

§9217. Community broadband planning

The authority shall provide funds for broadband planning grants to municipalities, groups of municipalities or nonprofit local or regional community organizations that are providing local or regional economic development programs to develop plans to expand the availability of broadband services in unserved and underserved areas. [PL 2015, c. 284, §11 (NEW).]

1. Elements of plans. Plans funded through grants under this section may include:

- A. A description of local broadband needs and goals; [PL 2019, c. 625, §13 (AMD).]
- B. An inventory of existing broadband infrastructure assets within the municipality, municipalities or region; [PL 2019, c. 625, §13 (AMD).]
- C. A gap analysis defining the additional broadband infrastructure necessary to meet identified needs and goals; [PL 2019, c. 625, §13 (AMD).]
- D. One or more potential network designs, cost estimates, operating models and potential business models based on input from broadband providers operating within the municipality, municipalities or region and any other parties that submit a network design solution in the course of developing the plan to address any broadband gaps identified in paragraph C; and [PL 2019, c. 625, §13 (AMD).]
- E. An assessment of all municipal procedures, policies, rules and ordinances that have the effect of delaying or increasing the cost of broadband infrastructure deployment. [PL 2019, c. 625, §13 (AMD).]

The authority shall make all plans developed using grant funds under this section available on the authority's publicly accessible website.

[PL 2019, c. 625, §13 (AMD).]

2. Distribution of grants. The authority shall ensure that planning grants under this section are equitably distributed throughout the unserved and underserved areas of the State and that the grants encourage collaboration between multiple communities.

[PL 2015, c. 284, §11 (NEW).]

3. Precertification. The authority may establish a precertification process to determine eligibility for planning grants under this section to encourage adoption of identified best practices by participating municipalities and organizations.

[PL 2015, c. 284, §11 (NEW).]

4. Limitations on matching funds. Matching funds provided by a municipality for planning grants under this section may not consist of in-kind contributions from the municipality or funds provided by a vendor or private business that proposes to build, operate or provide retail services using broadband infrastructure constructed pursuant to the planning grant.

[PL 2015, c. 284, §11 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2015, c. 284, §11 (NEW). PL 2019, c. 625, §13 (AMD).

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