# FCC Grants $41M to Alaskan Telecom for Rural Wireless Broadband

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The FCC today deemed Alaskan telecom General Communications eligible for $41.4 million in grant money to build out 3G and 4G mobile broadband [1] in underserved rural areas.

The money, coming as part of the FCC's Tribal Mobility Fund Phase I, will go toward serving 37,000 people across 48 communities in Alaska.

"We will continue to work with policymakers to ensure that quality service is sustainable in high cost locations throughout rural Alaska," Tina Pidgeon, GCI's senior vice president of governmental affairs, said in a statement.

GCI expects to deploy the mobile broadband service within two or three years depending on "construction schedules and the type of technology deployed."

Alaska hasn't had access to the kind of competitive landscape that much of the population in the continental U.S. enjoys. AT&T had been the incumbent national provider for years, until Verizon in 2013 finally launched data services in Alaska [2] after maintaining a roaming agreement with regional carrier ACS for years.

The Tribal Mobility Fund is a one-time $50 million payment to companies building out wireless broadband networks in tribal regions. The FCC also awarded grants for similar projects in Arizona, Montana, New Mexico and Utah.

The FCC also granted some funds to Copper Valley Wireless for Alaskan projects.

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