

Microsoft to help expand rural broadband in 6 states

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Microsoft says it will team up with communities in North Dakota, Wisconsin, Virginia, Texas, Wyoming and Washington state in a program broadly aimed at fostering economic growth in rural and smaller metropolitan areas.

Company president Brad Smith launched the TechSpark program Thursday in Fargo, a metropolitan area of more than 200,000 people that includes a Microsoft campus with about 1,500 employees. Smith says the six communities are different by design and not all have a Microsoft presence.

Smith says TechSpark is a multi-year, multi-million dollar investment meant to help teach computer science to students, expand [rural broadband](#) and create and fill jobs. North Dakota currently has more than 13,000 [job openings](#).

The company has also selected Appleton, Wisconsin as one of the sites. The other communities will be announced later.

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