

For Immediate Release
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State to Offer Second Round of Broadband Funding

Follows successful first round of Statewide Broadband Build for Unserved and Underserved Communities funding opportunity

Concord, N.H. – Today, the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) announced a second round of funding under the New Hampshire Broadband Contract program aimed at bringing high speed broadband service to unserved and underserved locations. The Request for Proposals will be issued on Friday, September 30, 2022, and follows on the heels of a successful review of applications for the first round where up to \$50 million will be awarded.

“We have seen a very competitive first round and we are confident that by moving to a second round, we will be able to see even more locations gain access to high-speed broadband across a wider geographic area,” said BEA Commissioner Taylor Caswell.

“The State of New Hampshire has been a leader in building out broadband internet, first dedicating \$13 million that benefitted more than 4,500 households in 2020,” New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu said. “And this year, we were the first state U.S. Treasury gave the green light to expand opportunities even further. With today’s announcement, we are full steam ahead and expect to see the buildout of more than 30,000 unserved and underserved locations, with more than 20,000 served in round 1 and another 15,000 anticipated for round 2.”

“It is clear there is more capability from internet service providers to get us closer to our goals of increasing access to high-speed internet across New Hampshire,” BEA Commissioner Taylor Caswell said. “To make that happen quicker, BEA has decided to hold a second round of the NH Broadband Contract Program. We were so encouraged by the response our office received from the first round; BEA saw value to hold a second round. By doing this, we estimate an additional 15,000 unserved and underserved locations will be built out with broadband and provide more people the ability to work, learn, and access critical services from home.”

The NH Broadband Contract Program is designed to select and support a local internet service provider (ISP) to provide internet service to the most rural parts of the state lacking internet service. Like the first round, this second round opportunity will prioritize applicants that encourage the maximum number of locations to be served at the lowest cost and broadband networks that will be owned, operated by, or affiliated with local governments, non-profits, and co-operatives for a cost not to exceed \$40 million.

Today’s announcement is another step in the State of New Hampshire’s push to connect every household with access to broadband internet. In 2020, New Hampshire allocated short-term CARES Act Funds to broadband expansion – dedicating \$13 million to 16 projects that benefitted more than 4,500 households. In June, New Hampshire was the first state U.S. Treasury approved for Capital Projects Funds (CPF) when it created the NH Broadband Contract Program. Just two weeks ago, NH was the first state to have its two programs approved when it signed off on the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative (BMGI). BEA is engaged in the rulemaking process with the Legislature for BMGI and will have an additional announcement of even more opportunities for access upon the approval of interim rules.