

Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Clearwater County

Rank: 17 (of 87) for access to 100/20 broadband megabits per second (Mbps)

Background

Every year since 2017 Blandin Foundation has pulled together 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.

Clearwater County: data and community action

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
Clearwater	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	89.3	89.3	73.41
25/3 (2022 goal)	99.74	99.58	99.58

Clearwater has been well poised for broadband for several years, but there has been little improvement in the last couple years. There is almost ubiquitous coverage for 25/3 Mbps access but they need more to reach the 2026 goals.

In 2018, [Garden Valley Telephone Company received a \\$20 million loan¹](#) from the USDA to make system improvements (fiber-optic facilities and construct fiber-to-the-premises) in Polk, Clearwater, Pennington, Marshall and Red Lake counties, and in the vacation resort areas of Maple Lake and Union Lake. That may be the leap the county needs to close the gap for the 2026 goal.

There are [seven providers in Clearwater²](#), but you can see from the [map below³](#) that much of Clearwater County is served by only one provider and that is not a national provider. It can be difficult to persuade a national provider to upgrade in areas where the business case is not clear. But there is (at least) one area where there is competition. There are several providers in the county that provide speeds to meet the 2026 goals. It's a matter of working with those providers to encourage upgrades in the areas that are currently underserved.

Clearwater has not benefited from a Minnesota broadband grant – yet. The grant program has prioritized geographic diversity among awardees but there were no applications submitted for 2019 that might help.

¹ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/08/02/usda-invests-97-million-in-rural-broadband-infrastructure-20-million-loan-coming-to-mn/>

² https://mn.gov/deed/assets/providers-county_tcm1045-190762.pdf

³ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/09/05/impact-of-competition-on-broadband-speeds-may-come-down-to-type-of-provider/>



Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 17 (down 4 places)
- 25/3 ranking: 4
- Has worked with Blandin: no
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: no
- Household density: 3.4
- Number of providers: 7

Details:

- Find more articles on broadband in Clearwater County. (<http://tinyurl.com/homdjrt>)
- Districts: CD 7
Senate: 02
House: 02A, 02B
- [Find your reps⁴](#)

Analysis: Code Yellow

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

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