



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF BROADBAND
JB Pritzker, Governor



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

Closing the Digital Divide in Illinois

BEAD Deep-Dive Webinar: Evidence of Community Support – Tips & Tricks

December 18, 2024

BEAD Deep Dive Webinar Series:

Context and Goals



Context:

To align with NTIA requirements, BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4 **differs from Connect Illinois Rounds 1-3**

The Illinois Office of Broadband aims to **help all interested applicants become familiar** with these requirements ahead of the subgrantee process



Goals:

Walk through key elements and requirements of the Connect Illinois Round 4 subgrantee selection process:

- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Application process and tools
- Application templates
- Other tips and tricks

Clarify specific components of the BEAD and Connect Illinois Round 4 program requirements ahead of the subgrantee process

Today's Objectives



- 1) Provide **clarity and best practices** around compiling evidence of community support and financial commitment.
- 2) Offer advice for prospective applicants and communities to **engage with each other** ahead of and during the Connect Illinois Round 4 application process.

Intended audience includes:

- **Prospective BEAD applicants** looking to better understand local coordination processes and documentation
- **Local governments and community institutions** preparing to evaluate internet service provider (ISP) proposals to make decisions about offering support

New Local Coordination Guidance Document Available

Resource for both 1) prospective BEAD applicants and 2) communities considering offering support



Illinois Local Coordination Guidance Document

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program – Connect Illinois Round 4

Guidance on preparing evidence of (1) Community Support and (2) Financial Commitment from Community for the BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4

The BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4 allocates \$1.04 billion to connect up to 175,000+ households, businesses, and community anchor institutions to high quality, affordable broadband service. Through a three-wave competitive process, the Illinois Office of Broadband (IOB) will accept applications from entities who can deploy internet service and evaluate them based on a set of scoring criteria.

Through two *Local Coordination* criteria on the scoring rubric, the BEAD Program provides counties, local governments, residents, and other community institutions a significant opportunity to influence how applications are evaluated for BEAD funding. This guidance document is intended to provide clarity and best practices around compiling and crafting evidence of community support and financial commitment.

The audience for this document is both:

- **Prospective BEAD applicants** looking to better understand local coordination processes and documentation; and
- **Local governments and community institutions** preparing to evaluate internet service provider (ISP) proposals in order to make decisions about offering support.

Part 1: Local Coordination Overview

Local coordination for broadband means the process of ISPs engaging with local governments and communities to understand their priorities and needs, and align broadband offerings accordingly.

In the BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4, *Local Coordination* represents 10% of the total points an applicant can earn. Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project (5%) and financial investment by the community (5%).

(1) Evidence of Community Support

[Local Coordination Guidance Document Link](#)

On-going FAQ to be updated on a regular basis

Topics for Discussion Today

1

Recap of BEAD and progress to date

2

CI Rd4 Evidence of Community Support: Tips & Tricks

Guest Speakers:

- Kaley McGinnis, Massac County
- Bailey Conrady, Champaign County Farm Bureau

1

Recap of BEAD and progress to date

BEAD is a \$42B federal grant program that aims to bring high-speed internet to all Americans

\$42.45 billion

Funds provided for BEAD

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program is a federal grant program that aims to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where high-speed internet is currently unavailable

Program highlights

Eligible entities

- All 50 States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico
- Other Territories: U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Example eligible uses of funds

- Planning for the deployment of high-speed Internet, including conducting research, collecting data, outreach, and training
- Deploying or upgrading Internet in un/underserved areas
- Improving service to community anchor institutions
- Installing Internet and Wi-Fi in multi-unit residential buildings
- Workforce development, including Registered Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, community college and/or vocational training for broadband-related occupations to support deployment, maintenance, and upgrades

What are the goals of BEAD?



The BEAD Program awarded Illinois \$1.04 billion to connect all unserved and underserved locations to broadband over the next 5 years



Ensure universal coverage across all un/underserved locations in the state, maximizing deployment of end-to-end fiber, and only using non-fiber where fiber costs are extremely high¹



Prioritize projects providing broadband access to unserved and underserved locations and community anchor institutions, Wi-Fi equipment for Multi-Dwelling Units (MDUs) then other digital equity and inclusion priorities²



Run subgrantee selection process within one year of approval of the Initial Proposal, and complete implementation within four years of receipt of funds³



Focus on improving broadband affordability through a low-cost broadband service option, and a middle-class affordability plan⁴


1. Page 14 of BEAD NOFO, on the definition of Priority Broadband Project
2. Page 33 of BEAD NOFO, on the allocation of grant funds
3. Page 65 of BEAD NOFO, on deployment deadlines and benchmarks
4. Page 42-46 of BEAD NOFO, on inclusion of affordability in the BEAD scoring criteria

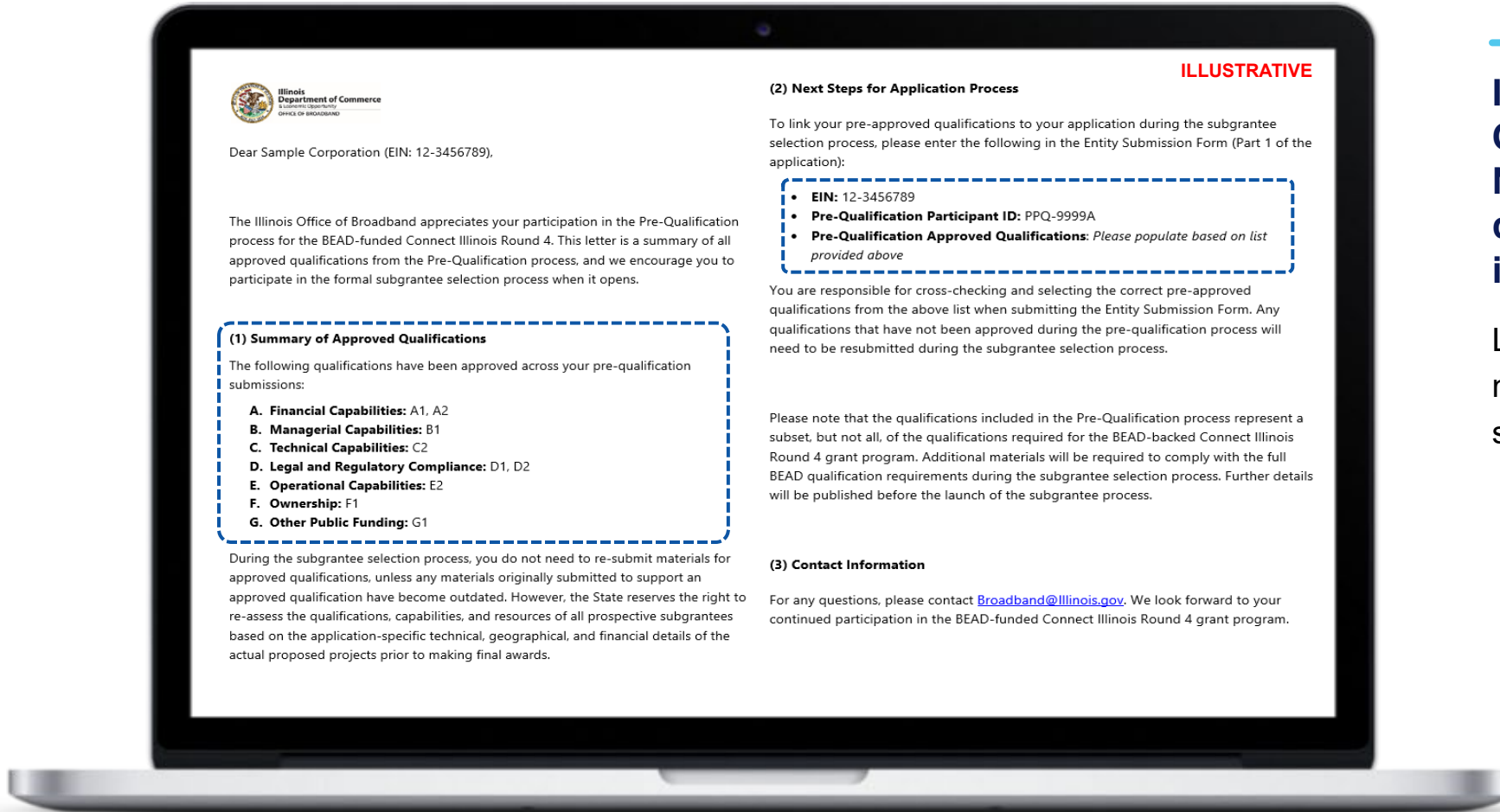
Source: [BEAD NOFO](#)

Sample Pre-Qualification Participation Notice Letter

ILLUSTRATIVE

INFORMATION PROVIDED ON AN INFORMATIONAL BASIS AND DOES NOT SUPERCEDE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

 Key information

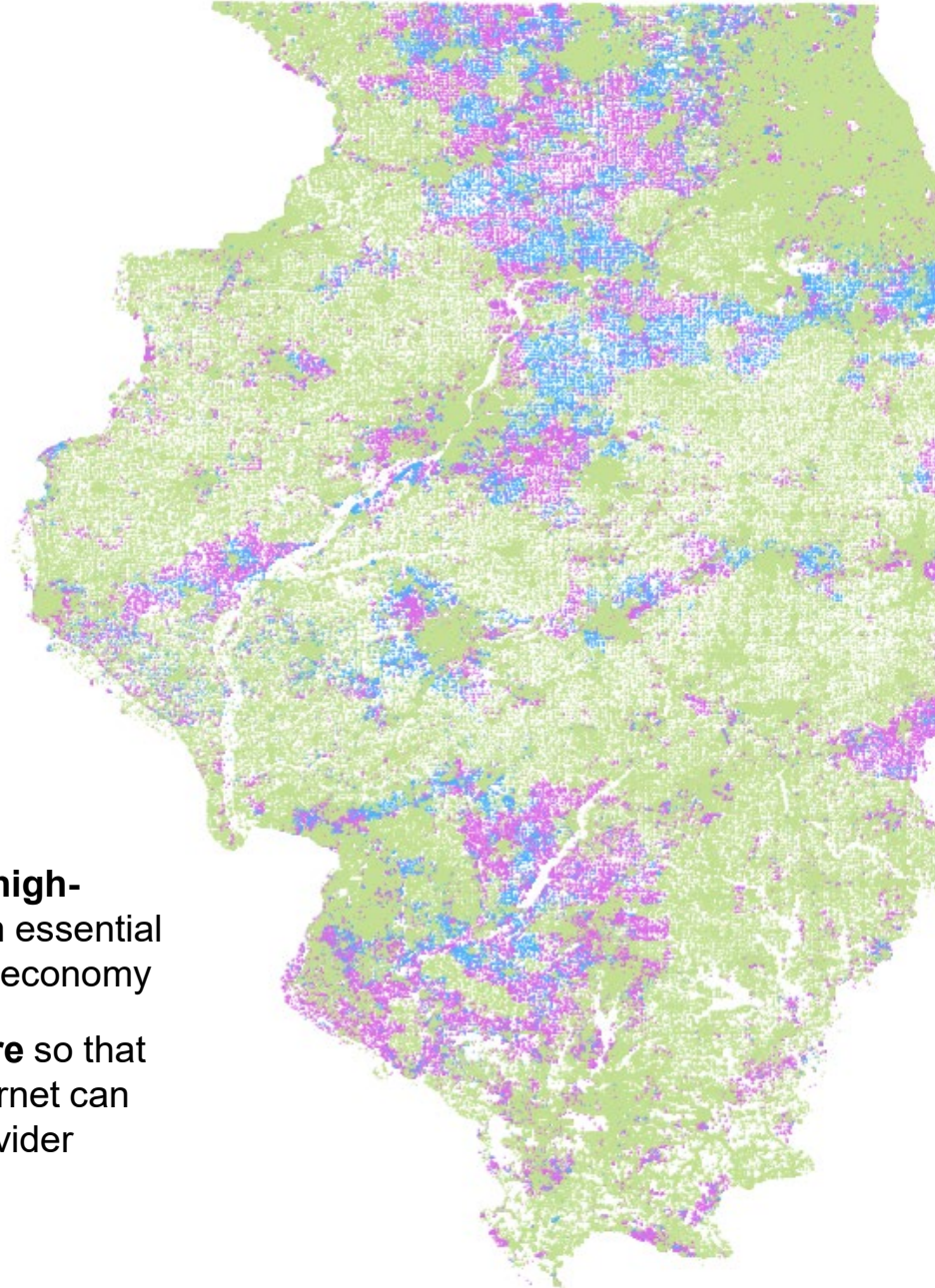


IOB sent a Pre-Qualification Participation Notice Letter to all pre-qualification participants in Fall 2024

Letter summarizes qualifying materials for reference during sub-grantee selection process.

Note: RDOF awardees are required to resubmit materials for G4 even if pre-qualified (see Final Determination email for details)

175,293 locations are eligible to be connected through BEAD



Today, many Illinoisans cannot access high-speed internet service, barring them from essential online services and the 21st century digital economy

BEAD funds will help build infrastructure so that every Illinoisan who wants high-speed internet can subscribe to internet service through a provider

Broadband service availability in Illinois, per BEAD-eligibility data

~4.2M

Total Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)

~107K (~3%)

Unserved BSLs

(locations with <25/3Mbps speed)

~65K (~1%)

Underserved BSLs

(locations with ≥25/3Mbps and <100/20Mbps speed)

~4.0M (~96%)

Served BSLs

(locations with ≥100/20Mbps speed)

Plus **3,356** eligible community anchor institutions (CAIs)

BEAD-eligible

2

CI Rd4 Evidence of Community Support: Tips & Tricks

Overview: BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4 scoring rubric

	Criteria	How it will be applied	Score, %
Primary¹	Minimal BEAD Program outlay: non-state match	More points will be assigned to the degree of nonstate match over 30%, as a greater nonstate match signifies more “skin in the game” and therefore financial risk assumed by the applicant	20%
	Minimal BEAD Program outlay: financial need with respect to reference cost	Points will be assigned based on how much the application’s required BEAD outlay deviates from the reference cost published by the state. More points will be assigned to applications with lower BEAD outlay compared to the reference cost	30%
	Affordability	Applicants will be scored based on the price they offer for either 1Gbps/1Gbps or 100/20Mbps: 1Gbps/1Gbps for Priority Broadband Projects and 100/20Mbps for other broadband projects	15%
	Fair Labor Practices	Applicants will be scored based on their demonstrated record of and plans to be in compliance with federal labor and employment laws, and submission of a project labor agreement	15%
			80%
Secondary/ additional²	Speed to deployment	Points will be assigned for enforceable deployment plans faster than 48 months	3%
	Speed of Network & Technical Capabilities	Points will be assigned based on performance levels and scalability of networks	4%
	Open Access	Points will be assigned based on subgrantee’s provision of open access	3%
	Local Coordination	Points will be assigned based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project (5%) and financial investment by community members and organizations (5%)	10%
			20%
		Total	100%

The program includes two Local Coordination criteria on the scoring rubric, through which Illinois provides counties, local governments, residents, and other community institutions an opportunity to influence how applications are evaluated for BEAD funding

1. That is: BEAD-stipulated criteria that must collectively account for no less than 75% of total points

2. That is: Other BEAD-stipulated criteria (Speed to Deployment, Speed of Network and Technical Capability), and additional criteria (Open Access, Local Coordination) that are not required but encouraged per the BEAD NOFO

Context: Submitting Evidence of Local Coordination

When should I plan to submit evidence of local coordination?

BEAD applicants can submit evidence during any wave of the Connect Illinois Round 4 application process. With the first wave running from early February to mid-March, the first opportunity to submit will be February-March. There will be two additional waves through Spring 2025.

Applicants may initiate conversations with communities of interest at any point.

How can I submit evidence of local coordination?

Evidence can ONLY be submitted by the applicant through the formal application form. The application will contain a place to upload documentation.

The IOB cannot accept evidence emailed, mailed, or submitted in another way outside of the application.

P.S.F. Local Coordination: Evidence of community support

P.S.F1. Evidence of Community Support: Narrative * Please provide a narrative describing evidence of community support, such as a summary of letters of support received, relevant strategic plans, community survey and outreach efforts, and other community feedback received. Please refer to the Application Guidebook for additional details and how the State will evaluate materials submitted. If evidence of community support is not available, please write "Not applicable". (3500 character limit, approx. 500 words)

P.S.F1.A. Evidence of Community Support: Documentation Please upload any documents needed to support the narrative above for P.S.F1. Evidence must be submitted to receive points for this scoring criterion, unless your response above is "Not applicable." (Permitted file types: PDF, DOCX, JPEG, PNG)

📎 Drop files here or [browse](#)

P.S.G. Local Coordination: Verified Financial Commitment from Community

P.S.G1. Financial Contribution from Community: Narrative * Please address the following, as each is applicable:

- (a) Degree of financial contribution from municipal government and/or community-based members and institutions;
- (b) In-kind resource commitments from municipal government and/or community-based members and institutions; and
- (c) Evidence to support verification of pledge.

Note that the figures and descriptions provided for (a) and (b) must be evidenced in the Project Budget and Capital Investment Schedule: Template submitted in P.B4. Evidence to support verification of pledge must be submitted to demonstrate the cited community commitment to receive points (e.g., signed letter of intent, signed letter of commitment, municipal resolutions, etc.). If not applicable, please write "Not applicable". (3500 character limit, approx. 500 words)

P.S.G1.A. Financial Contribution: Documentation Please upload documentation to support the above narrative for P.S.G1. Evidence must be submitted to receive points for this scoring criterion, unless your response above is "Not applicable." (Permitted file types: PDF, XLSX, DOCX, JPEG, PNG)

📎 Drop files here or [browse](#)

Local Coordination represents 10% of the total points an applicant can earn in BEAD-Funded CI Round 4

Dep dive to follow on each criteria

1. Local Coordination: *Evidence of Community Support*

5%

Scoring weight

Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project. The State's evaluation of the evidence of community support will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** Degree of personalized and specific letters that reflect a broad spectrum of community members
- B** Degree to which the project fits into an existing community strategic plan or commitments from community
- C** Recent survey that covers a broad spectrum of the community, with meaningful results regarding level of need, gaps, and project support
- D** Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project
- E** Other community feedback or evidence of community engagement/collaboration that shows compelling need and support for the project

2. Local Coordination: *Verified Financial Commitment from Community*

5%

Scoring weight

Points will be awarded based on financial investment by community members and organizations. The state's evaluation of verified financial commitment from communities will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** The degree of financial contribution from community-based members and institutions
- B** In-kind resource commitments from community-based members and institutions
- C** Evidence to support verification of pledge

Deep dive 1A: Local Coordination: Evidence of Community Support – Personalized and specific letters

1. Local Coordination: *Evidence of Community Support*

5%

Scoring
weight

Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project. The State's evaluation of the evidence of community support will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** Degree of personalized and specific letters that reflect a broad spectrum of community members
- B** Degree to which the project fits into an existing community strategic plan or commitments from community
- C** Recent survey that covers a broad spectrum of the community, with statistically meaningful results regarding level of need, gaps, and project support
- D** Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project
- E** Other community feedback or evidence of community engagement/collaboration that shows compelling need and support for project

Deep dive on acceptable evidence of community support for each sub-criterion:

- Customized, specific letters of support demonstrating genuine, localized endorsement for the *specific* project from stakeholders, e.g.,
 - Local and regional government officials (e.g., county, municipality, economic development organizations, agency elected officials)
 - Community institutions benefitting from broadband (e.g., schools, libraries)
 - Community organizations (e.g., non-profits, employers)
 - Individual end-users (e.g., residents and businesses) with a personal stake in the project

Deep dive 1B: Local Coordination: Evidence of Community Support – Existing community strategic plan or commitments from community

1. Local Coordination: *Evidence of Community Support*

5%

Scoring
weight

Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project. The State's evaluation of the evidence of community support will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** Degree of personalized and specific letters that reflect a broad spectrum of community members
- B** Degree to which the project fits into an existing community strategic plan or commitments from community
- C** Recent survey that covers a broad spectrum of the community, with statistically meaningful results regarding level of need, gaps, and project support
- D** Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project
- E** Other community feedback or evidence of community engagement/collaboration that shows compelling need and support for project

Deep dive on acceptable evidence of community support for each sub-criterion:

- Demonstration of how the project aligns with an existing community strategic plan, such as how the proposed project addresses documented broadband gaps, connectivity barriers, and community priorities

Deep dive 1C: Local Coordination: Evidence of Community Support – Recent survey regarding level of need, gaps, and project support

1. Local Coordination: *Evidence of Community Support*

5%

Scoring
weight

Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project. The State's evaluation of the evidence of community support will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** Degree of personalized and specific letters that reflect a broad spectrum of community members
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- C** Recent survey that covers a broad spectrum of the community, with statistically meaningful results regarding level of need, gaps, and project support
- D** Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project
- E** Other community feedback or evidence of community engagement/collaboration that shows compelling need and support for project

Deep dive on acceptable evidence of community support for each sub-criterion:

- Survey within the last 12-24 months to gauge a community's broadband needs, service gaps, technology preferences, etc.
- Survey that touches upon level of need, gaps, and support for a broadband project, e.g.,
 - Survey conducted by a county that participated in the [Broadband Breakthrough](#) program

Deep dive 1D: Local Coordination: Evidence of Community Support – Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project

1. Local Coordination: *Evidence of Community Support*

5%

Scoring
weight

Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project. The State's evaluation of the evidence of community support will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** Degree of personalized and specific letters that reflect a broad spectrum of community members
- B** Degree to which the project fits into an existing community strategic plan or commitments from community
- C** Recent survey that covers a broad spectrum of the community, with statistically meaningful results regarding level of need, gaps, and project support
- D** Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project
- E** Other community feedback or evidence of community engagement/collaboration that shows compelling need and support for project

Deep dive on acceptable evidence of community support for each sub-criterion:

- Evidence of active community engagement that documents meaningful outreach and input from a broad spectrum of the community, e.g.,
 - Evidence of townhall meetings
 - Local meeting attendance
 - Social media outreach to targeted constituents

Deep dive 1E: Local Coordination: Evidence of Community Support – Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project

1. Local Coordination: *Evidence of Community Support*

5%

Scoring
weight

Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project. The State's evaluation of the evidence of community support will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** Degree of personalized and specific letters that reflect a broad spectrum of community members
- B** Degree to which the project fits into an existing community strategic plan or commitments from community
- C** Recent survey that covers a broad spectrum of the community, with statistically meaningful results regarding level of need, gaps, and project support
- D** Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project
- E** Other community feedback or evidence of community engagement/collaboration that shows compelling need and support for project

Deep dive on acceptable evidence of community support for each sub-criterion:

- Examples of other evidence of community engagement and interest
- Examples include, but are not limited to
 - Local commitment to support the project with infrastructure planning and deployment (e.g., permitting, pole attachment, right-of-way access, shared assets, etc.)
 - Proof of previous and/or ongoing collaborative efforts with the community (e.g., history of partnership)
 - Other community feedback that shows compelling need and project support

Sample characteristics of a high-scoring application

1. Local Coordination: *Evidence of Community Support*

5%

Scoring
weight

Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project. The State's evaluation of the evidence of community support will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** Degree of personalized and specific letters that reflect a broad spectrum of community members
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- D** Evidence of community outreach efforts to gauge interest in the project
- E** Other community feedback or evidence of community engagement/collaboration that shows compelling need and support for project

Example characteristics of a high-scoring application

- Includes **(A) support letters** that are personalized and reflect both a broad spectrum of stakeholders and geographic areas covered by the proposed project;
- Touches upon several of the **other example evidence categories (B-E)** indicating community support; and
- Includes both **depth and breadth of support** from the populations impacted by and geographic areas included in the proposed project

Note: Earning full points does **not** require providing evidence for every category – the scoring rubric rewards genuine, authentic evidence of community support



Reminder: Anyone can provide evidence of community support!

Support may come from a wide variety of community representatives, which can include community-based organizations, schools, libraries, small businesses, municipal governments, residents, chambers of commerce, and more

Any party who may benefit from or have a stake in improved internet service is welcome to contribute their perspective

Deep dive 2: Local Coordination: Verified Financial Commitment from Community

1. Local Coordination: *Verified Financial Commitment from Community*

5%

Scoring weight

Points will be awarded based on financial investment by community members and organizations. The state's evaluation of verified financial commitment from communities will be similar to its evaluation in Connect Illinois, Round 3.

Examples of supporting evidence

- A** The degree of financial contribution from community-based members and institutions
- B** In-kind resource commitments from community-based members and institutions
- C** Evidence to support verification of pledge

Deep dive on acceptable evidence of verified financial commitment from community

Financial contribution from the local government or other community institutions, including evidence to verify commitment (e.g., signed letter of intent or commitment)



Note: If a community partner commits American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) resources or another time-bound funding source, the community partner and applicant **MUST** coordinate to ensure matching funds align with the appropriate spending deadlines

In-kind resource commitments from the local government or other community institutions, e.g.:

- Waived permit fees
- Access to existing conduit or dark fiber



Note: High-scoring applications will provide a financial contribution to the proposed project. In-kind resource commitments may earn points but will be considered most strongly along with a financial match

Letter of Support Best Practices

As prospective BEAD applicants, service providers (ISPs) may seek letters of support from community institutions endorsing their BEAD applications

Communities can tap into the influence they have in offering community support for broadband applicants who meet their needs

Local governments and community institutions are encouraged to **determine their priorities**, and then **engage with interested providers**, asking questions to understand how a project may meet local needs

The outcome of these discussions can be captured through a letter of support – strong letters of support are **specific** and demonstrate **genuine, localized endorsement**

Sample framework for a letter of support

Subject: Support for [Applying Entity]'s Application for BEAD Funding

- **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the purpose of the letter and discuss commitment to broadband expansion
- **Acknowledgement of BEAD Funding:** Mention the availability and purpose of BEAD funding
- **Support for Broadband Expansion:** Highlight the local efforts around and commitment to broadband expansion, and mention any relevant committees, surveys, or initiatives
- **Eligible Entity's BEAD Funding Application:** Discuss the applicant's proposal and how it will address the needs of the community, mentioning specific experiences or anecdotes
- **Experience with Applicant:** Detail the organization, local government, or individual's experience and engagement with the applicant, mentioning any partnerships, engagement, or collaborative efforts
- **Resolution/Endorsement Statement:** Clearly state the endorsement of the application
- **Conclusion:** Reiterate the support and commitment to the project, and offer any additional support or information if needed

Guest Speaker:
Kaley McGinnis
Massac County

CONNECT

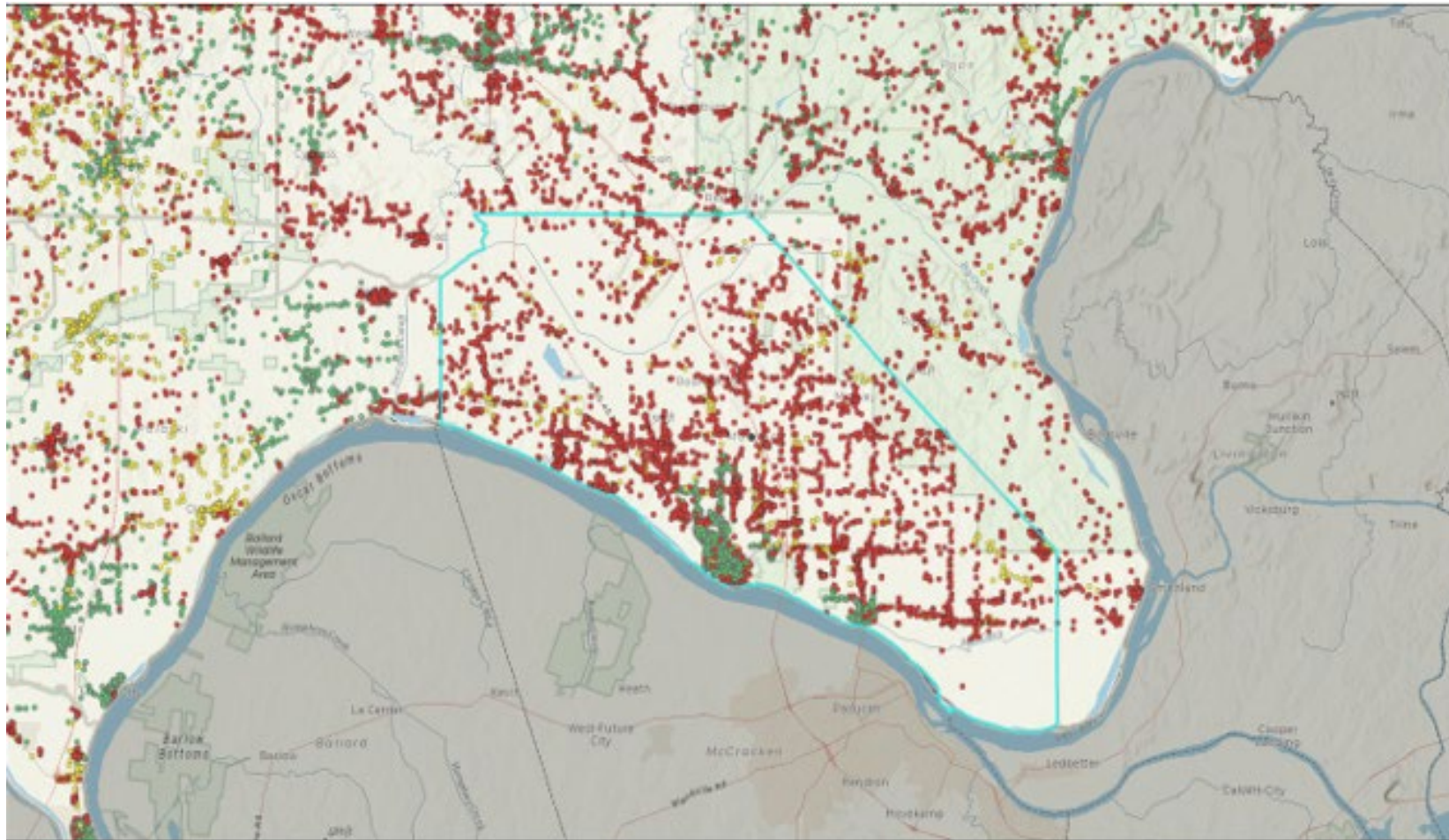


MASSAC



Served, Unserved, and Underserved locations based on FCC Maps

Data as of June 2023



3/17/2024, 11:59:52 PM

- Lacking 25 Mbps Download/3 Mbps Upload
- 25 Mbps Download/3 Mbps Upload - Less than 100 Mbps Download/20 Mbps Upload
- At Least 100 Mbps Download/20 Mbps Upload
- County Boundaries



Esri, NASA, NOAA, USGS, Connected Nation, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS, Connected Nation, OCEBO, FCC/Comcast

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Urgent Need

Alarming, our community survey results revealed that 71% of respondents who took the speed test with a fixed internet connection met the FCC standard for Unserved and Underserved. This Map reaffirms these results and illustrates rural Massac County's inequitable access to affordable, fast, and reliable broadband service.

"There are no service providers out where we live."

"It's horrible."

Would love to have reliable, affordable, high speed internet!"

PRIORITY STRATEGY

1



Cultivate public-private partnerships with ISPs

2



Create Massac County Broadband Grant Program

3



Letters of Support

4



HURRY UP AND WAIT

NOTABLE COMMENTS

“We would highly support an organized movement to acquire better high speed internet access where we live in Northern Massac County.”

The only option for internet is satellite, which is terrible. We need fiber optic lines put in so we can come into this decade.”

“ALL of Massac Co needs high speed internet. Kids need it for school and people could work remotely with good internet, have good jobs, and still live here.”

“Please help us get reliable, consistent coverage in the Massac County area!”

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

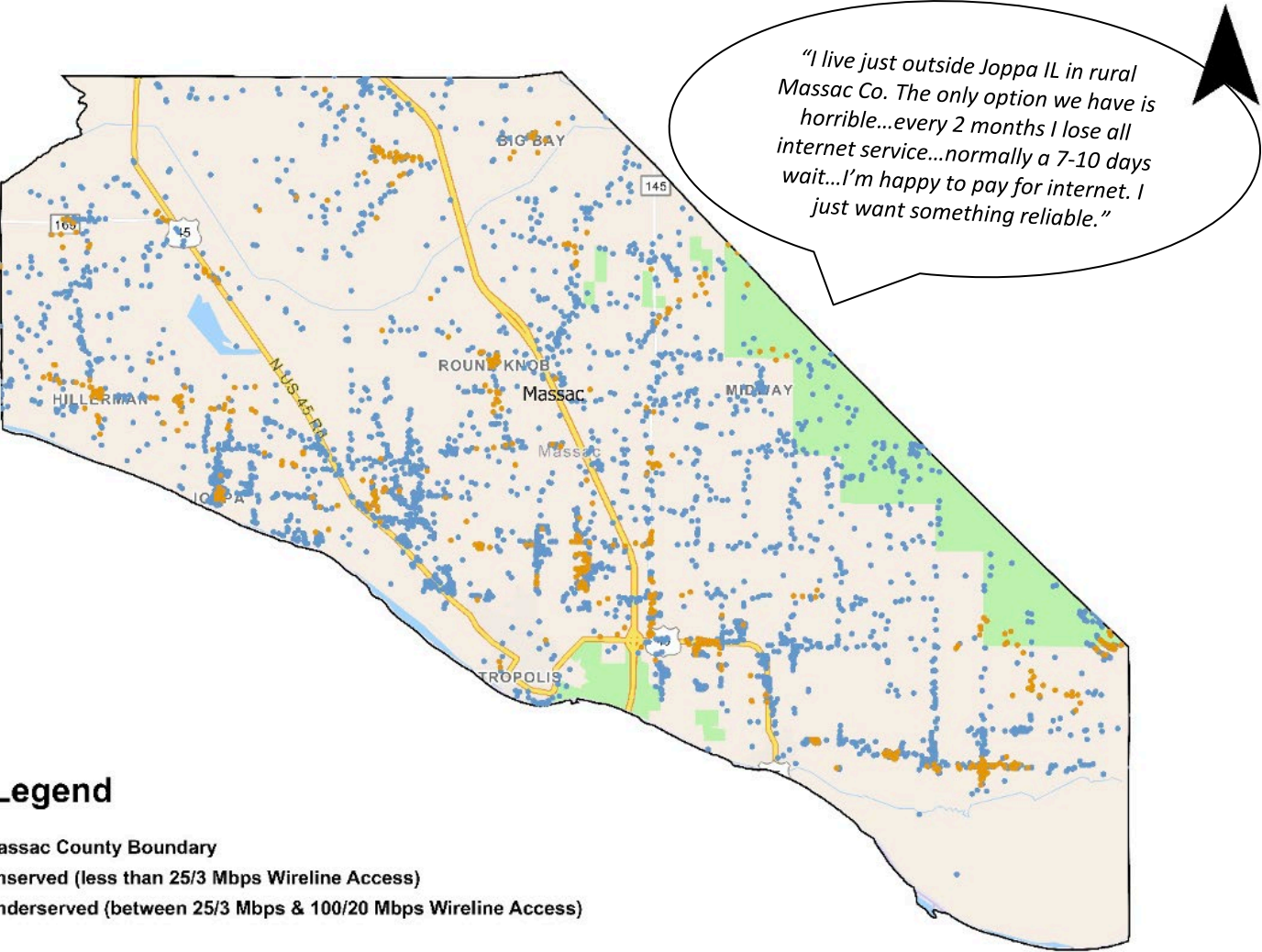
- 715 people took our survey, representing 5.2% of the County's population. Its unbelievable!
- Between 20-40% of respondents, including those taking the survey in homes, businesses, and farms, reported that they did not have a local internet connection or service provided at their address.
- Respondents were overall dissatisfied with their ISPs current service in the areas of reliability, affordability, and speed
- 100% of those who had access to cellular internet and took the speed test met the FCC standard for "unserved" or "underserved".

"It's costing a fortune"

"Our service goes out a lot and is not worth what we pay for."

"The internet in rural Massac County is slow and expensive. We are not rich-that's why we live in rural Massac County."

UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED AREAS



"I live just outside Joppa IL in rural Massac Co. The only option we have is horrible...every 2 months I lose all internet service...normally a 7-10 days wait...I'm happy to pay for internet. I just want something reliable."

TARGET AREAS

1. No access
2. Unserved and Underserved
3. Agricultural areas
4. Areas not under RDOF enforceable commitments.

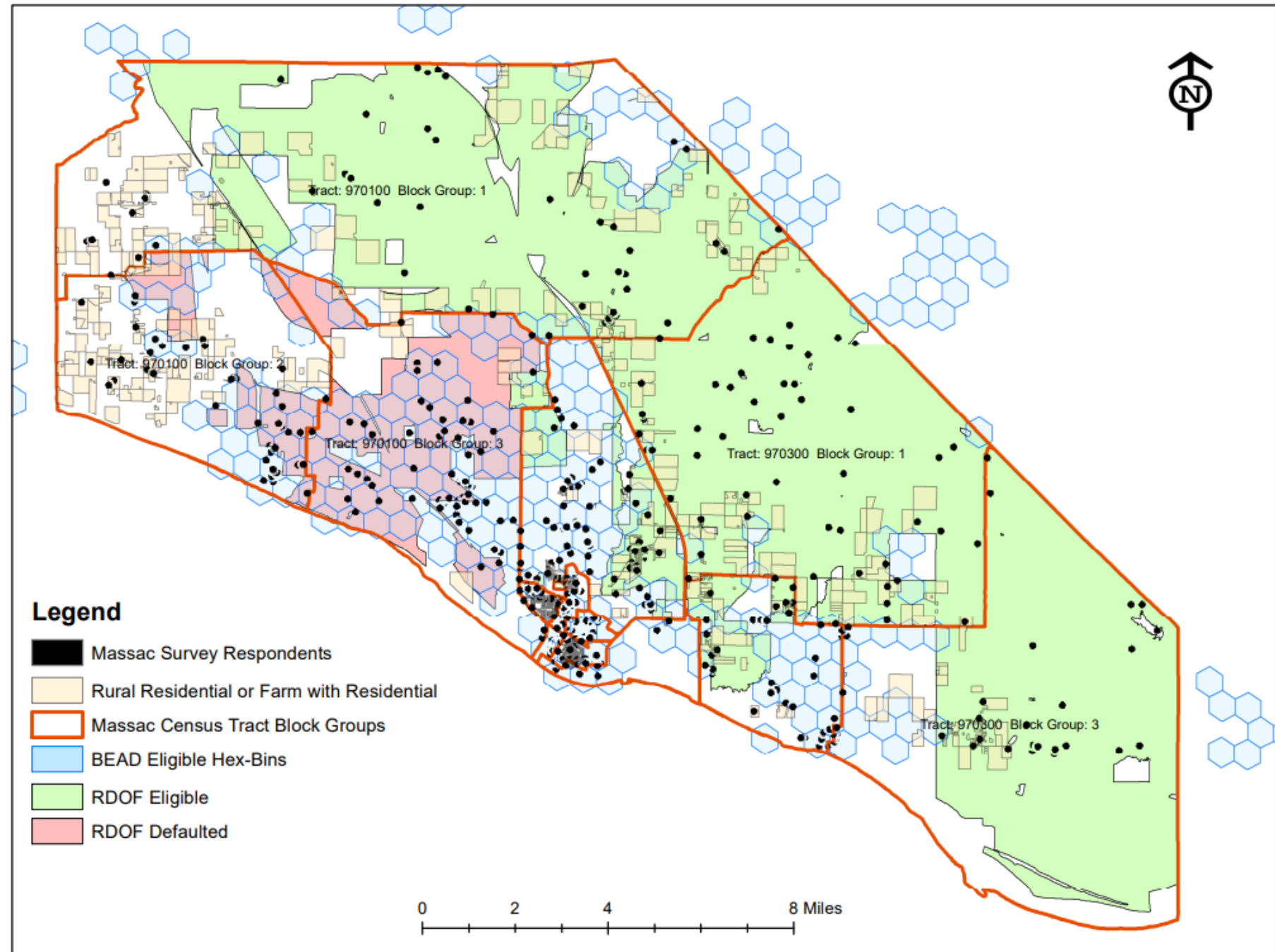
Legend

- Massac County Boundary
- Unserved (less than 25/3 Mbps Wireline Access)
- Underserved (between 25/3 Mbps & 100/20 Mbps Wireline Access)

Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

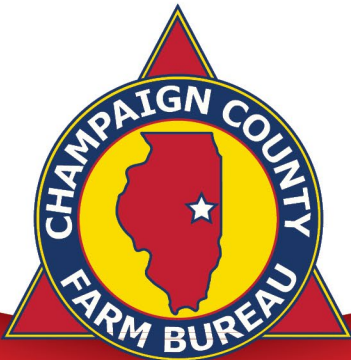
We created our own map of locally relevant broadband data for the following reasons:

- To guide conversations with interested ISP's for zoning eligible areas of deployment
- To closely hone in on our target areas
- To assist the process of determining how much funding ISP's will receive from the Massac County Broadband Grant



Guest Speaker:
Bailey Conrady
Champaign County Farm Bureau

Community Support for Broadband: A local perspective



Connect Champaign County: Background

- Champaign County developed a broadband plan and engaged in a community planning process
- Dual goals: infrastructure build-out & digital equity
- Local ISP awarded an IL Connect Rd. 3 grant for rural infrastructure build out
- Local ISP also placing wi-fi routers in low-income housing units that do not have wi-fi access



Engaging Locally

- Communication, Communication, Communication
- Find local individuals and groups that are passionate about the issue and are willing to be “boots on the ground”
 - Especially if ISP isn’t “local”
- Be proactive and honest
 - Project scope
 - Cost
 - Realistic goals



Engaging Locally

- Understand that community members and local governments are NOT broadband experts
 - Communication needs to be simple, easy to understand
 - Avoid industry jargon if at all possible
 - Describe anything and everything you can with regards to project specifics
 - Especially important around installation process and cost projections
- Outside of letters of support, be open to things that might help the application
 - Ex. Local gov't waiving permit fees, aid with easements and landowners, drainage district contacts, etc.

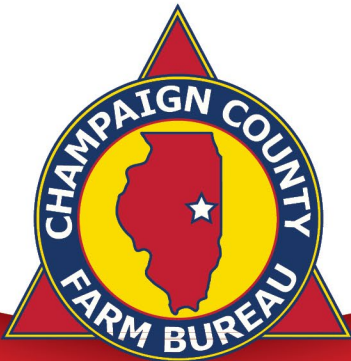


Champaign County Examples

- Townhall meetings with ISP's and local community members to explain the basics of the projects and the need for community support and letters of support
 - Go to the community, don't expect them to come to you
- Farm bureau members were asked to write letters of support with personal examples of issues around broadband
 - Also did this with the county board, which is one reason the county board took the issue up so early in the ARPA process



Questions?



Local governments and community institutions: Helpful Information gathering considerations and questions (1/2)

Topic

Considerations

Target Project Area

How does a project's target scope align with the geographic boundaries of a community? Will the project proposal include hard-to-serve areas?

Type of Technology

Consider whether the community has any preference for the type of technology (e.g., fiber, fixed wireless, hybrid, etc.) or preferences around deployment plans (e.g., aerial vs. underground)

Affordability Commitments

Consider community priorities around low-cost options, speed and pricing packages, and commitments to price consistency over time. BEAD participants are already required to offer a \$30-40 low-cost service option for qualifying households. What other pricing packages does the ISP plan to offer?

Digital Equity

Understand whether the provider plans to support digital skill building initiatives in the community
Consider plans for outreach or advertisement of low-cost options and whether these meet community needs

Business Practices

Consider community priorities around location of technicians, customer service/call centers, and local hiring preferences

Local governments and community institutions: Helpful information gathering considerations and questions (2/2)

Topic

Considerations

Accountability

Understand the provider's business structure and any planned changes

Understand the provider's planned deployment timeline, and whether they can provide a point of contact, schedule, and updates for the project

ISP-Community Relationship

Meet with the provider to learn about their plans/approach

Seek references from communities the provider previously served

Consider what type of ongoing relationship your community prefers

Financial Commitments

Consider the provider's financial contribution to the project, and opportunities to locally source materials, equipment, and workforce

Infrastructure



Consider whether the provider has experience deploying broadband in similar communities across Illinois

Identify local right-of-way access and coordinate with community leaders around securing easements

Assess poles for "make-ready status"

New Local Coordination Guidance Document Available

Resource for both prospective BEAD applicants and communities considering offering support



Illinois Local Coordination Guidance Document

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program – Connect Illinois Round 4

Guidance on preparing evidence of (1) Community Support and (2) Financial Commitment from Community for the BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4

The BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4 allocates \$1.04 billion to connect up to 175,000+ households, businesses, and community anchor institutions to high quality, affordable broadband service. Through a three-wave competitive process, the Illinois Office of Broadband (IOB) will accept applications from entities who can deploy internet service and evaluate them based on a set of scoring criteria.

Through two *Local Coordination* criteria on the scoring rubric, the BEAD Program provides counties, local governments, residents, and other community institutions a significant opportunity to influence how applications are evaluated for BEAD funding. This guidance document is intended to provide clarity and best practices around compiling and crafting evidence of community support and financial commitment.

The audience for this document is both:

- **Prospective BEAD applicants** looking to better understand local coordination processes and documentation; and
- **Local governments and community institutions** preparing to evaluate internet service provider (ISP) proposals in order to make decisions about offering support.

Part 1: Local Coordination Overview

Local coordination for broadband means the process of ISPs engaging with local governments and communities to understand their priorities and needs, and align broadband offerings accordingly.

In the BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4, *Local Coordination* represents 10% of the total points an applicant can earn. Points will be awarded based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project (5%) and financial investment by the community (5%).

(1) Evidence of Community Support

[Local Coordination Guidance Document Link](#)

On-going FAQ to be updated on a regular basis

Additional Resources & Helpful Links

Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO Preview: [\[Link\]](#)

State of Illinois, BEAD Landing Page: [\[Link\]](#)

State of Illinois BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process Page: [\[Link\]](#)

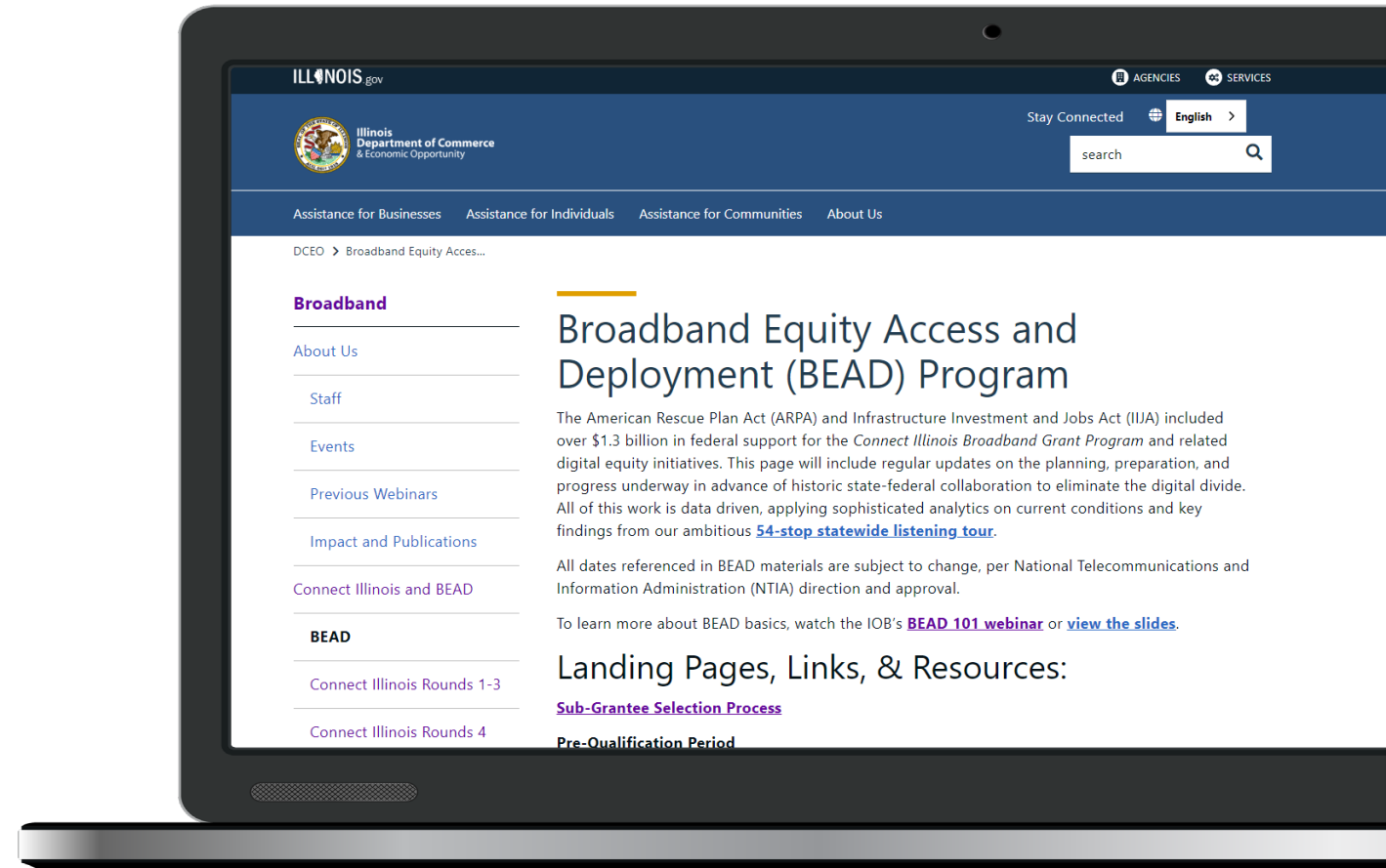
- Includes materials from BEAD Deep Dive Webinar Series and FAQs

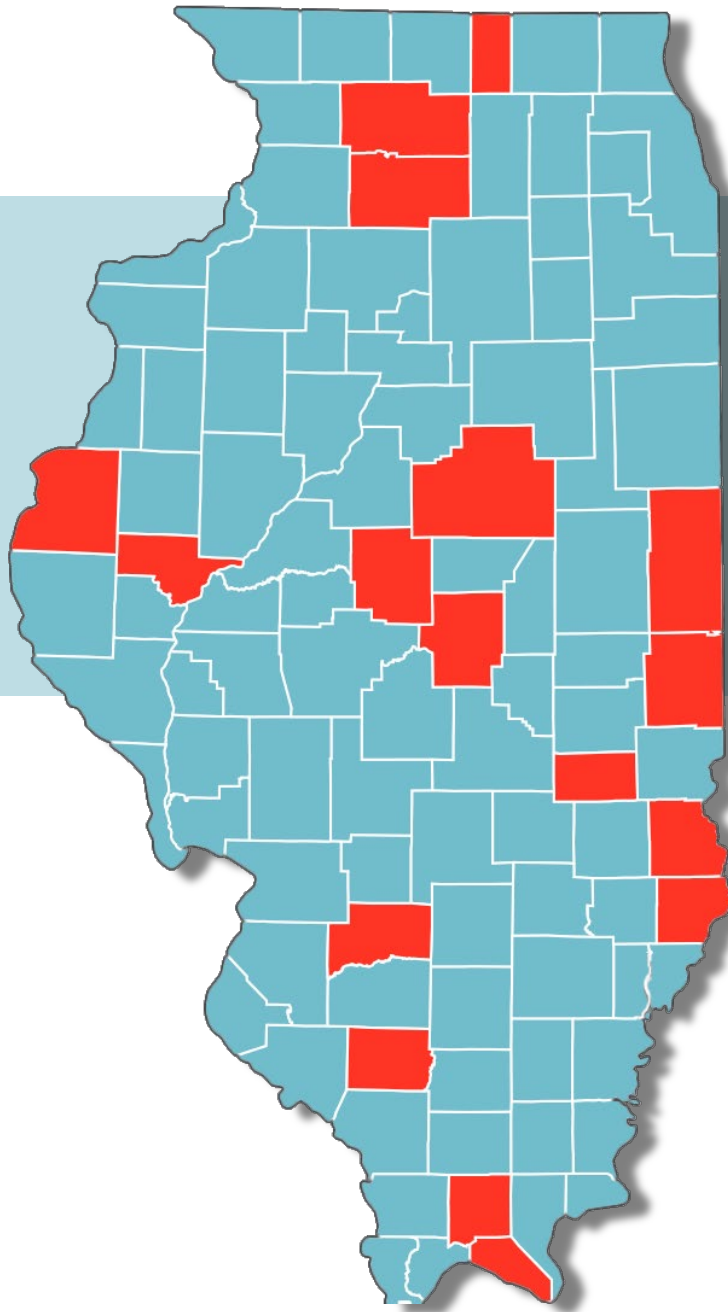
Connect Illinois Initial Proposal, Volume II: [\[Link\]](#)

NTIA BEAD NOFO: [\[Link\]](#)



For further questions, please email broadband@illinois.gov





ILLINOIS *BROADBAND BREAKTHROUGH* Cohort 4



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- **Orientation Session:** Review current broadband circumstances
- **Community Survey:** Distributed by community, provided and analyzed by Benton
- **Community Preparation:** Technical assistance Zoom sessions on project development and best practices, read-out on refreshed analysis
- **Analysis:** Determination of best broadband options based on local knowledge and technical assistance input
- **Prospective ISP Matchmaking:** Community discussions facilitated with technical assistance
- **Program Wrap-up:** Round table discussion of outcomes

APPLICATION PROCESS

Up to 8 counties will be selected

- Applicants can be an entire county or a project area that may cross county lines
- All counties are eligible to apply
- There is no-cost to the community
- Applications accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until Jan. 31, 2025

Apply via email

- Contact information
- Community description
- General broadband situation overview
- Community team roster (minimum of committed eight team members, preferably 12-15) from local government, economic development, education, health care, technology, non-profits. Community members are welcome!
- Submit application:

More Information:

Dec 9 Webinar: [Slides](#) | [Recording](#) | [Application Information](#)

Broadband Breakthrough: benton.org/broadband-breakthrough

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Stay informed!

Sign up to receive updates from the
Illinois Office of Broadband (IOB)

<https://bit.ly/IOBPartner>

Sign up for Illinois Broadband Connections Newsletter

<https://bit.ly/IOBnewsletter>

Appendix

Overview of the BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4 timeline

PRELIMINARY TIMELINE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

INFORMATION PROVIDED ON AN INFORMATIONAL BASIS AND DOES NOT SUPERCEDE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

Key Updates

- Pre-Qualification Participation Notice Letters sent to all participants
- Final BEAD eligibility data approved by NTIA
- Draft NOFO posted for initial review

