



## Blandin Community Broadband Program

Blandin Foundation stands with Minnesota's rural leaders and communities as they create and claim futures that are resilient, vibrant and connected. Abundant and robust access to broadband and the skills to use it are essential as communities seek to compete and thrive in an ever more connected world.

### Background

Broadband has revolutionized the way we work, learn, play and live. Without robust broadband access and technologically literate residents, rural communities will be disadvantaged. Access denied is opportunity denied. Broadband has become the indispensable infrastructure of our age.

Since 2003, the Blandin Community Broadband Program has partnered with dozens of communities and funded hundreds of projects that reduce the digital divide, advance broadband adoption, increase community economic vitality, enable civic engagement and enhance quality of life and place.

The foundation extends its Blandin Community Broadband Program with up to \$900,000 available for grants in 2018-2019, and technical support available to rural Minnesota communities.

### Opportunities

The Blandin Community Broadband Program offers resources for community-designed and -driven initiatives. Blandin Foundation matches community resources and vision with technical support, grants, access to peer community insights, conferences, workshops and webinars. Together we explore broadband possibilities in three ways:

#### Blandin Broadband Communities

The Blandin Broadband Communities (BBC) program is an intensive, two-year partnership between rural Minnesota communities (cities, counties, tribes, or other self-identified communities of interest or place) and the foundation. Selected communities work through a proven process to define their technology goals, measure current levels of broadband access and use, and seek technical assistance and resources to meet their goals.

The foundation is currently seeking a fourth cohort of four rural Minnesota communities for the project period beginning in August 2018.

- Selected through an application process, Blandin Broadband Communities will define their technology goals, review current levels of broadband access and use, and connect with other technical assistance and resources to meet their goals.
- Each Blandin Broadband Community will be invited to apply for Blandin Foundation matching grants for community-defined projects, up to \$75,000 per community, and a Robust Network Feasibility Fund grant if needed.
- Applications are due to Blandin Foundation by May 31, 2018, with selections announced by the end of June.

For more information, including application information and project lists from previous cohorts, visit <https://bit.ly/2laSpKm>.

### Robust Network Feasibility Fund grants

Up to \$25,000 to fund projects that determine the feasibility of geographically based robust broadband networks. Proposed networks should be able to provide service of at least the minimum of the State of Minnesota broadband goal of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload to every premise in the community, and must be able to support broadband service scalable to 100 Mbps download and upload. (*Exceptions to the speed requirements can be made for wireless network projects.*) Network ownership can be private, public or a private-public partnership. Services must be provided in accordance with the FCC definitions of a non-discriminatory network. 1:1 matching funds required. <https://bit.ly/2GAtlZS>

Eligible recipients are located in Minnesota, serve rural Minnesota residents, and are 501(c)3 organizations, units of government or tribal governments. Application deadlines for 2018 are June 15, September 14 and December 14.

### Community Broadband Resources

Technical, educational, informational and convening resources are available to assist communities as they identify, prioritize and act on their broadband-related objectives. Many resources are publicly accessible at the Foundation's broadband website and at the Blandin on Broadband blog. In addition, applications for up to 32 hours of flexible technical assistance are accepted on an ongoing basis. <https://bit.ly/2us9dcU>

### For more information

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