



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
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August 31, 2020

To: Persons Interested in the Broadband Expansion Grant Program

Re: FY 2021 Broadband Expansion Grants

5-BF-2021

Announcement of the Commencement of the
FY 2021 Broadband Expansion Grant Cycle

The Public Service Commission is pleased to announce that it is now accepting applications for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Broadband Expansion Grants. This round will make available approximately \$24 million. Although the application process is substantially unchanged from the FY 2020 grant cycle, applicants should review the changes and information highlighted below.

1. Schedule of Events

The schedule of events related to this year's grant application is as follows:

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>EVENT</u> |
|-------------------|--|
| September 1, 2020 | Date of issue of the application instructions |
| November 1, 2020 | Last day for submitting questions and requests for clarification |
| December 1, 2020 | Applications due from applicants |
| January 14, 2021 | Last day for submitting an objection to a grant application |
| January 21, 2021 | Last day for submitting a response to an objection |

2. **The Commission will only accept letters, signatures, and other comments in support of a grant application if those letters, signatures, and comments are included as part of an attachment to the grant application, and filed with the grant application in a single document.** This procedure was used with success for the FY 2020 grant round. As with the FY 2020 grant round, the Commission will schedule a comment period after the grant applications are filed, but that comment period will be limited to comments that object to specific grant applications and comments that respond to those objections.
3. The Commission strictly enforces the filing deadline for submitting applications. Applicants are encouraged to file in advance of the deadline.

4. The Commission has made a Budget and Income Summary spreadsheet available on the Commission website in order for applicants to submit a budget for a grant project. A project budget is a required element of the application. Using the appropriate form is part of this requirement. Using this form will facilitate comparison of the financial details of the grant projects and will help ensure that budget details are accurate. Applicants must upload this document to ERF in Excel format along with including it in the Application.
5. This year, applications must be no more than 30 pages in length. Further attachments to the applications are welcome and not limited, but only the first ten pages of comments will be used by the scoring panel to determine the merit list. Applicants are encouraged to curate these attachments and use the first ten pages for comments that best support the application and address how the application satisfies scoring criteria.
6. This grant round is taking place while the COVID-19 pandemic is underscoring the urgent need for broadband in the state. Getting broadband service to unserved areas is a point of emphasis for the Commission in this grant round. As such, the points allocated to unserved areas have been increased for this grant round. Applications must delineate the number of underserved and unserved locations that their proposed project will reach.

Questions or concerns about the grant application process, program administration, content of the application, or the meaning of any provision of the application instructions should be submitted by e-mail message to the State Broadband Office at PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov, as provided in the Application Instructions at Section 1.5. If the Commission finds that the instructions are unclear or in error, it will provide a clarification to the mailing list for this docket.

Sincerely,



Kristy Nieto
Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs

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1. Application Instructions