



2024 REPORT

Ohio Capital Projects Fund Performance Report



**Office of Budget
and Management**

**Department of
Development**

**Facilities
Construction
Commission**

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Executive Summary

Six broadband and digital connectivity projects are part of Ohio's Capital Projects Fund (CPF) plan, managed by the state's broadband office, BroadbandOhio. The vision of BroadbandOhio, a division of the Ohio Department of Development, is to bring high-speed internet access to every Ohioan, regardless of where they live. To cover the nearly one million Ohioans that do not have access to high-speed internet, BroadbandOhio identifies and launches projects around the state, to bring connectivity to pockets of land that have traditionally been disadvantaged due to difficult terrain, lower income, and rural demographics. While each of these broadband projects are in varying phases, from awaiting conditional approvals from Treasury to early implementation, all projects compliment the work already being done by BroadbandOhio to directly enable work, education, and health monitoring for the Ohioans that need it the most.

The seventh project within Ohio's plan, a multi-purpose community facilities project, provides the Appalachian region with an access point to public education, community health services, and workforce development. The Appalachian Community Innovation Centers grant program, managed by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission, is a one-time opportunity to support underserved communities where the pandemic uncovered disproportionate access to reliable, high-speed internet. Through a competitive grant process, eleven plans in the Appalachian region were awarded funding totaling \$88,949,069 to support this objective. These plans support construction, expansion or renovation of combined access points which will provide K-12 students and the surrounding community access to needed services such as mental and physical healthcare, job readiness and job search skills, career-technical education, and practical on-site training. Currently, these communities are finalizing the award agreements with the state and will soon begin.

During the reporting period, Ohio continued to work on moving each of these projects forward. Due to the lack of project activity, there are no key outcomes yet to report. Ohio anticipates significant progress will be made in the next year.

Uses of Funds

Broadband

Ohio Broadband Expansion Grant Program

Approved Program Plan Number: CPF_GP-000301

Program Start Date: August 14, 2023

Program End Date: December 31, 2026

CPF Funds Allocated to Program: \$87,500,000

The Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant program (ORBEG) is a competitive broadband grant program designed to fund last-mile broadband infrastructure projects in rural areas currently lacking access to reliable, high-speed internet. CPF funds will be used to expand the current state-funded program to serve additional locations.

Over the reporting period the following activities occurred:

- Published technical assistance program guidebook and a frequently asked questions document.
- Held multiple live technical assistance sessions.
- Published the program application and all related documents via grants portal and BroadbandOhio/Ohio Department of Development website.
- Began the subgrantee selection process. At the end of the reporting period, the challenge process and pre-score for all applications was still ongoing.

The following activities are planned during the next reporting period:

- Complete the challenge process.
- Determine the final scores of applications.
- Notify applicants of award decisions.
- Publish final scores, awarded addresses, and awarded applications.
- Begin grant agreement phase and begin making payments.
- BroadbandOhio will establish a regular cadence of calls and check-in meetings with subgrantees.

BroadbandOhio has not encountered any challenges during this reporting period for this project. Since this is an expansion of an already established state funded program, the timelines and process are very prescriptive as it is tied to legislation that established the initial program. BroadbandOhio has been able to follow all required timelines.

Planned performance metrics include:

- Number of households served
- Miles of fiber installed
- Number of towers constructed

Multi-County Last Mile Fiber Build Pilot Project

Approved Program Plan Number: CPF_GP-000297

Program Start Date: November 1, 2023

Program End Date: December 31, 2026

CPF Funds Allocated to Program: \$50,000,000

The Multi-County Last Mile Fiber Build Pilot program is a broadband grant program designed to provide high-speed, reliable internet in an area of the state with a gap in infrastructure availability and where the cost of the last-mile connection is a barrier.

Over the reporting period the following activities occurred:

- Released a competitive request for proposal process to build fiber to every unserved and underserved home in the rural counties of Adams, Brown, and Clermont.
- Scored the responses received from the request for proposal.
- Started the grant agreement process with the winning internet service provider.

The following activities are planned during the next reporting period:

- Execute signed grant agreement with winning internet service provider.
- Begin grant agreement phase and initial payments.
- Subgrantee will procure equipment to begin construction.
- BroadbandOhio will establish a regular cadence of calls and check-in meetings with subgrantee.

BroadbandOhio has not encountered any challenges during this reporting period for this project.

Planned performance metrics include:

- Number of households served
- Miles of fiber installed
- Number of towers constructed

Western Ohio Infrastructure Upgrade Pilot Projects

Approved Program Plan Number: CPF_GP-000300

Program Start Date: Awarded November 1, 2023

Program End Date: December 31, 2026

CPF Funds Allocated to Program: \$3,000,000

The Western Ohio Infrastructure Upgrade Pilot Project is designed to leverage existing middle mile infrastructure in western Ohio to upgrade the network's capacity to provide internet at speeds of 100/100 Mbps. The upgraded capacity will also enable providers to provide last-mile connectivity to surrounding locations currently lacking internet at speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps.

Over the reporting period the following activities occurred:

- Released a competitive request for proposal process to upgrade the middle mile footprint to help providers operating in north and west Ohio to achieve speeds of 100/100 mbps which will help connect the unserved and underserved households in the related counties.
- Received one response to the competitive request for proposal.
- Reviewed and awarded the project.
- Executed the grant agreement.

The following activities are planned during the next reporting period:

- Begin grant agreement phase and initial payments.
- Subgrantee will begin to procure equipment to begin construction.
- BroadbandOhio will establish a regular cadence of calls and check-in meetings with subgrantee.

BroadbandOhio has not encountered any challenges during this reporting period for this project.

Planned performance metrics include:

- Number of households served
- Miles of fiber installed
- Number of towers constructed

Ohio Broadband Line Extension Customer Assistance Program

Approved Program Plan Number: CPF_GP-000303

Program Start Date: April 30, 2024

Program End Date: December 31, 2026

CPF Funds Allocated to Program: \$10,000,000

The Ohio Broadband Line Extension Customer Assistance program is a competitive grant program that provides funding to internet service providers (ISPs) to address the needs of individuals who are located near infrastructure for high-quality broadband service but where the cost of the last mile connection is a barrier.

Over the reporting period the following activities occurred:

- Created program documents and submitted to the U.S. Treasury for approval.

The following activities are planned during the next reporting period:

- Begin the grant process for this program which includes publishing program documents and holding a technical assistance session for perspective applicants.
- Begin application scoring.

BroadbandOhio has not encountered any challenges during this reporting period for this project.

Planned performance metrics include:

- Number of households served
- Miles of fiber installed
- Number of towers constructed

Shovel Ready School District Project

Approved Program Plan Number: CPF_GP-000299

Program Start Date: August 22, 2024

Program End Date: December 31, 2026

CPF Funds Allocated to Program: \$7,000,000

The Shovel Ready School District Project is a competitive broadband grant program that provides funding to eligible school districts to expanded connectivity to locations where students and families have been shown to have lower rates of broadband access due to difficult terrain and lack of available funding.

During the current reporting period, BroadbandOhio continued to work with the U.S. Treasury on satisfying special conditions imposed as part of the project approval. Ohio is examining whether this project continues to be feasible based on timeline and necessary changes required to satisfy U.S. Treasury special conditions.

Digital Connectivity Technology

Affordability and Digital Equity Grant Program

Approved Program Plan Number: CPF_GP-000261

Program Start Date: December 13, 2024

Program End Date: December 31, 2026

CPF Funds Allocated to Program: \$20,000,000

Ohio's Affordability and Digital Equity Grant program will fund eligible internet service providers for the purchase and installation of equipment to help facilitate broadband access to areas of need. Priority will be given to projects in areas that have limitations on connectivity based on indicators such as poverty and distressed county status.

Over the reporting period the following activities have occurred:

- Created program documents and submitted to the U.S. Treasury for approval.

The following activities are planned during the next reporting period:

- Begin the grant process for this program which includes publishing the program documents and holding a technical assistance session for perspective applicants.
- Begin application scoring.

BroadbandOhio has not encountered any challenges during this reporting period for this project. We are eager to meet the special conditions and receive approval.

Planned performance metrics include:

- Number of households served
- Miles of fiber installed
- Number of towers constructed

Multi-Purpose Community Facilities

Appalachian Community Innovation Campus Program

Approved Program Plan Number: CPF_GP-000302

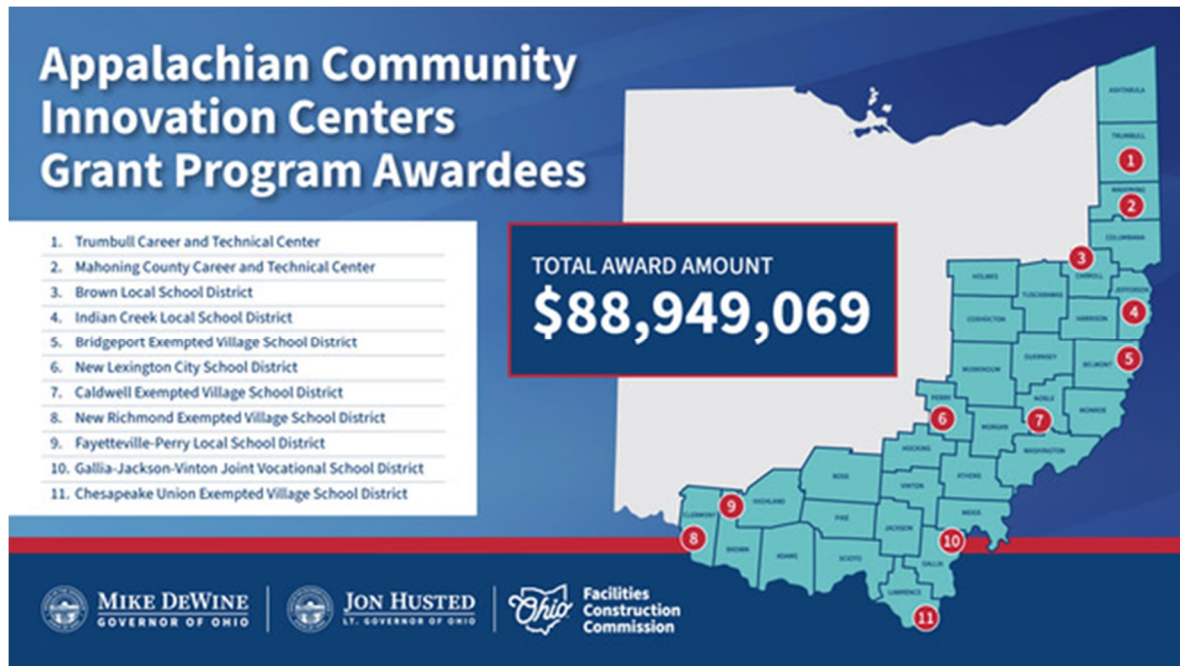
Program Start Date: January 31, 2024

Program End Date: December 31, 2026

CPF Funds Allocated to Program: \$88,949,069

Ohio's Appalachian region consists of 32 counties running along the eastern part of the state from northeast to southeast Ohio. Much of Appalachia's population is remote, isolated from urban growth centers and the additional resources that exist within cities. Rural Appalachian towns have struggled to maintain and upgrade public infrastructure, furnish business opportunities, invest in workforce resources, and provide adequate access to medical and behavioral health services that are necessary to sustain populations. The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted Ohio's Appalachian region, making very apparent the disparities in health care, education, and work.

The Appalachian Community Innovation Centers program, administered by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission, supports investments to the underserved Ohio Appalachian region by creating greater educational opportunities, increasing workforce participation, and improving health outcomes. This competitive program supports the construction of multi-purpose community facilities known as "Community Innovation Campuses" in areas within the Appalachian region to provide a combined access point to public education, community health services, and workforce development. Eleven projects totaling \$88,949,069 have been selected to be funded; four new school-based community wellness, education, and career development centers and seven existing school buildings will be renovated or expanded to deliver these additional services.



Over the grant period, the following activities occurred:

- Created all program documents and submitted to the U.S. Treasury for approval.
- A competitive grant process was opened and applications were received.
- Applications were scored and award decisions were made.
- Awards were announced and the grant award administrative process began.
- Kickoff meetings were held in June with each of the announced awardees to discuss the grant program and timeline.

The following activities are planned during the next reporting period:

- Grant agreements will be finalized and executed, after which projects may commence.
 - Design and early construction are expected to begin next period, with construction being completed by the end of 2026.
 - Quarterly financial and performance reports will be collected and reviewed from each of the grant recipients to ensure projects are timely and completed in accordance with the program’s requirements.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission has not encountered any challenges during this reporting period.

Planned performance metrics include:

- Number of people served, by program type
- Number of square feet renovated and constructed
- Services provided

Promoting Equitable Outcomes and Addressing Critical Needs

Each of the Broadband and Digital Connectivity Technologies projects funded by Capital Projects Fund have the overarching objective to make sure that unserved/underserved populations and communities can receive access to high-speed and affordable internet. Each program will address disparities seen in rural and urban areas. The subrecipients range in industry, but will apply these funds to enhance remote work, education, and healthcare. The projects represent the immediate needs that span across the whole state and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last two years, BroadbandOhio worked with other state agencies, local governments, and external stakeholders through communication, engagement, and statewide listening sessions to identify the broadband needs of Ohio.

The subrecipients that have been chosen for the broadband and digital technology projects have a focus on building broadband infrastructure, while also maintaining consistent reliability and affordability. CPF funding has allowed the BroadbandOhio office to address broadband inequities that many Ohioans are facing and make sure affordability is at the center of all projects. The identified projects do not have access to other federal or state funding streams. Local stakeholders and non-profits will receive preference for funding where applicable, giving strong emphasis on collaboration and equity across all projects.

The goal of the Appalachian Community Innovation Campuses program is to create greater educational opportunities, increase workforce participation, and improve health outcomes in Appalachia. Each of the recipients has demonstrated how their project will address critical needs within their community relating to education, health, and/or workforce. Additionally, the recipients demonstrated how these needs resulted from, or became apparent or exacerbated by, the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Labor

The Ohio Department of Development encourages the use of skilled and experienced labor in the construction of broadband projects. BroadbandOhio participated in the creation of numerous local training programs to encourage the hiring of local talent for these companies.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission encourages strong wage and labor practices in their program guidelines and in communication with awardees. All recipients must comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations, and with all state and local laws and regulations to the extent that such requirements do not conflict with federal laws.

Community Engagement

Quarterly BroadbandOhio Alliance meetings bring together stakeholders from all over the state to learn about the issues facing Ohioans. This meeting serves as an opportunity to inform stakeholders of the current work being done. BroadbandOhio's Digital Equity Manager interacts with the office's regional digital inclusion alliances which operate in designated regional communities. These alliances are used to continue engagement with the community, internet service providers associations, and local leaders.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission's program guidelines require projects to develop and implement a community engagement and stakeholder communication plan to ensure full transparency and commitment from the community and key stakeholders. Currently, projects are in the award phase whereas communication plans have not been fully adopted.