

**NOFO ID: 2424 - 1617**  
**Illinois Connected Communities**

**Grant Application Instructions**

**2020 Illinois Connected Communities Grant Application**

**\$150,000 available**

**Maximum grant amount: up to \$15,000**

**Application period opens: May 13, 2020**

**Submission deadline: June 16, 2020, at 1pm**

A complete application will contain each of the following components:

- Cover Letter (see [NOFO Appendix A](#))
- Application Information (see [NOFO Appendix A](#))
- Uniform Application (see [NOFO weblink](#))
- Uniform Budget\* (see [NOFO weblink](#))
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure (see [NOFO weblink](#))
- Mandatory Disclosures (see [NOFO weblink](#))

**Application Information**

The body of the Application should be no longer than eight pages (excluding Uniform Application, Uniform Budget, Conflict of Interest Disclosure, Mandatory Disclosures, Applicant biographies, financial statements, other legal documents, and letters of support) and contain the following information:

1. Cover letter that introduces the applicant, defines the “community,” and makes a clear link between the community’s broadband aspirations and:
  - a. The goals of the Illinois Connected Communities program – including preference for program curriculum focused on broadband *access, adoption, and/or utilization (if known and/or applicable.)*
  - b. The vision articulated in statewide [Connect Illinois Broadband Strategic Plan](#).

In addition, the cover letter should note if the Applicant expects to apply for or partner to apply for separate Connect Illinois Broadband Grant funds and/or program funding for digital literacy, adoption, and inclusion. [Note: application to additional Connect Illinois programming is not required to take part in the Illinois Connected Communities program.]

**2. Applicant Information**

- a. Complete contact information, including Applicant name, primary contact name, title, address, email address, phone number, website address, and federal ID number.
- b. Summary of Applicant’s history, including the date established or incorporated.
- c. Summary of Applicant’s mission and goals.
- d. List of the Applicant’s key project staff and leadership team, including brief bios and qualifications relevant to the Illinois Connected Communities program.
- e. Description of Applicant’s current broadband-related programs or activities, including any service statistics and strengths or accomplishments (if applicable).

\*Note: The Uniform Budget is a mandatory component of all Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity grant programs. However, we do not expect Applicants to have a firm sense of their final project budgets at this time. Rather, please provide best estimate information in the Uniform Budget – and do not let the Uniform Budget and Uniform Application forms dissuade your application; the Office of Broadband will be scoring the Cover Letter and Application Information only.

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3. Community Description

- a. Define the geographical area of your community.
- b. Describe community and economic development priorities and current efforts around these priorities.
- c. Preview the opportunities and challenges that exist in the community, and how they might be addressed through the Illinois Connected Communities program.
- d. If applicable, describe any work done previously or currently underway around the Intelligent Community Indicators:
  - i. Broadband infrastructure and services development
  - ii. Creation, attraction and support of knowledge workers (highly skilled, highly paid workers)
  - iii. Innovation (new industries, new companies, new practices to enhance competitiveness)
  - iv. Digital Inclusion (ensuring that all community members have computers, skills and connectivity)
  - v. Sustainability (improving living standards while maintaining the ability of future generations to do the same)
  - vi. Community advocacy (efforts to attract investment and talent and guide community change)

4. Anticipated Focus

- a. Describe the opportunities and challenges that exist in the community, and how they might be addressed through the Illinois Connected Communities program.
- b. Description of how the Applicant plans to utilize the grant funds, with specific reference to and discussion of one or more of the following:
  - i. Additional broadband support, technical assistance, or consultative services
  - ii. Community project manager and/or Steering Committee overhead
  - iii. Broadband asset mapping, needs assessment, and/or deployment feasibility study
  - iv. Other planning and preparation for broadband access or adoption, including financing and/or funding thereof
- c. If applicable, describe preference for curriculum focused on *access, adoption, and/or utilization*. For instance, does the Applicant expect to apply for or partner to apply for separate Connect Illinois Broadband Grant funds and/or program funding for digital literacy, adoption, and inclusion?
- d. Other information regarding how the Applicant and Community expect to benefit through participation in the Illinois Connected Community program.

5. Description of supporting organization(s), affiliated companies, strategic partners or joint ventures (if applicable). This should include: legal name, mission statement, services and programs, addresses, and staff contacts.

- a. List and describe the local/regional organizations that have provided letters of support and participation.

6. Letters of support and/or participation from local/regional organizations. Other attachments (Appendices).