

Last Mile Round Two Grant Program Questions

Updated 04/09/24.

Application Information

Q: Can you provide some clarity on the locations list? Is an application required to reach every listed location within the county subdivision?

A: Yes, that is correct. The program is considered all or nothing for each subdivision. You must agree to reach each location within the county subdivision.

Q: Is there a maximum amount allowed for each grant request or per county?

A: A total of \$25 million has been allocated for the Last Mile Grant Program. There is not a maximum amount per grant request nor is there a maximum amount allocated to each county.

Q: Can other individuals within our organization receive access to SmartSimple?

A: Yes, the applicant can add users/collaborators within Smart Simple.

Q: If two providers apply for the same grant area which will receive grant funding?

A: The applicant with the highest scoring application will receive the grant area.

Q: In the application, is it required to include the detailed project timeline description in addition to using the project timeline template?

A: In addition to the template available within the application, there is a text box requesting the details that align with the template - milestones, timeline, speeds offered, location type, etc. Please use this box to bolster or justify anything in the template and include anything that may not have been explicitly requested or spoken to regarding timeline and/or milestones.

Q: Who do we contact to get access to the FCC Fabric ID's for potential project areas?

A: Please reach out to Cost Quest and request a Tier E License, which can be completed at the following website: <https://apps.costquest.com/ntiatiererequest/>

Q: What happens if there aren't any applications for a project area?

A: TNECD anticipates there will be an application for each project area.

New! Q: For the Service and Pricing Levels questions regarding contracts, early termination fees, etc. If an applicant has several different tiers and pricing options that include contracts and no contracts, how should the applicant answer the question?

A: Please upload a pricing sheet explaining the different service tiers and pricing options under Supplemental Documentation. In the application's Service and Pricing Levels section, please include the regular service tiers and add an actual breakdown of the costs in the uploaded document.

New! Q: In the Budget Feasibility table, do applicants only fill out the table for the years in which they are building locations?

A: Please fill out the table for every year throughout the grant timeline, which should end in within two years of the contract start date. Contract start date is anticipated by June 30, 2024.

New! Q: In the Guidebook, the application checklist says that applicants should: "Attach a .shp or .kml/.kmz file map showing the proposed service area routes for each proposed project area." I don't see a place to upload this map. Should we upload it in the "Supplemental Documentation" area?

A: Please upload this attachment in the Supplemental Documentation area. The application checklist refers to the specific grant the applicant is applying for.

New! Q: Can applicants submit a general design and then give TNECD a more time-consuming or detailed design once the project is awarded?

A: A general project design is acceptable as long as the applicant can prove they have thought through their proposed project and understand the big picture to complete it within the grant period.

Project Information

Q: Is there a required middle mile component for the Last Mile Round Two grant program?

A: The middle mile component is optional and is also based on each individual sub area.

Q: If ONT is installed inside a home can it be considered the service demarcation point and the ONT equipment and labor (installation) costs be eligible for inclusion in the project budget?

A: Yes, in this case the ONT installation costs are eligible for inclusion in the project budget.

Q: My understanding from the program guide is that if the residential gateway (CPE) is a separate piece of equipment from the ONT, it (the RG) is not an eligible project expense. Is that correct?

A: We'll confirm with US Treasury on this.

Q: Are Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) eligible costs?

A: Yes, CPE is eligible for the Last Mile Grant Program if the equipment, upon installation is owned by the ISP and not the customer. CPE funding only covers up to the demarcation point (e.g., network interface device (NID) or optical network terminal (ONT). All-in-one devices may be eligible at the demarcation point (a router/modem combo, an ONT/Router combo, etc.) if they are manufactured in house within the allowable project timeframe or are purchased for the purpose of installing at the consumer's home.

Q: If an applicant builds out last mile in an eligible area but has an existing broadband backbone ("middle mile") already built, can any of that backbone be claimed as an eligible expense, since that backbone is required to move traffic from the eligible area to the Internet?

A: If the middle mile was constructed by March 15th, 2021, or later it could be an eligible expense if it's used specifically for the grant area.

New! Q: If part of the middle mile route for this project is outside of Tennessee, can it be financed using Last Mile Round Two funds?

A: Yes, if part of the middle mile route is outside Tennessee, it can be included in the project but drops in that area cannot be financed using grant funding.

New! Q: If there are locations significantly driving up the cost per passing, do applicants still need to service them?

A: Yes, applicants will still need to service the locations but should note in their application why the location increases the cost per passing.

New! Q: How much flexibility will be provided on the construction competition date of June 30, 2026?

A: In general, this is a hard deadline unless there are circumstances outside of your control. If a contract extension is needed, please contact TNECD.

New! Q: If an applicant submits two applications containing duplicative areas, if both are awarded, can they still apply?

A: Yes, apply as if the two applications are separate. If both are awarded TNECD will work with the applicant to ensure redundancy is removed.

Other Requirements

Q: Is the PE stamp required upfront or upon completed design of the areas? It is required as a part of the application and then upon project closeout.

A: Applicants are required to upload the following form in Smart Simple, signed and stamped by a PE (<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/ecd/documents/broadband/infrastructure/last-mile-middle-mile/cpf/CPF%20Application%20Submission%20-%20Certification.pdf>) prior to submitting their application.

Q: Is an environmental/historic preservation review required with the application? If so, is it just completing Treasury's environmental questionnaire? If E&HP is not an application requirement, when will the applicant have to certify any E&HP review has been completed?

A: TNECD conducts environmental reviews as part of post award monitoring, verifying that all grantees have reviewed, completed and provided the required supporting documentation during CPF project's mid-point monitoring visits. Grantees should follow and review the Treasury's environmental checklist for more information: [Treasury's Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund Environmental Checklist](#).

New! Q: If an applicant finds two isolated eligible CLs surrounded by many ineligible CLs, is there a chance that's a data error and not a location that needs to be built out?

A: Please attach a visual and an Excel sheet in the Supplemental Documentation area. It is possible that it is a data error; however, it is also possible that the two isolated locations were passed, did not adopt, etc.

Key Dates

Q: When is the Last Mile Round Two public comment period?

A: The anticipated public notice window is April 18, 2024 – May 3, 2024.

Q: Will there be a completeness review period?

A: Applications submitted prior to April 10th will be reviewed for completeness and applicants will be notified of any necessary updates. No major edits will be accepted on applications submitted after April 10th.

Q: What is the contract period for the Last Mile Round Two grants?

A: These grants will have a two-year contract period.

Additional Information

Q: Who should we contact if we have any questions about the application?

A: For any questions regarding the Last Mile Round Two, please contact Taylre Beaty at taylre.beaty@tn.gov or Donovan Spann at donovan.spann@tn.gov.

Q: What is TNECD Broadband’s website?

A: For more information regarding the Last Mile Round Two Grant Program, please visit: <https://www.tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/broadband-office/grants.html>.

Q: When will additional information, such as the webinar’s slides and webinar recording, be posted on TNECD’s website?

A: To view the slides from or to watch a recording of the Last Mile Round Two Grant Program, webinar, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/broadband-office/grants.html>, and click on the “Last Mile” tab and then the “Supplemental Resources” tab.

Q: Have Last Mile Round One awardees been decided?

A: Finalists for Last Mile Round One have been notified including applicants whose applications were not awarded. If you have questions about an application, please reach out to us (taylre.beaty@tn.gov) or ecd.broadband@tn.gov.

Q: Have Middle Mile Round One awards been decided?

A: Finalists for Middle Mile Round One have been notified including applicants whose applications were not awarded. If you have questions about an application, please reach out to us (taylre.beaty@tn.gov) or ecd.broadband@tn.gov.

New! Q: When will additional information, such as the office hour questions and recording, be posted on TNECD’s website?

A: To view the slides and FAQs from or watch a recording of office hours, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/broadband-office/grants.html>, click on the “Last Mile” tab, and then click on the “Supplemental Resources” tab.

New! Q: Is there a published list of TEBF ARP Awards?

A: Yes, the press release containing the list of TEBF ARP Awards can be found here:
<https://tnecd.com/news/governor-lee-commissioner-mcwhorter-announce-447-million-in-broadband-infrastructure-investments/>

New! Q: Is there an online board or list where internet service providers can look for consulting services?

A: There are lists on the TNECD websites of previous grant awardees, or the public comment period is another option.