



Blandin Community Broadband Program

Blandin Foundation stands with Minnesota's rural leaders and communities as they create and claim futures that are resilient, vibrant and connected. Abundant and robust access to the Internet (broadband), and the skills necessary to take full advantage of this access, are essential as communities seek to compete and thrive in an ever more connected world.

Background

Since making rural broadband use and access a focus in 2003, Blandin Foundation has partnered with leaders in nearly 70 communities and 110 organizations across the state. At the core of every one of the hundreds of projects emerging from this work have been two core objectives:

- *Sustainable broadband adoption*
- *Enriched quality of life and place*

The foundation extends its Blandin Community Broadband Program in 2015 and 2016 with up to \$1.5 million in grants and technical support available to rural Minnesota communities.

Opportunities

The Blandin Community Broadband Program offers resources for community-designed and -driven initiatives. Blandin Foundation matches community resources and vision with technical support, grants, access to peer community insights, conferences, workshops and webinars. Together we explore broadband possibilities in three ways:

Community Project Grants

Blandin Foundation makes matching grants available to all rural Minnesota communities for specific broadband-related projects.

Robust Network Feasibility Fund <http://bit.ly/1cOe5VS>

Up to \$25,000 to fund projects that determine the feasibility of geographically based robust broadband networks. Proposed networks should be able to provide service of at least the minimum of the State of Minnesota broadband goal of 10 Mbps download and 5 Mbps upload to every premise in the community, and must be able to support broadband service scalable to 100 Mbps download and upload. (*Exceptions to the speed requirements can be made for wireless network projects.*) Network ownership can be private, public or a private-

public partnership. Services must be provided in accordance with the FCC definitions of a non-discriminatory network. *1:1 matching funds required.*

Broadband Innovation <http://bit.ly/1oAD0XK>

Up to \$25,000 for community projects that support enhanced broadband access, adoption and use. Project examples include, but are not limited to: Conducting a community technology survey, holding a community technology fair, e-commerce/technology training for business, community web portals, and public access labs and/or hot spots. *Matching funds of at least 25% of total project cost (1:3) required.*

Eligible recipients are located in Minnesota, serve Minnesota residents, and are 501(c)3 organizations, units of government or tribal governments. Application deadlines for 2015 are December 12, 2014, March 20, and June 19.

Community Broadband Resources <http://bit.ly/1wJjTwi>

Technical, educational, informational and convening resources are available to assist communities as they identify, prioritize and act on their broadband-related objectives. Many resources are publicly accessible at the Foundation's broadband website and at the Blandin on Broadband blog. In addition, applications for up to 32 hours of flexible technical assistance are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Blandin Broadband Communities

Blandin Foundation has selected a new cohort of ten rural Minnesota communities (cities, counties, tribal governments, geographic corridors or other self-identified communities of interest) to participate in an intensive, two-year partnership. Blandin Broadband Communities will define their technology goals, measure current levels of broadband access and use, and connect with other technical assistance and resources to meet their goals. Each Blandin Broadband Community also will be invited to apply for Blandin Foundation matching grants for community-defined projects, up to \$100,000 per community.

The newly selected 2015-16 cohort of communities follows the success of the 2013-14 cohort of nine 'BBCs', and the Demonstration Community component of the Blandin Foundation-administered, federally funded Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities program. Thirteen alumni BBCs and MIRC Demonstration Communities have chosen to continue their participation with the program.

For more information

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Blandin Foundation website: www.blandinfoundation.org

Broadband: <http://broadband.blandinfoundation.org>

Blandin on Broadband blog: www.blandinonbroadband.org



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