

Permitting Roundtable Guide for Broadband Service Providers

(Version 1, as of 5/7/2026)

This resource provides Broadband Service Providers with guidance on determining whether hosting a Permitting Roundtable would be beneficial, as well as instructions on how to effectively conduct one. It includes step-by-step guidance, an overview of the benefits, example email, and agenda templates.

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What is a Permitting Roundtable?

A Permitting Roundtable is a structured meeting hosted by a Broadband Service Provider (“provider”) to bring together external permitting stakeholders involved in a broadband deployment project. Participants may include local leaders, Permitting Specialists from State Agencies, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Municipalities, Townships, and Railroads, as well as Pole Owners, County Engineers, Township Commissioners, Drainage District Commissioners, and Utility Locating Regional Directors.

Permitting Roundtables are especially valuable for projects with complex permitting needs or those requiring coordination across multiple agencies. Bringing all parties together early helps clarify expectations, align requirements, and identify challenges before they lead to delays.

Example: A Permitting Roundtable would be useful for a provider planning to install underground fiber in a new area that requires a railroad crossing and approval from a Drainage District they have not worked with before. Meeting with all relevant entities allows for discussion of the project, clear guidance on the permitting process, and the opportunity to identify efficiencies.



Benefits of Hosting a Permitting Roundtable

Builds Working Relationships

- Establishing channels of communication early can make it easier to ask questions, seek clarification, and address issues as they arise throughout the project schedule.

Improves Local Support

- Informing local stakeholders about the project can enhance assistance in acquiring easements, promote municipal or township right of way (ROW) access, and support general awareness to the community.

Identifies Early Efficiencies

- Suggesting solutions can prevent challenges proactively, reduce the need for rework on permit applications, and support more efficient deployment.

Streamlines Permitting Processes

- Reviewing large project details may prompt permitting entities to improve internal processes, clarify application requirements, or align standards to better processes and systems where appropriate.

Steps to Initiate a Permitting Roundtable

Planning the Permitting Roundtable

Determine whether a Permitting Roundtable would benefit your project:

- Overlay your project's network diagram onto the Illinois Permitting Map to identify all permitting entities involved.
- Please review the questions below. If the answer is "yes" to two or more questions, the Illinois Office of Broadband recommends a Permitting Roundtable to support efficient deployment:
 - Are there at least two permits needed from different permitting entities on your project?
 - Is this a new project area in which your organization hasn't yet deployed?
 - Are at least 50% of the permitting entities new to your organization?
 - Does the project require at least one of the following permit types:
 - Railroad (e.g., Union Pacific, BNSF)
 - Federal agency (e.g., Dept of Natural Resources, Dept Fish and Wildlife)
 - State and/or National Park (e.g., Starved Rock, Shawnee National Forest)

Prepare your project details:

- Document the following information in a PDF and share it with permitting entities before a Permitting Roundtable
 - Project ID (i.e., BOTB-1234) and/or the location of the project
- Number of locations to be served (i.e., total BSLs and CAIs)
 - Technology type (i.e., fiber, wireless, satellite)
 - Technology quantity (i.e., footage of fiber, number of towers)
 - Installation methods (i.e., underground, aerial, equipment to be used)
 - Estimated number of crews and where they will be placed
 - Estimated schedule (i.e., start and end date for each set of crews)

Document a list of permits needed and the relevant jurisdiction owner:

- Compile a list of all permitting entities for your project, including email addresses and contact information.

Initiate outreach:

- Email each permitting entity with a request to participate using the [Email Template](#) below.

Schedule the Permitting Roundtable:

- After gathering availability from the permitting entities, send a meeting invitation and confirmation email that includes:
 - Final date and time
 - Location (in-person or virtual) and relevant access information (meeting links or directions)
 - Note: In-person meetings tend to have more active participation and effective outcomes compared to virtual. If possible, coordinate with your local municipality to identify a conveniently located conference room to host the Permitting Roundtable.
 - An attachment with your project details so permitting entities can review it before the Permitting Roundtable session
 - An attachment with the meeting agenda items

Executing the Permitting Roundtable

Prepare your materials

- Ensure all project information is ready to share (i.e., printed out or on a slide deck)

Arrive early to prepare and confirm logistics, including:

- Technology setup (i.e., ability to project slides in a conference room or screenshare in a virtual meeting)
- Building or room access, if applicable
- Any required setup for presentation materials

Conduct the meeting using the Agenda Template below

Following up after the Permitting Roundtable

- Send a recap of the Permitting Roundtable notes to the attendees.
- Document attendee names, contact information, discussion points, and action items.
- Track all action items discussed and set reminders for any required follow-up.
- Provide updates to permitting entities if substantial changes occur in the project details.
- Reach out to attendees if challenges arise to troubleshoot and create solutions.

Best Practices for the Permitting Roundtable

Invite the Right Team Members

- Ensure all team members involved in permitting, engineering, and/or project management are present from your organization and/or applicable contractors.

Share Key Information

- Share key details prior to the meeting such as meeting objectives, agenda, and attendee list before the meeting.

Set the Objectives

- Start the meeting by outlining objectives, agenda, and participation guidelines.

Delegate Roles

- Assign roles on your team such as presenter, facilitator, and note-taker ahead of time.

Practice Time Management

- Create focused agenda items with time limits to ensure the meeting doesn't exceed the allotted time.

Email Template

Subject Line: Action Required: Invitation to Broadband Permitting Roundtable

Hello,

I hope you are doing well. My name is [FIRST AND LAST NAME], and I am the [TITLE] at [ORGANIZATION]. We will be expanding broadband access through the Connect Illinois grant program, funded through the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program, within your permitting jurisdiction in [INSERT RELEVANT LOCATION/COUNTY/TOWNSHIP] beginning [ESTIMATED DATE], and we want to ensure the process is smooth, well-coordinated, and in alignment with your needs.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in a 90-minute Permitting Roundtable, in which you, along with other local stakeholders, can meet our staff and learn about the upcoming project. Additionally, part of the agenda for the Permitting Roundtable will be delegated for your organization to provide a brief overview of your requirements and best practices. Your participation ensures that we have all the information needed to submit complete permits, reduce back and forth, and mitigate any issues ahead of deployment.

Please let me know which of the dates and times below would work for you

- [Possible date/time]
- [Possible date/time]
- [Possible date/time]

I will work to schedule a time that works well for all participants. Please let me know your availability by [INSERT DATE ONE WEEK FROM SEND DATE].

If you have any questions or would like additional information, I am happy to help.

Thank you, and I look forward to the opportunity to work together. To learn more about the Connect Illinois grant program, funded through the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program, visit the Illinois Office of Broadband Website [here](#).

Best,

[INSERT NAME]

Sample Agenda Template for 90-Minute Permitting Roundtable

Adapt this guide to fit the goals of your organization and the needs of the stakeholders who will be attending. Sharing the agenda helps participants understand how the Permitting Roundtable will run and ensures clear timing for each section to keep the discussion on track.

Time	Agenda Item	Details
5 min	Welcome and Objectives	Greet all members as they enter the in person or virtual room. Designate someone to take attendance for everyone present. Explain the overall purpose of the Permitting Roundtable, goals, and review the agenda for the meeting.
10 min	Introductions	Have each attendee state their name, role, organization Example ice breaker question for everyone to answer: What is your favorite type of municipal infrastructure? Manhole covers? Power poles?
20 min	Sharing Project Details	Broadband Service Provider will explain their project details including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project ID (i.e., BOTB-1234) and project area • Number of locations to be connected • Technology type (i.e., fiber, wireless, satellite) • Technology quantity (i.e., footage of fiber, number of towers) • Installation methods (i.e., underground, aerial, equipment to be used) • Number of crews and where they will be placed • Number of locations to be served • Estimated schedule (i.e., start and end date for each set of crews)
10 min	Clarifying Project Details	This section is intended for the permitting entities to ask any clarifying questions about the project details. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex: confirming timing, number of crews, size of labor, footage etc.
20 min	Permitting Entity Requirements	Permitting entities will share each about 5 min about their process, where to find more information, and share best practices on how to submit a quality and complete application.
20 min	Discussion	Open the floor for the permitting entities to ask questions or discuss any potential challenges with implementation of the project. If the permitting entities do not have any questions or discussion items, the provider can ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any areas of concern with the project details? • Any opportunities to make this project more efficient? • Are there any other conflicting projects or improvements in the local community that could cause a delay to this project?
5 min	Wrap Up and Conclusion	Summarize the discussion topics, proposed solutions to challenges, and will document any next steps stakeholders discussed for follow up.

Resources to Support Your Permitting Roundtable

- [IOB BEAD Website](#)
 - A website that provides a program overview, final proposal materials, and downloadable CSV files with detailed location information
- [BEAD Map](#)
 - A GIS map that allows you to view locations details by address, technology type, and provider
- [Broadband in Illinois Starter Guide](#)
 - A detailed and comprehensive resource outlining how to navigate different permitting jurisdictions in Illinois
- [Permitting Directory](#)
 - A spreadsheet containing contact information for Class I Railroads, Counties, and Department of Transportation
- Permitting Map
 - A comprehensive map combining the data from the BEAD Map, Permitting Directory and Permitting Jurisdiction GIS data to easily identify what permits may be needed for a BEAD project.
- IOB Email: broadband@illinois.gov
 - This email offers a direct way to ask the office questions or request more information about BEAD related information