



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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## **Michigan secures \$363 million in federal funding to increase access to rural high-speed internet**

- **Nearly 250,000 locations in Michigan to have expanded access to broadband, 13 companies awarded projects**
- **MEDC partnership with Connected Nation Michigan helped secure FCC funding, also facilitating Connecting Michigan Taskforce**

**LANSING, Mich.** – Supporting efforts to ensure greater access to broadband and high-speed internet across the state, Michigan will receive \$362,985,055 in federal funding over the next 10 years to expand broadband access to 249,263 sites statewide, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation has announced. The funding is being awarded through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase 1 auction.

“The internet access divide is real and must be addressed to provide opportunity for all Michiganders to thrive,” said Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II, who is helping to lead the Connected Michigan Taskforce. “As we work to recover from the ongoing pandemic here in Michigan, strengthening our infrastructure remains a key component of our economic recovery, and broadband and high-speed internet are as foundational to our infrastructure as strong roads and bridges. Over the coming years, these broadband projects will have a major impact in making sure Michigan is a home of opportunity for all.”

Residents who lack access to broadband or cannot afford a home broadband connection are unable to participate in telehealth, virtual learning, telework, civic engagement, and many other activities those who are connected are able to use every day. Today, approximately 1,243,339 Michigan households do not have a permanent fixed broadband connection at home resulting in \$1.8 billion to \$2.7 billion in potential economic benefit left unrealized among disconnected households.

The FCC announced there were 13 winning bidders awarded the \$362,985,055 through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund to provide broadband with speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps to eligible locations reaching 81 counties in Michigan, with many locations getting gigabit-speed broadband. A full list of awards by county is available [here](#). Winning bidders included Baraga Telephone Company (\$444,490), MEI Telecom, Inc. in Delton, Mich. (\$479,789) and Cherry Capital Connection, LLC in Elk Rapids (\$5,620,840).

Ensuring Michigan was well-represented in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase 1 auction was a key initiative for efforts led by Connected Nation Michigan this fall through its partnership with MEDC. This federal funding also builds on [\\$12.7 million in Connecting Michigan Communities \(CMIC\)](#) grants through the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget announced by the Whitmer Administration in October, with an additional \$14.3 million in

CMIC grant funding authorized for projects in 2021. These grants go toward projects that committed to closing the digital divide including providing digital literacy training materials to residents and businesses in their proposed service areas.

Lt. Governor Gilchrist II is helping lead the Connecting Michigan Taskforce – announced alongside the CMIC grants – which will advise and assist in improving coordination among stakeholders in addressing broadband and technology access and adoption issues in the state.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made access to broadband more imperative than ever and building and strengthening broadband infrastructure throughout Michigan will be a driver of economic recovery efforts statewide,” said Amanda Bright McClanahan, Chief Operating Officer of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “The benefits of having access to the internet can have a tremendous impact on a person’s future success and our state’s overall economic prosperity, making it absolutely vital that we get to work with our public and private sector partners to create more equitable access to broadband infrastructure statewide.”

Access to broadband and high-speed internet is vital to people’s ability to work, learn and carry out business. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it more imperative than ever and building and strengthening broadband infrastructure throughout Michigan will be a driver of economic recovery efforts statewide. To support that effort, the MEDC has also partnered with Connected Nation Michigan (CNMI) to facilitate the Connecting Michigan Taskforce.

“This latest round of federal funding is a critical part of statewide efforts now underway to bring affordable internet access to every family and community across Michigan,” said Eric Frederick, Executive Director, CN Michigan. “To do so we must make a long-term commitment to work together with local stakeholders, community and state leaders and internet service providers and leverage funding opportunities for infrastructure investment and broadband expansion especially in rural areas where families, businesses, and communities are disproportionately on the wrong side of the Digital Divide.”

To learn more about the Connecting Michigan Task Force and broadband initiatives in Michigan, visit [www.michiganbusiness.org/broadband](http://www.michiganbusiness.org/broadband).

#### **About Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)**

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is the state’s marketing arm and lead advocate for business development, job awareness and community development with the focus on growing Michigan’s economy. For more information on the MEDC and our initiatives, visit [www.MichiganBusiness.org](http://www.MichiganBusiness.org). For Pure Michigan® tourism information, your trip begins at [www.michigan.org](http://www.michigan.org). Join the conversation on: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).

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