

## CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVE

The Telecommunications and Connectivity Division administers a grant program established under 30 V.S.A. §7515b designed “to provide each service location in Vermont access to Internet service that is capable of speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, or the FCC speed requirements established under Connect America Fund Phase II, whichever is higher.” The program is funded through the Vermont Universal Service Fund. Currently the Connectivity Fund has just over \$2 million, which the Department plans to distribute imminently in Q1 of 2021.

30 V.S.A. 7515b(b) states as follows:

The Department of Public Service shall publish annually a list of census blocks eligible for funding based on the Department's most recent broadband mapping data. The Department annually shall solicit proposals from service providers to deploy broadband to eligible census blocks. Funding shall be available for capital improvements only, not for operating and maintenance expenses. **The Department shall give priority to proposals that reflect the lowest cost of providing services to unserved and underserved locations;** however, the Department also shall consider:

- (1) the proposed data transfer rates and other data transmission characteristics of services that would be available to consumers;
- (2) the price to consumers of services;
- (3) the proposed cost to consumers of any new construction, equipment installation service, or facility required to obtain service;
- (4) whether the proposal would use the best available technology that is economically feasible;
- (5) the availability of service of comparable quality and speed; and
- (6) the objectives of the State's Telecommunications Plan.

### Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

The Department gives grantees one year from the execution of a grant agreement to complete construction and offer retail broadband service to all locations listed in their proposal. Within 30 days of completion of construction, grantees submit to the Department a final report summarizing the project, actual costs of the project, invoices, receipts, or detailed job ledgers, and other backing materials. Service must be offered for a minimum of five years.

**Table 1**  
**Round: CI 2016-01**  
**Date of Award: October 16, 2016<sup>1</sup>**

Company	Amount Awarded	Number Underserved	Cost per Address	Town	Technology	Actual Amount Invoiced
FairPoint	\$90,000.00	108	\$833.33	Peru	DSL	\$90,000.00
FairPoint	\$87,500.00	57	\$1,535.09	Lowell	DSL	\$84,622.00
FairPoint	\$90,000.00	50	\$1,800.00	Canaan	DSL	\$90,000.00
EC Fiber	\$13,500.00	13	\$1,038.46	Stockbridge	FTTP	\$13,500.00
EC Fiber	\$43,500.00	38	\$1,144.74	Norwich	FTTP	\$43,500.00
EC Fiber	\$12,000.00	9	\$1,333.33	Sharon	FTTP	\$12,000.00
EC Fiber	\$24,000.00	14	\$1,714.29	Randolph	FTTP	\$24,000.00
EC Fiber	\$10,500.00	6	\$1,750.00	Royalton	FTTP	\$10,500.00
EC Fiber	\$17,000.00	9	\$1,888.89	Norwich	FTTP	\$17,000.00
EC Fiber	\$36,000.00	19	\$1,894.74	Chelsea	FTTP	\$31,926.00
Pear Networks	\$22,695.00	14	\$1,621.07	W. Craftsbury	FTTP	\$22,695.00
Pear Networks	\$27,795.00	15	\$1,853.00	S.W. Craftsbury	FTTP	\$27,795.00
WCVT	\$61,638.00	28	\$2,201.36	Charlotte	FTTP	\$61,638.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$536,128.00</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>\$1,410.86</b>	<b>13 Towns</b>		<b>\$529,176.00</b>

**Table 2**  
**Round: CI 2016-02**  
**Date of Award: August 2, 2017**

Company	Amount Awarded	Number Underserved	Cost per Address	Town	Technology	Actual Amount Invoiced
FairPoint	\$55,000.00	53	\$1,037.74	Reading/Woodstock	DSL	\$55,000.00
FairPoint	\$120,000.00	109	\$1,100.92	Whitingham	DSL	\$120,000.00
EC Fiber	\$13,300.00	7	\$1,900.00	Royalton	FTTP	\$13,300.00
EC Fiber	\$28,000.00	13	\$2,153.85	Stockbridge	FTTP	\$28,000.00
EC Fiber	\$31,200.00	11	\$2,836.36	Randolph	FTTP	\$31,200.00
Comcast	\$300,000.00	114	\$2,631.58	Cavendish	Cable	\$300,000.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$547,500.00</b>	<b>307</b>		<b>6 Towns</b>		<b>\$547,500.00</b>

<sup>1</sup> The initial 2016 round 1 grant announcement included an award to the Southern Vermont Broadband Coop (SVBC) for \$22,505 to serve 71 addresses in Stamford, VT. The Department and SVBC were not able to execute an agreement so the funds have reverted to the Connectivity Initiative for future awards.

**Table 3**  
**Round: CI 2018-01**  
**Date of Award: April 26, 2019**

Company	Amount Awarded	Number Underserved	Cost per Address	Town	Technology	Actual Amount Invoiced
Mansfield Community Fiber	\$21,200	6	\$3,533	Underhill	FTTP	\$11,419.20
Southern Vermont Cable	\$5,636	11	\$512	Putney	DOCSIS	\$5,636
ECFiber / ValleyNet	\$16,000	10	\$1,600	Corinth	FTTP	\$16,000
ECFiber / ValleyNet	\$21,750	14	\$1,554	Tunbridge	FTTP	\$21,750
ECFiber / ValleyNet	\$25,500	25	\$1,020	Tunbridge	FTTP	\$25,500
Consolidated	\$44,498	37	\$1,203	Barnet	VDSL2+	\$44,498
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$134,584</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>\$1,307</b>	<b>6 Towns</b>		<b>\$113,384</b>

### Eligible address changes for 2021

Of the 69,899 locations previously identified as lacking access at 25/3 Mbps, 6,820 are included in the Connectivity Initiative 2020 grants, but not the RDOF, 14,200 are in the RDOF but not the CI grants, and 1,892 are in both, for a total of 22,912 locations affected by both programs. When these locations are removed from the 69,902 previously identified, 46,990 remain lacking 25/3 Mbps. Another 432 locations were served by the Line Extension Consumer Assistance Program (LECAP) and or had service inadvertently omitted from the 2019 analysis. Thus **46,558** locations lack access to service at 25/3.