

Nevada County Last-Mile Broadband Grant 2019/2020 Grant Application

\$225,000 Available

Application Period Opens: November 1, 2019

Application Conference Q&A: November 19, 2019, 2PM

Deadline for Submission: December 6, 2019

Finalist Announcement: December 20, 2019

Finalist Comment Period: January 10, 2019

Grant Finalist Presentation & Award January 21, 2020

Program Guidelines

The focus of the Nevada County Last-Mile Broadband Grant Program is to provide resources that help make the financial case for new and existing Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to invest in building broadband infrastructure that supports economic development, public safety, education and overall community prosperity in Nevada County. Funds will be targeted to areas that are unlikely to receive broadband service without grant funding. The grant can provide up to 50% of a project's infrastructure costs (project planning, permits, construction plans and labor, installation and testing, engineering, etc.). The maximum grant amount is \$225,000. Multiple, smaller grants will be considered.

Completed applications and supporting documents must be received by Sierra Business Council by 5:00 PM on the due date to be considered for funding. Submissions will be accepted via email. An applicant may apply for more than one project, but a separate application must be completed for each project. Award decisions are estimated to be made by January 21, 2020.

Eligible Applicants

- Types of eligible applicants:
 - Public entities or special districts
 - Corporations
 - Indian Tribes
 - Partnerships, LLCs or other business entities
 - Cooperatives
 - Non-profit organizations
 - Any other entity authorized by state law to provide broadband services

Eligible Projects

- Last-mile broadband projects located in Nevada County that contribute to economic development, overall community prosperity and Digital Inclusion.
 - Applicants are encouraged to include information that strengthens their case for funding which may include but is not limited to:
 - Statistically significant survey data for the designated area
 - Documentation of the location of existing infrastructure within a given census block or other identified geographical location with supporting maps and definitions.
 - Testimonials and speed tests from residents, businesses or institutions in the project area.
 - This grant specifically **DOES NOT** rely on the California Public Utility Commission's (CPUC) [Broadband Map](#) for determination of grant eligibility because the data can be out-dated, often incorrect, and collected on a census block level, overstating the availability of services. However, CPUC map data may be included in the application to support proposed projects in designated unserved or underserved areas.
 - Application scoring will include an evaluation of the likelihood that the proposed area will receive broadband service without grant funding, including consideration of CAFII or CASF eligible areas
 - Applications must include a map file of the proposed service area (acceptable formats: (.kml., .kmz,, Shapefile format and File GONDatabase)
 - Applicants may provide information regarding additional and/or complementary planned infrastructure projects (such as underground utilities, roadwork or other broadband projects) that are not eligible for grant funding to provide context for the proposed project in the relevant portions of the application
 - Applicants may provide an explanation on how the proposed project will promote and/or support economic and disaster resiliency for the project area, County overall and region, if applicable.

Eligible Program Costs

- The maximum grant request is \$225,000
- The grant will cover up to 50% of eligible costs for qualifying project
- **Costs** means the cost associated with the installation and/or acquisition of last-mile broadband infrastructure that supports broadband service at the locations and speeds identified in the application.
 - Last-mile infrastructure is broadband infrastructure that serves as the final leg connecting the broadband service provider's network to the end-use customer's on-premise telecommunications equipment.
- **Eligible costs:** project planning; construction permits; construction materials, construction of facilities; equipment; installation and testing of the service. *Please note, prevailing wage must be specified for all labor or contracts due to California law.*

- **Ineligible costs:** general broadband planning not associated with a specific last-mile build; operational expenses; general administrative work, provider's overhead expenses, middle-mile infrastructure not directly connected to service provision for an end-user; expenses related to provision of telephone or video services which are not necessary for the delivery of broadband services.
- Where applicable, applicants will be required to provide a preliminary technical evaluation of the project certified by a Professional Engineer (PE) or another qualified individual. If the evaluation is not stamped by a PE, applicant must provide the credentials of the individual who prepared the report.
- Nevada County reserves the right to amend the scope of grant awards or partially fund applications

Local Match Requirement

- To obtain a last-mile broadband grant, the applicant must provide for the funding *not covered by the grant as a local match*. The match can come from any private and/or public source available to the applicant. An application will receive additional points if the local match is higher than 51% of the total eligible project costs.
- Documentation to support match is required as part of the application
 - Examples include: letter of credit, letter from bank, bank statement, board resolution committing funding, loan documentation
 - Additional financial partners for the local match must also provide documentation for their local match

Grant Priorities

The Nevada County Last-Mile Grant Program establishes priority for projects that:

- Leverage existing infrastructure or further support planned projects that meet the County's missions and goals.
- Support the goals of the County's general plan, specific plans, area plans, energy action plan or other economic development plans.
- Propose to acquire and install infrastructure that supports broadband services scalable to higher download and upload speeds without taking precedent over the number of locations and size of the area to be served.
- Have not received funds or have not been designated to receive funds through other county, state, or federally funded broadband grant programs.
- Will provide higher download and upload speeds to locations served.
- Serve locations without access to download speeds of at least 6 megabits per second and upload speeds of at least one megabit per second

Reimbursement and Accountability

- Funds disbursement will occur on a reimbursable basis
- Fee schedule will be established with Nevada County after grants are awarded

Public Comment for Pending Applications

To ensure transparency and best use of taxpayer funds, the application process will include a public comment period

- Within two weeks of the close of applications, Nevada County will post a description of the applications received including the proposed service area
- The online public comment period will last for a minimum of 14 calendar days
- All comments collected during the public comment period may be subject to public disclosure, except for the specific location of infrastructure assets, or any personal financial information related to the project developer/applicant.
- This period is designed to provide opportunity for providers, elected officials, and citizens to either express support of or to inform us of any issues or concerns with an application or its proposed service area.
- Grant applicants are not allowed to enter comments on behalf of community members unless the community member has requested special assistance in submitting the form. Surveys or comments collected by providers should be included in the grant application
- Incumbant providers are encouraged to submit comments and corresponding documentation if:
 - The area proposed to be served already has service available
 - Construction is underway in the area proposed to be served and will be completed within 12 months
- In order for feedback to be considered when reviewing applications, supporting evidence must be provided. The impact of planned builds disclosed in comments will depend on the certainty of the build as demonstrated by the documentation submitted with the comment and the timeline for the expansion. Documentation that shows that a provider anticipates serving an area in the future will be factored into the scoring to demonstrate that the area is likely to be served without grant funding. Comments with insufficient evidence or documentation will not be considered.
- Where evidence demonstrates that an area is currently served (with a 25/3 fixed, terrestrial connection) that portion of the grant area will be disqualified. In order for a defined area to be considered served, service at or exceeding 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload must be generally available to all residential customers in the defined area.
- Grant finalists will be given a two-week period to respond to public comments.
- Providers who comment may be asked to provide additional information and/or work with Nevada County to validate service availability
- If a commenter is found to have submitted inaccurate information, all current and future comments will be disregarded in the scoring process.

Nevada County Last-Mile Broadband Grant Application

Instructions – Refer to Nevada County Last-Mile Broadband Grant Program Guidelines Before Continuing with Grant Application

Application must be reviewed by a professional engineer (PE) or other qualified individual. A separate review is required for each grant application if submitting multiple applications.

Final application deadline is December 6, 5:00 PM, 2019.

No incomplete or late applications will be accepted.

Attachments

- For attachments containing more than 5 pages, a summary page is required.
- For surveys or petitions, the summary page must include the number of signatures and description of process to verify addresses are in the proposed service area.

Match Requirement

The grant will cover up to a 50% of eligible project expenses. In-kind matches (i.e. donation of land for infrastructure, labor, donation of lease for infrastructure, etc. will be accepted at a lower point value than cash matches).

Applicants with additional local match or leveraged funds will receive additional points in the scoring process. Federal broadband grant funding is not an eligible match.

Applicant Conference Call and Questions

An applicant informational conference call is scheduled for Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 2pm. The call is voluntary and will be recorded. Inclusion in the call should be submitted in writing via email by EOD Friday November 15, 2019. Questions about the grant should be submitted in writing to:

Recipient: cwalterscheid@sierrabusiness.org

Subject Line: Nevada County Broadband Grant Application

1. Applicant Information

1.1 Applicant Contact Information

Name:

Company:

Title:

Email:

Phone:

1.2 What type of legal entity is applicant? (refer to Grant Guidelines for types of eligible applicants)

1.3 Describe applicant's history with other Broadband deployment projects

2. Project Overview

2.1 Project Name

2.2 Project Technology

What type of technology will the applicant use to provide broadband?

Cable, Fiber to the Premise, Fixed Wireless, Hybrid Fiber/Cable, Hybrid Fiber/Fixed Wireless, Mobile, Satellite or Other

2.3 Describe the proposed network design.

2.4 Proposed Service Area

Describe geographic area to be served, including service area boundaries, place names, buildings, road/street names and addresses, bordering highway, bodies of water, or other features that clearly identify the project coverage area.

Attach a .shp or .kml/.kmz/Shape File format or File GO Database format file showing the map of the proposed service area showing boundary data for each contiguous area. **Note: If submitting multiple applications, do not combine multiple project areas into one file. Submit a separate mapping file for the project area with each application.**

2.5 Project Permitting

Include a schedule of all required permits for the project including permit type, fee, permitting agency or regulatory board and status of the permit. Ensure that the application is complete and that all of the required local/city/county/state approvals necessary for this project to proceed been considered (planning commission, zoning, route and road authorities, railroad crossing, etc.) Indicate clearly what remains to be done and what is required for completing the process of obtaining approvals. Include this information in the project timeline/schedule.

2.6 Service and Pricing Levels

Provide the service and pricing levels to be offered in the grant project area:

Service Level/Tier	Pricing

Are there any limitations on data usage? (e.g. data caps, reduced speeds, etc.) If yes, please explain.

2.7 Project Schedule

Provide a detailed project schedule outlining the individual tasks and their timing for the overall project including broadband deployment tasks and activities necessary to complete the project. Include expected completion date (month and year) of the activity. The last task on the project schedule should indicate the date upon which service to the last location will be turned up.

List any factors that would change or delay this schedule

3. Level of Service Verification

3.1 Provide evidence of current service levels which may include but is not limited to:

- Statistically significant survey of residents from grant area
- Documentation of area's existing infrastructure demonstrating existing service area
- Documentation from website of reported service provider stating that service is not available in this area
- Testimonials and commitments from residents, businesses or institutions in project area are strongly encouraged

3.2 List in the box below the total number of passings proposed in your project by type of location:

PASSINGS TALLY SHEET	HOUSEHOLDS	BUSINESSES	COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS
Currently UNSERVED Number of passings expected to improve to at least 25/3 as a result of the project			
Currently UNDERSERVED Number of passings expected to improve from between 25/3 & 100/20 to 100/20 and above as a result of the project			

3.3 Describe the methodology used to determine the number of locations (e.g. number of meters, existing customers, address points)

3.4 With respect to density, what is the average number of homes, businesses and institutions per square mile within the proposed service area?

3.5 In terms of infrastructure installation, explain why this area was chosen for the grant and is unlikely to be served without grant funding. Include an explanation of terrain, population density, or other factors contributing to the overall cost of the project.

If necessary, provide any additional information on the grant area that may be helpful during the scoring process that was not asked on the application.

3.6 Anticipated Improvements

Using the “**Anticipated Improvements**” table below, provide the **number** of households, businesses, and community institutions that will be able to receive improved broadband services as a result of the proposed project. Identify the speeds currently available for each type of location, using the ranges provided on the table, and the speeds that will be offered if the project is awarded grant funding.

To the extent possible, identify location types by household, business (including home-based business or telecommuter, farm, etc.) and community anchor institutions.

**Anticipated Improvements in Broadband Service
Based on the Broadband Project Investments**

# of Passings	Speed Now:	0/0	≤10/1	0/0	≤10/1	25/3	0/0	≤25/3	<100/20
	Speed After Build:	25/3	25/3	100/20	100/20	100/20	1G/1G	1G/1G	1G/1G
Households									
Businesses									
Anchors									
TOTAL									

3.7 Include a description of the business model and plan to sustain operation of the network. Include estimated take-rate in grant area.

4. Project Cost Analysis

A full project budget must be completed and attached as part of this application. Provide a summary in section 4.3 below.

4.1 What are the total eligible project costs?

Remember to figure in both time and expenses for the required local and state environmental reviews and permits.

4.2 How much grant money are you seeking from the Nevada County Last-Mile Grant program for this project?
**up to 50% of the total broadband development cost is eligible to be reimbursed the county broadband grant, to a maximum of \$225,000. Points will be awarded to projects that leverage greater local match funding – more than 50% -- from alternative sources.*

4.3 Fill out the PROJECT BUDGET TABLE below indicating the sources, uses, and amounts of all funds that will be used for eligible broadband development costs as defined in the guidelines. Use the recommended Use of Funds categories where possible, creating other categories where anticipated expenses do not fall within one of the recommended categories. Attach your full project budget to the grant application. Be sure to include a contingency for project completion.

Sources and Uses of Broadband Grant Funds and Local Match for the Project
PROJECT BUDGET

Use of Funds (Activity-Category)	Amount	Costs Incurred (Y/N)	Date Incurred	Source of Funds (Local portion/County grant)	Date Funds Committed

EXPLANATION OF BUDGET TABLE ITEMS:

- **Use of Funds (Activity-Category)** – Use the recommended categories where possible, creating other categories where anticipated expenses do not fall within one of the recommended categories. You can also add additional rows as necessary
- **Amount** – Total cost of the budget line item
- **Costs Incurred** – Has work on this activity started?
- **Date Incurred** – When was this work done?
- **Source of Funds** – Who is paying for this activity? Please note if it will be included in an invoice for reimbursement from the Nevada County Last-Mile Broadband Grant Program.
- **Date Funds Committed** – When were the funds secured from this source?

4.4 Attach all written funding commitments from all project funding partners, including public, private, and non-profit or philanthropic sources.

4.5 If the grant request was approved for this project, is the remainder of the financing (the local match) in place for building this project?

NO, the local match funds are not yet in place. If funds are not secured yet, what is the process to secure the funds and what is the timeline in which they will be obtained?

YES, all of the local match is in place. If yes, you must attach evidence that local match funds secured.

4.6 Are there additional costs related to this project that are not eligible costs that will be incurred as part of the overall project costs for deploying broadband to this area? If yes, what are those costs?

4.7 Is this project part of a larger build for which the applicant is not requesting grant funds? Is there any additional relevant information regarding the investment in the area surrounding the grant project area? If yes, please explain and/or attach proof of leveraged financing.

(Attachment optional)

5. Financial and Governance Plan

5.1 Describe the need for funding from the Nevada County Last-Mile Grant fund and why the project could not proceed without this funding. Refer to your stand-alone financial plan/budget and demonstrate the financial model with and without grant funding. Be as specific as possible.

5.2 Provide an organizational chart, applicant's history including experience relevant to the proposed project, and an indication of readiness to build, manage, and operate the proposed broadband project. Include resumes of key officers and management personnel.

6. Community & Economic Development Impact

6.1 Describe the economic and community development potential of the project, including how the project will provide opportunities for existing business retention and expansion, new business attraction, increased jobs, and/or other expanded business and community opportunities such as improve public safety, health care delivery, service to economically distressed area, and improved educational access.

*This question is intended to understand how the applicant worked with the local community in identifying areas of greatest need and determining specific community impacts of broadband connectivity. **Narrative here should explain the expected results the project will have on the specific community, not just a general explanation of the positive impact of broadband.***

6.2 Describe any partners or subcontractors associated with the project's deliverables related to deployment and service delivery. Please describe each party's role in the project. Please include copies of any applicable executed contracts or anticipated contractual language and/or insurance requirements.

6.3 Attach evidence of community support for the project. This may include resident surveys, local government resolutions, and/or letters from residents, businesses, government officials, other stakeholders or the partners listed above. Note: the upcoming public comment period is not designed to extend the application period. Members of the public may comment during this time, but all community support intended for application must be included at time of submission. *(Attachment required)*

Selection Criteria & Weights

Grants will be awarded to projects that provide the highest return in public benefits for the public costs incurred and meet all of the statutory requirements. To fulfill this requirement of reviewing applications in an objective and fair manner, applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a team compiled by Sierra Business Council and Nevada County and using the following criteria and point values to assist in systematically awarding grants. These criteria reflect information sought via the grant application questions. To ensure that your application receives its maximum point total, be sure to provide complete responses to the information requested in the application.

120 Points Possible

Household and businesses passed: 1-20 points

- Amount of increase in speed from current service to reach speed goals and above combined with number of passings determines points awarded

Grant request amount: 0-10 points

- Percent of grant request compared to eligible project costs (a higher local match percentage above 50% will result in a higher application score in this category)

Readiness & Strength of Team: 0-20 points

- Demonstration of project readiness. Examples include a solid engineering and design plan, financing secured, other approvals or permits secured or in process, project schedule thorough and complete, and evidence of readiness to build, manage, and operate the project.
- Comprehensive proposal: partners in place, application complete and well-prepared, budget table complete with planned contingency.

Sustainability: 0-20 points

- Financial soundness and efficiencies. Examples include identification of eligible costs, leveraging existing broadband, financing is secured, additional costs identified, need for funding clearly identified, financial plan, financial strength demonstrated.
- Organizational capability. Examples include quality/experience of partners and project manager, organizational charts, company history and resumes
- Technical demonstration. Examples include a clear and concise project description, a realistic project schedule that syncs with broadband infrastructure to be provided and the budget table, a clear documentation of areas to be served.

Community Support & Engagement/Partnership: 0-20 points

- Evidence of community support, including project partners and demonstration of customer interest such as potential/current customer surveys and/or canvasses as to desire/need for improved service, letters of support, and take-rate estimates
- Benefits to community anchor institutions (CAIs). Provide a list of significant CAIs and how they would benefit.

Economic Development & Community Impact Review: 0-30 points

- Does the project demonstrate economic development impacts and how? This might include documenting via specific impact statements from businesses as to business retention, expansion, and attraction impact, including home-based businesses and telecommuting. Also, evidence of education, health, and public safety benefits and general quality of life improvements.
- Is project area economically distressed? This would include documentation that in the proposed project area, unemployment, poverty, or population loss are significantly greater than statewide average and/or would reference median household income and/or percent of students eligible for free or reduced school lunches.
- Does the project support the goals of any particular county specific plan, area plan, economic development plan or the energy action plan?
- Will the project ultimately support an increase in living wage jobs?

GRANT REQUESTER AMOUNT SCORING TABLE

- Percent of grant request compared to eligible project costs. A higher local match percentage (above 51%) will result in a higher application score in this category

Percent of eligible project costs requested	Points
Less than 30%	10
30 to 39%	7
40-45%	4
46-48%	2
49-50%	0