



2021 the Year of Broadband Access

During [Governor Tony Evers](#) State of the State Address, he declared 2021 as the Year of Broadband Access and challenged our state to invest a historic \$200 Million in the 2021-2023 State Biennial Budget for this effort.

The State Broadband Office at the Public Service Commission (PSC) is thrilled that Gov. Tony Evers continues to demonstrate his commitment to ensuring that our communities have access to high-speed internet service. Having affordable broadband access is an essential service, especially when so many of us are asked to work and study remotely. We look forward to working with Governor Evers, the legislature, and our partners to ensure everyone in the state has equitable access to quality internet service regardless of where you live or work.



Upcoming Webinars of Interest

[Bridging the Digital Divide for an Inclusive Future](#)

January 28th 10:00 - 11:00 am CT

Hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, this panel will bring together experts to discuss the current state of the digital divide. They will highlight solutions for building broadband infrastructure where it's needed, providing access to digital devices, and promoting digital literacy, which have become critical for gaining living-wage employment.

[Bridging the Divide Registration and information about the expert panelists](#)

[2021 Utility Damage Prevention Meetings](#)

February 10th 9:00 - 11:00 am CT

March 10th 9:00 - 11:00 am CT

Hosted by Diggers Hotline, this webinar is a utility damage prevention meeting, provided for free to excavation stakeholders including telecommunications and ISPs. This meeting will help you to brush up on the one-call law and safe digging practices, current events, and new Diggers Hotline services. Facility operators and service vendors are offering a virtual exhibit hall with each meeting as well.

[Utility Damage Prevention registration and information](#)

Data as the Foundation for Broadband Planning

February 17th 1:00 - 2:00 PM

Hosted by Broadband USA, the federal government compiles huge broadband datasets cataloguing broadband availability and subscriptions through the US Census Bureau and Federal Communications Commission, among others. These can be augmented with commercially available speed test data to provide a better insight into broadband access and availability. This webinar will explore how to utilize of these datasets and how to use data to strengthen your broadband planning efforts.

[Data as the Foundation for Broadband Planning information and registration](#)

Follow the Broadband Expansion Grant Process

The best way to find the documents associated with a Broadband Expansion Grant round is to search the docket on the [Public Service Commission's website](#). The current round of grants can be found by searching the docket 5-BF-2021. Last year's grant round and the CARES awards are under 5-BF-2020. Within the docket the public can find all the applications, comments, memos, correspondence, reports and Commission orders associated with a particular grant round. If you would like notifications when new documents are added you can subscribe to dockets [here](#).

PSC Announces Thousands More Have Broadband Access Thanks to CARES Act Funding

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) announced today that the Emergency Infrastructure Grants funded through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided access to new and improved service to more than 20,000 locations throughout the state, according to final and interim reports provided by grant awardees. Governor Tony Evers authorized the CARES Act funding for broadband expansion in September and the PSC awarded \$5.3 million to 12 projects who applied for the funding in October.

"I'm thrilled that we were able to work so quickly with our internet service providers and public partners to get thousands more homes and businesses connected by the end of 2020. These projects will make a real impact for students attending school virtually, those who are working from home, businesses who need to be connected with customers, and patients who need to schedule telehealth visits with their doctors during the pandemic." said Rebecca Cameron Valcq, Chairperson of the PSC.



Above: Plowing in mainline fiber in Burnett County with CARES funding

Below: Fiber back to the main office in Dane County with CARES funding



Above: Wireless Access Point being installed in Green County with CARES funding

New Reports and School District Survey Results

New Broadband Report and Policy Brief from UW Extension

The Center for Community and Economic Development recently released two new publications regarding Broadband Internet and the Wisconsin Economy. The report and the policy brief pro explore a range of broadband issues and include both a detailed analysis and policy options.

[The **Broadband and the Wisconsin Economy** Report can be found here.](#)

[The **Strategies and Policy Option for Broadband Access Across Wisconsin** can be found here.](#)

New Home Internet Access Survey and Digital Equity Data from DPI

In January, the Department of Public Instruction released two new public reporting tools; the [Digital Equity dashboard](#) and the [K-12 Student Digital Equity Map](#). These two tools provide a high level overview of the home internet access survey results from K-12 students and include important information on availability, affordability and performance. Check them out.

Wisconsin ISP Survey

The PSC encourages Internet Service Providers to complete our questionnaire regarding the Wisconsin Broadband Coverage Data Collection program. We intend to use the results to work with providers to make our data collection process easier and more effective. Internet Service Providers can access the survey at the link below.

[Survey Link](#)



WBO E-Newsletter



out regular communication to internet service providers, grant applicants and broadband stakeholders. We aim to be relevant and share timely information from our office.

Please reach out if anyone from the Wisconsin Broadband Office can be of assistance. [Email Us](#)