



# **MISSOURI CELL TOWER GRANT PROGRAM**

## *Program Guidelines*

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# **PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

## *Missouri Cell Tower Grant Program*

### **1. PURPOSE**

The Missouri Cell Tower Grant Program (Program) helps improve accessibility for those without access to quality cellular service. Funds are available for projects that will serve areas lacking quality service prioritizing those tower projects which are located on public lands. This competitive grant program will support two types of tower projects:

1. Construction of new towers
2. Retrofitting and or refurbishment of existing towers

The Missouri General Assembly appropriated \$20 million to the Department of Economic Development (DED) in [House Bill 3020 at §20.055 \(2022\)](#).

The Program is funded through the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF) authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). As a result, the grant must comply with various federal requirements, including Treasury regulations in [31 CFR part 35](#).

### **2. TIMELINE**

DED intends to award all funds in one funding round, but may hold additional funding rounds prior to June 30, 2024, to ensure all available funds have been obligated prior to the ARPA funding deadline.

March 17, 2023 | Draft Program guidelines published

May 22, 2023 | Final Program Guidelines published

May 31 2023 | Application cycle opens

July 30, 2023 | Application cycle closes

Sept 8, 2023 | Challenge cycle opens

Oct 13, 2023 | Anticipated award announcements

Oct 13, 2024 | Pre-construction Phase ends

Cell tower siting and deployment can be a lengthy process, to account for this DED will allow awardees applying under the Construction of New Towers category a planning period of up to twelve months to allow time for the permitting and design process and to reach necessary agreements with public or private entities owning land/real estate in the proposed project area.

If necessary, dates for future rounds will be announced until all funds are awarded. Updates will be announced on the [One Stop ARPA Resources - Broadband webpage](#).

*NOTE: Once an application cycle is opened, Applicants will have 60 days to submit applications. Anticipated award announcement date may change depending on the number of applications received.*

### **3. FUNDING CATEGORIES**

To ensure that Applicants are competing against similar projects across the State, the Program is allocating funding based on the following:

#### **Category 1**

Construction of New Towers  
Available Funds: \$17 Million

#### **Category 2**

Retrofit and or Refurbishment of Existing Towers  
Available Funds: \$3 Million

DED intends to fund projects in both funding categories. In the event that demand does not exhaust funds in one category, those remaining funds can be awarded to projects in the other category.

### **4. APPLICANTS**

#### **4.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

The following entities are eligible to apply for the Program:

1. Cellular providers who own their own towers or can demonstrate a partnership with a tower owner; and
2. Tower owners<sup>1</sup> that demonstrate a partnership with a cellular

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this program, tower owners are considered entities that own a structure on which a cellular signal or antenna might be placed (e.g. traditional tower infrastructure or a city water tower).

provider<sup>2</sup>.

#### 4.2 INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following are ineligible to apply for the Program:

1. Entities that are debarred or suspended from participation in federally funded programs.

### 5. PROJECTS

Cell tower projects meeting the following criteria are eligible for funding under this Program:

#### 5.1 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

1. The infrastructure is designed to deliver, upon project completion, quality and reliable cellular service to the proposed project area;
2. The project must achieve:
  - a. Carrier deployment of mobile voice and data to all structures<sup>3</sup> and vehicle traffic within the area defined by the application within the project time frame; or
  - b. If the applicant is not the end service provider, demonstrate that new and/or improved carrier commitments are in place to deploy the services within the project time frame;
3. The project is designed to construct a new tower or retrofit/refurbish an existing tower;
4. The project will serve areas with gaps in quality wireless service<sup>4</sup>/cellular coverage;
5. The project will target serving high-cost areas of the state lacking adequate cellular coverage. High-cost areas that are least likely to provide sufficient operating revenues to provide service without support are identified as those servicing census tracts containing less than 50 persons per square mile;
6. DED will prioritize projects locating towers on public lands (e.g. local government property, state-owned property, water towers, and highway department properties);

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<sup>2</sup> All partnering entities will be required to provide information as part of the application process. The information provided by the tower owner and a Primary Cellular Carrier designated by the applying entity will be considered for scoring.

<sup>3</sup> Structures are defined as houses, businesses, farms, community anchor institutions, and workshops that are within the proposed service area.

<sup>4</sup> Quality service is defined as industry standard 4G LTE service minimum and a voice signal of sufficient strength and should include scalability options. End users should not be required to purchase a signal extending device such as an antenna or booster.

7. The project's proposed service area is not currently served by existing infrastructure;
8. The project must comply with all federal tower regulations;
9. The project must provide access to all cellular carriers and other attaching entities; and
10. The project must be operational by September 30, 2026.

## **6. BUDGET**

As part of the application, the Applicants will be required to submit a budget for the proposed project. The following principles will apply regarding costs that are eligible for reimbursement with ARPA funds.

### **6.1 MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AWARDS**

1. Retrofit and Refurbishment of Towers
  - a. Project minimum grant amount: \$25,000;
  - b. Project maximum grant amount: \$300,000; and
2. New Tower
  - a. Project minimum grant amount: \$100,000;
  - b. Project maximum grant amount: \$750,000
3. Applicant maximum for Program per application cycle: \$8 million.

### **6.2 PRIVATE INVESTMENT**

1. This Program does not require private investment funds. However, projects that demonstrate the private investment of 20% or greater will score higher.

### **6.3 ELIGIBLE COSTS**

1. Funds will be disbursed to a subrecipient on a reimbursement basis after final documentation has been approved and the final grant agreement has been fully executed;
2. Funds must be expended by and submitted to DED for payment by September 30, 2026.;
3. Costs incurred before the date of award but on or after March 17, 2023 (the release date of the draft guidelines) are eligible only if they were incurred with the intention of applying for a grant through this Program;
4. Subrecipients will need to comply with all applicable cost principles and other requirements in the Uniform Guidance that are applicable

to this Program. See Section 9.1 of these Guidelines for more information;

5. Examples of eligible project costs are:
  - a. Construction of new towers<sup>5</sup>;
  - b. Retrofit of existing towers;
  - c. Refurbishment of existing towers;
  - d. Installation of utilities at the cell tower site;
  - e. Fiber-to-the-antenna;
  - f. Engineering and construction plans;
  - g. Permitting;
  - h. Installation;
  - i. Validation of service; and
  - j. Grant administration costs not to exceed 4% of grant amount or \$55,000, whichever is lower;

#### 6.4 INELIGIBLE COSTS

Program funds may not be used for the following costs:

1. General mobile voice and broadband planning not associated with the project;
2. Cost of providing last mile broadband connections associated with the fiber to the antenna;
3. Cost of "stealth" site concealment or camouflage;
4. Retrofitting a tower with technology outputting a signal that would provide similar service to already existing technology on the tower;
5. Antennas mounted on utility or light poles or small cell networks;
6. Ongoing costs including operational expenses;
7. Costs to procure or obtain certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment as set forth in [2 CFR § 200.216](#) and [2 CFR § 200.471](#);
8. Acquisition of spectrum licenses;
9. Short-term operating leases;
10. Costs incurred prior to March 17, 2023 (the release date of the draft guidelines);
11. Costs incurred on or after March 17, 2023 and before the date of award that were not incurred in anticipation of applying for a grant under this Program; and
12. Costs not submitted to DED by September 30, 2026.

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<sup>5</sup> For projects in the Construction of New Towers category, any construction or ground breaking costs are not eligible to be reimbursed until after Notice to Proceed is given by DED.

## 6.5 ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FUNDING

1. Payment requests may be submitted monthly and must include supporting documentation for the costs paid or incurred;
2. Specific documentation requirements for payment requests will be identified separately; and
3. DED reserves the right to amend the scope of grant awards or partially fund applications prior to making awards. Such amendments would only be made with the cooperation of the applicant in situations where the score for a project would not be materially changed as a result of the amendment as compared to the application as submitted. For example:
  - a. If the remaining funds in the Program will not fully fund the next project in line for funding, but the applicant desires to modify its project to utilize remaining funding available, rather than no longer be considered for funding.

## 7. SERVICE AREA CHALLENGE PROCESS

1. To ensure transparency and best use of taxpayer funds, the application process includes a proposed service area challenge process, as follows:
  - a. Within thirty (30) business days of the close of the grant application period, DED will publish on its website a map with the proposed projects' service areas and a challenge application through the MO Federal Initiatives Grant Portal;
  - b. Challenger<sup>6</sup> Actions:
    - (1) A cellular service provider that provides existing service in a proposed service area may submit to DED, within 30 days of publication, a written challenge to an application based on its proposed service area. The challenge must contain information and documentation demonstrating that:
      - i. The challenging provider currently provides cellular service to retail customers at the minimum quality service levels within the proposed service area; or
      - ii. The challenging provider has begun substantive construction<sup>7</sup> to provide cellular service to retail customers within the proposed service area;

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<sup>6</sup> The challenging entity can be either a tower owner partnering with a cellular carrier(s) to submit information in the challenge process or a cellular carrier.

<sup>7</sup> Substantive Construction is defined as providing evidence of purchase or lease of land used for the purpose of constructing of a tower to provide cellular service and a preliminary engineering review of the tower project.

- (2) The challenge must include a map file following DED instructions in Appendix B: GIS Requirements - Tower Retrofit/Refurbishment Application;
- (3) The challenger must provide all relevant information when submitting the challenge. Failure to include all details may result in a failed challenge:
  - i. Challengers will be expected to submit a generalized, "clean" shapefile to DED to share with an Applicant to aid with amending the project service area if that is the outcome of a challenge;
- c. Within three business days of receiving a challenge, DED will notify the applicant of the challenge;
- d. Challenged Applicant Actions:
  - (1) Upon receipt of a challenge to a proposed project, a challenged applicant may:
    - i. Dispute the challenge; or
    - ii. Agree with the challenge and amend the proposed project if viable; or
    - iii. Withdraw application from consideration due to the challenge.
  - (2) The challenged applicant has 10 business days from receipt of the challenge to provide DED with all relevant information regarding how the applicant would like to proceed. Failure to provide all relevant information within the 10 business day time period could result in the challenge being successful and the application being denied;
- e. The results of the challenge will be provided to the challenger and challenged applicant once DED has completed reviewing information from both parties. Results will be:
  - (1) Challenge is successful<sup>8</sup> due to:
    - i. Currently provides cellular services; or
    - ii. Has begun substantive construction to provide such services.
  - (2) If the challenge is successful and the project is still viable:
    - i. DED will collaborate with the challenged applicant to amend a project and notify the challenger of the outcome; and

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<sup>8</sup> Up to 0.5 square miles of contiguous overlap between the Applicant's and Challenger's signals is acceptable as long as these signals do not cause interference. For a challenge to be successful, the Challenger must demonstrate that the Applicant's cellular signal overlaps its current service area or substantive construction area by over 0.5 square miles.



- ii. Upon DED's determination that a challenge is successful, DED will not fund the challenged portion of the application. DED will notify the applicant and the challenging provider of its decision. DED will incorporate challenge results into its approvals and denials of Program applications.
- (3) Challenge is unsuccessful due to:
  - i. Incomplete or unverified challenge information; or
  - ii. Challenged applicant provided substantial evidence counter to the challenger claims. DED reserves the right to request additional information from a challenging provider or challenged applicant to fully assess the details of the challenge. Requests for information from DED must be received by DED within three (3) business days.
- 2. DED will post on its website a list of challenges found to be successful and the service areas affected by those challenges for projects that are in the final stages of the application review process;
- 3. For each challenge found to be successful, the challenger must submit documentation to DED no later than 12 months from the Program award date, substantiating that the challenger has fulfilled its commitment made during its challenge. If the challenging entity challenges on the basis of substantive construction and is successful, it would be required to provide service to the area it challenged for at least 5 years; and
- 4. If DED denies an application as a result of a challenge, and the challenging provider does not fulfill its commitment to provide cellular service in the service area, DED will not consider another challenge from that provider for any remaining Program grant rounds, unless DED determines the challenging provider's failure to fulfill the commitment was due to unforeseeable and disastrous circumstances beyond the challenger's control, including, but not limited to: flood, tornado, earthquake, or civil unrest, and the provider took reasonable steps to complete the project in light of the circumstances.

## **8. APPLICATION PREPARATION**

Applications and all supporting documents will be submitted electronically through the DED ARPA Grant Portal into one of the two project categories. Potential applicants are encouraged to create an account on the portal.

All partnering entities will be required to provide information as part of the application process. Under the Construction of New Towers category, if applying as a tower owner partnering with a cellular carrier(s), only the information provided by the tower owner and a Primary Cellular Carrier designated by the applying entity will be considered for scoring.

The grant application portal will open on May 31, 2023, with applications due by July 30, 2023. Grant award notifications will be issued approximately 75 days after the close of the application period.

Applicants will be allowed to submit one application per tower project.

In preparation for submitting an application, grant applicants are encouraged to have information and documents ready and available. In many instances documents will need to be uploaded as an attachment to the grant application. Being prepared will help assure a timely application process, as well as assist applicants in ensuring a complete and accurate application is submitted.

1. An applicant must be registered in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov), and will need to provide its Unique Entity ID that is generated by SAM.gov (Note: DUNS numbers have been removed from SAM.gov as of April 4, 2022—existing registered entities can find their Unique Entity ID by visiting the Sam.gov web site and following the instructions for requesting a Unique Entity ID). If an applicant is in the process of obtaining its Unique Entity ID, that will be satisfactory; however, no payments will be made to a subrecipient until it has a Unique Entity ID;
2. Entities must show they are compliant with state sales and withholding tax laws to be eligible for funding. To register to obtain the Statement of No Tax Due, visit [No Tax Due \(mo.gov\)](https://no-tax-due.mo.gov);
3. DED will require documentation of the following to be submitted with an application for this Program:
  - a. Proposed project budget detailing the cost components of the project tower;
  - b. Long-term sustainability of the project to be maintained over time, as further described in section 10.9 of these guidelines;
  - c. If the applicant is a tower owner, additional information demonstrating formal carrier commitments to serve the area associated with the project. A Primary Cellular Carrier should be identified for scoring purposes, as well as any additional partnering cellular carriers;
  - d. Applicants applying under the “Construction” category should

select an “estimated tower space” or a contiguous area of land up to 3.15 square miles which could host a tower location<sup>9</sup>. Projects constructing “guyed towers” with wire anchors will receive additional consideration when selecting the size of the square mileage. GIS data files should be submitted following instructions in Appendix B: GIS Requirements—New Tower Application;

- e. Specifications of proposed project including tower height and type of technology being utilized;
  - f. Affordable plans available to end service consumers by the Primary Cellular Carrier;
  - g. “Clean” shapefiles of tower signals that will be uploaded for public access on the DED website and shared with a challenging entity;
  - h. Applicants will be asked to identify the location of the closest tower providing minimum quality cellular service and the entity providing that service;
  - i. Anticipated structures to be served by the proposed tower(s);
  - j. Relevant road traffic data in the proposed service area based on the most recent data from the [MODOT Traffic Volume Map](#). If the tower footprint does not overlap a state or interstate highway the applicant will be allowed to submit regionally specific traffic information to be considered; and
  - k. If debt financing will be obtained, subrecipients will be required to submit letters of commitment to demonstrate the willingness of the financial institution to provide the funding required to complete the project.
4. Entities must show a Certificate of Good Standing from the Missouri Secretary of State;
  5. For privately-held entities, identifying information (full legal name, including middle initial, and date of birth) about persons in certain management and ownership positions; and
  6. The Applicant is enrolled in E-Verify and provides a copy of its signed Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, as required by § 285.530 RSMo<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> GIS data files should be submitted following DED instructions in Appendix B: GIS Requirements – New Tower Application.

<sup>10</sup> The E-Verify Program is currently the only federal work authorization program as described in §285.530 RSMo. If Applicant is not already enrolled in E-Verify, go to <https://e-verify.uscis.gov/enroll/to> to learn what is needed to enroll and enroll in the Program. Applicant can provide a copy of the entire MOU or it can provide the last few pages starting with the signature page. Include the page(s) with “Information relating to your Company” and “Are you verifying

## 9. AGREEMENTS

### 9.1. GRANT AGREEMENT

1. If an applicant's project is awarded a Program grant, the applicant, or subrecipient, will enter into a grant agreement with DED (Grant Agreement), committing to complete the project as set forth in the application, among other obligations;
2. The Grant Agreement will pass through to the subrecipient the requirements imposed on the State of Missouri under its agreement with Treasury. The Grant Agreement will also include state law and other requirements for Program administration;
3. Awardees who apply under the New Construction category will have a "Pre-construction Phase" and a "Construction Phase." The Pre-construction Phase shall not exceed 10% of the estimated total project costs, and cannot be used for construction costs, which include ground preparation. <sup>11</sup>
  - a. Awardees in this project category will have up to 12 months to complete the Pre-construction Phase and submit to DED finalized plans including exact tower locations and locations served before proceeding into the Construction Phase, at which time its eligible costs can be reimbursed from the remaining amount of awarded grant funds.
  - b. Awardees in this project category will be expected to meet benchmarks during the Pre-construction Phase and provide benchmark completion updates to DED for approval before proceeding to the Construction Phase.
4. Because this Program is federally funded, various federal laws, regulations, and guidance will apply under the Grant Agreement. Prospective Applicants are encouraged to acquaint themselves with some of the requirements by visiting these resources:
  - a. The [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, 2 CFR part 200 \(Uniform Guidance\)](#), to the extent applicable to SFRF Revenue Replacement funds as set forth in Treasury's Final Rule FAQs, FAQ #13.14 and FAQ #13.15. When reading the Uniform Guidance, a prospective

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for more than 1 site? If yes, please provide the number of sites verified for in each State", which should be the pages immediately after the signature page.

<sup>11</sup> Any grant funds not used in the Pre-construction Phase may be carried over for eligible project costs in the Construction Phase.

- applicant should understand that it would become a “subrecipient” receiving a “subaward” from DED/the State, which is the “pass-through entity” (also referred to as a “non-Federal entity”);
- b. [42 U.S.C. § 802](#), Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF);
  - c. [31 CFR part 35](#), Treasury’s SFRF regulations; and
  - d. Treasury’s [Compliance and Reporting Guidance: State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#).
5. Applicants must demonstrate sufficient financial wherewithal to incur the costs associated with completing the work;
  6. As part of the Grant Agreement process, but prior to DED signing the Grant Agreement, subrecipients will be required to submit a letter of credit or performance bond to DED in an amount equal to the total value of the grant award;
  7. The Grant Agreement will also include requirements regarding the following:
    - a. In addition to documents submitted to obtain payment of costs, subrecipients must submit reports to DED in a format and frequency to be specified by DED, to include speed, pricing, and any data allowance metrics. Reports will be required that allow DED to meet Treasury’s reporting requirements for SFRF;
    - b. DED will monitor the subrecipient for compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement and applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidance; and subrecipient will cooperate in all monitoring;
    - c. Record retention and inspection;
    - d. Audits relating to the grant, including cooperating with federal and state representatives and providing requested access, information, and records for such audits;
    - e. If DED determines, based on monitoring, an audit, or otherwise, that a subrecipient is not complying with the terms of the Grant Agreement and applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidance, DED may take actions as set forth in, but not limited to, [2 CFR § 200.339](#); and
    - f. Grant closeout by DED, including a requirement of certification from a professional engineer before the grant will be closed out.
      - (1) The professional engineer: (1) must be certified in Missouri; (2) must not be the engineer who originally designed the project; and (3) must not have a direct pecuniary interest in the project or an affiliation with an entity providing financial support for the project; and
      - (2) The professional engineer must certify that: (1) the project

meets the original design as approved by DED; (2) the build has been completed; (3) the design and installation conform to all applicable federal, state, and local requirements and standard engineering practices; and (4) the installed infrastructure will provide the service levels stated in the application.

8. Records created in the administration of this Program and in communications about it, including records submitted by and provided to applicants and subrecipients, will be subject to federal and state open records laws. DED may be required to disclose some information in the records relating to the Program or in agency communications upon DED's receipt of a third party request;
9. DED may disclose grant records to other state agencies or public governmental bodies in the course of administering the grant; and
10. Grant recipients must commit to:
  - a. Offer quality cellular service upon completion to all structures within the area defined by the application within the project time frame;
  - b. Offer reliable voice connection to 911 services;
  - c. Use the Program support only for the purposes intended and which have been approved by DED through the application process;
  - d. Offer quality cellular service at affordable rates; and
  - e. Offer service stated in the application for a period of at least five years after final award is made.

## **10. EVALUATION OF APPLICATION AND APPLICATION SCORING**

DED will evaluate project applications using evaluation criteria that take into consideration the following:

1. High-cost Areas: Towers located in areas with less than 50 persons per square mile by census tract (per [2020 Census Demographic Data Map](#)) will be identified as serving high-cost areas and eligible for further evaluation;
2. 911 Connectivity: Projects will be expected to provide reliable voice connection to 911 services;
3. Level of Impact: To determine projects serving the greatest number of people, applicants will be evaluated on the level of impact in the proposed service area;
  - a. Points will be assigned based on the number of structures served.

- b. Further, additional points will be assigned based on the average daily traffic counts of the busiest road in the tower footprint. Towers with higher daily traffic counts will be given higher priority;
4. Gaps in Cellular Service: Points will be assigned to eligible towers from those furthest from existing tower locations in the state to those closest. Only towers providing minimum quality cellular service will be considered;
5. Public Lands: Prioritization will be given to projects on public lands (e.g. local government property, state-owned property, water towers, and highway department properties);
6. Additional Considerations: Additional points will be given to projects covering an area that experiences seasonal or occasional high volume usage;
7. Private Investment: DED is not requiring applicants to provide a private investment. However, prioritization will be given to projects for which the applicant is including a private investment of at least 20%. Credit will be provided on a graduated scale to applicants that exceed the 20% private investment prioritization;
8. Access to quality cellular service at affordable rates.
9. Quality of service provided: DED will evaluate the anticipated quality and reliability of service to the proposed area;
10. Project Viability:
  - a. Technical Approach and Related Network Capacity and Performance: Applications will be evaluated on the proposed technological solution and the ability of the proposed network to provide sufficient capacity, as well as scalability, to meet the needs of the households, businesses, and community anchor institutions in the proposed service area; and
  - b. Applicant's Organizational Capability: Applications will be evaluated on the experience and expertise of the project management team, the past record of the applicant with projects of a similar size and scope, the applicant's capacity and readiness, and ability to manage the size of funds comparable to the awards of this Program. Further, DED will review financial statements to assess the applicant's financial wherewithal to complete the proposed project. DED will also consider the applicant's community involvement. Applicants with a history of any recent violations of federal and state labor and employment laws will receive negative points.
11. Reasonableness of Budget: Applications will be evaluated on the reasonableness of the budget based on its clarity, level of detail, appropriateness to the proposed technical and programmatic

- solutions, and the reasonableness of its costs. Applicants should provide the most recent quarter's financial statements, and three previous fiscal years of financial statements (indicated if any supplied are audited). Financial statements need to include: balance sheets, income statements, and statement of cash flows. Applicant should also provide an itemization of costs for materials and equipment with budget documents;
12. Cost Per Structure Served: Cost per structures served by a project will be evaluated with a higher number of points to be assigned to projects that that meet or fall below average cost per structure served for high cost areas;
  13. Sustainability of the Project: Applications will be evaluated on the ability of the project to be sustained beyond the award period. Applicants will need to provide pro forma financial information; including income statement and statement of cash flows, market projections, and business plans to demonstrate the applicant's financial ability to maintain the infrastructure over time. Project plans will need to describe the applicant's ability to scale the project by integrating advanced services over time; and
  14. Community Engagement: Applicants will be required to demonstrate cellular service need through public engagement efforts showing great disparity of service and multiple letters of support from community leaders, community anchor institutions, business owners, and citizens.





## **APPENDIX A: SCORECARD MISSOURI CELL TOWER GRANT PROGRAM**

### **Introduction to Scoring and Award Process**

The Department of Economic Development (DED) will give priority to projects that provide the highest return in public benefits for the public costs incurred. To evaluate the applications for public benefits with respect to the costs incurred, the federal guidelines specify certain priorities that DED must consider. To fulfill this requirement of reviewing applications in an objective and fair manner, applications will be reviewed and evaluated by DED using the following criteria and point values to systematically score and award grants. Applications will be scored through a two-step process based on information provided in the grant application. To ensure that an application receives the best possible score, it should include complete and comprehensive responses to all information requested.

Step one will consist of evaluating the applications against minimum requirements on a pass/fail basis. If an application fails any of these requirements, then it will be rejected and not advanced to the step two scoring process.

Step two will consist of the following criteria and point values.

<b>Scoring Overview</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Available Points</b>
Level of Impact	50
Project Viability	30
Budget	20
Cost Per Structure Served	10
Private Investment	20
Sustainability	15
Public Land	15
<b>Total:</b>	<b>160</b>

**Scoring Notes:**

1. Private investment is not required, but applications may be awarded additional points.
2. DED reserves the right to disqualify applications at its discretion. For example, applications that are incomplete, appear to be misleading, or raise significant doubts about the successful completion of the project may be disqualified.

**Step 1 Pass/Fail Criteria:** Applications must have a Yes response to all minimum criteria in order to advance to the Step 2 scoring evaluation:

Minimum Criteria	
Criteria	Yes/No
Applicant is an eligible entity	
Infrastructure is designed to deliver upon completion service that reliably meets or exceeds the cellular voice and data needs of users within the service area.	
Proposed tower project is located in areas with less than 50 persons per square mile by census tract.	
Proposed tower project will provide reliable voice connection to 911 services.	
If the applicant is not the end service provider, projects include evidence to demonstrate that formal carrier commitments are in place to deploy the services to the area(s) associate with the project	
Applicant's financial statements demonstrate the financial wherewithal to complete the proposed project as budgeted and if there are cost overruns	
If Applicant requires debt financing, evidence of letters of commitment from financial institutions to provide required financing	
Applicant offers service stated in the application for a period of at least five years after final award is made;	
Proposed project will be completed prior to September 30, 2026	

**Step 2 Points Evaluation**

**Level of Impact in the Proposed Service Area: 0 to 50 points**

To determine projects having the greatest impact, DED will assign more points to eligible towers further from existing tower locations and serving the most people in the proposed service area. Applicants are requested to solicit information from communities that are planned to be served. This information could include letters of support from different levels of the community or surveys from local government demonstrating lack or unreliable service.

Level of Impact – Structures Served	
Number of Structures <sup>12</sup>	Points (25)
0-50	5
51-250	10
251-500	15
501-1,000	20
1,000+	25

Level of Impact – Closest Tower (Same Min. Quality)	
Distance	Points (5)
≤ 1 mile	2
>1 to ≤3 miles	3
>3 to ≤5 miles	4
>5 miles	5

Level of Impact – Traffic Survey					
Average Daily Traffic	< 500	500-849	850-1249	1250-2499	>2500
Points	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10

**Additional Consideration: 0 to 5 points possible**

Up to 5 additional points will be available for projects that provide service to demonstrate additional service considerations such as covering an area that

<sup>12</sup> If applying under the New Construction category, applicants should provide an estimated number of structures their project would serve. This number should fall within a reasonable margin of error (± 5%) after the Pre-construction Phase otherwise DED reserves the right not to fund a project.

experiences seasonal or occasional high volume usage (e.g. proposed project service area includes a State Park or a large public event causing a sharp increase in customer usage)

**Community Engagement:** 0 to 5 points

Applicants should demonstrate cellular service need through public engagement efforts. Providing a letter of support for the renovation or construction of a cellular tower will yield minimum points whereas maximum points will be awarded to applications showing great disparity of service and multiple letters of support from community leaders, community anchor institutions, business owners and citizens.

**Project Viability:** – 30 points possible

**Technical Approach:** 0 to 20 points

Applications will be evaluated on the proposed technological solution and the ability and readiness of the proposed network to sufficiently meet the needs of the cellular users in the proposed service area.

Technical Approach		
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions
Technology Performance and Deployment	20	20 Points: Strong evidence provided indicating that the proposed technology will exceed minimum needs of users now and in the future. Strong evidence to validate technology deployment.
		10 Points: Strong evidence provided indicating that the proposed technology will meet the needs of users. Sufficient evidence provided that proposed technology will perform at the minimum expectations.
		5 Points: Sufficient evidence provided that proposed technology will perform at the minimum expectations. Sufficient

		evidence to validate technology deployment.
		0 Points: Insufficient evidence providence that proposed technology will perform at the minimum expectations and/or the applicant may not have provided evidence to validate technology deployment.

**Scoring Notes:**

1. A zero score in the Technology Performance category may result in application disqualification.

**Organizational Capability: 0 to 10 points**

Applications will be evaluated on the experience and expertise of the project management team, the past record of the applicant with projects of a similar size and scope and the applicant's capacity and ability. Further, DED will review financial statements to assess the applicant's financial wherewithal to complete the proposed project.

Organizational Capability		
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions
Technical Expertise and Performance History	7	7 Points: Applicant has strong technical expertise to complete the project, the organizational capability to provide on-going support and a strong track record in completing similar projects.
		3 Points: Applicant has the technical expertise to complete the project, the organizational capability to provide on-going support and has limited experience in completing similar projects.

		0 Points: Applicant lacks the technical expertise required to complete the project, does not have the organizational capability to provide on-going support and/or has little or no reliable history of completing similar projects.
Financial Wherewithal	3	3 Points: Application demonstrates strong evidence of financial wherewithal to complete and sustain the proposed project.
		0 Points: Limited or no evidence of financial wherewithal to complete and sustain the proposed project.

**Scoring Notes:**

1. Zero scores in the Technical Expertise, Performance History may result in application disqualification if the applicant's ability to complete the proposed project is in doubt.

**Budget:** 0 to 20 points

Applications will be evaluated on the reasonableness of the budget based on its clarity, level of detail, appropriateness to the proposed technical and programmatic solutions, and the reasonableness of its costs.

Budget		
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions
Cost Reasonableness and Appropriateness	10	10 Points: Strong support provided for reasonableness of the costs and the allocation of funds is sufficient to complete the project.
		5 Points: Adequate support provided for reasonableness of the costs and the allocation of funds is sufficient to complete the project.
		0 Points: Insufficient support provided for reasonableness of the costs, or the allocation of funds is not sufficient to complete the project.
Clarity and Level of Detail	10	10 Points: The budget provided is comprehensive, utilizes the required template, and includes a complete itemization of costs.
		0 Points: The budget provided is not comprehensive, is not in the required format, or does not include a complete itemization of costs.

**Scoring Notes:**

1. Applications with insufficient budget information, substantially unreasonable costs, or costs that are highly inappropriate to the proposed technical and programmatic solutions may be disqualified.

**Private Investment Funds:** 0 to 20 points

DED is not requiring applicants to provide private investment. However prioritization will be given to projects where providers are including a private investment of at least 20%.

Private Investment		
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions
Private Investment	20	20 Points: Private investment of at least 50%.
		15 Points: Private investment is 40-49%.
		10 Points: Private investment is 30-39%.
		5 Points: Private investment is 20-29%.
		0 Points: Private investment is 0-19%.

**Scoring Notes:**

If the private investment is in between two of the target percentages identified in the scoring definitions, points will be awarded proportionally to the funding provided.

**Cost Per Structures Served:** 0 to 10 points

Projects that are able to demonstrate a reasonable cost per structure served based on total project cost within high need areas will be prioritized.

Cost Per Structure Served	
Available Points	Scoring Definitions
10	<u>0 to 10 points:</u> Extra points will be given if the cost per structures served by the project falls at or below a reasonable cost per passing within high need areas.



**Sustainability:** 0 to 15 points

Applications will be evaluated on the ability of the project to be sustained beyond the award period. Applicants will need to provide pro forma financial information, market projections, and business plans to demonstrate the applicant's financial ability to maintain the infrastructure over time. Project plans will need to describe the applicant's ability to scale the project by integrating advanced services over time and demonstrate affordable cellular plans are available to end user consumers.

Sustainability		
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions
Sustainability	5	5 Points: Application includes a robust sustainability effort to ensure the project succeeds and can serve as a catalyst for future expansions within the surrounding area.
		0 Points: Application includes an insufficient sustainability effort to ensure the project succeeds and can serve as a catalyst for future expansions within the surrounding area.
Scalability	3	3 Points: The proposed project is scalable and has the ability to integrate advanced services over time without requiring future subsidies.
		0 Points: The proposed project has limited scalability and does not have the ability to integrate advanced services over time.
Affordability	5	5 Points: The Primary Cellular Carrier will provide quality cellular service at below average rates and participate in more

		than one government affordability program.
		0 Points: The Primary Cellular Carrier provides limited to no evidence of offering affordable rates and does not participate in any affordability programs.
Financial Ability to Maintain	2	2 Points: Strong evidence provided of the applicant's ability to maintain the infrastructure over time.
		0 Points: Insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate the applicant's ability to maintain the infrastructure over time.

**Scoring Notes:**

1. Significant doubts about the proposed project's sustainability or the applicant's ability to maintain the infrastructure over time may result in application disqualification.

**Locating on Public Land: – 15 points possible**

In order to maximize the impact of this Program DED will prioritize project siting on publicly owned lands. DED will award 15 points to projects utilizing publicly owned lands.

**Total Score:**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Available Points</b>
Level of Impact	-
Structures Served	25
Closest Tower	5
Traffic Survey	10
Additional Considerations	5
Community Engagement	5
Project Viability	-
Technical Approach	20
Organizational Capability	10
Budget	20
Private Investment	20
Cost Per Structure Served	10
Sustainability	-
Sustainability	5
Scalability	3
Financial Ability to Maintain	2
Affordability	5
Locating on Public Land	15
<b>Total:</b>	<b>160</b>



## **APPENDIX B: GIS REQUIREMENTS**

### **MISSOURI CELL TOWER GRANT PROGRAM**

For both project categories, applicants should submit shapefiles containing the following information as requested by DED. Additionally, applicants should submit “clean” versions of these shapefiles that contain a just a voice and data layer that will be publically available on DED’s website and shared with Challengers during the challenge process.

Shapefiles from any additional partnering cellular carriers on a project tower should be submitted as well with the below requirements.

#### **1. TOWER RETROFIT/REFURBISHMENT APPLICATION**

1. Cell tower dataset - Dataset containing separate layers for the following:
  - a. Cell tower: point layer with tower location;
  - b. Voice: polygon layer depicting area within which a customer could reasonably expect to complete a voice call; and
  - c. Data: polygon layer depicting area within which a customer could reasonably expect to receive the data service (e.g. 4G LTE).  
*Applicant to provide separate layer for each technology that would be offered (i.e. 4G LTE, 5G-NR, etc.)*
2. Cell tower dataset formatting requirements:
  - a. Cell tower dataset must be submitted in a single Zip archive file.  
*Must contain a sub-folder for each required layer above for shapefile submissions;*
  - b. Each required layer must be submitted in acceptable format (.shp, .kml, or .kmz), contain the appropriate geometry type as specified above, and be labeled according to the below layer naming convention:
    - (1) {applicant name- project name}\_celltower
    - (2) {applicant name- project name}\_voice
    - (3) {applicant name- project name}\_data{technology}
  - c. All layers must use the unprojected (geographic) WGS84 / EPSG:4326 coordinate reference system
  - d. Polygon layers contain *clean and simple polygons; and*

- e. Must include metadata according to FGDC standards including primary contact, summary, description of layer, and process description including how the layer data (i.e. location or area) was determined. *For .kml or .kmz files, metadata should be provided in an excel or xml file.*
3. Supplemental dataset - Dataset containing separate layers for each of the below:
    - a. Fiber to the cell tower: line layer containing fiber route proposed tower could use; and
    - b. Structures served: point layer of households the tower could serve, labeled with street address, and structure type (*optional – label structures as houses, businesses, farms, community anchor institutions, and workshops that are within the proposed service area*).
  4. Supplemental dataset formatting requirements:
    - a. Supplemental dataset must be submitted in a single Zip archive file. *Must contain a sub-folder for each required layer above for shapefile submissions;*
    - b. Each required layer must be submitted in an acceptable format (.shp, .kml, or .kmz), contain the appropriate geometry type as specified above, and be labeled according to the below layer naming convention:
      - (1) {applicant name- project name}\_fibertothetower; and
      - (2) {applicant name- project name}\_structuresserved
    - c. All layers must use the unprojected (geographic) WGS84 / EPSG:4326 coordinate reference system; and
    - d. Must include metadata according to FGDC standards including primary contact, summary, description of layer, and process description. *For .kml or .kmz files, metadata should be provided in an excel or xml file.*

## 2. NEW TOWER APPLICATION

1. Proposed tower dataset- Dataset containing separate layers for the following:
  - a. Construction boundary: layer of the 3.15 square mileage area where applicant is proposing to build the proposed tower;
  - b. Voice: layer depicting estimation of area within which a customer could reasonably expect to complete a voice call; and
  - c. Data: layer depicting estimation of area within which a customer could reasonably expect to receive the data service (e.g. 4G LTE)

Applicant to provide separate layer for each technology that would be offered (e.g. 4G LTE, 5G-NR.)

2. Proposed tower dataset formatting requirements:
  - a. Proposed tower dataset must be submitted in a single Zip archive file. *Must contain a sub-folder for each required layer above for shapefile submissions;*
  - b. Each required layer must be submitted in acceptable format (.shp, .kml, or .kmz), polygon geometry type, and be labeled according to the below layer naming convention:
    - (1) {applicant name- project name}\_constructionboundary;
    - (2) {applicant name- project name}\_voice; and
    - (3) {applicant name- project name}\_data{technology}.
  - c. Must use the unprojected (geographic) WGS84 / EPSG:4326 coordinate reference system;
  - d. Polygon layers contain clean and simple polygons; and
  - e. Must include metadata according to FGDC standards including primary contact, summary, description of layer, and process description including how the layer data was determined. *For .kml or .kmz files, metadata should be provided in an excel or xml file*
3. Supplemental dataset- Dataset containing separate layers for each of the below:
  - a. Public land: polygon layer highlighting public land the tower could serve; and
  - b. High volume area: polygon layer highlighting road areas with high volume.
4. Supplemental dataset formatting requirements:
  - a. Supplemental dataset must be submitted in a single Zip archive file. *Must contain a sub-folder for each required layer above for shapefile submissions;*
  - b. Each required layer must be submitted in an acceptable format (.shp, .kml, or .kmz), contain the appropriate geometry type as specified above, and be labeled according to the below layer naming convention:
    - (1) {applicant name- project name}\_publicland; and
    - (2) {applicant name- project name}\_highvolume
  - c. All layers must use the unprojected (geographic) WGS84 / EPSG:4326 coordinate reference system; and
  - d. Must include metadata according to FGDC standards including primary contact, summary, description of layer, and process

description. For .kml or .kmz files, metadata should be provided in an excel or xml file.

**Note: Applicants who receive an award in the New Construction category will be required to submit additional GIS data upon confirmation of the definitive tower location.**



## **APPENDIX C: PRE-CONSTRUCTION PHASE BENCHMARKS MISSOURI CELL TOWER GRANT PROGRAM**

Applicants applying under the New Construction category of the program will be required to meet benchmarks and submit information to DED demonstrating benchmarks are being met. DED reserves the right to withdraw funding for a project if benchmarks are not made.

The benchmarks listed below are not all-inclusive of a project but will be viewed by DED as major milestones in progress for the Pre-construction Phase. Upon submission of all benchmark documentation and DED gives Notice to Proceed, grant funds withheld during the Pre-construction Phase will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis.

### **1. SITE IDENTIFICATION**

1. Applicants should provide the following information to DED in this benchmark:
  - a. Tentative location of the site;
  - b. Identify landowner and steps needing to be taken to obtain land ownership or lease; and
  - c. Any surveys carried out.

### **2. GROUND LEASE EXECUTED**

1. Applicants should provide the following information to DED in this benchmark:
  - a. Evidence that the ground lease has been obtained;
  - b. Provide DED with a definitive count of the total structures to be served by the project; and
  - c. Updated GIS shapefile information that shows among other information the location of the tower, signal reach, and locations that will be served<sup>13</sup>.

### **3. PERMITS OBTAINED AND ZONING APPROVED**

1. Applicants should provide the following information to DED in this benchmark:
  - a. Evidence that all necessary permits have been obtained and the zoning approval process has concluded.

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix B: GIS Requirements, Section 1. Tower Retrofit/Refurbishment Application



#### **4. ANY APPLICABLE REVIEWS COMPLETE**

1. Applicants should provide the following information to DED in this benchmark:
  - a. Evidence that the environmental review process is complete if applicable; and
  - b. Evidence that any other regulatory reviews are complete (e.g. SHPO and FAA approval).

#### **5. NOTICE TO PROCEED**

1. Applicants should provide the following information to DED in this benchmark:
  - a. Documentation that the applicant is able to proceed and construction is ready to begin<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> DED will release the remaining grant funds awarded to the project after sending the applicant Notice to Proceed documentation.