



Finding the Broadband Internet Service That Works for Your Family

A guide provided by the Blandin Foundation, ECMECC and Milaca Public Schools



www.ecmecc.org



www.milaca.k12.mn.us



Blandin Foundation™
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

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Introduction

The ability to find, comprehend, judge and share information is critical to today's students and to our citizenry. Access to a high-speed broadband Internet connection is a primary means to exercise these skills. On our school campus, we are fortunate to have a high-quality Internet connection. **The purpose of this guide is to help parents and students find the home Internet connection that best fits their needs, in terms of bandwidth and price.**

Broadband availability may vary considerably by geographic location. Homes within and near city limits generally have at least two wired Internet providers – traditionally the phone and the cable company. In the countryside, choices are generally limited to one wired provider and one or more wireless options: cellular data, satellite or fixed wireless. In some locations, wireless options are the only options. In this guide, you will find listings of providers offering services in our area.

For those families with a choice of broadband providers, there are many factors to consider when selecting your provider: price, speed or bandwidth, data caps, reliability, customer service, mobility, service bundle and required contracts. You can go online to read reviews, investigate service packages or talk with your friends and neighbors about which providers provide the best services.

Affordability of broadband is a concern to many of our families. Some providers have programs that offer low-cost options for families. Details on some of these programs are included in this guide.

Area Broadband Providers

Below is a list of providers that market services within all or part of the school district. The list provides the company name and the technology that they use to deliver broadband. Please contact the providers directly for specific information on services and coverage area.

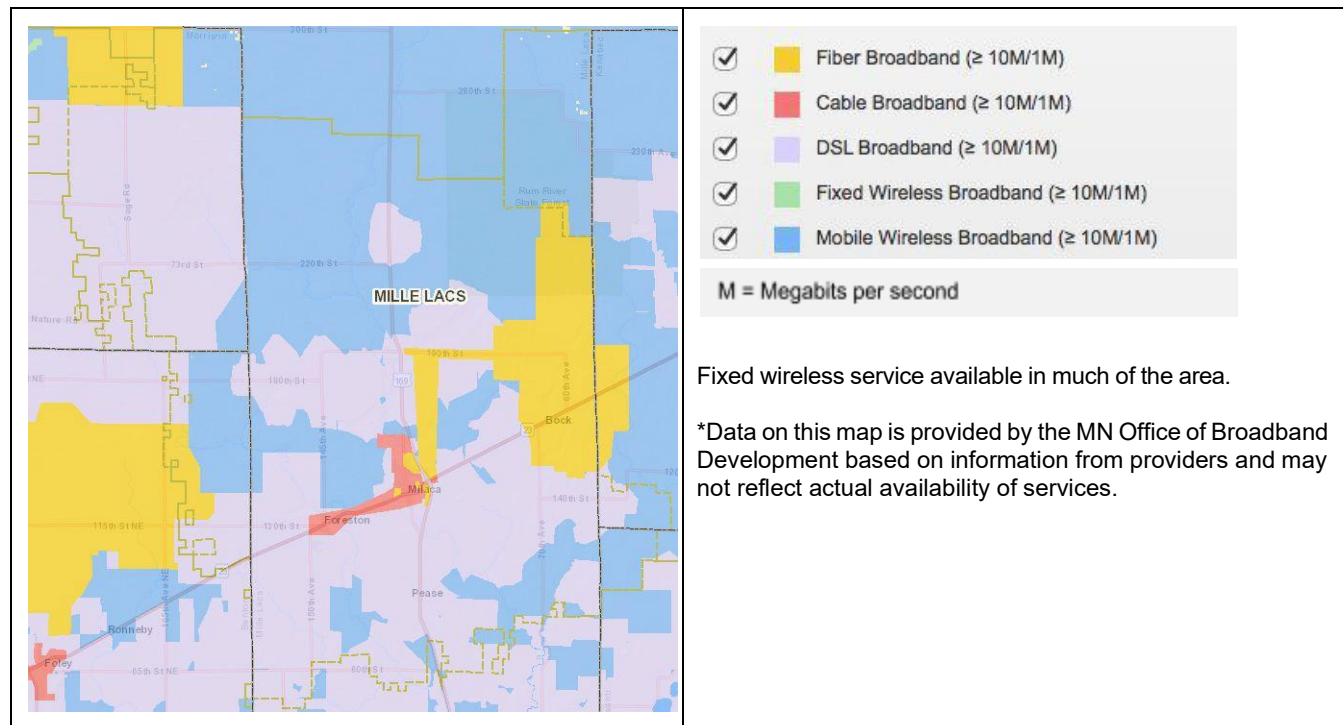
ISD 912 - Milaca, Minnesota*		
AT&T Mobility	Mobile	https://www.att.com/
Benton Cooperative Telephone	DSL/Fiber	http://www.bctelco.net/
Frontier Communications	DSL	https://frontier.com
Genesis Wireless	Wireless	http://www.genesiswireless.com
Hughes Network Systems, LLC	Satellite	https://www.hughes.com/
Midcontinent Communications	Cable	https://www.midco.com/services/internet/
Milaca Local Link	DSL/Fiber	http://www.milaca.net/
Sprint	Mobile	http://www.sprint.com
T-Mobile	Mobile	https://www.t-mobile.com/
U Bet Net	DSL	http://www.youbetnet.net
Verizon Wireless	Mobile	https://www.verizonwireless.com/
ViaSat, Inc.	Satellite	https://www.viasat.com/

**The listing of companies in this guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement of services. Companies wishing to be included in this listing should contact mjohnson@ecmecc.org.*

A more comprehensive list of broadband providers by county is available here: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/providers-county_tcm1045-190762.pdf. Company web addresses and fastest download and upload Internet service offerings are included.

Broadband Speed and Infrastructure Map

Below is a map indicating the highest broadband service levels available in our school district. The color key below shows the type of infrastructure – fiber, cable, DSL, fixed wireless or cellular wireless – used to deliver service.



Fixed wireless service available in much of the area.

*Data on this map is provided by the MN Office of Broadband Development based on information from providers and may not reflect actual availability of services.

[To access additional maps, click here:

<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/maps/general-maps.jsp>. You can select county maps or the interactive map which may be a good choice if your district crosses county lines.]

The federal government, through the Federal Communication Commission, has set 25 Megabits per second (Mbps) download/3 Mbps upload as the minimum standard for broadband services. Many consumers in rural areas do not have access to services that meet this standard. Even with lower speeds, students will still be able to successfully accomplish their homework and parents can access the parent portals.

Speeds needed for common online tasks, according to the Federal Communication Commission (<https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/guides/broadband-speed-guide>):

Email/Basic browsing	1 Mbps download
Video streaming	4 Mbps for standard video or 5-8 Mbps for high definition video
Music streaming	.5 Mbps
Video web conferencing	1.5 Mbps
Large uploads/downloads	50 Mbps download/ 25 Mbps upload for high definition files
Average student use	5-25 Mbps

Low-cost plans

Broadband is an essential tool for all families, especially those with children in school, and some providers have created low-cost plans that make it easier for most families to subscribe. Below is a table that summarizes some of these plans. If your existing or prospective provider is not listed, please go to their website or contact them to see if they have a low-cost plan. (must meet eligibility requirements)

Provider*	Program Name	Program Details	Web Site
CenturyLink	Lifeline	Discount of \$9.25 per month on Internet services.	http://www.centurylink.com/aboutus/community/community-development/lifeline.html
Frontier	Lifeline	Discount of \$9.25 per month on Internet services	https://frontier.com/resources/discountprograms/lifelineprogram/minnesota
Midco	Lifeline	Discount of \$9.25 per month on Internet services.	https://www.midco.com/lifeline/
PCs for People	PCs for People	Refurbished computers at no or low cost. Wireless service as low as \$10 per month over the Sprint network.	www.pcsforpeople.com
<i>*The listing of companies in this guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement of their services. Companies wishing to be included in this listing should contact the school district. Prices and federal programs subject to change.</i>			

Public Access

We recognize that some families will not be able to get broadband and/or lack computers at their homes.

In or near our community, you can get access to both equipment and Internet services at the following locations. With some of these locations, the wi-fi connection reaches outside for 24-hour access.

- East Central Regional Library - Milaca - <https://ecrlib.org/locations/milaca-community-library/> - (320) 983-3677

Families might also find wi-fi connections at local businesses, such as coffee shops, restaurants, tourism attractions, etc.

Questions

If you have questions or comments about Internet service available to you at your home or public access points, or you have information to add to this document contact Marc Johnson - mjohnson@ecmecc.org