# Notice of Funding Opportunity
# FY24 Network Infrastructure – Smith Island

## 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 Network Infrastructure Grant Program – Smith Island (MDNI Smith Island).

The FY24 MDNI Smith Island is a new program that will utilize $3 million of Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) to provide financial assistance to an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to provide broadband service to all unserved locations on Smith Island. This grant opportunity will fund a project 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:

Only entities legally organized as one of the following are eligible for funding:

1. A Maryland local jurisdiction;
2. Incorporated organization that is recognized as a partner by the local jurisdiction;
3. Any other legal entity, including a cooperative, private corporation, or limited liability company organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis that is recognized as a partner by the local jurisdiction.

Applicants must have the legal capacity and authority to own and operate the broadband facilities as proposed in the application, to enter into contracts and to otherwise comply with applicable federal or state statutes and regulations. Applicants must be in good standing in accordance with the laws of the State.

# Eligible Uses of Funds

Grant funds may be used to finance:

1. The construction of facilities used to deploy service at the Broadband Grant Speed to all end users.
2. Middle mile infrastructure directly necessary to provide service to an end user including, but not limited to, fiber optic cabling and microwave equipment. Middle mile infrastructure is only eligible if another middle mile provider is not able to provide suitable service.
3. Electronics necessary to deliver service to an end user including, but not limited to, OLT's, ONT's, routers, switches, firewalls, wireless radio equipment, antennae, access points and any necessary equipment cabinets or shelters. Customer installation and equipment (CPE) beyond the ONT or fixed wireless antenna or within the subscriber's premise is not an eligible purpose. If the CPE is installed within the subscribers premise, the equipment is considered eligible, but any interior installation labor is not.
4. All grant funded costs must be capital expenses with the final asset being owned by the applicant.
5. Tower construction and/or tower structural improvements is an eligible cost, but may only be treated as match per Matching Funds Exceptions as presented in the application guide.

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 90% of the cost for the construction of broadband service and installation to an unserved location. The maximum grant request amount is $3,000,000; the minimum grant amount available is $1,000,000.

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

# Application Process

- NOFA release: Thursday, December 28, 2023
- Application submission to OSB via email opens: Thursday, December 28, 2023
- Application submission closes: Wednesday, January 31, 2024
- Funding announcement is 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. Broadband Grant Application Form and Other Documentation
2. Executive Summary of the Project
3. Scoring Criteria Documentation
4. System Design
5. Scope of Work
6. Financial Information and Sustainability
7. Statement of Experience
8. Additional Funding
9. Reporting and Compliance

# 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