

SS HCS HB 1872 -- MISSOURI RURAL BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

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 25 megabits per second download and three megabit per second upload. Grants may be provided to corporations registered in Missouri along with their affiliates, 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, unserved areas where there is a demonstration of the ability to receive matching funds, and under-served areas, in that respective order.

However, no grant shall be awarded where a broadband service provider applicant has already secured funding through the Connect America Fund, where high cost support has been secured from the federal Universal Service Fund, or where other federal moneys not requiring matching funds were acquired. Funding shall also not be provided for retail end users that already have broadband service of at least 25 megabits per second download with three megabits per second upload.

Any grant awarded under the bill may not fund more than 50% of the total cost of a broadband service project when combined with other governmental funds, 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.

The bill is subject to a three-year sunset clause.