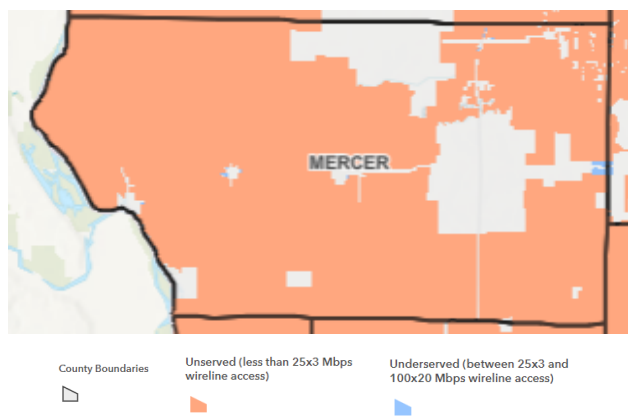


Current Status of Broadband in Mercer County

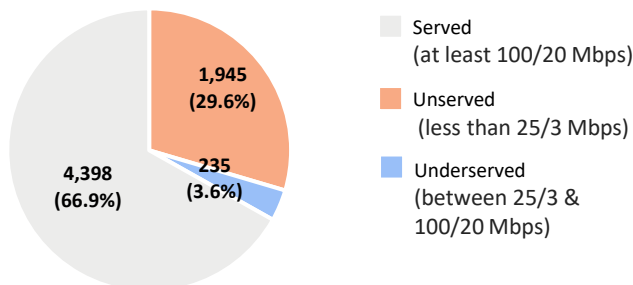


Broadband Availability



Households with wireline broadband access

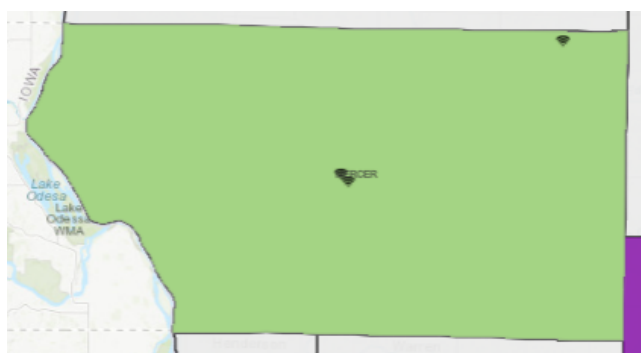
(Cable, DSL, and Fiber technologies)



Households with wireline + fixed wireless broadband access, but unconfirmed latency (speed): 454 (7%) households are unserved, 345 (5%) are underserved and 5,780 (88%) are served.

Illinois Office of Broadband Programs

The *Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program* is a best-practice approach to combine federal, state, and local funds with provider match contribution – (1) to expand fully-scalable broadband access to homes, businesses, and community anchors most in need and (2) to ensure continued access well into the future.



- **\$1.5B+ through State, ARPA, and IIJA** to promote consistency, ensure efficiency & align *Rebuild Illinois*, *Capital Projects Fund*, and *BEAD* program funding
- **50+ communities engaged in local planning & capacity building support** (*Connected Communities*, *Accelerate Illinois* & *Broadband Breakthrough* programs)
- **Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY) program** for ongoing community & stakeholder support through inclusive regional teams
- **Connect Illinois Computer Equity Network** launched in 2020 to source, refurbish, and distribute computers to households in need throughout Illinois

Collaborative Projects

- Public¹ Wi-Fi hotspots: **3**
- ACP enrollment rate²: **9%**
- Low-cost devices distributed (FY 2022): **7**
- Accelerate Broadband Infrastructure Planning Program: **1**
- Illinois Connected Communities Grants: **1**
- READY lead: **Northern Illinois University**

Broadband Adoption Statistics (ACS 2021 5-year estimates)

- Smartphone dependent households: **8%**
- Cellular Data dependent households: **16%**
- Households without a computing device: **11%**
- Households without an internet subscription: **14%**

To learn more or to get involved, visit <https://dceo.illinois.gov/connectillinois> or contact broadband@illinois.gov

1. Confirmed institutional public Wi-Fi hotspots tracked beginning April 2020 as part of immediate pandemic response

2. ACP enrollment rate as of October 2022. Number of eligible households. ACP Eligible Households includes number of households at/below 200% of the Federal poverty level + those who receive Medicaid or govt medical assistance, Supplemental Security Income, Public Assistance, or SNAP benefits

3. Devices distributed by the Computer Equity Network & PCs for people statistics includes the number of devices distributed in the County

Federal BEAD and Digital Equity funding aligns with Connect Illinois programs, adding impact to existing work

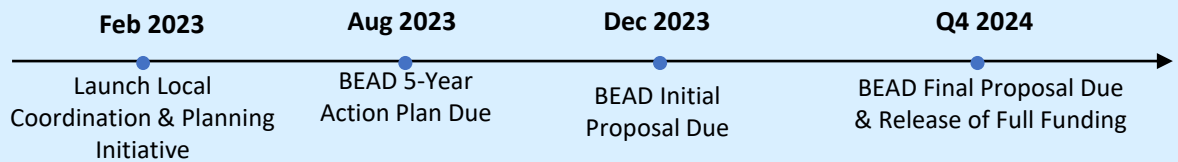


Two new grant programs for states provide a generational opportunity to close the digital divide in Illinois!

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

- Allocates **\$42.45B** focused on **broadband infrastructure deployment** to all states
- Illinois is expected to receive an estimated **\$1B+ on top of other funding sources**
- States must prioritize funds for:
 1. Unserved service projects
 2. Underserved service projects
 3. Connecting community anchor institutions
 4. Installing Wi-Fi infrastructure within residential buildings
 5. Data collection
 6. Broadband adoption
- States must **coordinate with local stakeholders** in the planning process
- States must **extend access to ALL unserved** locations

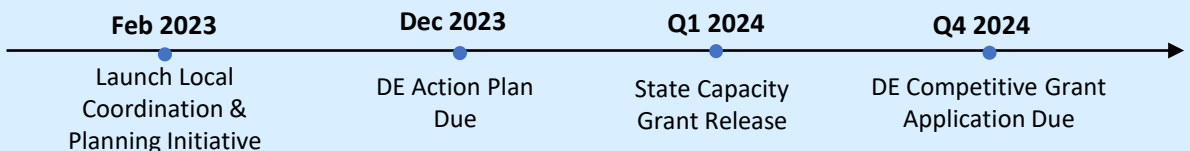
Timeline of BEAD Program



The Digital Equity Programs

- Provides **\$2.75B for digital literacy, computer access, and internet adoption** initiatives via formula-based and competitive grants to states
- Example use of funds:
 - Develop, implement, and oversee comprehensive digital equity plans
 - Make awards to other entities to help in developing digital equity plans
 - Improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources
 - Implement digital equity plans and digital inclusion activities
 - Provide digital literacy and skills education to covered populations

Timeline of DE Programs



To learn more about local coordination, outreach, and engagement efforts for the statewide BEAD and Digital Equity planning, visit <https://broadband.illinois.edu/>