

Frequently Asked Questions

- **WHAT IS A TELECOMMUTER?**

A telecommuter is someone who performs the majority of their employment duties from a home office or coworking space.

- **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?**

An eligible telecommuter is someone who:

- Is a full-time employee for a company headquartered outside of the region; and
- Is relocating from a distance of 60 miles or greater from the Bemidji area (as defined by a radius of the City of Bemidji); and
- Is becoming a full time resident of the Bemidji area (56601 zip code); and
- Performs the majority (95-100%) of their employment duties remotely (from a home office or co-working space in the Bemidji area such as the LaunchPad); and
- Is obtaining internet services through Paul Bunyan Communications.

- **ARE RECENT COLLEGE GRADS ELIGIBLE IF WE STAY IN THE BEMIDJI COMMUNITY AND ACCEPT A TELECOMMUTING POSITION FROM OUTSIDE OF THE AREA?**

YES - Recent area higher education grads who accept full-time remote work position with a company headquartered outside of the Bemidji region and are telecommuting from Bemidji are eligible.

- **WHAT IF I MOVE TO BEMIDJI AND BECOME EMPLOYED WITH A BEMIDJI AREA COMPANY?**

Only remote workers bringing their job with them are eligible to apply to this program. However, anyone relocating to the Bemidji area can take advantage of the Community Concierge Program and would like to become more acclimated and engaged with your new hometown. Check out the New Resident Relocation Program!

- **SHOULD I APPLY FOR A GRANT PRIOR TO MOVING TO THE BEMIDJI AREA?**

Yes. A grant can be conditionally approved prior to your move to the Bemidji area (56601 zip code). Only after your move is complete and proper documentation is provided will your application be considered eligible for the program.

- **HOW DOES AN APPLICANT PROVIDE PROOF OF RESIDENCY IN THE BEMIDJI AREA?**

Applicants must provide one of the following for reimbursement:

- Housing lease, contract or verified living arrangement (56601 zip code)
- Utility bill with service address listed
- Property tax bill
- Homeowner/renter insurance
- Contract for internet services through Paul Bunyan Communications

- **HOW DOES THE APPLICATION PROCESS WORK?**

The application process is open until funds are depleted.

- STEP ONE**

Complete and submit the Greater Bemidji 218 Relocate Telecommuter Grant Application online prior to relocating. There are four sections:

1. Applicant Information
2. Eligibility
3. Proof of Bemidji area Residency (documentation required)
4. Electronic Signature

- STEP TWO**

218 Relocate will review the application, verification of the supporting documentation, follow-up with the employer, and coordination of internet services through Paul Bunyan Communications. Please allow two weeks for this review process.

- STEP THREE**

The Greater Bemidji Board of Directors will review qualified applicants for conditional or final approval. All applicants will be notified of their application status at this point.

- STEP FOUR**

A grant acceptance form will be sent to the approved applicant using the email address provided in the application. The applicant must sign and return the form. After receipt, the grant award will be applied directly to the grantee's Paul Bunyan Communications monthly internet contract for six months free Gigabit Internet Services.

- **WHAT GRANTS CAN AN APPLICANT RECEIVE?**

The 218 Relocate Telecommuter Relocation Program will provide one grant per household. The grant award will be applied directly to the grantee's Paul Bunyan Communications internet contract for six months free Gigabit Internet Services.

The full package includes:

- Six months Gigabit Internet Service with GigaZone Blast WiFi featuring WiFi 6 Technology through **Paul Bunyan Communications** (one-year contract required). Higher Speeds up to 10 Gig available! (\$558 value).
- One-year membership to the **LaunchPad** co-working space in the Historic Mayflower Building (\$1,500 value).
- Free access to the **Community Concierge Program**, connecting you and your family to the community.
- One-year Associate Level membership to the **Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce** (\$335 value).
- Teleworking support through **Effective**, a remote worker toolbox (provided by Justin DiRose).

- **DOES 218 RELOCATE PROVIDE ANY FREE OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE BEMIDJI AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?**

YES! Grant awards include a free one-year Associate Level membership to the Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce (\$335 value). For more information, please contact: abby@bemidji.org

- **WHAT ARE “QUALIFIED EXPENSES” FOR THE TELECOMMUTER RELOCATION PROGRAM?**

- Six months Gigabit Internet Service with GigaZone Blast WiFi featuring WiFi 6 Technology through Paul Bunyan Communications (one-year contract required).**

One of the largest all-fiber optic gigabit networks in the country is right here in Beltrami County! You can get Internet speeds of up to 10 Gigabit per second both uploads and downloads to telecommute, distance learn, stream your favorite videos and much more, all at the same time if you want.

Grant awards will be applied directly to grantee's **Paul Bunyan Communications** monthly internet contract for six months free Gigabit Internet Services.

Need help with your internet service? Contact customerservice@paulbunyan.net

Greater Bemidji reserves the right to adjust the definition of qualifying expenses and the eligibility requirements of the program.

- **WHAT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED TO SUBMIT AS PROOF OF QUALIFIED EXPENSES?**

No documentation is required through the application process for 218 Relocate regarding the qualifying expenses but your active internet services and contract through Paul Bunyan Communications will be verified as a part of the review process after you have submitted your complete application.

- **WHAT IS A COWORKING SPACE?**

A coworking space is a shared location outside of the home ideal for telecommuters and small business owners, that provides a flexible size, environment, and contract terms. The LaunchPad is a co-working space located in Bemidji in the Historic Mayflower Building.

- **IF MY EMPLOYER COVERS THE COSTS FOR ANY QUALIFYING EXPENSES, CAN I SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR ANY REMAINING EXPENSES?**

Yes. An applicant can apply for any portion of qualified expenses that are not paid or reimbursed by their employer. It will be verified during the application process the extent of the reimbursement or financial coverage by the employer towards the internet services.

- **CAN MORE THAN ONE PERSON PER HOUSEHOLD APPLY SEPARATELY FOR THE TELECOMMUTER RELOCATION PROGRAM?**

No. There can only be one grant awarded per household. Feel free to utilize the free Community Concierge Program for your entire family, however!

- **DOES THE PROGRAM PROVIDE JOB PLACEMENT OR HOUSING LOCATION SERVICES?**

No. Applicants are responsible for obtaining their own employment and housing.

If you are looking for a job, a good place to start is [BemidjiWorks](#). This will direct you to some resources to help you begin your search. If you are looking for specific guidance, you can contact Erin Echternach at eechternach@greaterbemidji.com

Here are some tools for relocating to the Bemidji area:

- For data on demographics, median home prices, and services and amenities, click [HERE](#)
 - For available housing inquiries, visit:
 - ◆ [Century 21 Dickinson Realtors](#)
 - ◆ [Grimes Realty](#)
 - For new housing construction options, click [HERE](#)
 - For basic information about the Bemidji area schools, click [HERE](#)
 - For child care information, click [HERE](#)
- **IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS, WHERE CAN I FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?**

All of the details of the 218 Relocate Telecommuter Relocation Program or the New Resident Relocation Program can be found within these FAQs, or you can send an email to Erin Echternach at eechternach@greaterbemidji.com

Contact Paul Bunyan Communication at customerservice@paulbunyan.net for any questions regarding their internet services and how to apply for installation in your home.