

Dear Representative Coffey – As a follow up to my 1/25/24 testimony regarding the AOT Policy, Planning & Research Budget you had asked for information regarding historical funding levels for the Better Connections Program. Below is a table that summarizes the budgeted funding level for the Better Connections Program over the last 5 yrs. (including FY25 proposed).

FY	Total Budgeted	Grants to Municipalities
2021	\$245,488	\$218,499
2022	\$222,357	\$200,000
2023	\$226,009	\$190,950
2024	\$244,061	\$176,353
2025 - proposed	\$447,096	\$371,797

Just as a reminder the Better Connection Program runs on a 2-yr funding cycle (e.g. new grants are sought every 2-yrs) and the goal is for each grant to be completed in 18 months. However, during COVID the grantees (municipalities) were unable to meet the 18-month timeframe and extended well beyond the 18-month goal. We also found that those communities also required significantly more AOT staff technical assistance to complete their projects (as noted in FY24 by the higher total costs vs. grant costs). As I mentioned during my testimony the proposed funding level for FY25 is considerably higher because of the convergence of two funding rounds (conclusion of delayed COVID era grants and kick-off of new grants selected in FY24).

If you have any questions do not hesitate to reach out.

Amy H. Bell | Bureau Director  
Policy, Planning & Research Section  
Policy, Planning & Intermodal Development Division  
Vermont Agency of Transportation