

## Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Cass County

Rank: 68 (out of 87) for access to 100/20 broadband 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.

### Cass County: data and community action

Cass County seems unlikely to meet either the 2022 or 2026 Minnesota broadband speed goals. They've seen improvement each year, but it's incremental.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
Cass	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	51.61	35.92	34.07
25/3 (2022 goal)	88.02	77.58	66.92

Cass County was a [Blandin Broadband Community](#)<sup>1</sup> as part of Region 5 Development Commission (the Resilient Region).

Cass County benefited from two state grants:

#### 2016 - TDS TELECOM CASS & CROW WING COUNTIES -- GRANT: \$3,000,000

- Serving 3459 unserved households, 62 unserved businesses, and 4 community anchor institutions in Cass and Crow Wing counties in north central Minnesota including Backus, Hackensack, Ideal Corners, Pequot Lakes, Pine River, and Woman Lake. In a funding partnership with the State of Minnesota, TDS Telecom (dba Arvig Telephone Company) will improve unserved levels to the 2022 state speed goal of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.
- **2014 - Consolidated Telephone Cooperative, Region 5 Virtual Highway Project**  
Award: \$2 million. Total project cost: \$4.22 million. Impact: Service to 247 unserved and 90 underserved premises in Cass, Crow Wing and Morrison counties.

One issue is that the 2016 grant aimed for 25/3 Mbps speeds so that won't move the needle much. Cass County is making improvements. In [September 2018](#)<sup>2</sup>, Paul Bunyan announced Gigazone upgrades in

<sup>1</sup> <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2015/01/12/cass-county-broadband-2014-update-working-through-the-resilient-region/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/09/05/the-gigazone-comes-to-areas-of-cass-lake-and-the-leech-lake-reservation-served-by-paul-bunyan-communications/>



Cass County and the most recent maps were created in December. They need to continue putting the pressure on providers.

In September 2019, [Senator Klobuchar's staff](#)<sup>3</sup> held a listening session in Walker. Paul Bunyan, a local provider, talked about what would help them extend their service like being able to provide cable TV services. Representatives from Leech Lake reservation spoke about their need for better broadband.

Cass County could benefit from future grants. In 2019, WTCA has applied to upgrade service in Cass. (That doesn't mean they will get the grant; they have only applied.)

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 68 (up 2 from last year)
- 25/3 ranking: 37 (up from 50)
- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: yes
- Household density: 4.9
- Number of providers: 13

Details:

- See examples of community broadband adoption projects from Cass County and other communities participating in this 2015-2016 Blandin Broadband Communities cohort [https://blandinfoundation.org/content/uploads/vy/BBC\\_2015-16\\_Project\\_Matrix.pdf](https://blandinfoundation.org/content/uploads/vy/BBC_2015-16_Project_Matrix.pdf)
- Find more articles on broadband in Cass County. (<http://tinyurl.com/hgtulgm>)
- Districts: CD 8  
Senate: 05 & 09  
House: 05A, 05B, 09A
- [Find your reps](#)<sup>4</sup>

**Analysis: Code Red**

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

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<sup>3</sup> <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/09/18/sen-klobuchar-staff-visits-walker-to-talk-about-broadband-infrastructure-and-housing/>

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