

HCS HB 1872 -- MISSOURI RURAL BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT (Johnson)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Special Committee on Innovation and Technology

This bill establishes a grant program within the Department of Economic Development to expand broadband Internet access to unserved and under-served parts of Missouri. Grants may be awarded to fund the acquisition and installation of middle-mile and last-mile infrastructure that support Internet speeds of at least 10 megabits per second download and one megabit per second upload. Grants may be provided to corporations, incorporated businesses or partnerships, nonprofit organizations, cooperative associations, and political subdivisions.

The department is directed to develop certain application procedures for the grant program, while other procedural time lines are already provided, and the grant application's requirements are specified in the bill. The department shall give priority to applications for broadband service projects in unserved areas, and may give priority to under-served areas in limited circumstances. Any grant awarded under the bill may not fund more than 50% of the total cost of a broadband service project, and no single project shall be awarded grants that cumulatively exceed \$5 million. The department is also directed to report annually on the participation in the grant program, and any results thereof.