

Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Crow Wing County

Rank: 21 (out of 87) for broadband speeds of 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.

Crow Wing County: data and community action

Crow Wing County looks like they could meet the speeds goals with some concerted effort. Actually the 2026 goal seems more likely than 2022. They have made good progress since last year – from 42 percent coverage to 88 percent.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
Crow Wing	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	88.04	41.66	33.13
25/3 (2022 goal)	92.84	92.29	87.78

Crow Wing has benefited from three state broadband 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.

- **2015 - Consolidated Telecommunications Company - Fort Ripley Phase II – Grant award: \$759,525**

Consolidated Telecommunication Company will build out broadband infrastructure in the Fort Ripley area adjacent to Highway 371 to provide state speed goal broadband service and above to an additional 272 households.

- **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.



Crow Wing was a [Blandin Broadband Community as part of the Region 5 \(the Resilient Region\) 2015-2016 cohort](#)¹. Crow Wing County was [one of the communities](#)² studied as part of Blandin Foundation's 2017 Measuring Community ROI report. The following public investments have been made:

- \$5 million [bonding for school](#)³ technology (2002)
- \$5 million ARRA funding to serve Crow Wing and Cass
- \$2 million Minnesota Border-to-Border Broadband Grant (2015) to CTC to serve Crow Wing and Cass
- \$3 million Minnesota Border-to-Border Broadband Grant (2016) to TDS to serve Crow Wing and Cass
- \$123,450 from Blandin Foundation to support broadband adoption projects in the Resilient Region, which includes Crow Wing County
- **Total: \$15,123,450**

[Using formulas](#)⁴ devised to measure the impact of broadband access, Crow Wing has the potential to realize from this investment:

- A combined household economic benefit of broadband of \$67,412,150 annually
- A combined increase in residential real estate value of \$214,662,149

In September 2019, [Senator Klobuchar's staff held a listening](#)⁵ session in Crow Wing County. They spoke with a local provider (CTC) about the need for government support to build networks in rural areas. CTC pointed out that when funding is slowed, it slows down the process of getting access to everyone.

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

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 21 (up 40 places)
- 25/3 ranking: 26
- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: yes
- Household density: 22.5
- Number of providers: 10

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

² <https://blandinfoundation.org/learn/research-rural/broadband-resources/broadband-initiative/measuring-impact-broadband-5-rural-mn-communities/community-profiles/beltrami-county-bemidji/>

³ <http://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/local/3445318-brainerd-school-referendum>

⁴ <https://blandinfoundation.org/learn/research-rural/broadband-resources/broadband-initiative/measuring-impact-broadband-5-rural-mn-communities/return-on-investment/#formulating-broadband-value>

⁵ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/09/17/sen-klobuchar-staff-visits-brainerd-to-talk-about-broadband-infrastructure-and-housing/>

Details:

- For a list of community broadband adoption projects, see the Blandin matrix...https://blandinfoundation.org/content/uploads/vy/BBC_2015-16_Project_Matrix.pdf
- Find more articles on broadband in Crow Wing County. (<http://tinyurl.com/zechgaw>)
- Districts: CD 8 / MN Senate: 10 MN House: 10A, 10B
- [Find your reps⁶](#)

Analysis: Code Yellow

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

⁶ <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>