

## Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Chippewa County

Rank: 31 (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.

### Chippewa County: data and community action

Chippewa County made a huge leap in the last year, going from 25 percent 100/20 Mbps access in 2018 to 82 percent with 100/20 Mbps access now. They might appear to be lagging in 25/3 Mbps access compared to other counties, but one benefit for Chippewa is that almost everyone who has broadband, has good broadband. That makes it much less likely that a portion of the population will have to move forward being underserved. However, it will take a concerted push to meet the 2022 and 2026 speed goals.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
Chippewa	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	81.70	24.80	24.45
25/3 (2022 goal)	83.23	72.33	72.28

In 2015, Chippewa was one of twenty counties in southwestern Minnesota to benefit from a state grant:

- 2015 - MVTW Wireless Middle Mile – Grant award: \$808,080**  
 A Middle Mile broadband infrastructure buildout to upgrade backhaul capacity between site locations within 20 southwestern Minnesota counties that will improve services to state speed goal levels and above to 6,000 households and businesses that are current MVTW customers, with leverage possibility of 29,000 more. The counties are: Blue Earth, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Meeker, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock, Redwood, Renville, Sibley Swift, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine.

With financial support from Blandin Foundation, in 2018, [Chippewa County released a feasibility study<sup>1</sup>](#) that details a plan for the future, assuming they are able to get a state broadband grant...

We view the hybrid fiber and wireless solution as a great first step towards improving broadband. This option would bring fiber immediately to about a third of the rural homes in the county, including the town of Watson. The fiber constructed for this scenario is a first step in

<sup>1</sup> <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/10/22/chippewa-county-broadband-profile-current-ranking-77/>



getting fiber closer to everybody in the county. We think a reasonable business plan is to start with the hybrid option and extend fiber to everybody over time.

Our analysis shows that it is not economically feasible to build fiber everywhere in the county using the existing Border-to-Border grant program—the 50% grant matching in that program is not enough to create a sustainable network. However, the hybrid fiber and wireless solutions all look to be economically viable.

The report suggests possible next steps, such as looking for a partner to bring broadband to those areas without it today. The goal would be to have a partner by next year to be ready for future state grant funds.

There's a plan and they benefited from improved access in the past; they just need to execute again.

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

#### Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 31 (up 15)
- 25/3 ranking: 49
- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: yes
- Household density: 8.9
- Number of providers: 12

#### Details:

- Find more articles on broadband in Chippewa County. (<http://tinyurl.com/htwz58a>)
- There is a matrix of Minnesota broadband adoption projects; it includes [projects from this area](#).
- Districts: CD 7  
Senate: 17  
House: 17A
- [Find your reps<sup>2</sup>](#)

#### Analysis: **Code Yellow**

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

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>