

8B.11 Connecting Iowa farms, schools, and communities — broadband grants — fund.

1. The office shall administer a broadband grant program designed to reduce or eliminate unserved and underserved areas in the state, leveraging federal funds and public and private partnerships where possible, by awarding grants to communications service providers that reduce or eliminate targeted service areas by installing broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service in targeted service areas at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in [section 8B.1](#), in accordance with [this section](#).

2. *a.* A connecting Iowa farms, schools, and communities broadband grant fund is established in the state treasury under the authority of the office. The fund shall consist of moneys available to and obtained or accepted by the office. Moneys in the fund are appropriated to the office to be used for the grant program.

b. The office shall use moneys in the fund to provide grants to communications service providers pursuant to [this section](#). The office shall use moneys in the fund to leverage available federal moneys if possible.

c. Notwithstanding [section 8.33](#), moneys in the fund that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain available for expenditure for the purposes designated until three years following the last day of the fiscal year in which the funds were originally appropriated.

3. Communications service providers may apply to the office for a grant pursuant to [this section](#) for the installation of broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service in targeted service areas at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in [section 8B.1](#). The office may, by rule, increase the minimum download and upload speeds for grant eligibility pursuant to [this section](#). The office shall include representatives from schools, communities, agriculture, industry, and other areas as appropriate to review and recommend grant awards. The office shall conduct an open application review process that includes the opportunity for the public to submit factual information as part of a validation process to address claims that a targeted service area is currently served with broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in [section 8B.1](#). Upon completion of the validation process, the office may modify a proposed targeted service area to account for information received during the validation process. The office shall make available a public internet site identifying all publicly available information contained in the applications, the members of the review committee, a summary of the review committee's recommended results, and any results of performance testing conducted after the project is completed.

4. *a.* The office shall award grants on a competitive basis for the installation of broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service in targeted service areas at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in [section 8B.1](#), after considering the following:

(1) The relative need for broadband infrastructure in the area and the existing broadband service speeds, including whether the project serves a rural area or areas.

(2) The applicant's total proposed budget for the project, including the amount or percentage of local or federal matching funds, if any, any funding obligations shared between public and private entities, and the percentage of funding provided directly from the applicant.

(3) The relative download and upload speeds of proposed projects for all applicants.

(4) The specific product attributes resulting from the proposed project, including technologies that provide higher qualities of service, such as service levels, latency, and other service attributes as determined by the office.

(5) The percentage of the homes, farms, schools, and businesses in the targeted service area that will be provided access to broadband service.

(6) The geographic diversity of the project areas of all the applicants.

(7) The economic impact of the project to the area.

(8) Other factors the office deems relevant.

b. In considering the factors listed in paragraph "a" for awarding grants pursuant to [this](#)

[section](#), the office shall afford the greatest weight to the factors described in paragraph “a”, subparagraphs (1) through (3).

c. Except as otherwise provided in [this section](#), the office shall not evaluate applications based on the office’s knowledge of the applicant except for information obtained by the office during the application process or period for public comment.

5. The office shall not award a grant pursuant to [this section](#) that exceeds fifteen percent of the communications service provider’s project cost.

6. The office shall provide public notice regarding the application process and receipt of funding.

7. The office shall not award a grant pursuant to [this section](#) on or after July 1, 2025.

8. The office may adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) interpreting [this chapter](#) or necessary for administering [this chapter](#), including but not limited to rules relating to the broadband grant program process, management, and measurements as deemed necessary by the office.

9. The office shall adopt rules establishing procedures to allow aggrieved applicants an opportunity to challenge the office’s award of grants under [this section](#).

[2015 Acts, ch 120, §32; 2019 Acts, ch 159, §6 – 11](#)

Referred to in [§8B.4, 8B.9, 8B.10](#)

Subsection 1 amended

Subsection 2, paragraph c amended

Subsections 3, 4, 7, and 8 amended

NEW subsection 9