

## Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Cook County

Rank: 13 (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.

### Cook County: data and community action

Cook County is close to meeting the 2022 state speed goals and seemingly on track to meet the 2026 goals. Coverage has not changed in three years. They need a little push.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
Cook	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	94.50	94.50	94.50
25/3 (2022 goal)	98.8	98.87	97.56

For years, all Cook County telecommunications depended on a single fiber line. As late as 2008, dial-up was still the only choice for many residents, businesses and visitors. A grant from Blandin Foundation and a matching contribution from the County, along with additional support from Arrowhead Electric Coop, funded a feasibility study to examine the problem and potential solutions.

Based on the results of the feasibility study, the Cook County Board of Commissioners took up the idea of developing a fiber network for the county’s residents, businesses and government. The Board passed an ordinance in December 2009 declaring that a broadband network was in the best interests of the County and created the Fiber Optic Network Commission. Cook County formed a partnership with Arrowhead Electric Cooperative, which applied for and was awarded over \$16 million in federal stimulus grants and low interest loans to build a fiber-to-the-home broadband network throughout Cook County.

In addition, Cook County awarded Arrowhead Cooperative a \$4 million grant from the 1% sales tax fund.

(Cook County was featured in [CoBank’s report<sup>1</sup>](#) in the last year [Making the Move to Broadband: Rural Electric Co-ops Detail Their Experience<sup>2</sup>](#).)

<sup>1</sup> <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2017/10/04/case-study-of-cook-county-mn-building-a-case-building-partnerships-building-broadband/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cobank.com/~media/Files/Searchable%20PDF%20Files/Knowledge%20Exchange/2017/Making%20the%20Move%20into%20Broadband%20%20Sep%202017.pdf>



Cook County clearly benefits from the community's early activism, but they will still need to push to reach the 2026 speed goals. Cook County was part of Blandin Foundation's [Minnesota Intelligent Rural Community Program](#)<sup>3</sup> in 2009 – 2012.

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 13 (down 3 places)
- 25/3 ranking:
- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: no
- Household density: 0.7
- Number of providers: 3

Details:

- See MIRC project matrix for more details on Cook County's broadband adoption efforts [https://blandinfoundation.org/content/uploads/vy/DC\\_Project\\_Matrix\\_Nov\\_2012.pdf](https://blandinfoundation.org/content/uploads/vy/DC_Project_Matrix_Nov_2012.pdf)
- Find more articles on broadband in Cook County. (<http://tinyurl.com/hgbzlt7>)
- Districts: CD 8 / 03
- [Find your reps](#)<sup>4</sup>

**Analysis: Code Green**

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

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<sup>3</sup> <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/07/11/catching-up-with-broadband-projects-in-cook-mn-classes-hotspot-checkout-and-library-programming/>

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

