

2019 Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Benton County

Rank: 20 (out of 87) for access to 100/20 megabits per second (Mbps)

Background

Every year since 2017 Blandin Foundation has contracted with Ann Treacy of Treacy Information Services to synthesize data from the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development and broadband news from communities across the state to gauge progress toward the state broadband goals (2022: 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up and 2026: 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up).

Leaders can use this information to plan and act to improve broadband access and use in their communities.

Benton County: data and community action

The “most improved” award goes to Benton County. They went from 26 percent access to 100/20 Mbps in 2018 to 88 percent access. They still need to make a concerted effort to meet the 2022 and 2026 goals, but most of the people with access have good access (100/20 Mbps) and they had good momentum – unfortunately, we haven’t noted much activity in the last year.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
Benton	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	88.18	25.83	14.28
25/3 (2022 goal)	91.47	87.49	87.61

Benton County participated in Blandin Foundation’s federally-funded (American Recovery and Reconstruction Act) [Minnesota Intelligent Rural Community \(MIRC\)](https://blandinonbroadband.org/2012/08/10/mirc-community-update-benton-county/)¹ program from 2009-2012. They have been strong with [wireless connectivity](https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/10/22/benton-county-broadband-profile-current-ranking-75/)², but it seems as the grants they have received have spurred significant progress towards the 2026 speed goals.

Benton has benefited from several Minnesota broadband grants:

- 2017 - Benton Cooperative Telephone Company – Rice Ramey – GRANT \$765,015**
 Serving 250 unserved households and 73 unserved businesses in the area northeast of Rice in Benton and Morrison Counties with improved broadband service levels that meet or exceed the 2026 state goal of 100 Mbps download by 20 Mbps upload. This includes Langola, Graham and sections 5 and 6 of Mayhew Lake Townships, all located in Benton County.
- 2017 - Palmer Wireless - Duelm Hwy 95 – GRANT \$162,814**
 Serving 60 unserved households and 21 unserved businesses near the town of Duelm in southern Benton County, using Fiber-to-the-Home technology capable of delivering 1 Gbps speeds up and down. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, Palmer Wireless will

¹ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2012/08/10/mirc-community-update-benton-county/>

² <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/10/22/benton-county-broadband-profile-current-ranking-75/>



upgrade its wireless customers, and improve broadband service levels for others along the route, through a fiber network capable of meeting and exceeding the 2026 state speed goal.

- **2014- CenturyLink Foley, Benton County–Balkan Township**

Award: \$382,883. Total project cost: \$995,977. Impact: Service to 162 unserved households, 10 businesses, several community facilities.

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 20 (up from 75!)
- 25/3 ranking: 31
- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: yes
- Household density: 36.5
- Number of providers: 9

Details:

- Find more articles on broadband in Benton County. (<http://tinyurl.com/zuk3zeg>)
- [See last year's profile](#)³
- Districts: CD 6
Senate: 13, 14, 15
House: 13B, 14B, 15B
- [Find your reps](#)⁴

Analysis: Code Yellow

- Red (action needed)
- Yellow (warning – ramp up efforts)
- Green (good shape)

³ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2017/02/13/benton-county-broadband-profile-wireless-pushes-the-stats-today-but-not-for-the-future/>

⁴ <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>

