

Rural Broadband Capacity Pilot Program
Request for Interest and Information
October 26, 2017

Is your Oregon rural community trying to implement or expand broadband to your residents and businesses? Business Oregon is pleased to announce that a new pilot program has been created to kick start funding opportunities to assist with planning for and deployment of broadband projects targeting rural and underserved populations.

This request seeks statements of interest from Oregon cities, counties, ports, tribes, cooperatives, non-profit corporations and public-private partnerships that wish pursue broadband capacity projects for their community. It is an opportunity to provide input that will help inform the department as it develops program criteria prior to initiating the application for funding process.

An overview of the program and instructions for submitting responses are provided below and in the attached Interest Response Form. The estimated timeframes for the pilot program are:

- Interest Response Form due by November 30, 2017
- Opportunity announcement and application launch by January 12, 2018
- Applications due by February 21, 2018
- Award offers made by March 15, 2018

Funding offers will be contingent upon successful completion of the opportunity application process and negotiation between Business Oregon and funding recipients of contractual terms for the award(s), performance objectives and agreed upon completion dates.

1. Description of the Program

The Governor's Office has allocated \$500,000 for grant(s) of up to a total of \$500,000 from the Strategic Reserve Fund to be available for the support of broadband planning, engineering, and/or infrastructure deployment projects targeting rural and underserved populations (areas that do not have broadband service available at the current FCC designation of 25 million bits per second (Mbps) downstream and 3 Mbps upstream, excluding satellite service).

The Strategic Reserve Fund program places particular emphasis on investments that assist communities, businesses or industries in cost-effective projects that assist the creation, expansion and preservation of the principal traded sector industries of Oregon and encourage diversification and preservation of regional economies. The fund shall be used to assist economic and community development projects of public entities, industry groups or businesses with significant long-term, regional or statewide economic impacts, to provide interim financing mechanisms to augment existing public or private sector programs or to analyze statewide, long-term economic issues and opportunities.

Business Oregon will administer the Rural Broadband Capacity Pilot Program and will provide financial support in the form of grant(s) of up to a cumulative total of \$500,000 for projects that will increase the availability and utilization of broadband infrastructure and services. A grant may be used for the following:

- Planning - For projects to organize and engage rural community stakeholders to develop broadband strategic plans for the deployment, adoption and utilization of broadband infrastructure in their respective communities.
- Engineering - For projects that have completed plans, a grant may be used for the design and engineering of broadband infrastructure.
- Infrastructure - For projects that have completed plans and engineering designs, a grant may be used for the construction of broadband infrastructure.
- Matching Funds - A grant may also be used as matching funds to enable recipients to qualify for grants and loans from federal and private foundation funding programs for broadband planning, engineering and infrastructure deployment projects.

2. Requirements to Participate

Each interested respondent and potential applicant should establish that:

1. Broadband services delivering the current Federal Communications Commission benchmark of 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream are not available or planned to be available to residences and businesses in the community.
2. The respondent is a city, county, port, tribe, cooperative, non-profit corporation or public-private partnership.
3. A champion for the project defined as an official in government, education, healthcare, public safety, economic development, or business is willing to recruit other community leaders to participate in the project.
4. The community can bring key stakeholders to the table (members of the community representing areas such as business, education, healthcare, government and service providers), to identify community broadband needs, goals and solutions.
5. The prospective applicant can demonstrate the ability to engage key stakeholders and obtain local community participation in the project and that there is demonstrable community motivation and enthusiasm to participate in the project and to meet the project schedule and timelines.

3. Submission Instructions

Complete the Interest Response Form providing a statement of interest and project description. Your response should be no longer than five pages. Interest responses are due by November 30, 2017 at 4:00 pm. All responses should be submitted electronically via e-mail mail as an Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) attachment to:

Christopher Tamarin, Oregon Business Development Department, 121 SW Salmon Street, Suite 205, Portland, Oregon 97204, christopher.tamarin@oregon.gov, 503 508-0178 Phone / Cell.