



Notice of Funding Opportunity

FY24 HS-DSP Difficult to Serve Properties

Purpose

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) through the Office of Statewide Broadband (OSB) is administering funding for the Connect Maryland: FY24 Home Stretch - Difficult to Serve Properties Grant Program (HS-DSP).

The FY24 Difficult to Serve Properties Grant Program is a new program that will utilize \$24,223,815 of Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) to provide financial assistance to local jurisdictions to further the state's digital access efforts. This grant opportunity will fund projects focused on bringing high-speed internet access to premises that have difficulty obtaining service due to their remoteness, distance from broadband infrastructure or other geographic issues that may discourage an ISP from delivering broadband service.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Be a local county government with an ISP partner or partners

Eligible Uses of Funds

Grant funds may be used to finance:

- The construction of facilities used for connection of an unserved difficult to reach premise to an existing broadband network. This may include minor extensions of ISP's existing infrastructure; however, the maximum grant per location still applies.

**Eligible projects must be designed to reliably provide a minimum internet connectivity of 100 Mbps down and 100 Mbps up with exceptions as identified in the application guide.*

Funding Criteria

The Office will facilitate the award of financial assistance for up to 75% for the construction of broadband service installation to an unserved location. The maximum grant request amount is \$1,100,000; the maximum grant amount available per location is \$8,000.

- Only applications that are fully complete at submission will be considered for funding.

Application Process

- NOFA release: Tuesday, October 12, 2023
- Application submission to OSB via email opens: Tuesday, October 12, 2023
- Application submission closes: Friday, December 22, 2023
- Funding announcements expected to be made February, 2024.

All applications and supporting documents must be submitted via email to: OSB.MD@Maryland.gov.

Application Requirements

In addition to basic organizational information and completion of the application form, the following information and attachments will be required in order for an application to be considered complete.

1. **Project Summary:** The project summary should explain how the project will further the OSB's goal of closing the digital divide. The summary will require the following information:
 - Executive Summary
 - Partnership with ISP
 - Statement of Experience
 - Network Design
 - Subscriber Profile

- Budget
- Jurisdictional Program Overview
- Schedule

Application Attachments

All of the following attachments will be required in the application submission in order for the application to be considered complete:

- Completed & signed Application form
- Application requirements as detailed above and in the Program Application Guide
- IRS W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification