

2019 Annual Minnesota Broadband Profiles | Polk County

Rank: 19 (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.

Polk County: data and community action

Based as much on their recent momentum as on their numbers, Polk County could very well meet the speed goals for both 2022 and 2026; their odds are probably higher for 2026.

Percentage of Served Population by Speed and Date			
Polk	2019	2018	2017
100/20 (2026 goal)	88.35	85.39	80.89
25/3 (2022 goal)	93.11	93	91.74

Polk County has benefited from three state broadband grants:

- 2016 - HALSTAD TELEPHONE COMPANY KERTSONVILLE AREA - GRANT: \$296,665**
Serving 51 unserved households in Kertsonville and Onstad Townships in Polk with service levels to 1 Gigabit.
- 2015 - Halstad Telephone Company - Gentilly Township -- Grant award: \$424,460**
Halstad Telephone Company will build out FTTH infrastructure in Gentilly Township in Polk County to provide state speed goal broadband service and above to 114 households, 20 businesses, and 1 community anchor institution in the Village of Gentilly and Gentilly Township (except for the NW corner of the township which is served already). The total project costs are \$931,000; the remaining \$504,540 (54 percent local match) will be provided by Halstad Telephone Company.
- 2014 - Halstad Telephone Co., Halstad Tract MN 11902500 FTTH**
Award: \$1.65 million. Total project cost: \$3.3 million. Impact: Service to 249 unserved locations in Polk County.

In 2018, Polk County also benefited when [Garden Valley Telephone Company](#)¹ received a loan of \$20,360,000 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and when [Red River Valley](#)

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



[Cooperative Power Association](#)² received a \$8,000,000 USDA loan to improve infrastructure for a smart grid system. They also will receive almost [\\$2 million in FCC funding](#)³ over the next 10 years.

While Polk County has a way to go to meet the 2026 goals, they have a lot of activity working in that direction. It may take even more activity but it's easier to build on growing momentum.

Polk County could benefit from future grants. In 2019, Halstad Telephone Company and Garden Valley Telephone Company applied to upgrade service in Polk. (That doesn't mean they will get the grant; they have only applied.)

Checklist:

- 100/20 ranking: 19 (down from 16)
- 25/3 ranking: 23
- Has worked with Blandin
- Has received a MN Broadband grant
- Household density: 6.4
- Number of providers: 6

Details:

- Find more articles on broadband in Polk County (<http://tinyurl.com/zk8apgm>)
- Districts: CD 7
Senate: 01
House: 01B
- [Find your reps](#)⁴

Analysis: Code Green

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

² <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2018/09/20/43-7-million-in-usda-smart-grid-funding-could-help-drive-more-rural-broadband-3-projects-in-mn/>

³ <https://blandinonbroadband.org/2019/08/16/more-on-fcc-funding-freeborn-county-receives-almost-2-million/>

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

