



Wisconsin Joins National "Internet For All" Initiative

Last week, Governor Tony Evers and the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced that Wisconsin has signed on to participate in the "Internet for All" initiative, which will invest \$65 billion to provide affordable, reliable, high-speed internet for everyone in America by the end of the decade.

Funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and administered by NTIA, the Internet for All programs will build internet infrastructure, teach digital skills, and provide necessary technology to ensure that everyone in America – including communities of color, rural communities, and older Americans – have the access and skills they need to fully participate in today's society.

The Internet for All programs launched with three Notices of Funding Opportunities:

- Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program (\$42.5 billion);
- Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program (\$1 billion); and,
- State Digital Equity Act programs (\$1.5 billion).

To participate in the BEAD Program, Wisconsin has submitted a letter of intent and a planning funds request, which will unlock up to \$5 million in planning funds and allow Wisconsin to begin creating its five-year action plan. Each participating state is guaranteed a minimum \$100 million allocation, with additional funding determinations made based on the forthcoming coverage maps from the Federal Communications Commission.

Internet for All [fact sheet](#).

WISCONSIN SIGNED ON



PSC Awards Nonprofit and Telemedicine Grants

Commission Awards \$500,000 in Nonprofit Access Grants for 16 Projects

The funds will go to support 16 projects by 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that will provide access to affordable telecommunication services to low-income households, people with disabilities, or customers in areas of the state with relatively high costs of services.

“Access to affordable and reliable telecommunications services is extremely important,” said PSC Chairperson Rebecca Cameron Valcq. “These nonprofit organizations will work in their communities to connect some of our most vulnerable populations with critically needed phone service, data plans, Wi-Fi, loaned devices, computer labs, and specialized telecommunications equipment for Wisconsinites with disabilities.” Here is the full [press release](#) and [list of awards](#).

Commission Awards more than \$790,000 in Telemedicine Grants for 12 Projects

The funds will support 12 projects that will purchase medical telecommunications equipment to enhance access to medical care in rural or underserved areas.

“The projects funded today use broadband and telecommunications services to reduce barriers to getting necessary health screenings as well as decrease the time to access emergency or specialized care for our most vulnerable communities,” said PSC Chairperson Rebecca Cameron Valcq. Here is the full [press release](#) and [list of awards](#).

Federal Broadband Updates

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

Funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, BEAD is a federal grant program that aims to get all Americans access to affordable, high speed internet. The BEAD program is administered through states, and in Wisconsin the Public Service Commission will serve

as the program coordinator. BEAD prioritizes unserved locations that have no access or access under 25/3 Mbps, and then underserved locations without access to 100/20 Mbps and finally to community anchor institutions.

[Notice of funding opportunity released](#)

Application for planning closes: **August 15, 2022**

Wisconsin 5-year Action Plan due: **270 days after receipt of planning funds**

Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program

The new [middle mile program](#) will provide \$1 billion in funding for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure, and to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas of the country. Governments, industry, non-profits and partnerships are among the eligible entities to apply.

[Notice of funding opportunity released](#)

Application open: **June 21, 2022**

Applications closes: **September 30, 2022**

NTIA Broadband Resources for State and Local Government

NTIA has developed a series of short resources for state and local governments that provide a simple overview of key points on broadband topics related to preparing for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

- [Broadband Network Deployment Engineering](#)
- [Economics of Broadband Networks](#)
- [Planning a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy](#)
- [Setting Up Initial Stakeholder Engagement](#)
- [Broadband Policies & Mechanisms](#)
- [Broadband Asset Mapping & Management](#)

FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Funding Authorizations

The FCC continues to review long-form applications of winning bidders in the [RDOF Auction 904](#) on a rolling basis. As of [May 12, 2022](#), the following winners have been **authorized** for funding in Wisconsin: Baldwin Telecom, Inc., Bruce Telephone Company, Inc., CenturyLink, Inc., Charter Fiberlink CCO, LLC, Cuba City Telephone Exchange Co., La Valle Telephone Cooperative, Inc., Lakeland Communications Group, LLC, Marquette-Adams Telephone Cooperative, Inc., Reedsburg Utility Commission, Richland-Grant Telephone Cooperative, Inc., and Somerset Telephone Co. Inc.

Broadband Office Launches Internet Self Report



The Wisconsin Broadband Office recently developed a survey to gather information on the internet experience of Wisconsin residents. The survey will collect information on internet speed, affordability, device use, satisfaction and performance. The survey will be used to gather data on the internet in Wisconsin over time and track our progress towards affordable, high performance broadband for all.

In June, the Commission will add a phone number and call in opportunity for individuals unable to take the survey online.

[Take WISER](#)

Digital Equity and Inclusion Updates

Get Internet Website Launching

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provides eligible households \$30 per month off their internet bills. To deliver maximum cost savings to families, the Biden-Harris Administration has secured commitments from over 20 leading internet providers to offer ACP-eligible households a high-speed internet plan for no more than \$30 per month. Eligible families who pair their ACP benefit with one of these plans can now receive high-speed internet at no cost. The Administration is launching a new website getinternet.gov to assist households to find a no cost offer.

Digital Equity Act (DEA) Programs

Funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, DEA Programs are planning and implementation programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity. The three programs include two state formula programs and one competitive program. The first state formula grant will be to develop a State Digital Equity Plan and the following grant will be to implement the plan.

[Notice of funding opportunity released](#)

[Digital Equity Act Population Viewer](#)

Application for planning grant due: **July 12, 2022**

Wisconsin Digital Equity Plan due: **365 days after federal approval of state application**

Digital Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder Group

The State of Wisconsin Digital Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group meets monthly to inform the State Digital Equity and Inclusion Plan and work to strengthen the digital equity ecosystems in the State. In addition, the group has been discussing developing a digital navigator model, how to increase participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program and learning from other members. If you are interested in joining the stakeholder group please [email](#).

Governor's Task Force - June Meeting

The June meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access is scheduled to take place virtually on Wednesday, June 8, 2022 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. The Task Force will continue work on preparing their annual report on Broadband Access to the Governor and Legislature which is due by June 30th.

The meeting will be posted on the [PSC calendar](#) and the agenda will include information for the public to listen.

Two Reports Worth Reading

State of Digital Equity & Using Data to Advance Digital Skills

EveryoneOn released their final report in the 3-report series on digital connectivity during the pandemic. [The State of Digital Equity: Lessons from survey data and focus groups](#) was published in partnership with John B. Horrigan, PhD and explores the persistent barriers to internet adoption. The report may be used to develop initiatives that foster digital equity.

A new resource from the National Governor Association's (NGA) Workforce Innovation Network, [Using Data to Advance Digital Skills: A State Playbook](#) provides resources and data sets for communities working to close the digital skills gap. The playbook includes data sets, key questions and best practices.

State of Digital Equity

Digital Skills Playbook

Grant Recipient Corner

Reimbursement Reminder: Important reminder for both state and ARPA grant recipients: the grant programs will only reimburse eligible expenses **after** they are incurred. Once the expense has been incurred, you need to submit supporting documentation (invoices, receipts) along with a completed reimbursement request form for review and (if eligible) reimbursement.



WBO Newsletter



The Wisconsin Broadband Office will send 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](#)

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