

Governor's Office for Emergency Relief & Recovery
CONNECTING NEW HAMPSHIRE - EMERGENCY BROADBAND EXPANSION PROGRAM
Program Overview



Governor Chris Sununu has authorized the allocation and expenditure of \$50 million from the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (“flex funds”) to address the increased need for internet connectivity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Connecting New Hampshire – Emergency Broadband Expansion Program will benefit students, families, and businesses as the need for distance learning, telework, telehealth, and other remote services continues due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, New Hampshire has received national recognition for its swift and successful transition to remote services. Nevertheless, areas with limited internet connectivity have experienced challenges with this transition. The Connecting New Hampshire – Emergency Broadband Expansion Program will address these challenges for students participating in remote learning, as well as other Granite Staters utilizing the internet to access telehealth services, including vital mental health services. The program will also provide Granite State families with limited internet connectivity situations with expanded access to vital public health information as well as additional opportunities to connect with other family members that are otherwise cut off due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Governor’s Office of Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) will provide the allocated \$50 million in “flex funds” to the Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) as they work collaboratively with the Department of Education (DOE) and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to develop the program criteria.

Projects that have already commenced the field construction/build process will not be eligible for this program. Planned and permitted projects that have not commenced construction may be eligible. Projects related to existing rural broadband expansion commitments or other existing contractual commitments will also be excluded from consideration.

To meaningfully affect the State of New Hampshire’s response to COVID-19, all expenditures under this program will end by December 30, 2020, and the projects must be complete as early as possible, and no later than December 15, 2020.

Additional Technical Details:

A top priority of the program is ensuring it provides connectivity to as many New Hampshire households currently experiencing limited internet connectivity as possible at the least cost to the State and end-users. The program requires reliable service delivered at 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload (25/3 Mbps). To accomplish these priorities, the project will:

- Be technology-neutral
- Work in a public/private partnership collaboration with existing providers and municipalities

- Deploy a transparent and straightforward project awarding process
- Pay for performance, through meeting project objectives

Locations currently capable of receiving the 25/3 Mbps level of service or higher will not be eligible for funding under this program.

The Connecting New Hampshire – Emergency Broadband Expansion Program will be open to all technologies and all providers, private and municipal. Any technology that has demonstrable efficacy in the marketplace and can provide 25/3 Mbps connectivity is eligible to participate, including wired and wireless technologies. Where two proposals are equivalent in terms of public-cost per household, the project that can deploy higher connectivity speeds will be preferred.