



COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs
Office of the Executive Director

January 29, 2015

Dear Local Government Colleague:

I'm excited to share with you an initiative we're expanding to help bolster Colorado communities' access to broadband. Based on the success of the regional broadband planning efforts on which we've partnered with the Office of Information Technology over the last two years, we're now offering grants to support investment in middle-mile broadband infrastructure to help communities implement those strategies. This investment by local governments will create an opportunity for them to partner with the private sector in expanding broadband service to their communities.

DOLA has earmarked \$20 million in Energy Impact Assistance (EIA) grant funds to assist in such local government efforts that meet certain criteria. These dollars are directed toward broadband infrastructure that will enhance economic development, improve distance learning opportunities, promote inter-jurisdictional communication, improve health care delivery and meet citizens' requests for better access to the breadth of services available over broadband.

EIA grants are directed by statute to communities that are economically or socially impacted by the development of energy and mineral resources. Grants are also awarded based on financial need, among other review criteria. As a consequence, the majority of grant funding is directed to smaller and more rural communities. These are precisely the areas where sufficient broadband service is lacking, and DOLA anticipates that broadband funding will be directed to these areas.

If you are interested in researching this for your community, please first contact your DOLA Regional Manager to learn more about DOLA's program requirements and the grant process: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251593776716>.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope you have the opportunity to explore how this program can work for you!

Sincerely,

Reeves Brown
Executive Director



I. Introduction/Background

The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) recognizes that provision of high speed broadband services can play a critical role in enhancing local government operations and community development efforts.

DOLA recognizes that local governments can play a role assisting public institutions and private businesses, as well as local citizens, to gain access to reliable broadband service at affordable costs. Such locally initiated actions can be undertaken under local authority to enhance economic development, improve distance learning opportunities, promote inter-jurisdictional communication, improve health care delivery and to meet citizens' requests for better access to the breadth of services available over broadband.

DOLA has earmarked \$20 million in Energy Impact Assistance (EIA) grant funds to assist in such local government efforts, subject to certain conditions.

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Impact Grants for broadband are made available to support two general areas – planning and provision of infrastructure.

II. Planning

A. Regional Planning/Interconnectivity

DOLA will support efforts by local governments to engage in planning to determine optimal regional configurations of infrastructure, to identify infrastructure needs, and to identify potential partnerships among public and private entities to achieve enhanced broadband service.

Such planning activities are generally undertaken by Regional Councils of Governments (COGs) or similar regional organizations. Any new applications for regional planning activities must take into account and coordinate with any recently completed or currently in-process regional plans.

Grants for broadband planning must meet the following criteria:

- Grantee must invite any private sector service providers to participate in the planning process including development of solutions
- Potential private sector as well as public/private solutions must be considered

- The planning process must assess the current level of broadband availability, including used and unused capacity, and the community's desired broadband service level, including prioritization of needs (redundancy, reduced costs, increased speeds etc.) and possible options for achieving desired service levels

B. Match

Local governments applying for planning grants must contribute a minimum of 25% match.

III. Infrastructure

DOLA will support efforts by local governments to build certain types of infrastructure necessary to providing enhanced broadband services.

Such grants are subject to certain conditions, as follows:

A. Plans in Place

Infrastructure grant applications will be considered only after demonstration that the proposed project is consistent with a regional broadband plan.

B. Middle Mile Infrastructure Only

Middle mile infrastructure is considered any infrastructure that is utilized to provide or enhance the network connection between communities and a provider of core network services, including the interconnection of community anchor institutions.

C. Not for Service Provision to End User

The funds shall not be used for "Last Mile" deployments, which will be considered any infrastructure that terminates at a residential, business or other non-governmental address.

This limitation excludes service provision equipment such as routers, switches and the like from consideration for funding from this program.

However, projects submitted for funding must demonstrate plans for eventual use of the system, including plans for maintenance and system upgrades. Public/private partnerships to provide service are encouraged.

D. Basic Infrastructure

Conduit systems, fiber, towers, ROW, appurtenances and similar systems necessary to enhance middle mile connections will be considered for funding. For applicants who are subject to the restrictions of SB 05-152 (CRS 29-27-101 et seq.), funding for fiber that is intended to benefit non-governmental users (e.g., private citizens, businesses) will be limited to dark fiber.

- E. The awarding of any grants as part of this program does not constitute an acknowledgment that the funded project is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. As with all DOLA grant programs, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure such compliance.**

- F. Any infrastructure built with program funds and offered to private entities must be done so in an open access, competitively neutral model. Access and rates must be provided on a competitively neutral and non-discriminatory basis for all providers regardless of technology.
- G. Applicant will be required to allow use of any infrastructure for public safety purposes and encouraged to work with local public safety entities to define their specific needs.
- H. Applicant must agree to share infrastructure location information (GIS) to assist the state in building an asset inventory.
- I. Applicant is encouraged to work with the private sector to investigate and secure other available funding, such as the Broadband Deployment Fund (HB 14-1328, CRS 40-15-208). Applications which have a private sector application counterpart under consideration by the Broadband Deployment Fund will be given special consideration in order to leverage State funds.
- J. Match
As with other capital construction projects, applicants are required to match grant funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis. In cases where the applicant's financial condition does not permit a 50/50 match, a minimum match of 25% is required.

IV. Application Process

1. Planning Grants

Applications for planning grants may be submitted at any time. Such applications shall be reviewed by the Impact Assistance Advisory Committee and approved administratively.

2. Infrastructure Grants

Applications for infrastructure grants are made through the regular Impact Program process, with 3 application deadlines per year.

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251594715231>

Applications for infrastructure do not compete with applicants' other projects submitted through the regular cycle.

3. Agency Review Required

Applications for both planning and infrastructure are subject to review & comment by the Office of Information Technology, the Office of Economic Development and International Trade, and the relevant Council(s) of Governments. Pre-application review by these agencies is encouraged.