Governor's Task Force Report Released

Gov. Tony Evers announced the release of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access' third annual report. Building upon findings from the previous two reports, the 2023 report provides an update on efforts to expand access, adoption, and affordability of high-speed internet across the state. The third annual report makes recommendations for the state to continue building on this progress and prepare to capitalize on increased federal investments through the 'Internet for All' initiative under President Joe Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

The 2023 report provides several recommendations to ensure the state continues building upon Gov. Evers' and the Evers Administration's progress expanding access to reliable, high-speed internet, including:

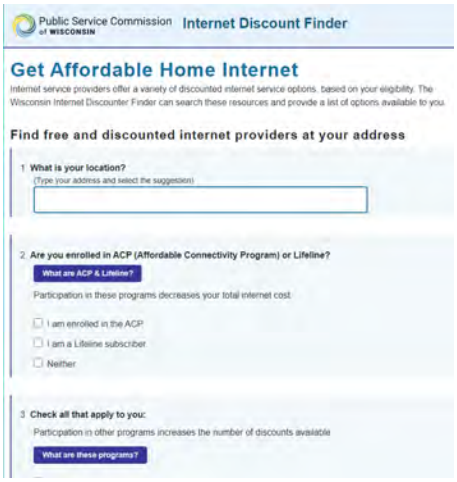
- Support local communities through technical assistance efforts and ensure their involvement and participation in the rollout of federal funds;
- Ensure a sufficient and trained telecommunications workforce for internet service providers, contractors, and subcontractors to construct, operate, and maintain current and new broadband infrastructure;
- Improve mapping and data efforts by supporting local communities in their efforts to pursue, collect, and make meaning of local data; and
- Continue outreach and promotion of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to reach the highest possible levels of participation in Wisconsin.

Since its inception, the Task Force has brought together a diverse group of members with experience in this field to learn from outside experts, hear from the public, and identify forward-looking broadband policies and initiatives that aim to close the digital divide in the state.

The 2023 report can be found here.

More information about the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access, as well as the 2021 report and the 2022 report, can be found on the PSC website here.

State Launches New Tool to Help Wisconsinites Find Free, Discounted Internet Service



Gov. Tony Evers together with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), announced the launch of the Internet Discount Finder website to help Wisconsin households find and access affordable internet. The new tool can assist in finding free and discounted internet service available to eligible Wisconsin residents.
The Internet Discount Finder quickly matches eligible Wisconsin residents to low-cost home internet service and discount programs by entering their address and identifying their eligibility criteria. The tool will show available plans and describe next steps for enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The ACP helps eligible households get a discount of up to $30 per month for broadband service and internet connected devices and up to $75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. More information about ACP can be found at GetInternet.gov.
See the full press release.

Internet Discount Finder

New $42 Million Broadband Grant Program

Gov. Tony Evers, together with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC), announced the Broadband Infrastructure Program application period will begin August 14,

2023. Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the U.S. Department of Treasury awarded Wisconsin $42 million through the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) to administer the Broadband Infrastructure Program and invest in projects that will provide high-quality internet to locations that lack access to adequate, affordable service.

Eligible entities for the competitive grant program include internet service providers, telecommunications utilities, cooperatives, local governments, and for-profit and non-profit organizations. The funding is available to construct broadband infrastructure projects to deploy reliable internet service that will meet or exceed 100/100 megabits per second (Mbps) symmetrical speed internet service and include at least one low-cost option for work, education, and health monitoring.

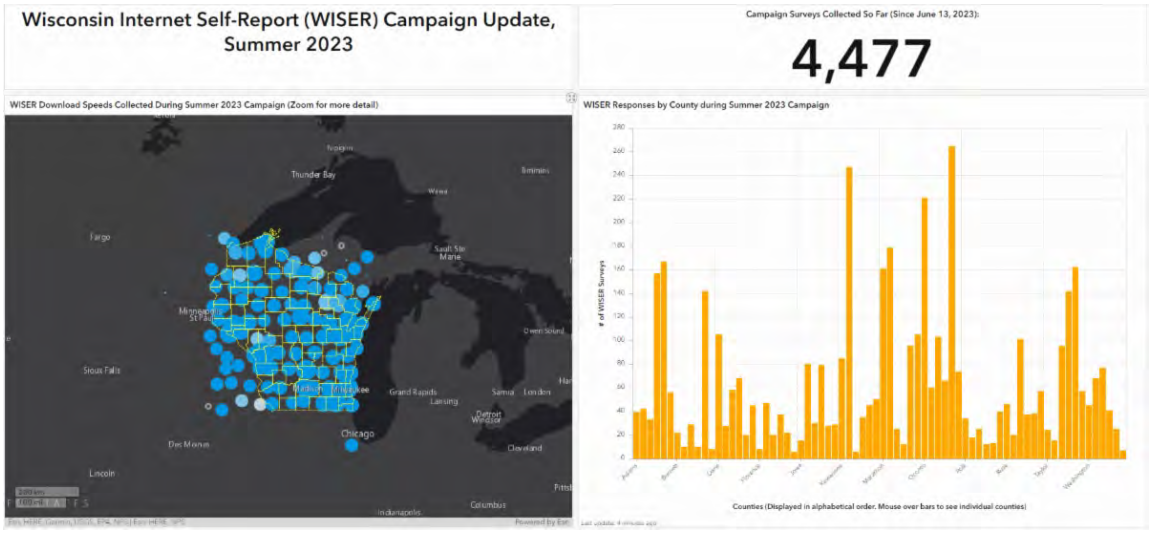
On August 14th, more information about the upcoming grant application will be made available by the PSC's Wisconsin Broadband Office. The deadline to apply will be in November 2023. The Commission docket for the Capital Project Fund Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program is 5-CPF-2023. To ensure you receive communication regarding the grant program, please subscribe to the docket.

Internet for All Wisconsin Listening Tour Summary Comments Due August 7th

After talking with over 300 people from all over the state during the PSC Internet for All Wisconsin Listening Tour, a summary of the main themes and top comments that were shared is available for review and public comment. Comments must be received by **1:30 pm on Monday, August 7, 2023**. Comments should be filed in docket 5-BP-2023 using the Commission's Electronic Records Filing system (ERF). The comment system can be accessed through the Public Service Commission's website

Listening Tour Summary

WISER Survey Dashboard Available



Last month, the Wisconsin Broadband Office, in an effort to understand Wisconsinites' experience with internet, including their needs, barriers, and network performance, are encouraged all households to take the Wisconsin Internet Self-Report (WISER) survey. This information is helping shape the state's internet planning efforts as we continue to prepare for BEAD funding and connecting all of Wisconsin.

A huge thank you to the residents, counties, Tribes and digital equity partners that have

promoted the Wisconsin Internet Self Report Survey and supported the WBO's ongoing efforts to survey internet users throughout the state about their experiences. The Commission has created a simple dashboard that is tracking the number of responses by county for the state. The WISER survey is an ongoing effort to collect information from Wisconsin residents and businesses.

WISER Dashboard

UW Extension Broadband Planning Workshop Series

Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

During Mondays in August, UW Extension will host a four-part broadband planning workshop series.

This 4-session series will cover:

- what data you need for successful local broadband planning;
- how to focus and prioritize your community engagement;
- tips, tools, and templates for using surveys, conversations, community forums, and asset mapping to inform your local broadband planning

August 7, 2023, 12:00-1:00 p.m. CST
Session 1: What data do you need for broadband planning?

August 14, 2023, 12:00-1:00 p.m. CST
Session 2: Prioritize and focus your local broadband community engagement.

August 21, 2023, 12:00-1:00 p.m. CST
Session 3: Tools to inform local broadband planning, Part 1: Surveys and Conversations

August 28, 2023, 12:00-1:00 p.m. CST
Session 4: Tools to inform local broadband planning, Part 2: Community Forums and Asset Mapping

Information and Registration

Federal Program Updates

NTIA Request for Comment BEAD Program Uniform Guidance

NTIA is requesting comment related to Uniform Guidance in the BEAD Program through a request for comment period which ends August 4th. This is an opportunity for stakeholders to let NTIA know what exemptions from Uniform Guidance may assist with implementation of the program. Stakeholder feedback is important as it will contribute to decisions about retaining program profit, type of sub-awards which could reduce administrative burdens, procurement requirements such as requests for bids, and property and equipment protocols. Background information can be found here; input can be made in the Comments section.

FCC Issues Enhanced A-CAM Order

On July 24, 2023 the FCC issued an order to extend its Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) funding and to increase the speed requirements for participating providers. ISPs that accept enhanced A-CAM must now be able to deploy broadband speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps to 100% of eligible locations. Wisconsin is among the top five states in the nation for A-CAM locations. Here is a downloadable fact sheet from the FCC.

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program Award

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has announced an award for another award for a tribal community in Wisconsin. The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin was awarded $500,000 to deploy a middle-mile and fiber to the home network to increase access to rural broadband on the Menominee Indian Reservation.

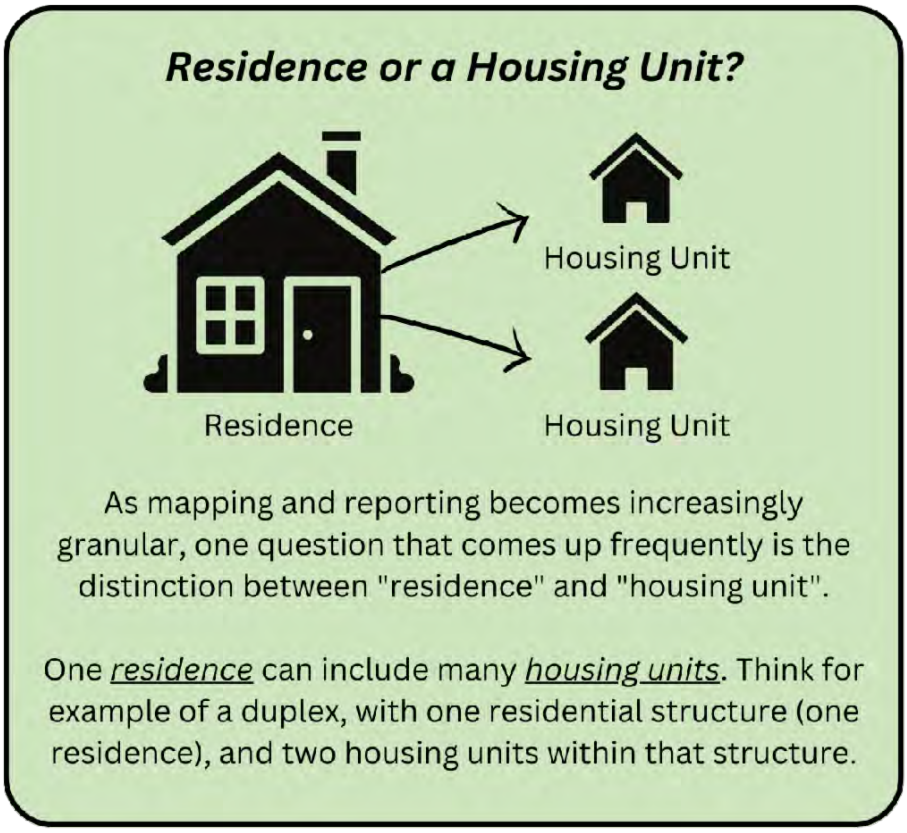
Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Award

The National Telecommunication and Information Administration announced awards for to expand middle mile high-speed internet in June 2023. In Wisconsin, Dairyland Power Cooperative was awarded $14.9 million for the Tri-State Fiber Deployment Project in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. The project will retrofit 240 miles of fiber on transmission lines, and last mile providers in these regions will have enhanced capacity to reach unserved and underserved residents using the facilities.

Wisconsin Internet for All - BEAD Allocation

On Monday, June 26th, President Biden announced how the federal government will allocate funding to all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories to deploy affordable, reliable, high-speed internet service to everyone in America. Wisconsin is receiving **$1,055,823,573.71** in federal funds through the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. Wisconsin is one of 19 states receiving over $1 billion in funding. Here is a complete listing of the allocations.

Grant Recipient Corner



Affirmative Action Grant Compliance Webinar Available

The Affirmative action webinar gives you step-by-step instructions on how to submit documentation to satisfy the Department of Administration regulations and requirements in all broadband grant agreement. This helpful webinar walks you through the process and shows you how to complete each form. Find the webinar on both the PSC State Broadband Expansion Grants and PSC ARPA Broadband Access Grants pages.

WBO Newsletter

Wisconsin Broadband Office

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

Join Our Mailing List

Your copy should address 3 key questions: Who am I writing for (audience)? Why should they care (benefit)? What do I want them to do (call-to-action)?

Create a great offer by adding words like "free," "personalized," "complimentary," or "customized." A sense of urgency often helps readers take action, so consider inserting phrases like "for a limited time only" or "only 7 remaining!"

WI Public Service Commission | 4822 Madison Yards Way, PO Box 7854, Madison, WI 53707-7854

Unsubscribe sarah.bradley@wisconsin.gov

Update Profile |Constant Contact Data Notice
Sent byalyssa.kenney@wisconsin.govpowered by

Try email marketing for free today!