



Internet for All Wisconsin Listening Tour Announced



Gov. Evers, together with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC), announced the statewide [Internet for All Wisconsin Listening Tour](#), a series of nine in-person and two virtual interactive meetings to help develop the state's five-year action plan to deploy high-speed internet and improve internet affordability and adoption.

Community leaders and all interested members of the public are welcome to attend this free event. Prospective attendees are advised to visit the listening tour webpage for additional event information as it becomes available.

Wisconsin could expect an allocation of \$800 million to \$1.1 billion to implement the state's five-year action plan for broadband and approximately \$25 million to implement the state's Digital Equity Plan under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's 'Internet for All' programs. In December 2022, Gov. Tony Evers and the PSC announced the nearly \$6 million federal investment for the state to develop these plans by gathering local input from Wisconsinites in broadband access and digital inclusion activities.

The Internet for All Wisconsin Listening Tour is hosted by the PSC's Wisconsin Broadband Office, in partnership with Wisconsin's nine regional economic development organizations. If someone is unable to attend an in-person or virtual meeting, they may still submit public comment [here](#).

[Listening Tour](#)

PSC Awards over \$1.9 Million in "Internet for All" Planning Grants

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC or Commission) awarded 44 grants under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's 'Internet for All' Initiative, including the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Workforce Planning Program, Digital Equity Outreach Program and BEAD Local Planning Grants.

These grant programs will inform and prepare for the next stages of the 'Internet for All' timeline. Wisconsin could expect an allocation of \$800 million to \$1.1 billion to implement these plans under BEAD and additional federal funding will help to implement the state's digital equity plan so that all residents have access to a reliable, affordable internet connection.

The Commission made awards to two entities totaling \$100,000 under the BEAD Workforce Planning Grant Program. This program is designed to engage existing entities involved in workforce development—including industry groups, labor organizations, and technical colleges—to plan workforce development strategies, in preparation for BEAD funding and to ensure all Wisconsinites have a pathway to these career opportunities. The list of Workforce Planning Grants awards is [here](#).

The Commission made awards to seven entities totaling \$335,000 under the Digital Equity Outreach Grant. Digital Equity Outreach activities may include but are not limited to

interactive workshops, surveys, townhall discussions, data collection, and interviews with covered populations. The information collected from successful applicants will inform the statewide digital equity plan. The list of Digital Equity Outreach awards is [here](#).

The Commission approved a \$1.5 million formula grant to support local broadband planning efforts and build local capacity for counties, Tribes and Regional Economic Development Organization. All 72 Wisconsin counties and five Tribes opted into the formula grant, with 48 of these entities collaborating through one of six participating Regional Economic Development Organizations with a total of 35 awards allocated. A letter outlining the allocation and award amount is available [here](#).

UW Extension Broadband Planning Webinar



Join UW Extension on May 18th from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for a webinar on **Organizing for Community Broadband Planning**.

Participants will learn and practice tools to:

- Develop and convene your core project team.
- Identify and engage community stakeholders.
- Draft a regional broadband vision and goals.
- Identify key barriers and opportunities related to “Internet for All”.

Register

Federal Broadband Updates

USDA Offers Funding to Promote Internet Planning and Expansion in Rural Areas

The USDA announced \$20 million in available funding under the new Broadband Technical Assistance Program. The program supports technical assistance projects such as conducting feasibility studies, completing network designs and developing broadband financial assistance applications. **The application deadline is June 19**. [Learn more](#).

Comment Period on BEAD Program State Challenge Process

NTIA released proposed guidance for the BEAD program’s state challenge process. The program’s rules require that each state and territory administer a “challenge process.” In the challenge process a unit of local government, nonprofit organization, or ISP may challenge whether a location or community anchor institution is eligible for BEAD funding, including whether a location has limited or no Internet service. The [proposed guidance](#) expands upon previous guidance to assist states and includes a model challenge process. To submit a comment email BEAD@ntia.gov by midnight on **May 5, 2023**.

Oneida Nation Awarded \$500,000 from Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

The Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has awarded \$498,217 to the Oneida Nation as part of the [Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program](#) (TBCP). This Broadband Infrastructure Deployment project will construct a fiber backbone to enable the Oneida Nation to reach future locations with fiber for expanding broadband capabilities on the reservation.

Digital Equity and Inclusion Updates

Digital Equity Act Request for Comment

NTIA is [requesting comments](#) on the \$2.75 billion Digital Equity Act of 2021 Program, and on the design and implementation of two components of that grant program: the \$1.44 billion State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and the \$1.25 billion Digital Equity

Competitive Grant Program. NTIA seeks broad input and feedback from all interested stakeholders across the nation, including Tribal entities. The public comment will be used to improve the number and quality of ideas under consideration as the agency develops the Notice of Funding Opportunity. [Comments are due on or before 5 p.m. E.T. May 1, 2023.](#)

Invitation to help identify digital equity barriers and opportunities

The PSC continues to work to identify barriers to the digital equity and skill development needs of Wisconsinites. Identifying these barriers is part of data collection and development of the Wisconsin Digital Equity Plan, which is required by the Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. If you or someone you know is experiencing significant barriers and are willing to share your story please reach out to Annette Smith, annette.smith1@wisconsin.gov.

Wisconsin 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](#).

BEAD Local Planning Grant Application Due May 1st

Reminder: the [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) Local Planning Grant](#) is still accepting applications [per the award letter](#). Applications from the entities listed in the award letter are due by **May 1st, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.** Awardees listed in the letter must submit their application via the [PSC Grants System](#).

In order to enter into a grant agreement and access the grant funds, recipients **must** submit a simple grant application through the PSC Grants System. Please refer to the [PSC Grants System User Guide](#) for guidance on how to use the system. Commission staff are on hand to provide technical assistance throughout this process. If you require assistance, please contact us at PSCStateBroadbandOffice@wisconsin.gov.

Articles and Resources Worth Reading

Digital Equity Outcomes and Impacts

How investments in high-speed Internet can alleviate digital inequities

A Resource from NTIA

This high level overview document provides data, resources and stories related to the impact of digital inclusion activities and outcomes for digital equity. It is a simple impactful document.

[Digital Equity Outreach and Impacts](#)

Closing the Digital Skills Divide

*By: Amanda Bergson-Shilcock and Roderick Taylor
From the National Skills Coalition*

National Skills Coalition (NSC) in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta released *Closing the Digital Skill Divide*, a real-time snapshot of demand for digital skills in the US labor market. The analysis finds that 92% of jobs analyzed require digital skills. Previous NSC research found one-third of workers don't have the foundational digital skills necessary to enter and thrive in today's jobs. Together, these findings point to a significant digital skill divide. This report also found that public investments in closing this digital skill divide can generate measurable economic payoff for businesses, workers, and the broader economy.

[Read the Report](#)

Governor's Task Force on Broadband Next Meeting

The May meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17, 2023 from 1:00 - 3:00 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.

Grant Recipients Corner

Broadband Grant Recipients Press Releases and Marketing Materials Reminder

Refer to your FY22 and forward grant agreements for advertising requirements. An example of required language follows, but always consult your specific grant agreement for updates or any federally-required language.

“This project [is being] [was supported, in whole or in part, through \$[grant award amount] of funds from the State of Wisconsin, acting by and through the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.”

This agreement requirement (1) remains in effect long after the performance period ends and (2) requires sufficient advance notice to the Commission which provides our State opportunity to participate. There are a few other important requirements. Please refer to section 24 of your federally funded ARPA agreements or section 31 of FY22 stateside grant agreements.

State-Funded Broadband Expansion Grants

Project Status Reports: Interim Reports are Due by April 30

Updated Project Status Report forms are on our [State Broadband Grant webpage](#). When preparing your reports, always use the version currently posted on our webpage. The forms contain changes to help inform the Commission and the public about your projects as well as to help Recipients stay in compliance with grant agreements and speed up the reimbursement process.

[Interim project status reports](#) for all open grants are due during the month of April, unless a final reimbursement request is submitted on or before that date. Interim Reports must be filed no later than April 30.

[Final project status reports](#) are required for all completed projects (i.e., all deliverables have been met), and all final reimbursement requests require the filing of a final project status report.

Upload your reports to [ERF](#), the Commission's Electronic Records Filing System that provides public access to information about awarded projects, etc. Send all state grant reimbursement requests to PSCBroadbandGrantReimbursement@Wisconsin.gov and final project spatial data to PSCBroadbandData@wisconsin.gov. When uploading to ERF or emailing about a project, please include “Award UID, BBEG FY20XX GranteeKeyword(s), ProjectKeyword(s)” which can be found on your customized reimbursement forms. Be sure to upload your report to the correct docket [5-BF-20XX].

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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