



# OFFICE OF PLANNING AND BUDGET

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## **Georgia Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions**

The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget ("OPB") is facilitating the distribution of the State's Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds ("CSFRF") through a competitive grant process called the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Grant Program ("Grant Program").

OPB designed this grant process in accordance with the Interim Final Rule ("IFR"), *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*, 86 Fed. Reg. 26786, 26819 (May 17, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-05-17/pdf/2021-10283.pdf>, and supplementary guidance ("Treasury FAQ") issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury ("U.S. Treasury"), *U.S. Dep't of the Treasury, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Frequently Asked Questions* (July 19, 2021), <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRPFAQ.pdf>.

This document contains answers to frequently asked questions OPB has received regarding the Grant Program application process. Applicants should refer to the IFR, Treasury FAQ, and the following Georgia-specific application information to complete their applications. Supplementary guidance, like the Treasury FAQ, may be updated periodically by the U.S. Treasury; applicants should rely on the most updated guidance issued by the U.S. Treasury, as this document only includes information from U.S. Treasury guidance issued July 19, 2021.

### **DISCLAIMER**

**This document is intended to be a guide to the application process for perspective applicants applying for consideration of CSFRF through the Grant Program. This guidance is not intended to address eligible uses of CSFRF and is not exhaustive, binding, or final. The U.S. Treasury continues to update its guidance which is binding on the State as well as applicants.**

**1. Where can an applicant apply?**

The link to the application can be found on OPB’s homepage, <https://opb.georgia.gov/>, under Current COVID-19 Funding Opportunities or via the tab on the State Fiscal Recovery page <https://opb.georgia.gov/state-fiscal-recovery-fund>.

**2. Who may apply for Georgia’s Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund grant?**

The following entities may apply (See Treasury FAQ 1.1 – 1.8.):

**Government Organizations**

- State Agencies
- County governments
- City or township governments
- Special-purpose units of local government
- Non-entitlement units (“NEU”), or smaller local governments

**Georgia Organizations and Professional Associations**

- Industry Trade Associations
- Business Organizations
- Trade or Professional Organizations
- Non-Profit Organizations

**3. What Data Universal Number System (“DUNS”) number would an applicant use if partnering with a trade association, county, city, etc.?**

The primary applicant for the broadband project should use their DUNS number. See <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html> for more information regarding obtaining a DUNS number. If a private provider is partnering with multiple governments, only one of those governments would serve as the primary applicant and would use their DUNS and Employer Identification Number (“EIN”). They will also need to obtain a System for Award Management (“SAM”) number for award purposes. See <https://sam.gov/content/home> for more information regarding obtaining a SAM number.

**4. Can the primary applicant add points of contact once they register to assist with filling out the application?**

Yes, the primary applicant has an option to add contacts within the system once they have successfully registered and begun an application.

**5. Is a SAM number required?**

While a SAM number is not required to submit an application, an active SAM registration is required by the U.S. Treasury as a condition-precedent to receive an award. This process could take some time, so OPB strongly encourages applicants to proactively apply for a SAM number as soon as possible by visiting <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

**6. Can private broadband providers apply for CSFRF for broadband infrastructure?**

Applying as an individual broadband infrastructure provider is allowable, however the U.S. Treasury “encourages recipients to prioritize support for broadband networks owned, operated by, or affiliated with local governments, non-profits, and co-operatives—providers with less pressure to turn profits and with a commitment to serving entire communities.” *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*, 86 Fed. Reg. 26806 (May 17, 2021), <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2021-10283.pdf>

**7. Will an application be eligible if it proposes extending service into Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) award areas?**

The IFR states, “[i]n selecting an area to be served by a project, recipients are encouraged to avoid investing in locations that have existing agreements to build reliable wireline service with minimum speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload by December 31, 2024, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and resources.” *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*, 86 Fed. Reg. 26806 (May 17, 2021), <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2021-10283.pdf>. Therefore, preference will be given to applications that avoid areas with existing agreements that reliably meet the previously mentioned speed standards and date. Notwithstanding, Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (“RDOF”) winning bidders are allowed to apply for CSFRF for broadband infrastructure projects to cover RDOF locations for which the FCC funds will not enable complete buildout of required broadband service before December 31, 2024.

**8. Will there be a broadband verification process?**

Yes. Broadband applicants should submit a simple rendering of the proposed service location, as a drawing (by hand or digitally) on the location-level Georgia Broadband Availability Map (see <https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps>), showing locations that would receive broadband service as a result of an ARPA broadband grant.

Application summaries with proposed service areas map will be posted on OPB’s website as applications are reviewed. If locations proposed to be served are already served, such internet service providers may submit verification of such service (a wireline connection that delivers a reliable broadband service with a minimum speed of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload) using the form posted that will be posted to <https://opb.georgia.gov/state-fiscal-recovery-fund> to **arpabroadband@opb.georgia.gov** no later than November 12, 2021, as indicated on the timeline below. Applicants whose project has received a service verification from another provider will be contacted to allow the applicant the opportunity to provide additional information.

**Timeline:**

**Application Period:** August 1-October 31, 2021

**Verification Process:** August 1-November 12, 2021

Applicants that are contacted to provide additional information should provide any such information back to [arpabroadband@opb.georgia.gov](mailto:arpabroadband@opb.georgia.gov) no later than 5:00pm on November 19, 2021.

**Committee Review:** November 8-November 24, 2021

**Collaborative Session:** Week of November 29, 2021

**Awards may be announced on or after:** Week of January 3, 2022

**9. What are the scoring criteria for applications?**

**Broadband Infrastructure**

- a. Description of the Issue (10%)
- b. Project Design and Implementation (25%)
- c. Capabilities and Competencies (15%)
- d. Performance Measures (10%)
- e. Budget (15%)
- f. Matching Funds (15%)
- g. Local government, non-profit, or co-operative (10%)

**Water/Sewer Infrastructure**

- a. Description of the Issue (15%)
- b. Project Design and Implementation (30%)
- c. Capabilities and Competencies (15%)
- d. Performance Measures (10%)
- e. Budget (15%)
- f. Matching Funds (15%)

**Negative Economic Impact**

- a. Description of the Issue (15%)
- b. Project Design and Implementation (30%)
- c. Capabilities and Competencies (15%)
- d. Performance Measures (10%)
- e. Budget (15%)
- f. Matching Funds (15%)

**10. Can an applicant apply for multiple projects?**

In general, we ask that applicants submit one application for projects within the same category (water/sewer, broadband, or negative economic impact) if the projects are of a similar nature. However, there may be instances where more than one application is warranted for projects in the same category. Applicants may reach out to [grants@opb.georgia.gov](mailto:grants@opb.georgia.gov) to receive guidance.

Applicants may submit more than one application if their proposed projects cover multiple categories. For example, an applicant may submit a broadband infrastructure project application and a water/sewer infrastructure project application.

**11. What level of project detail is needed for an application?**

An applicant should provide sufficient detail for the committee members to understand the project, the costs, and the technology. The details should provide a clear picture of the budgeted costs in the budget narrative including capital contributions and projected operational and maintenance costs. The application should also explain how any equipment or infrastructure will be maintained after the expiration of the grant.

**12. Can Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds received from other sources (i.e., local government direct receipt of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds) be used in conjunction with CSFRF received from the Grant Program for a broadband infrastructure project?**

CSFRF may be used in conjunction with other funding sources. Applicants that received funding from the State as a NEU under the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund or received a Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund award directly from the U.S. Treasury can match said funds together with Grant Program funds for one project and are encouraged to include plans for intended matching of other funding sources in their application.

**13. What types of supporting documentation may be included in an application?**

The supporting documentation portion of the application allows the applicant to attach a budget narrative, project timeline, letters of support, project designs, or any other documentation they wish for the committee to consider that falls in line with the published scoring criteria outlined in this FAQ document. The identification of proposed service areas by applicants will be conducted via the Georgia Broadband Map (see <https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps>), and this should be uploaded into the application supporting documentation field.

**14. Can applicants use project estimates for the application in order to submit by the October 31, 2021 deadline?**

An applicant may use project cost estimates for the application. However, the grant award amount will be based on the budget included in the application. ***A grant recipient will not be allowed to request an increase to their grant award if actual project costs exceed the estimates included in the application.***

**15. What reporting data will be required, and when are grant recipients required to submit that data?**

All grant recipients should expect the grant agreement will impose a requirement on individual grant recipients for timely reports on the use of CSFRF and the progress on CSFRF-funded projects throughout the performance period and upon project completion. The timing and frequency of the reporting will be communicated to grant recipients at a later date. Reporting requirements may change over time and may vary by project.

**16. How does an applicant know the status of their application?**

Applicants can check the status of their application by logging into the Georgia Grants portal.