



**Illinois**  
**Department of Commerce**  
& Economic Opportunity

OFFICE OF BROADBAND  
JB Pritzker, Governor

## ILLINOIS CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

As part of his historic \$45 billion Rebuild Illinois investment strategy, Governor J.B. Pritzker included \$420 million to expand access to high-speed broadband internet across the state. The resulting *Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program* is the largest state-based broadband matching grant program ever, leveraging the magnitude of funding needed for state-driven broadband ubiquity.

To help Illinoisans best access, adopt, and use broadband, the Illinois Office of Broadband introduced complementary programming to pair with its ongoing \$420 million capital broadband investment. Combined, this funding seeks to ensure affordable in-home broadband service, access to personal computers, digital literacy training, and ongoing technical support. Illinois is working alongside public and private partners through this initiative to drive economic development and increase quality of life for all Illinoisans.

The *Illinois Connected Communities (ICC) Grant Program* was launched in 2020 to help drive community planning and capacity building for advances in broadband access, adoption, and utilization. The program is part of the increasingly robust and comprehensive Connect Illinois Digital Equity Package, a holistic approach designed to help communities identify and address existing broadband equity gaps, as well as to leverage new resources for urgent broadband access and longer-term broadband competitiveness – with an eye to sustained broadband equity and inclusion.

The ICC program recognizes that not all communities are prepared to take advantage of historic state and federal funding opportunities and that others could benefit from a focus on complementary aspects of the digital divide, such as broadband adoption or utilization. Whatever a community's focus – and however prepared a community may be to set a broadband vision and take steps toward realizing that vision – the ICC program is designed to support inclusive community planning and capacity building around one or more aspects of an integrated broadband strategy.

By the end of the program, each community will have completed a community-driven, broadband strategic plan. Communities ranging from Chicago neighborhoods to entire counties comprise an Illinois Connected Communities cohort, with each member community participating in a combination of focused community-specific and cohort-wide activities throughout a period of approximately one year.

The 12-member inaugural 2020 ICC cohort has concluded their work, and a similar year-two cohort is now underway. The ICC is a collaborative effort amongst the Illinois Office of Broadband, the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, and local philanthropic organizations. For more information on the Illinois Connected Communities program, [visit the Illinois Office of Broadband Connect Illinois website](#).

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