

The details below are part of a living document as we move through the initial round of the GUMBO grant program process.

General Details for Grant Program

- 1. Who would you recommend be on the management team?**
Each parish or municipality should establish a Digital Navigator and Broadband Team to serve as local stakeholders within the community. More details on who should be included on this committee are found in our Broadband Toolkit, posted on our website.
- 2. Does the parish, municipality or school board need to go through a local, state or federal procurement process to select a private provider partner? Will we violate any existing guidelines? Do we need to create a special ordinance or permit?**
State procurement does not apply to the GUMBO program. Local requirements may differ, so consult with your parish attorney or other legal counsel to clarify the answer specific to your area. You may also request an opinion from the attorney general's civil division.
- 3. How do we find out what areas of our region do not meet the minimum requirements? If an area supposedly meets the minimum requirements of 25:3 Mbps delivered by an existing internet service provider, but the ISP doesn't actually deliver those speeds, would the area still be eligible?**
Mapping resources are available on our website for local municipalities to use as part of their research. Areas that show third-party speed tests reporting speeds below the minimum threshold can be considered for the GUMBO grant program.
- 4. What if an area has satellite service?**
Unserved areas are defined as areas with access to speeds of less than 25:3 Mbps delivered through wireline (fiber) or fixed wireless, regardless of the availability of satellite service. In short, if satellite is the only service available in an area, that area is eligible for GUMBO, regardless of the speeds offered by the satellite company.
- 5. Who is the actual grant recipient?**
The private ISP is the grant recipient.
- 6. Is there any methodology ConnectLA would recommend when selecting an ISP to work with?**
There is no restriction on the number of providers and/or applications a municipal governing authority may support, so we recommend meeting with experienced ISPs that know your area and understand the access issue. You may also consider having discussions with ISPs that are grant recipients of the federal Rural Digital Opportunity Fund program and will be deploying broadband near your municipality.
- 7. Is the agreement with the ISP performance-based? How are funds awarded to the provider?**
GUMBO grants are performance-based, and funds are paid to an ISP as they meet certain thresholds of completion within the project area. This is measured by the number of homes, businesses, etc., that gain access to broadband because of the project.
- 8. If a local government builds a middle mile network, can a GUMBO grant provide funding to build the last mile connections?**
Yes, GUMBO grants can be used for last mile connections. But remember, the private provider is the applicant for GUMBO and will receive grant funds.
- 9. Does the use of existing infrastructure affect scoring criteria?**
Yes, the use of existing infrastructure can increase the points awarded to a project area.
- 10. Can GUMBO grant dollars be used for digital literacy programs? If an adequately served area wishes to partner with a private provider to address digital literacy, are GUMBO funds available for that?**
No, GUMBO grant funds are used to address the broadband infrastructure issue.
- 11. Can GUMBO grant dollars be used to assist low-income areas in paying for broadband services?**
No, GUMBO grant funds are used to address the broadband infrastructure issue. There are other methods available for communities to use to their advantage to assist low-income households with broadband service.

costs. Currently, the Emergency Broadband Benefit program offered by the FCC can help bridge the gap for broadband costs that low-income households may have.

12. Is there a list of parishes that have established broadband committees?

A listing of parishes that have established broadband committees can be found on our website at connect.la.gov.

13. How should we ensure that the infrastructure built considers future technology or advances?

Scalability is an important part of this grant program. We want to ensure build out of new networks results in infrastructure that can be improved and upgraded over time. It is important to ask this question of any potential providers, to ensure that whatever is built today doesn't have to be replaced in the near future.

Mapping

1. How accurate are the maps that have been provided by the FCC on their website? How was census data used to determine who has access?

There are known issues with the viability of data within the FCC mapping tools. For example, even if only one home has access to broadband on a census block, the entire census block will be marked as having access to broadband. The FCC is actively working to correct these issues, but at this point, the current data can give local municipalities a general idea of the access issues in their areas. The ISPs should have specifics within each area.

2. Mapping only tells some of the story. As a municipal governing authority, how are we supposed to know cost estimates, types of infrastructure needed, etc.?

The GUMBO grant program is designed to enlist private providers as applicants. Private providers will be able to present cost estimates, infrastructure and technology solutions and unserved area data.

Application and Protest Process

1. Where can we find the application for review?

The application process will be completed within an online portal, available on our website. Application requirements are outlined within the rules of the program and can be found at connect.la.gov.

2. Will private providers, as potential applicants, have the ability to navigate the application portal prior to the application period opening?

Providing a beta testing environment to potential applicants is under consideration.

3. Are applicants required to submit project area data in the form of census blocks, shapefiles, address-level data and polygons? Or can applicants choose their preferred data form?

We strongly encourage applicants to provide as much data as possible to justify the requirements of the program. If our administration team can't score a project adequately, more details will be requested.

4. Will providers be required to disclose financial information? Is there a list of required financial disclosures available yet?

Yes, they will be required to submit financial information. Full details are provided in [Section 307](#) of the rules.

5. How does an applicant submit confidential information through the online portal?

There will be a method for submission to delineate which files require redaction within the application portal, subject to approval by our office.

6. Will a losing applicant get notified of its score?

All scores will be posted publicly for review after the awards have been made.

7. What type of information will be required to protest an application?

Full details of the information required to be provided as part of a protest are provided in [Section 501\(D\)](#) of the rules.

8. **Is the office going to use a predetermined mapping tool for determining the eligibility and/or ineligibility?**
For the initial round of GUMBO, the office will not use a predetermined mapping tool to determine eligibility.
9. **Does the program have a preference toward awarding grant funding to unserved areas ahead of underserved areas?**
To be eligible, an area must not have access to broadband speeds of at least 25:3 Mbps through either wireline or fixed wireless, and application scoring will be based on the scoring criteria published in the [Emergency Rule](#).
10. **Why is the application process happening so quickly?**
In short, Louisianians need access to broadband, and the state must spend all GUMBO funding by 2024.
11. **Could infrastructure built by a current ISP be sold at a later date? If so, how do we ensure our agreement with the ISP is maintained?**
GUMBO grant funds enforce a five-year period of engagement with the ISP in regards to certain metrics they must maintain (pricing, broadband speed, etc.) to ensure compliance with the grant program. Execution of external agreements between municipalities and ISPs are at the discretion of the parties involved.

Budget & Matching Funds

1. **Is there a requirement as to when a provider must spend its designated matching funds?**
No. The state and any municipal governing authority providing matching funds will disburse grant awards in increments of 10%, 35%, 60%, 85% and 100%, in direct correlation with the percentage of project completion. Project completion is defined as prospective broadband recipients gaining access to broadband service as a result of the project. For example, when 10% of a project's prospective broadband recipients have access to broadband as a result of the project, 10% of grant funding will be released to the awardee, regardless of the costs incurred by the provider.
2. **Must matching funds be designated for certain expenses?**
Matching funds may be designated for any expense that is directly related to the project. Restrictions, which are not eligible project costs and should not be included in the proposed budget, include subsequent years of service, recurring operating or maintenance costs, sales and marketing of services, overhead or administrative costs.