



ARC POWER INITIATIVE

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SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDANCE—Broadband

Up to one-third of the funds provided for the POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) Initiative for fiscal year (FY) 2020 will be available to fund broadband deployment projects that enhance access to and the use of broadband services, which is a critical infrastructure component needed by all segments of the community: for business development; job creation; health care services, including telemedicine; and to help rural areas compete with more densely populated areas.

Understanding that broadband deployment projects can be capital intensive, grant requests for deployment projects can be up to \$2.5 million, with priority given to projects with evidence of leveraged funding for the overall project. To qualify for broadband deployment funding, at least 65% of the project's budget must be directed to the actual deployment of broadband infrastructure. Projects whose budgets direct more than 35% of their funds toward activities not directly associated with deployment of broadband infrastructure will follow the same guidelines as implementation projects.

Below is special guidance for broadband deployment grant applications:

2.5.1 Fiber Deployment Projects

- Priority will be given to the following:
 - Projects with a completed feasibility study
 - Broadband fiber deployment in central-business-district designated areas and industrial parks
 - Networks and projects that will be operational upon the completion of construction
- ARC will not support sole fiber-to-the-home projects.
- ARC will not support deployment in areas that already have adequate broadband availability.
- Applicants must provide evidence of the need for high-capacity broadband service in the proposed service area. For areas where internet service already exists, the applicant must demonstrate that the available service is insufficient to support robust economic development activities. Types of evidence include, but are not limited to, electric pole attachment maps, state broadband maps, and speed tests from broadband demand crowdsourcing surveys.
- For the purposes of achieving robust economic development, ARC's minimum threshold for adequate service is 100/100 symmetrical service for businesses and

50/10 service for households. If existing service providers fail to meet either threshold, then ARC is willing to consider broadband grant applications for that service area.

- Applicants must notify existing service providers of their intent to use federal assistance to deploy broadband in the intended service area in advance of the grant application.
- Applicants are also encouraged to explore partnership opportunities with existing providers. This could include, but is not limited to, an electric utility contracting with an existing provider to manage its last-mile broadband services. It could also include a middle-mile fiber provider contracting with multiple providers to deliver last-mile broadband services.

2.5.2 Wireless Deployment Projects

- Priority will be given to the following:
 - Projects with a completed feasibility study
 - Projects for business and mixed-use deployment
 - Projects that use a variety of wireless technologies (e.g., fixed wireless/white space/LTE)
 - Networks and projects that will be operational upon the completion of construction
- ARC will not support deployment in areas that already have adequate broadband availability.
- Applicants must provide evidence of the need for broadband service in the proposed service area. ARC will not consider wireless deployment projects in areas where 10/1 or better service is already available.
- Applicants must verify that the intended service territory is not within an existing service footprint of existing providers, unless the existing service is below 10/1.

2.5.3 Broadband Feasibility Studies

POWER Initiative FY20 will also accept applications for POWER technical assistance (TA) grants up to \$50,000—for projects designed to demonstrate the feasibility of broadband deployment in coal-impacted communities. Potential broadband TA grants could fund projects that accomplish the following:

- Provide an inventory of broadband assets already in place.
- Assess community broadband requirements for bandwidth needs.
- Determine best technologies to meet the coal-impacted community needs.
- Provide cost estimates for different deployment strategies.
- Provide an analysis of alternative deployment routes.
 - This should include a survey of existing providers who may already have ownership interests in proposed routes and, if relevant, an assessment of pole attachment costs for those routes.
 - If the area already has service, the study must also include an analysis of what speeds are currently available from existing providers. The study

should also address any partnerships that the applicant plans to form to deliver broadband services.

2.5.4 Other Broadband Project Considerations

POWER applications for projects that seek to utilize existing broadband service or increase its adoption through community outreach efforts or innovative economic development initiatives will follow the same funding guidelines as other implementation projects, with grant amounts up to \$1.5 million that are not drawn from the available broadband deployment funds. Examples of these types of projects include:

- Business technical assistance on how to best utilize broadband services
- Community outreach efforts to increase broadband use and adoption
- Unique distance-learning and other telecom-oriented health practice enhancements