

## OBJECTIVE

To provide funding to specific areas in Indiana that lack broadband coverage, with less than actual speeds of 100 Mbps downstream; areas that lack quality, reliable access to fixed terrestrial broadband; and areas with compelling need.

## ELIGIBLE PROJECT AREAS

Broadband infrastructure projects are eligible if they are extending the deployment of eligible broadband service to areas and addresses in which:

- Internet connections are unavailable or;
- The only available connections to the Internet are at actual speeds of less than 100 Mbps downstream.

Additional information must be sufficient to conclude an area is eligible and may include but is not limited to:

- Statistically significant survey data for each address to be served within the project area, which may include, but is not limited to, speed testing at the address level data, or;
- Documentation of the location of existing infrastructure that does not provide 100/20 speed levels within the proposed project area; or
- Other relevant and available broadband data sets illustrate address-level data shared with OCRA.

## PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

Indiana Broadband Providers serving at least 100 subscribers for at least three years in Indiana are eligible for this program. Applicants that do not meet these requirements must then meet one of the following: 1) Be a corporation organized under IC 8-1-13; 2) Be a corporation organized under IC 23-17 that is an electric cooperative; or 3) Be a cooperative that has at least one member that is a corporation organized under 8-1-13.

Eligible registered Indiana Broadband Providers can submit project areas that commit to bringing high-speed, terrestrial broadband at more than 100/100 in areas where there is currently less than 100/20. Projects can be funded for up to \$5 million.

Preference will be given to projects delivering higher speeds and serving more locations. Projects that include providing connections to schools and/or rural health facilities will receive priority of funding if part of an eligible project.

The NLC Broadband Grant Program will pay up to 80% of the eligible costs for a qualifying project.

## CHANGES IN ROUND 4

- OCRA will be working with local governments of 92 counties to bring broadband to their communities:
  - Local governments and internet providers will inform OCRA of unserved or underserved areas in their communities.
  - County Governments are encouraged to work with local internet providers to determine their address list before sending to OCRA.
  - This will replace the Letter of Intent process used in prior NLC rounds.
- The Letter of Intent (LOI) process has been modified for NLC Round 4:
  - County commissioners and internet providers will work together to select LOI addresses.
  - County commissioners and internet providers are responsible for returning the address template to OCRA as instructed.

Internet providers will send a LOI pdf form to OCRA that shows their intent to participate in the NLC round 4 program.
- The most recent FCC fabric level data was used to identify any unserved and underserved addresses, as per House Bill 1454;
- Internet Providers can score higher on applications by including addresses from a priority list, which includes unattended ICP addresses and addresses identified in federal or NLC programs but not completed; and
- Services are required to be delivered at a minimum of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds, with the capability to scale up to 100 Mbps symmetrical for download and upload speeds.

## TIMELINE

NLC Round 4 opens in July of 2023. Projects must be completed 24 months after the contract is signed. OCRA reserves the right to adjust the timeline.

