

2019 Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Itasca County

Rank: 27 (out of 87) for broadband speeds of 200/10 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.

Itasca County: data and community action

Itasca County seems like it might be poised to meet the Minnesota broadband speed goals, but they need a concerted effort. They have several providers in the area. Itasca County is also home to Blandin Foundation, which works on rural broadband access and use.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
Itasca	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	83.06	79.44	76.35
25/3 (2022 goal)	93.12	86.15	78.92

Itasca has been working on broadband for many years. They were part of the [Blandin Broadband Communities \(BBC\)](#)¹ initiative before 2014. About the same time, [Connect Itasca](#)² started surveying residents about broadband.

Itasca has benefited from several Minnesota broadband grants:

- 2017 - Paul Bunyan Communications - North Central Fiber – GRANT \$802,620**
 Serving 657 unserved households, 29 unserved businesses, and 5 unserved community institutions, and 130 underserved households, 13 underserved businesses, and 1 underserved community institution near the communities of Park Rapids, Bigfork, and Side Lake, MN, to locations in St. Louis, Itasca, and Hubbard Counties with services exceeding the 2026 state and current federal speed goals.
- 2016 MEDIACOM HARRIS TOWNSHIP – GRANT: \$224,369**
 Serving 262 unserved households and 6 unserved businesses in Harris Township in Itasca County with services at 100 Mbps download by 20 Mbps upload.

¹ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2014/11/14/strut-your-stuff-in-itasca-county-business-get-tech-assessments-training-it-meetings-and-social-media-breakfasts/>

² <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2014/10/31/connect-itasca-innovative-plan-to-make-business-case-for-broadband/>



- **2016 - PAUL BUNYAN COMMUNICATIONS HUBBARD, BECKER & ITASCA COUNTIES - GRANT: \$1,742,232**
Serving 785 unserved households, 26 unserved businesses, 2 unserved community anchor institutions and 143 underserved households and 2 underserved businesses in rural portions of Itasca, Hubbard, and Becker counties. Combined, these areas are home to an estimated 2,750 people and nearly 50 small businesses.
- **2015 - Paul Bunyan Central Itasca County Fiber – Grant Award: \$1,980,000**
Serving 1193 households, 53 businesses and 5 community anchor institutions.

Itasca County is fortunate in that there are several providers in the area that currently offer Gigabit services. They need to work with providers to extend or expand their services.

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 27 (down from 23)
- 25/3 ranking: 22
- Has worked with Blandin: yes
- Has received a MN Broadband grant: yes
- Household density: 6.4
- Number of providers: 10

Details:

- Find more articles on broadband in Itasca County. (<http://tinyurl.com/grujo6t>)
- Districts: CD 8
Senate: 5, 6
House: 5A, 5B, 6A
- [Find your reps³](#)

Analysis: Code Yellow

- Red (yikes)
- Yellow (warning)
- Green (good shape)

³ <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>