic state and federal investment in broadband infrastructure and digital equity.

For more on Round 3 Connect Illinois, and Round 2 awards and other grant programs, please visit DCEO's website or follow us on social at [@IllinoisDCEO](#).