



ILLINOIS  
BROADBAND  
LAB



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



UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS  
SYSTEM

# Broadband **READY**

Regional Digital Equity Engagement — Southeast Region

January 31, 2024

# Today's Agenda

**Introductions**



**Group Discussion &  
Recharge**

**State Digital Equity Plan**

**Unpacking the Plan**

**Regional Findings**

**Breakout & Discussion**



**Submitting Comments**

**BEAD Challenge Process**

**Regional Updates & READY**



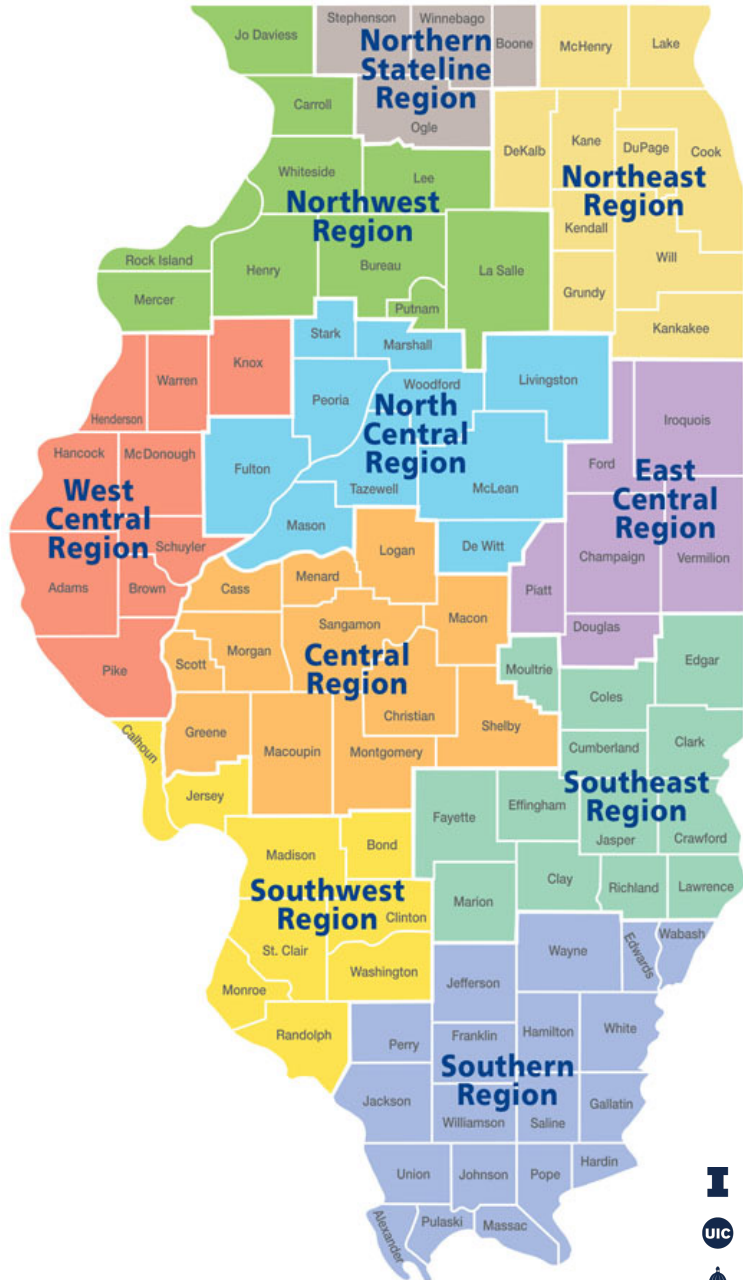
**Closing**

**Announcements & General Discussion**



# Broadband *READY*

## Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY)



# Context



**The Digital Equity Act of 2021 requires State Digital Equity Plan**

- Provides funding across the State Capacity and Competitive Grant programs



**The State Digital Equity Plan highlights digital equity needs in Illinois and offers a perspective on existing assets and ongoing gaps**



**The Plan highlights unique digital equity challenges and opportunities in Illinois gathered from the Spring 2023 Listening Tour**



**The State Digital Equity Plan draft is currently open for public comment until January 31<sup>st</sup>**





**Digital Equity** is the condition in which individuals and communities have **sustained access and the capabilities for productive use** of information technology that is needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States

## Digital equity is the target outcome of federal broadband funding



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“Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.”

## A stakeholder engagement process that includes underrepresented populations is required to access funds





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“Achieving digital equity is a matter of social and economic justice and is worth pursuing.”

# Background: The Digital Equity Act of 2021 provides funding across two digital equity programs

Created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Digital Equity Act Programs provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all

Funding program	Description	Primary focus	Project funding administered by	Timeline
<b>1. Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program</b>	<b>~\$1.44B<sup>1</sup></b> In funding for digital inclusion plans activities	Executing the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) by implementing digital equity initiatives (e.g., access to digital literacy training)	 State governments	Applications in early-mid 2024
<b>2. Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program</b>	<b>~\$1.25B<sup>2</sup></b> In funding to promote digital inclusion and broadband adoption activities	Facilitating digital inclusion activities (e.g., workforce development programs) as well as broadband adoption and affordability that benefits covered populations	 Federal government (NTIA)	Applications in mid-late 2024

**State of IL expects to receive \$30M to \$35M from the Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program<sup>3</sup>**

1. ~\$1.5B allocated in total for the DE State Capacity Grant Program; \$60M for State Planning Grants (FY22), and \$1.44B for State Capacity Grants (FY22 – FY26); 2. <= 10% of fund towards evaluation activities; <= 10% towards administration activities; 3. Estimated based on award formula outlined in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (US Senate H.R. 3684, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)

# The Digital Equity Act of 2021 identifies eight “Covered populations”

## Covered Populations

*Identity groups and communities disproportionately impacted by digital inequity*



Low-income households



People with disabilities



Aging populations



People with language barriers



Incarcerated individuals



Racial and ethnic minorities



Veterans



Rural inhabitants

Covered populations have **historically been unable to fully engage in the digital economy**—gaps in broadband adoption and device access persist between covered populations and their non-covered peers

# Breakdown of covered populations in IL compared to national averages: ~5.4M (42%) racial or ethnic minorities and ~2.7M (21%) below 150% of the federal poverty line

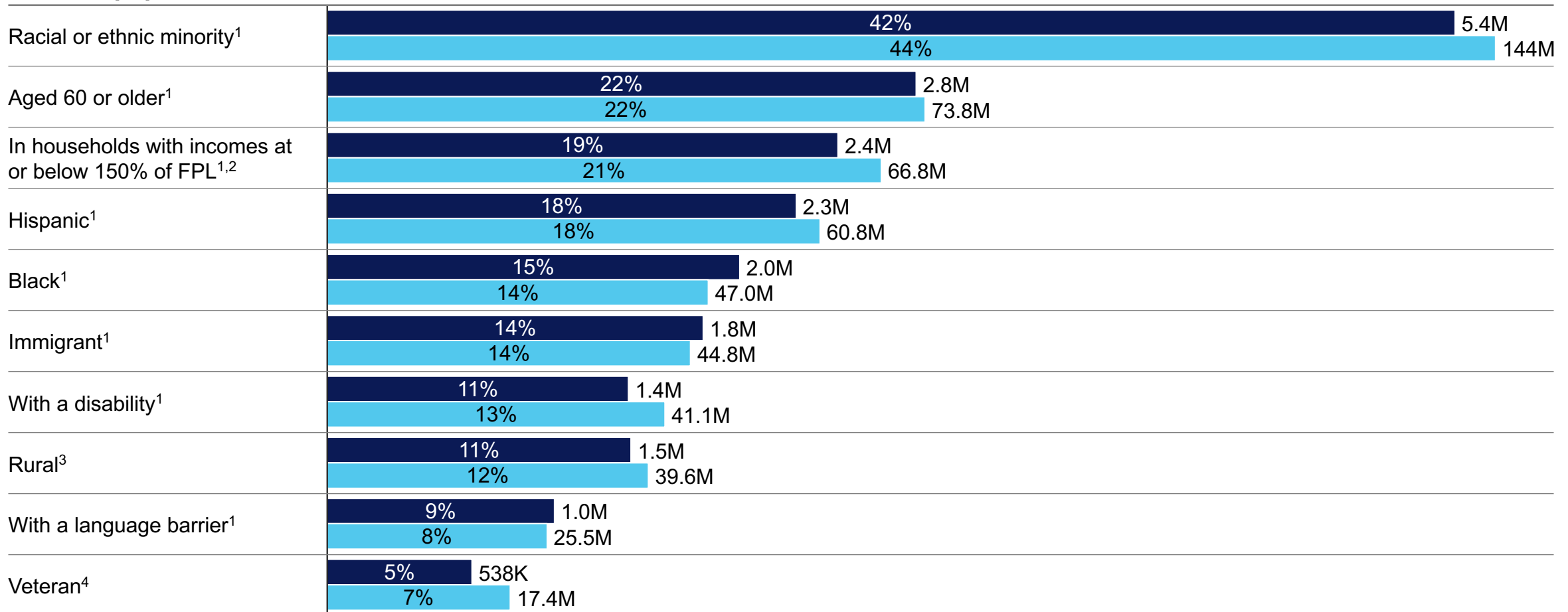
■ Illinois ■ United States

DATA AS OF 03/21/2023

## Covered population

## Breakdown of covered populations in IL

Percent of total population, total covered population count



1. US Census 2021 ACS 5-year data (Table DP05); [Digital Equity Act Population Viewer](#); 2. Federal Poverty Line; 3. US Census 2021 ACS 5-year data, [Based on OMB](#); 4. [definition of rural](#): a "micro area (urban core of 10,000-49,999 people)" or a county "outside of a metro or micro areas"; 5. US Census 2021 ACS 5-year data (Table DP02), Based on the total civilian population over 18 years and over



# Last year, the Illinois Broadband Lab held 55+ listening sessions across the state to hear about residents' greatest barriers to connectivity



Springfield, Central Region  
4/26/2023



Chicago, Northeast Region  
5/3/2023

*Sample photos from listening sessions*

# The listening tour spanned all 10 regions and engaged 1250+ stakeholders

Sessions were held across the state from March to June 2023



## Residents

24 in-person listening sessions<sup>1</sup>  
2 webinars



## Local Organizations & Non-Profits

22 in-person listening sessions<sup>2</sup>  
2 webinars<sup>2</sup>



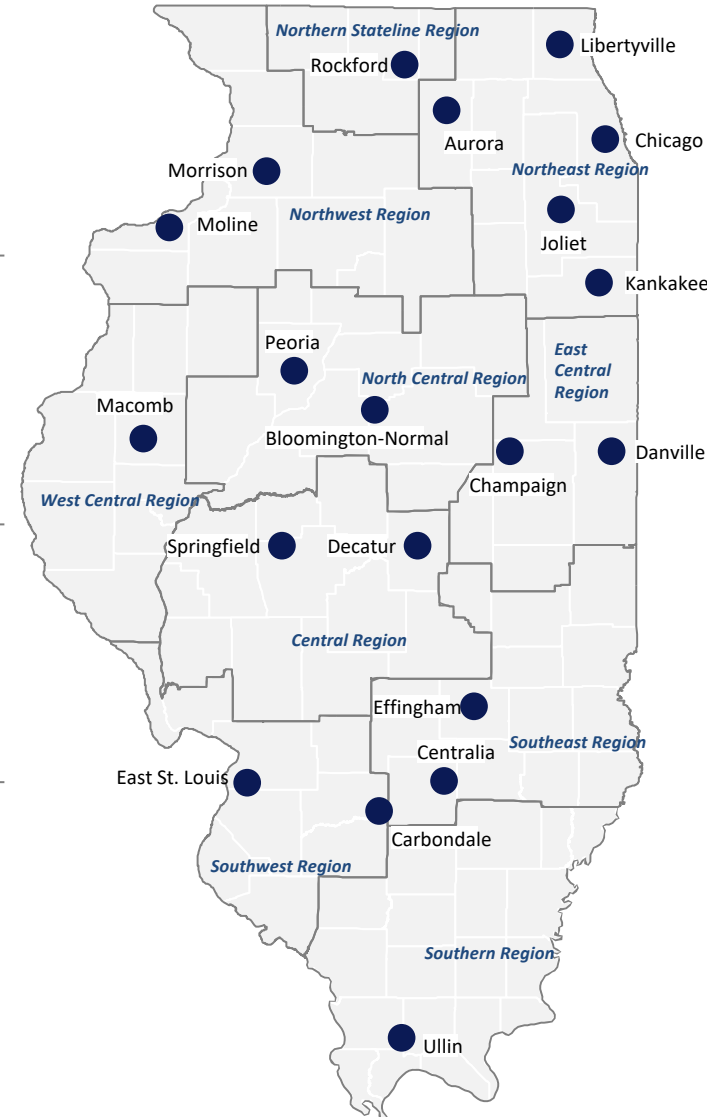
## Local Government

19 in-person listening sessions  
2 webinars



## Internet Service Providers

Numerous listening sessions  
2 webinars



# 1256

attendees

1168 for in-person sessions

88 for virtual sessions

# 40+

organizations  
represented

# 55+

listening sessions<sup>1</sup>

20 cities visited

<sup>1</sup> Includes 18 combined resident and local organization sessions

<sup>2</sup> Includes the follow-up session with the Northwest Center Digital Coaches



# Listening tour findings, plus data analysis and research, led to the draft State Digital Equity Plan

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) requires each state to develop a digital equity plan, which will inform how the State Capacity grant program is crafted



**ILLINOIS STATE DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN**  
**Digital Equity Act Programs**  
Illinois Office of Broadband  
November 2023

**DRAFT**

 ILLINOIS BROADBAND LAB  Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity  UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

DOCUMENT INTENDED TO PROVIDE INSIGHT BASED ON CURRENTLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION FOR CONSIDERATION AND NOT TO PRESCRIBE SPECIFIC ACTION

- The State Digital Equity Plan, or “SDEP”, must align with certain **requirements from NTIA**
- It includes...
  - Findings and takeaways from the listening tours
  - Results from an asset mapping exercise
  - Goals
  - Strategies to achieve these goals
- NTIA requires every state to accept public comment on the plan
  - **Public comment period is open through January 31, 5 pm CT**
  - To submit a comment, visit: [go.illinois.edu/DEPlanComments](https://go.illinois.edu/DEPlanComments)
- Following public comment, the state will **review and respond** to all comments, **incorporate** feedback in the plan, and submit to NTIA by Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>

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# Digital Equity Plan Guiding Principles



## Strive for Equity Beyond Just Digital

Ensuring everyone has opportunities that meet their individualized needs.



## Empower Communities

Using an inclusive and collaborative approach led by those most impacted.



## Stay Accountable to the Vision and the Community

Using well-defined measures for success and transparent reporting



## Deliver innovative solutions

Incorporating best practices and novel ideas



## Focus on Community Benefits

Focusing on creating opportunities and dismantling barriers









## Plan for Sustainability

Bridging short-term impact and long-term sustainable efforts

# Birdseye View: Digital Equity Plan Section Overview

## Key sections

## Subsections

	<b>1. Executive Summary</b>	
	<b>2. Introduction and Vision for Digital Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vision</li><li>• Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes</li><li>• Goals and Objectives</li></ul>
	<b>3. Current State of Broadband and Digital Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asset Inventory</li><li>• Needs Assessment</li></ul>
	<b>4. Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordination and Outreach Strategy</li></ul>
	<b>5. Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation Strategy and Key Activities</li><li>• Timeline</li></ul>
	<b>6. Conclusion</b>	

Notes: Excludes Appendices



[go.illinois.edu/SDEP](https://go.illinois.edu/SDEP)

# Vision for Digital Equity (Section 2)

## Connect Illinois seeks to:

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**Ensure universal access to high-speed broadband that is affordable, reliable, and fully scalable** for residences, businesses, and community anchor institutions (CAIs) across Illinois.

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**Leverage new and existing resources for adoption through targeted digital inclusion strategies and sustainable broadband equity outcomes** to help communities identify and address existing broadband equity gaps

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**Empower all Illinoisans to utilize and participate fully in an increasingly digital economy and society.**

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# Current State of Broadband and Digital Inclusion (Section 3)

*Illinois is not starting from scratch! Let's build upon and leverage our strengths.*

Digital inclusion assets are organized into 4 categories:



## **Civic and volunteer organizations:**

Organizations that advocate for digital equity or offer volunteer programming related to digital literacy, inclusion, or equity



## **Technical assistance:**

Programs that provide internet-enabled devices or digital literacy assistance to covered populations



## **Workforce development training and employment services:**

Programs that offer training and employment resources to community members



## **Public Wi-Fi, networks, and access points:**

Platforms or programs that provide information about or connection to public Wi-Fi, networks, access points, or sub-devices that enable access to networks

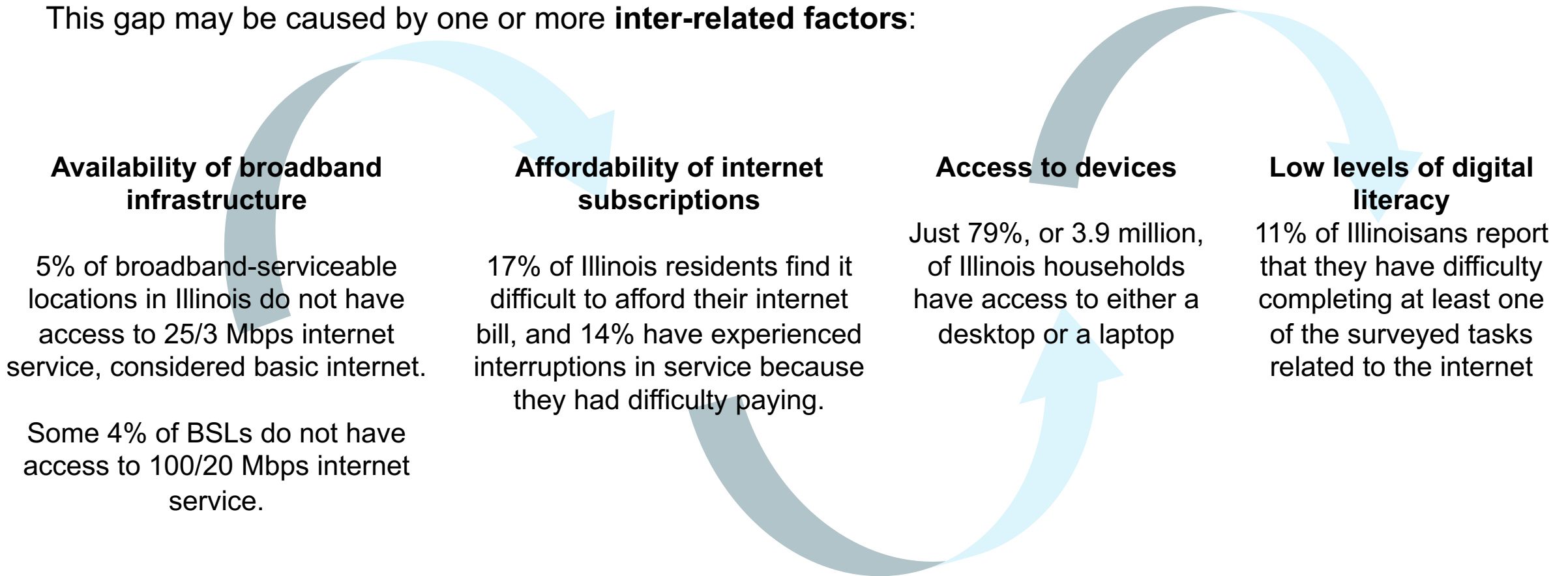
*The complete list of assets can be found on pg. 47 in the Plan.*



# Current State of Broadband and Digital Inclusion (Section 3)

Today, 2.9 million Illinois residents in 1.3 million households lack a subscription to high-speed internet in their homes.

This gap may be caused by one or more **inter-related factors**:



# Current State of Broadband and Digital Inclusion (Section 3)

The digital divide is an equity issue: Gaps are even more stark among covered populations

## Individuals who live in covered households

7% more likely than the average Illinoisan to believe that having internet service is “not worth the trouble”

## Aging individuals

14% more likely than the average Illinoisan to worry about how to use computers and the internet

## Veterans

5% less likely to adopt broadband as compared to the average Illinoisan

## Black Illinoisans

5% more likely than the average Illinoisan to experience service interruptions due to difficulties in paying

## Residents of rural areas

4% more likely than the average Illinoisan to have trouble getting internet services installed at their residence

## People with disabilities

15% less likely to adopt broadband and 15% less likely to have access to internet-enabled devices as compared to the average Illinoisan.

## Hispanic Illinoisans

14% more likely than the average Illinoisan to find it difficult to fit a monthly internet bill into their household budget

## People with a language barrier

Limited access to digital resources for device troubleshooting and digital literacy training

## Justice-Impacted Individuals

Extensive needs for digital learning as part of re-entry into society and to support their efforts to find and acquire jobs

# Summary statistics on broadband metrics and covered populations across the 10 regions of Illinois

## Legend<sup>1</sup>

- Top 2 highest proportions
- Above population median
- Below population median

	Broadband metrics			Share of each covered population as a proportion of total regional population							
	Unserved	Broadband adoption <sup>1</sup>	Access to devices	Income less 150% of FPL	Aging ind. (60+)	Veterans	Ind. with disabilities	Ind. with low English literacy	Racial & ethnic minorities <sup>2</sup>	Immigrants	Rural
Northeast	1%	76%	94%	18%	21%	3%	10%	42%	56%	19%	0%
Northern Stateline	2%	68%	91%	23%	25%	6%	14%	15%	30%	8%	10%
Northwest	6%	63%	91%	20%	28%	6%	14%	10%	19%	4%	36%
North Central	6%	67%	92%	20%	24%	5%	12%	6%	16%	4%	24%
East Central	8%	65%	92%	24%	22%	5%	11%	15%	25%	8%	22%
Central	9%	63%	90%	21%	26%	6%	14%	4%	14%	2%	44%
West Central	6%	60%	87%	23%	27%	6%	15%	4%	11%	2%	46%
Southeast	24%	58%	90%	22%	26%	6%	16%	4%	6%	1%	100%
Southern	23%	49%	87%	26%	26%	7%	19%	5%	11%	2%	67%
Southwest	8%	68%	91%	18%	24%	8%	14%	4%	22%	2%	23%
<b>Illinois average</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>

1. For broadband adoption and devices access: darkest color indicates lowest proportions, middle color indicates below state average, and light grey indicates above state average

2. Includes Black or African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, Some other race, Two or more races, and Hispanic populations

Covered populations excluded: Justice-impacted individuals, LGBTQ+ individuals, women, and rural residents; Units used for analysis: BSLs: unserved; Households: broadband adoption and access to devices; Individuals: all covered populations; Source: US Census 2021 ACS 5-Year, FCC Maps

# Summary of ACP eligibility and enrollment across regions

**ACP eligibility and enrollment rate by region, as of Sept 2023**

Region	% of BSLs	% of households eligible	% of eligible households enrolled
Northeast	56%	36%	33%
Northern Stateline	4%	47%	32%
Northwest	6%	42%	25%
North Central	6%	40%	28%
East Central	3%	49%	26%
Central	6%	42%	32%
West Central	3%	46%	23%
Southeast	3%	46%	28%
Southern	5%	53%	31%
Southwest	7%	38%	55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>33%</b>

## Key insights

**As of September 1, 2023, 33% of eligible Illinois households were enrolled in ACP, ranking Illinois 23<sup>rd</sup> in ACP enrollment among all 50 states**

- Highest enrollment is in the Southwestern region (55% of eligible HHs enrolled)
- Lowest enrollment rate is in the West Central region (23% of the eligible population)

# Locations with access to affordable and reliable broadband at 25Mbps download speed

Region	% of BSLs	Price of internet for advertised download speed of 25Mbps+			
		Less than \$25	From \$25-50	More than \$50	Not Available
Northeast	56%	94%	4%	1%	1%
Northern Stateline	4%	72%	25%	1%	2%
Northwest	6%	23%	57%	14%	6%
North Central	6%	56%	25%	14%	6%
East Central	3%	47%	13%	32%	8%
Central	6%	46%	21%	25%	8%
West Central	3%	43%	45%	7%	6%
Southeast	3%	0%	27%	49%	24%
Southern	5%	2%	18%	56%	24%
Southwest	7%	0%	81%	10%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>5%</b>

## Key insights

In some but not all regions of the state, residents can choose to subscribe to a lower-cost plan that offers 25 Mbps download speeds

- 67% of state residents have access to 25Mbps internet service for less than \$25 per month
- Almost no residents in the Southeast, Southern, and Southwest regions can access 25Mbps internet service for less than \$25

# Locations with access to affordable reliable broadband at 100Mbps download speed

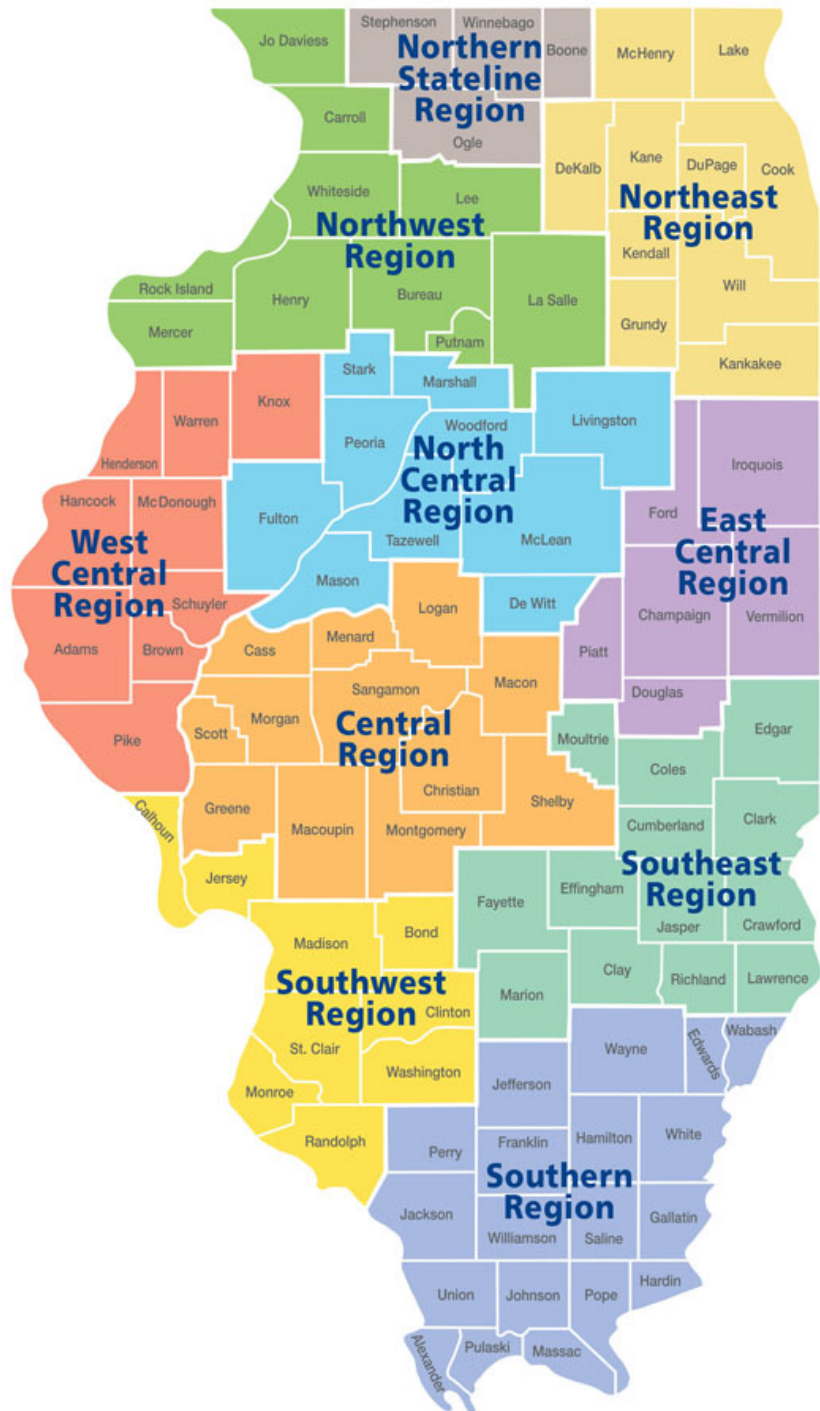
Region	% of BSLs	Price of internet for advertised download speed of 100Mbps+			
		Less than \$25	From \$25-50	More than \$50	Not Available
Northeast	56%	0%	97%	1%	2%
Northern Stateline	4%	0%	82%	7%	11%
Northwest	6%	0%	38%	39%	22%
North Central	6%	0%	59%	27%	14%
East Central	3%	0%	51%	39%	11%
Central	6%	0%	53%	31%	16%
West Central	3%	0%	45%	36%	18%
Southeast	3%	0%	12%	60%	28%
Southern	5%	0%	11%	61%	29%
Southwest	7%	0%	74%	13%	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>9%</b>

## Key insights

**Residents must pay at \$25 to \$50 per month for download speeds of 100 Mbps in most of the state**

- 77% of state residents have access to 100Mbps internet service for less than \$50
- 15% of residents pay more than \$50 for 100Mbps service
- 9% do not have access to 100Mbps internet service at all
- The Northeast region offers the most affordable internet service





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# Across all regions, several key themes emerged that informed the Plan



AS SHARED BY PARTICIPANTS ACROSS LISTENING TOUR SESSIONS

Category	Topics	Insights from Listening Sessions
<p>Deployment</p> 	<p>Barriers related to geography and outdated technology</p>	<p>Residents shared that <b>outdated broadband infrastructure</b> can limit their access to reliable internet service, particularly in rural communities</p>
	<p>Financial and regulatory barriers</p>	<p>Residents and local organizations shared that providers regularly encounter barriers that can <b>disincentivize their expansion of broadband infrastructure</b></p>
	<p>Competitive landscape</p>	<p>Many residents underscored the <b>lack of ISP competition in their communities</b> (e.g., only a single available provider), emphasizing the lack of customer agency over quality and price in a single-provider market</p>
<p>Access</p> 	<p>Insufficient internet speeds and inconsistent service</p>	<p>Residents and local organizations emphasized that <b>limited bandwidth and latency issues can compound when multiple devices are online</b> – constraining daily activities</p>

Source: Statewide listening tour

# Across all regions, several key themes emerged that informed the Plan

AS SHARED BY PARTICIPANTS ACROSS LISTENING TOUR SESSIONS

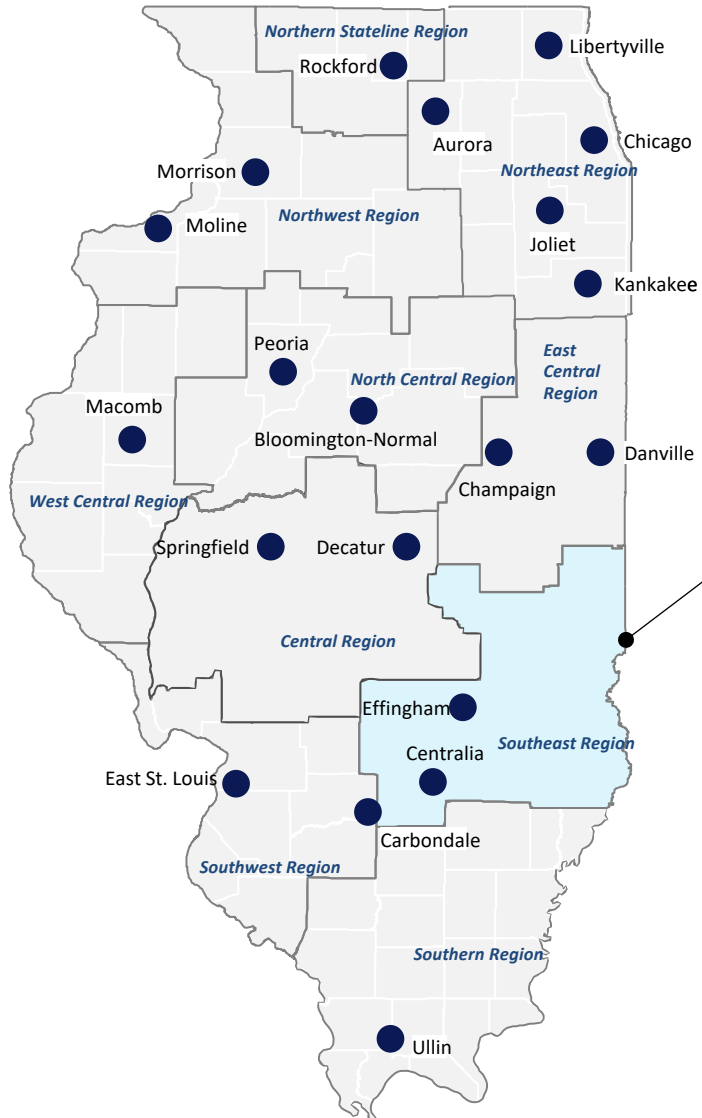
Category	Topics	Insights from Listening Sessions
Affordability 	Subscription and device affordability concerns	Residents and local organizations shared that <b>current broadband subsidies can be insufficient for underserved communities</b> and many residents who are eligible are still unaware of the programs Many – across residents, local orgs and ISPs -- <b>expressed concern that ACP may not last</b> , and are worried about the impact on families
Digital Equity 	Lack of robust digital literacy programs and networks	Residents and local organizations underscored that <b>digital literacy programs can be insufficient for residents' daily technical needs</b>
	Constraints on economic growth and upward mobility	Residents shared that the lack of reliable internet can significantly <b>constrain economic activities and development opportunities</b> for both businesses and residents

Source: Statewide listening tour

# Community events in the Southeast region highlighted gaps in broadband infrastructure reliability and high internet and device costs

NON-EXHAUSTIVE AS SHARED BY PARTICIPANTS ACROSS LISTENING TOUR SESSIONS

Includes content tailored for **Southeast Illinois**



## Southeast region (1 event, 30 participants)

### Unreliable internet connectivity

- Many residents report spending additional time planning their day around internet access and traveling long distances to public Wi-Fi locations because they face unreliable household connection
- Many residents report unreliable connectivity and limited bandwidth at home

### High monthly internet and device costs

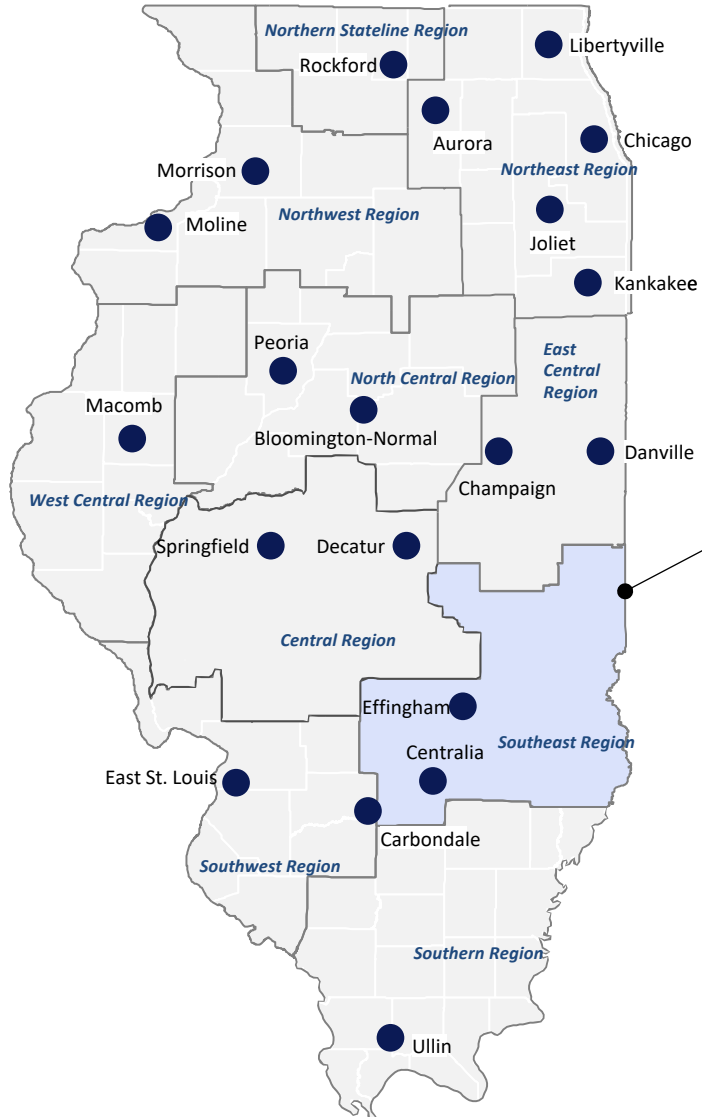
- Many residents report internet subscription and device affordability as a primary barrier to adoption
- Many residents report on limited ISP competition, with many areas that only have one or two providers to choose from

Source: Statewide listening tour

# Analysis of public data sources and survey responses reveals very significant unserved areas and gaps in affordability

Includes content tailored for **Southeast Illinois**

NON-EXHAUSTIVE



## Category

## Quantitative insights from public data sources



### Broadband access

24% of locations in the Southeast region of Illinois are unserved<sup>1</sup>

58% of households are subscribed to broadband internet<sup>2</sup>



### Device access

70% of residents in the Southeast region have access to a desktop or laptop computer<sup>2</sup>



### Affordability

28% of eligible households are enrolled in ACP, slightly below the state's total enrollment (33%)<sup>3</sup>

12% of providers in the Southeast region advertise internet for download speeds of 100Mbps between prices of \$25 – 50/month<sup>1</sup>

46% of all households (50,500 out of 109,600) in the Southeast region are eligible for ACP, of which **59,100** are not enrolled<sup>3</sup>



### Demographics

The Southeast region hosts higher than Illinois average representations of several covered populations: Individuals with Income <150% FPL (**22%**), aging individuals 60+ (**26%**), individuals with disabilities (**16%**) and rural residents (**100%**)<sup>2</sup>

1. FCC Maps
2. American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates
3. USAC ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker 2023

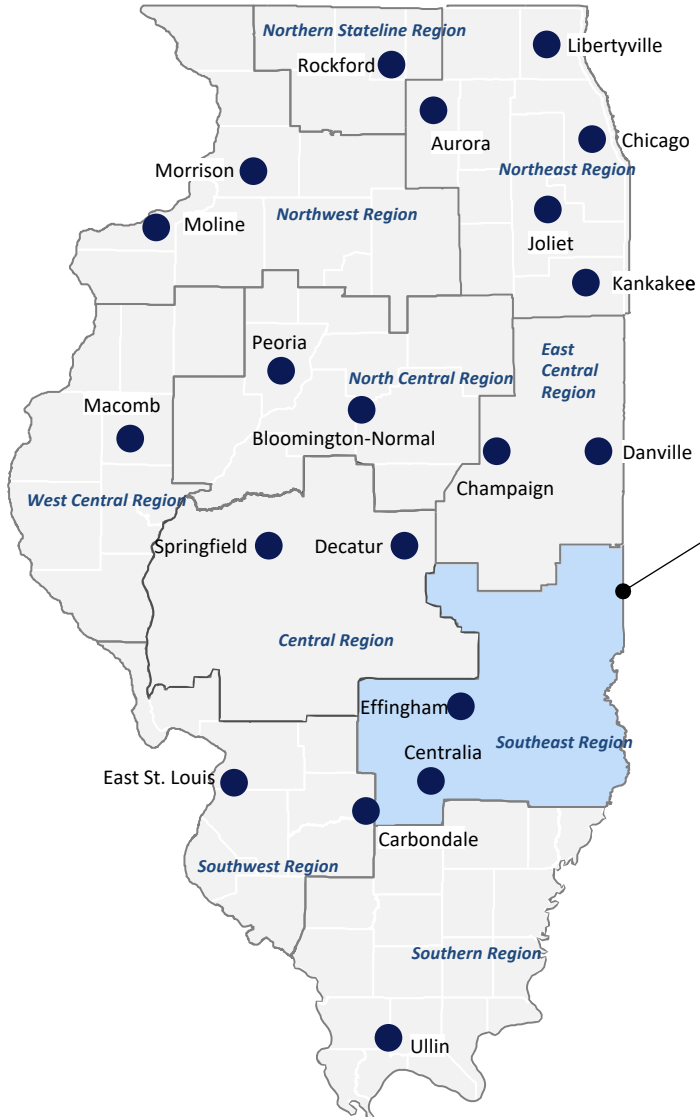
Note: All numbers rounded to nearest hundred and percentages to whole percentages



# Regional digital equity plans in the Southeast region highlight gaps in broadband availability, affordability, and digital skills

NON-EXHAUSTIVE

Includes content tailored for **Southeast Illinois**



## Insights from regional digital equity plans and programs

### Broadband READY report, Southeast

In 2021, the Purdue Center for Regional Development prepared a digital inclusion profile for the Southeast region that highlighted that **27.5% of all houses couldn't attain speeds of 100/20** and showed 35.2% of households in the region in high **digital distress** census tracts (vs. 20.3% avg. in IL) and 75.2% in high **digital divide** tracts (vs. 29% in IL)

### Southeast READY, Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University

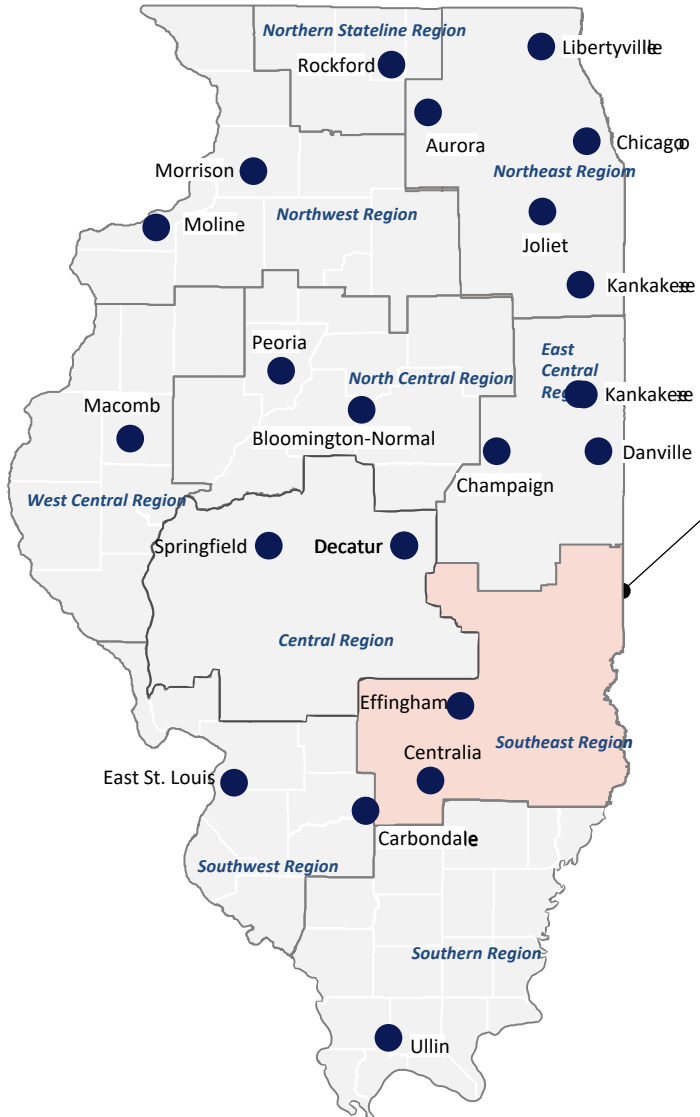
Partnering with rural libraries, K-12 educators, local GED instructors, and university professionals, the program aimed to demonstrate **accessible, effective digital literacy education** for the Southeast region, with a primary focus on the areas immediately surrounding **Coles County**

Source: Draft SDEP (State Digital Equity Plan), Southeast Broadband READY Report

# Several organizations are supporting digital equity assets in the Southeast related to digital literacy, digital equity, and broadband access

NON-EXHAUSTIVE

Includes content tailored for **Southeast Illinois**



## Digital Equity assets and key organizational contacts

### Booth Library Digital Literacy Program

Nate Carlson, Digital Literacy Coordinator

Booth Library at EIU runs an award-winning digital literacy program with a curriculum and online guides for local residents

### Statewide Digital Navigator Program

*Recruitment in process for local fellow*

Eastern Illinois University is training a digital navigator to identify digital equity barriers and help address local needs

### ISB Rural Broadband Task Force

Todd Main, Director of Market Development

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISB) is piloting a map that documents current broadband availability and gaps to address

### Accelerate Illinois regional program

George Evans, Kaskaskia College President

Kaskaskia College is supporting a training program to help local leaders' broadband plans to address their unique local needs

Source: State Digital Equity Plan

# Breakout Session



Public comments may be submitted at:

[go.illinois.edu/DEPlanComments](https://go.illinois.edu/DEPlanComments)

## 10 minutes, Open Format

### Guiding Questions

1. How will the takeaways from this presentation and the State Digital Equity Plan impact your work serving Illinoisans?
  - What's most important for you and/or the communities you serve? (infrastructure, literacy, adoption, affordability...)
2. What section do you plan to engage with further during the public comment process?
  - What do you like? What's missing?

# Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement (Section 4)



We realize in order to achieve our goal of digital equity for all throughout the state of Illinois we need to engage broadband leaders and broadband change makers in the process, this is our primary goal to success in closing the digital divide in our State.



We are achieving this goal by engaging with key stakeholders of broadband and digital equity throughout the State including; State legislatures, local government and municipalities, state agencies, community anchor institutions, and non-profit organizations.



Our focus has been to continue to expand these collaborations with new partners who have worked and expressed their need for inclusion as we laser focus our efforts on digital equity.

# Measures to ensure a sustainable, effective plan (1/2) (Section 4)

## **Strive to secure annual federal funding for the state:**

Ensure annual fulfillment of the requirements of the Digital Equity Capacity Grant program



## **Identify and apply for other federal grants:**

Build additional programs and expand impact beyond the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant



## **Work with local digital equity leaders to support action:**

Obtain insight of experienced experts to ensure good use of funding and impact.



## **Partner with local organizations that have established relationships with covered populations:**

Understand the importance of trust in digital equity work and leverage the influence of trusted organizations.





## Measures to ensure a sustainable, effective plan (2/2)

### Encourage partners to provide matching funds in grant applications:

Ensure the longevity of individual programs by expanding the number of entities that have an interest in the program's success



### Maintain and grow public-private partnerships:

Expand available resourcing and enhance the potential impact of the state's digital equity efforts



### Consider offering low-interest loans:

The IOB is considering this financing structure in addition to traditional grant awards to provide regenerative funding that can support even more programs across the state



### Provide technical assistance to grantees:

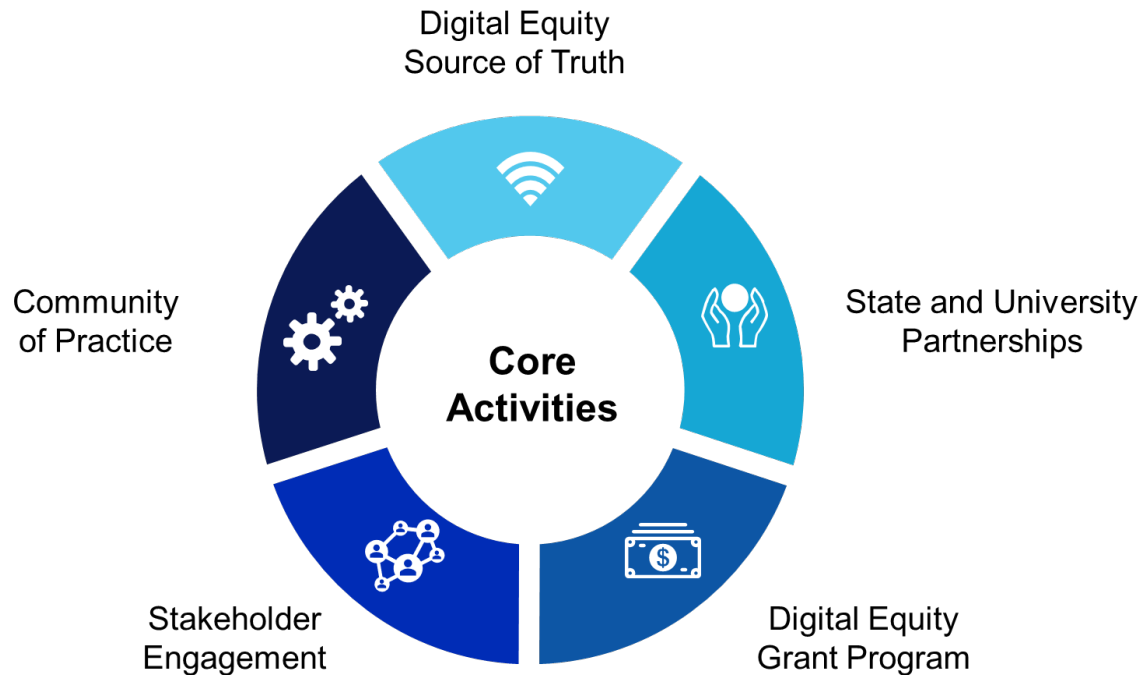
Support grantees in troubleshooting and addressing challenges community organizations face to enable greater impact



# Implementation (Section 5)

Achieving digital equity in Illinois will ultimately result from the collaborative work of thousands of leaders, practitioners, researchers, and program designers across the state, with guidance from experts across the nation.

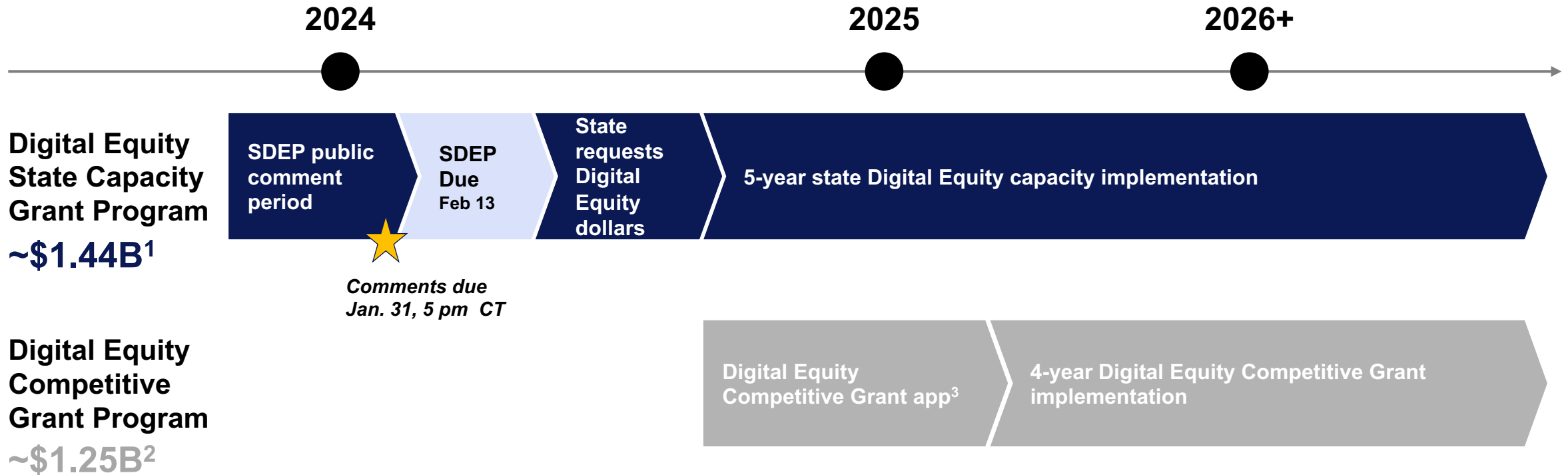
## How we'll execute on these plans:



- ✓ Maintain and make available an Illinois digital equity data sets to serve as the common source of truth
- ✓ Lead select statewide programming and university partnerships
- ✓ Execute a state-wide digital equity grant program
- ✓ Conduct ongoing stakeholder outreach and engagement
- ✓ Support and sustain a digital equity community of practice

# The state plans to submit the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) by Feb 13th – funds for implementation could be received in the Q4 2024

## Timeline for Digital Equity Grant Programs





**State of IL expects to receive \$30M to \$35M from the Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program<sup>4</sup>**

1. ~\$1.5B allocated in total for the DE State Capacity Grant Program; \$60M for State Planning Grants (FY22), and \$1.44B for State Capacity Grants (FY22 – FY26); 2. <= 10% of fund towards evaluation activities; <= 10% towards administration activities; 3. Competitive grant program launches within one month of first capacity awards; 4. Estimated based on award formula outlined in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (US Senate H.R. 3684, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)

# The Digital Equity Act of 2021 provides funding across two digital equity programs

Created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Digital Equity Act Programs provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all

Funding program	Description	Primary focus	Project funding administered by	Timeline
<b>1. Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program</b>	<b>~\$1.44B<sup>1</sup></b> In funding for digital inclusion plans activities	Executing the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) by implementing digital equity initiatives (e.g., access to digital literacy training)	 State governments	Applications in early-mid 2024
<b>2. Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program</b>	<b>~\$1.25B<sup>2</sup></b> In funding to promote digital inclusion and broadband adoption activities	Facilitating digital inclusion activities (e.g., workforce development programs) as well as broadband adoption and affordability that benefits covered populations	 Federal government (NTIA)	Applications in mid-late 2024

**State of IL expects to receive \$30M to \$35M from the Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program<sup>3</sup>**

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# State Digital Equity Plan

How you can weigh in



# The State Digital Equity Plan is available for public comment until January 31, 2024



The SDEP is available to view at:  
[go.illinois.edu/SDEP](https://go.illinois.edu/SDEP)



Public comments may be submitted at:  
[go.illinois.edu/DEPlanComments](https://go.illinois.edu/DEPlanComments)



## Illinois Draft State Digital Equity Plan Public Comment

To participate in the public comment period, please complete this form by 5 p.m. (CST) January 31, 2024.

**First Name \***

**Last Name \***

**Email Address \***

**Organization \***

**Title \***

**Plan Section \***  
Please specify the section of the plan you are providing comments on.

**Comments**  
Type your comments in this field or upload them in the File Upload section below.

**File Upload**  
Upload comments here

Drag and drop files here or [browse files](#)

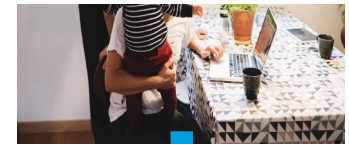
Send me a copy of my responses

## Tips

- Complete every field
- Identify which section your comment is applicable to
- Can provide criticisms & compliments (all feedback is good feedback).
- Due January 31, 2024 at 5 pm CT



1 Executive Summary



2 Introduction and Vision for Digital Equity



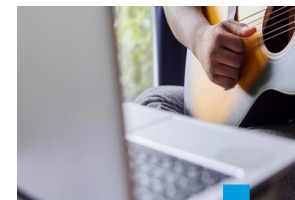
3 Current State of Broadband and Digital Inclusion



4 Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement



5 Implementation



6 Conclusion

# Public Comment Tips and Tricks



Suggestions to keep in mind:

- ✓ Support your comment with **substantive data, facts, and stories of lived experience**.
- ✓ **Identify the section number** within the DE Plan that you are commenting on
- ✓ Make **clear and concise** comments (there is no word limit)
- ✓ **Suggest an alternative** if you disagree with an aspect and include an explanation and/or analysis of how the alternative might meet the same objective or be more effective.
- ✓ Include **pros, cons and trade-offs** in your comment. Consider different perspectives and respond with your own point of view with examples of how the proposal would impact your life and work.

# Breakout Session



Public comments may be submitted at:

[go.illinois.edu/DEPlanComments](https://go.illinois.edu/DEPlanComments)

## 10 minutes, Open Format

### Guiding Questions

1. How will the takeaways from this presentation and the State Digital Equity Plan impact your work serving Illinoisans?
  - What's most important for you and/or the communities you serve? (infrastructure, literacy, adoption, affordability...)
2. What section do you plan to engage with further during the public comment process?
  - What do you like? What's missing?

# Today's Agenda

Introductions



**Group Discussion &  
Recharge**

State Digital Equity Plan

Unpacking the Plan

Regional Findings

Breakout & Discussion



Submitting Comments

**BEAD Challenge Process**

Regional Updates & READY



Closing

Announcements & General Discussion





# What is the goal of the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program?



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

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](#)



**Ensure universal broadband coverage in the state**, using fiber wherever possible



**Prioritize access** for unserved & underserved locations, community anchor institutions, and Wi-Fi equipment for MDUs<sup>2</sup>



**Select sub-grantees to implement broadband within one year**, and complete implementation within four years<sup>3</sup>



**Improve broadband affordability** through a low-cost broadband service option and middle-class affordability plan<sup>4</sup>



# High Level BEAD Process Overview

## **5-Year Plan**

Submitted,  
Approved

## **Initial Proposal Volume 1**

*(describes the  
challenge process)*

Submitted;  
Curing  
complete; in  
final NTIA  
review

## **Initial Proposal Volume 2**

*(describes the grant  
process)*

In progress:  
Incorporating  
public feedback

## **Challenge Process**

~January –  
March 2024

## **Sub-grantee Selection Process**

~April 2024 –  
Winter/Spring  
2025



# Phases of the Challenge Process Overview

ALL TIMELINES ARE TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO NTIA APPROVAL



**Now**

Eligible entities to complete pre-registration in online portal

**Live!**

IBL to publish all Illinois BSLs and eligible CAIs in an online map

Illinoisans can look up location(s) on map or by entering address

**Early February\***

Submit challenges and evidence via the portal

**3 weeks after challenge notification**

Challenged service providers/ CAIs submit their rebuttals  
 IBL to post all challenges & rebuttals publicly prior to final determinations, excluding any personal and proprietary info

**April 2024 (4 weeks)**

IBL to adjudicate challenges, considering challenge and rebuttal evidence

**Late Spring 2024**

IBL to publish final maps, after NTIA approval

\*Exact date dependent on NTIA approval of Initial Proposal Volume I

1. While federal NTIA rules do not allow individuals to submit challenges directly, residents can help identify inaccuracies and work with nonprofits / local governments to challenge the maps  
 Source: [NTIA Challenge Process Guidance](#), [Connect Illinois BEAD Initial Proposal Vol 1: Public Comment Draft](#)

# Overview of Illinois Broadband Map Challenge Process



## What is the purpose of the challenge process?

- Ensure the state's broadband map accurately reflects your home or organization's access to broadband
- Inform which locations are eligible for funding



## Who can submit challenges?

- Units of local government, non-profit organizations, and internet service providers can submit challenges
- Individuals can participate through local governments or non-profits



## What can be challenged?

Each **location displayed on the map** can be challenged if characteristics such as availability, speed, or latency are **not correctly listed**



## When will the challenge process be held?

The challenge process will **start in the coming few weeks** and run for 2-4 weeks

# Let's refresh on key terms and definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL)</b>	A broadband serviceable location (BSL) is “a business or residential location in the United States at which mass-market fixed broadband Internet access service is, or can be, installed.”
<b>Unserved</b>	A location that does not have access to ANY broadband, which is defined by speeds of 25/3 megabits per second (mbps)
<b>Underserved</b>	A location that has access to basic speeds of 25/3, but does not have access to speeds of 100/20 mbps. OR, latency is greater than 100 ms
<b>Served</b>	A location with access to broadband with speeds of 100/20 mbps (or higher)
<b>Community Anchor Institution (CAI)</b>	Institutions that provide critical services and support to residents, especially those in underrepresented communities
<b>Multiple-dwelling unit (MDU)</b>	A structure with multiple but separate housing units (e.g., an apartment building)
<b>Latency</b>	The time it takes data to go to a server and back to your connection. If you have high latency, it can cause video meetings to be choppy or freeze. “Good” latency is 100 ms or lower



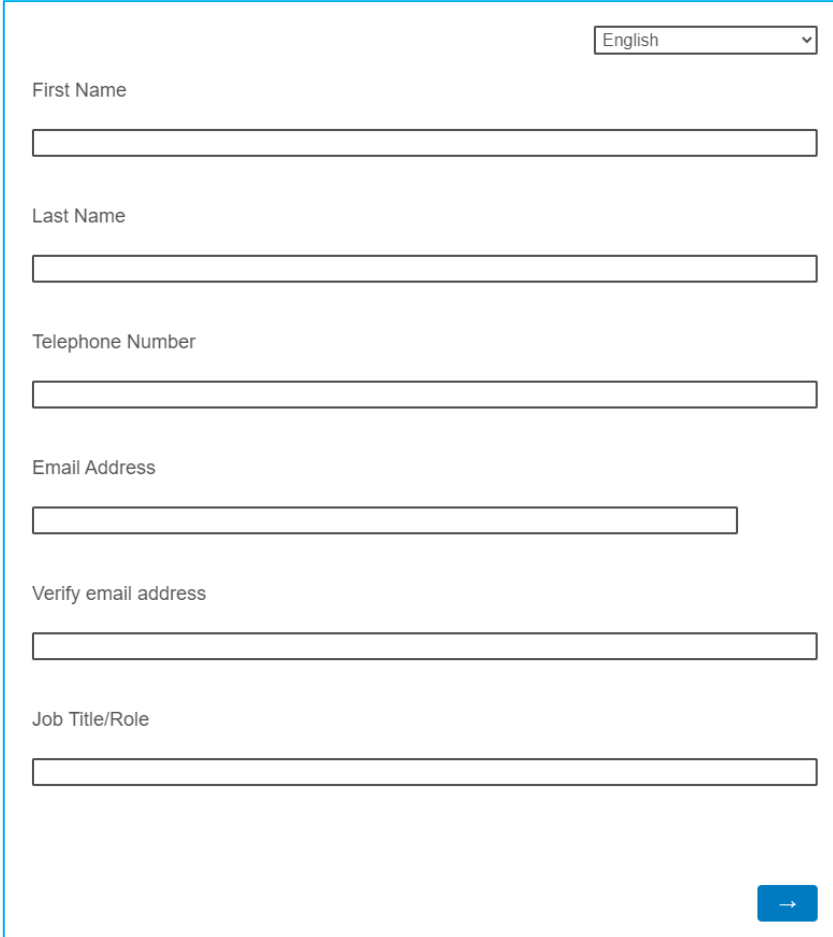
# Pre-register for the challenge process online starting now

Why is pre-registration required?

- 1) Communications:** Receive up-to-date communication about the challenge process, including important dates, resources, and updates
- 2) Identity Verification:** For a challenge to be submitted, the IOB needs to verify that the entity submitting the challenge is eligible

[Click here to pre-register.](#)

**Pre-registration in advance of the challenge window is recommended, but will also be accepted during the challenge window. Prior to the challenge opening, verified pre-registrations will be sent log-in credentials.**



A screenshot of a pre-registration form. At the top right, there is a language selection dropdown menu set to "English". The form contains several input fields: "First Name", "Last Name", "Telephone Number", "Email Address", "Verify email address", and "Job Title/Role". Each field is represented by a horizontal text box. At the bottom right of the form, there is a blue button with a white right-pointing arrow.

*Sample screenshot from pre-registration form*

# Landing page for all things Challenge Process!



[DCEO.Illinois.gov/BEADchallenge](https://DCEO.Illinois.gov/BEADchallenge)

**Bookmark it!**

## Visit this page for:

- Basics of the challenge process
- Recordings and slides from webinars and trainings
- BEAD Challenge Map
- BEAD Challenge Portal **(coming soon)**

...and more

## BEAD Map Challenge Process

### Background

Illinois was awarded \$1.04 billion in federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program funds by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to continue our efforts to connect all homes and businesses to modern high-speed internet.

The BEAD Program rules require states to prioritize funds in this order:

1. Connect unserved locations (available service is 25/3 megabits per second or less)
2. Connect underserved locations (available service is at least 25/3 mbps but less than 100/20 mbps)
3. Connect Community Anchor Institutions to gigabit symmetrical service (1,000/1,000 mbps)

### Challenge Process

*Let's get the map right!*

#### What is the challenge process?

The challenge process gives Illinoisians an opportunity to correct inaccuracies in the state's broadband map so it reflects the most up-to-date broadband access across the state. The updated map will determine which locations are eligible for funding through the BEAD program.

#### Who is eligible to submit a challenge?

NTIA rules allow units of local government, non-profit organizations, and internet service providers to submit challenges. Individuals in Illinois can participate by visiting [BEADchallenge.org](https://BEADchallenge.org) and following the instructions for taking internet speed tests and submitting the results, or by coordinating with registered local governments or non-profits to submit a challenge.

#### When is the challenge process happening?

Illinois intends to launch its challenge process in mid-January and it will be open for at least two weeks. Final timing depends on approval from NTIA.

**Help us make sure BEAD dollars go where they are needed most!**

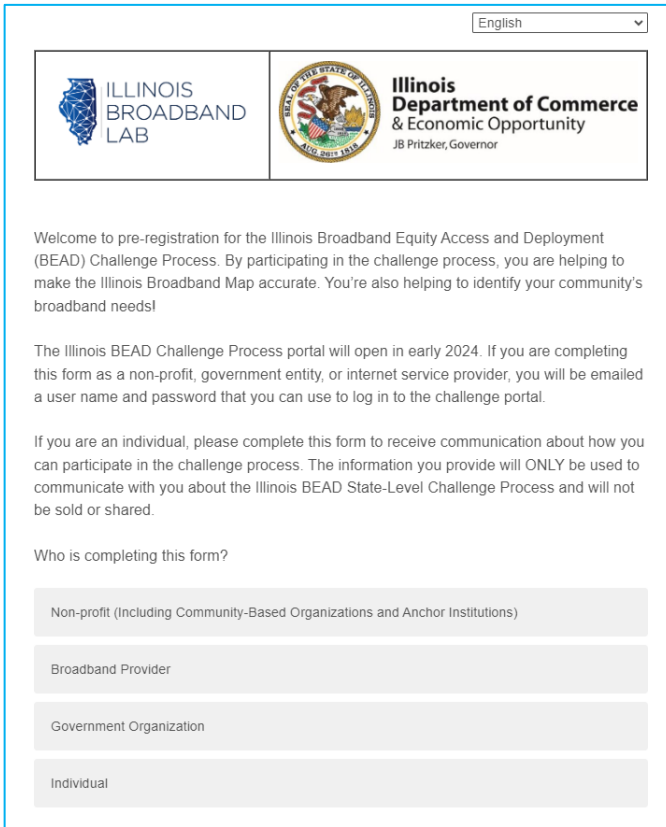


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# What will the challenge process look like?

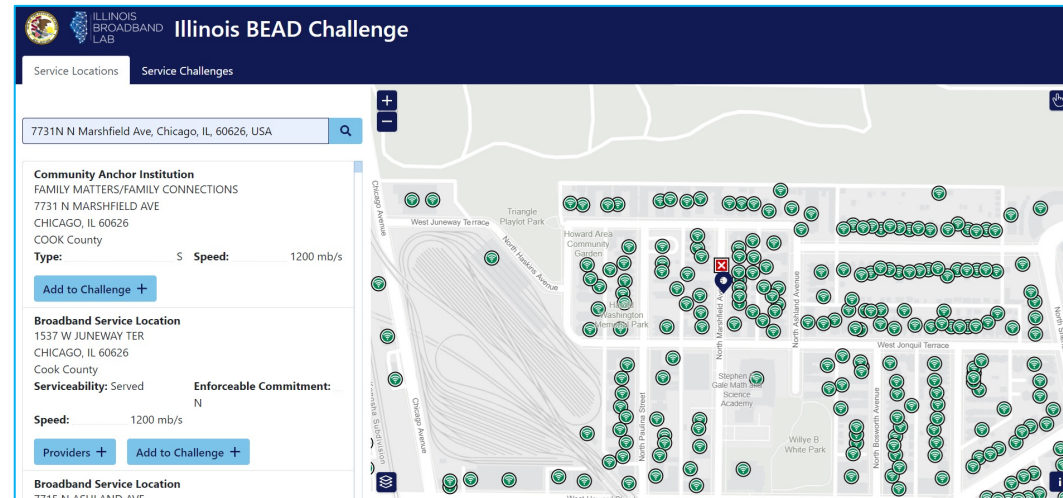
## Step 1: Pre-register



The screenshot shows the top of a web form. On the left are the logos for 'ILLINOIS BROADBAND LAB' and the 'Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity' with Governor JB Pritzker's name. A language dropdown menu is set to 'English'. Below the logos is a welcome message: 'Welcome to pre-registration for the Illinois Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Challenge Process. By participating in the challenge process, you are helping to make the Illinois Broadband Map accurate. You're also helping to identify your community's broadband needs!'. This is followed by two paragraphs of instructions: one for non-profits/government entities and one for individuals. At the bottom, there is a question 'Who is completing this form?' with four radio button options: 'Non-profit (Including Community-Based Organizations and Anchor Institutions)', 'Broadband Provider', 'Government Organization', and 'Individual'.

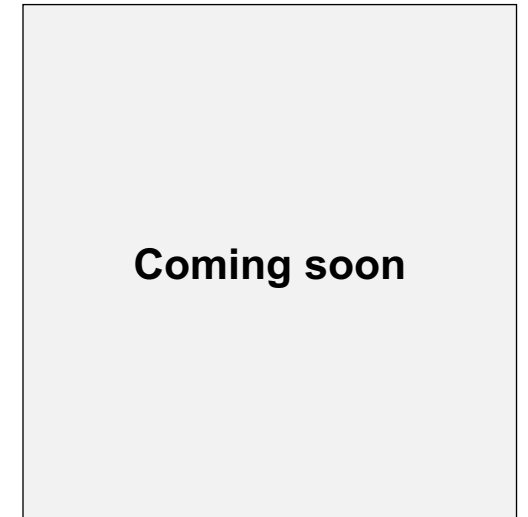
**Now!**

## Step 2: Select location or area to challenge on the map



**January 22**

## Step 3: Submit evidence of challenge in the portal



**January 29\***



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# What can you challenge?

## Challenged location

### Code

### Challenge type

### Description



#### Broadband serviceable locations

A	Availability	The broadband service identified is not offered at the location, including a unit of a multiple dwelling unit (MDU)
S	Speed	The actual speed of the service tier falls below the unserved or underserved thresholds
L	Latency	The round-trip latency of the broadband service exceeds 100ms
D	Data cap	The only service plans marketed to consumers impose an unreasonable capacity allowance data cap”) on the consumer
T	Technology	The technology indicated for this location is incorrect
B	Business service only	Location is residential, but the service offered is marketed or available only to businesses



#### Enforceable commitments and/or planned service

P	Planned Service	Knowledge that broadband will be deployed at this location by June 30, 2024, without an enforceable commitment or a provider is building out broadband offering performance beyond the requirements
N	Not part of enforceable commitment	Location in an area subject to an enforceable commitment to <100% of locations and is not covered by commitment
E	Enforceable Commitment	The challenger has knowledge that broadband will be deployed at this location by the date established in the deployment obligation



#### Community Anchor Institutions (CAI)

C	Location is a CAI	The location should be classified as a CAI
R	Location is not a CAI	The location is currently labeled as a CAI but is a residence, a non-CAI business, or is no longer in operation
S	Speed (for CAIs)	The location of the CAI lacks access to at least 1 gigabit symmetrical service

# When and how will the BEAD Challenge Map be useful?

The top screenshot shows the Illinois BEAD Challenge Map interface. It features a search bar at the top left with the text "Search for an address or ZIP Code...". Below the search bar, there are filter options for "Community Anchor Institution" (Eligible/Not Eligible) and "Broadband Service Location" (Serviceability: Served/Underserved/Unserviced, Enforceable Commitment, Multiple Dwelling Units, and Census Block Group). The map shows a large area of Illinois with various cities labeled.

The bottom screenshot shows a zoomed-in view of Harrisburg, IL. The search bar contains "75 Robinson Rd, Herod IL 62947". A pop-up window displays the following information:

- Broadband Service Location**
- 600 W LOGAN ST  
HARRISBURG, IL 62946
- Location ID:** 1054916015
- Enforceable Commitment:** No
- Serviceability:** Served
- Providers +
- Add to Challenge +

## Background

- To submit a challenge, a user **must** have a Broadband Serviceable Location's Location ID
- Some eligible entities may have access to the FCC Fabric Data, which include this information
- However, **many challengers will not have Fabric Data access, or may want to submit one single challenge**

## This is where the map comes into play –

- A challenger can use the map to:
  - Search for a location (zip code, address, etc.)
  - View a location's eligibility status and available broadband
  - Select a location(s) and submit a challenge originating from the map
  - This way, the user does not need to search for the Location ID; it automatically is pulled from the map into the challenge portal

# BEAD Challenge Process

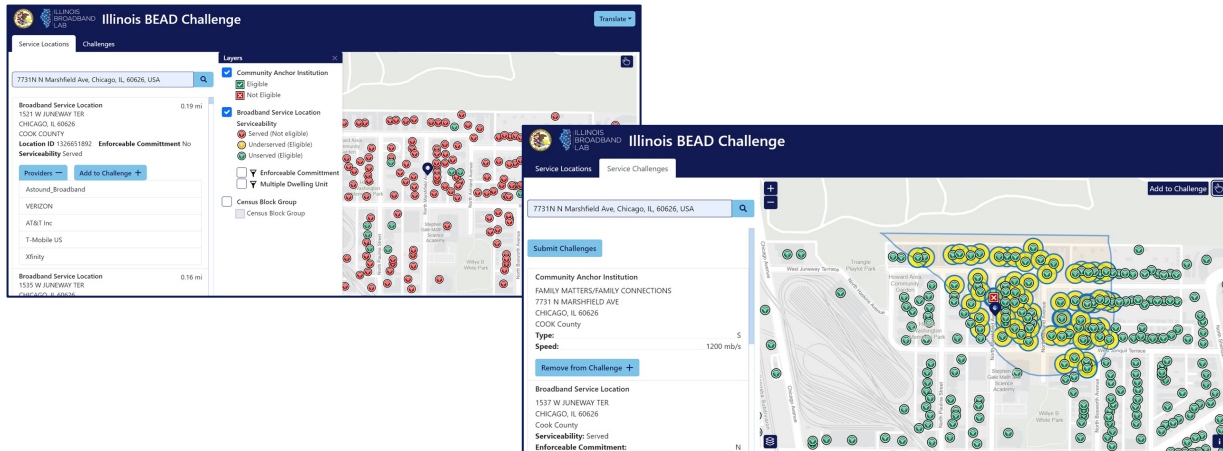
How individuals can participate

# There will be two ways to submit challenges

There are two ways to link your challenge to an eligible locations: 1) By selecting a location or area through the BEAD Challenge map, or 2) by accessing the FCC fabric data

## Option 1: BEAD Challenge Map

IOB has published a map where users can search directly for an address or area to initiate their challenge. This will automatically bring along the necessary information to the Challenge Portal.



**\* Recommended for anyone without fabric data access**

## Option 2: FCC Fabric Data

Entities can also use the FCC fabric data to identify Location ID. This may be most helpful for those who already have fabric data access.

A fabric data license can be requested from CostQuest:

**Tier D License:** Broadband providers  
**Tier E License:** Local governments and non-profits

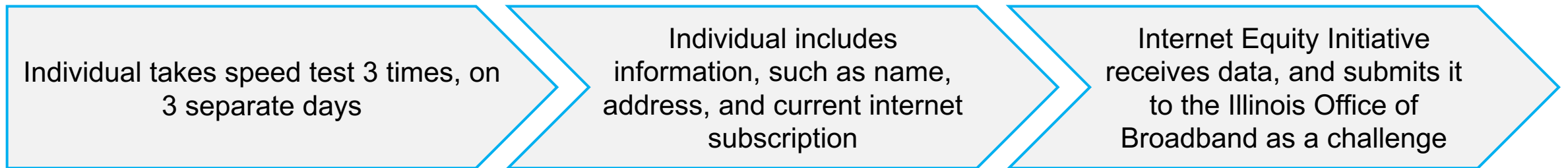
For additional information, see [CQA FAQs on NTIA Fabric Licenses](#)



# How can individuals participate in the challenge process?

- Only eligible entities may submit challenges directly, including:
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Local government entities
  - Internet service providers
- **However, these entities can also submit challenges on behalf of individuals**
- A local non-profit called the Internet Equity Initiative, based out of the University of Chicago, has developed a tool that can be used by individuals to test their speed and latency, and then be submitted as a challenge

## How it works:



**Only you know what internet quality you get in your home, and communities where your experience may be different than what's reflected on the map.** The more community members who participate, the more we understand broadband need and can ensure funding goes to where it's needed most.





# Your role as a trusted local organization

## *What you can do to empower residents to participate*

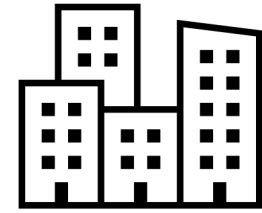
We want to equip you to bring this information to members of your community, educate them on why the broadband map is important, and support them through the speed test process.

### Get trained today, so you can train others tomorrow!

- ✓ **Share** the opportunity through social media
- ✓ **Print and distribute** one-pagers at events and meetings
- ✓ **Post** to bulletin boards in community spaces like grocery stores, laundromats, community centers, field houses, etc.
- ✓ **Train** members of your community on how to participate
- ✓ **Support** residents you have relationships or touchpoints with – show them how to check their current subscription, help them take a speed test



# The important role of multi-dwelling unit residents



In some instances, an apartment building may be marked as connected to high-speed internet on the broadband map, when not all units are.

---

## How can you correct the map?

---

Residents can take 3 speed tests over 3 days to document their reality, and potentially alter whether their building is eligible for funding to update broadband infrastructure.

- In a 2- to 15-unit building, at least 1 unit must participate
- In a 16- to 24-unit building, at least 2 units must participate
- In a building with 25 or more units, at least 3 units must participate

---

## Will my participation have an impact on the map?

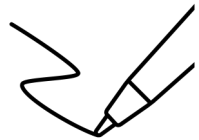
---

The entire building may be considered eligible for funding to improve broadband quality if:

- 1) The median of three speed tests taken on three separate days delivers a result slower than 100/20 mbps or latency above 100 mbps, and
- 2) Units subscribe to a plan 100/20 mbps or higher

**Find the internet speeds your household currently subscribes to.**

There will be a download and upload speed, labeled as megabits per second, or MBPS  
(i.e., 100/20 mbps)



***Write this down!***

**Where can I find my current subscription?**

- Option 1: Log onto your account online or using your internet provider's mobile app
- Option 2: Call your internet service provider and ask what speeds you subscribe to

# Speed Test Tool Instructions

Hover over text on website to view in Spanish.

Visit [BEADChallenge.org](http://BEADChallenge.org)

Click "Start"

This will prompt the speed test to begin. It may take a minute or two.



- Best practices:**
- Get close to your router
  - Plug into your router if you can

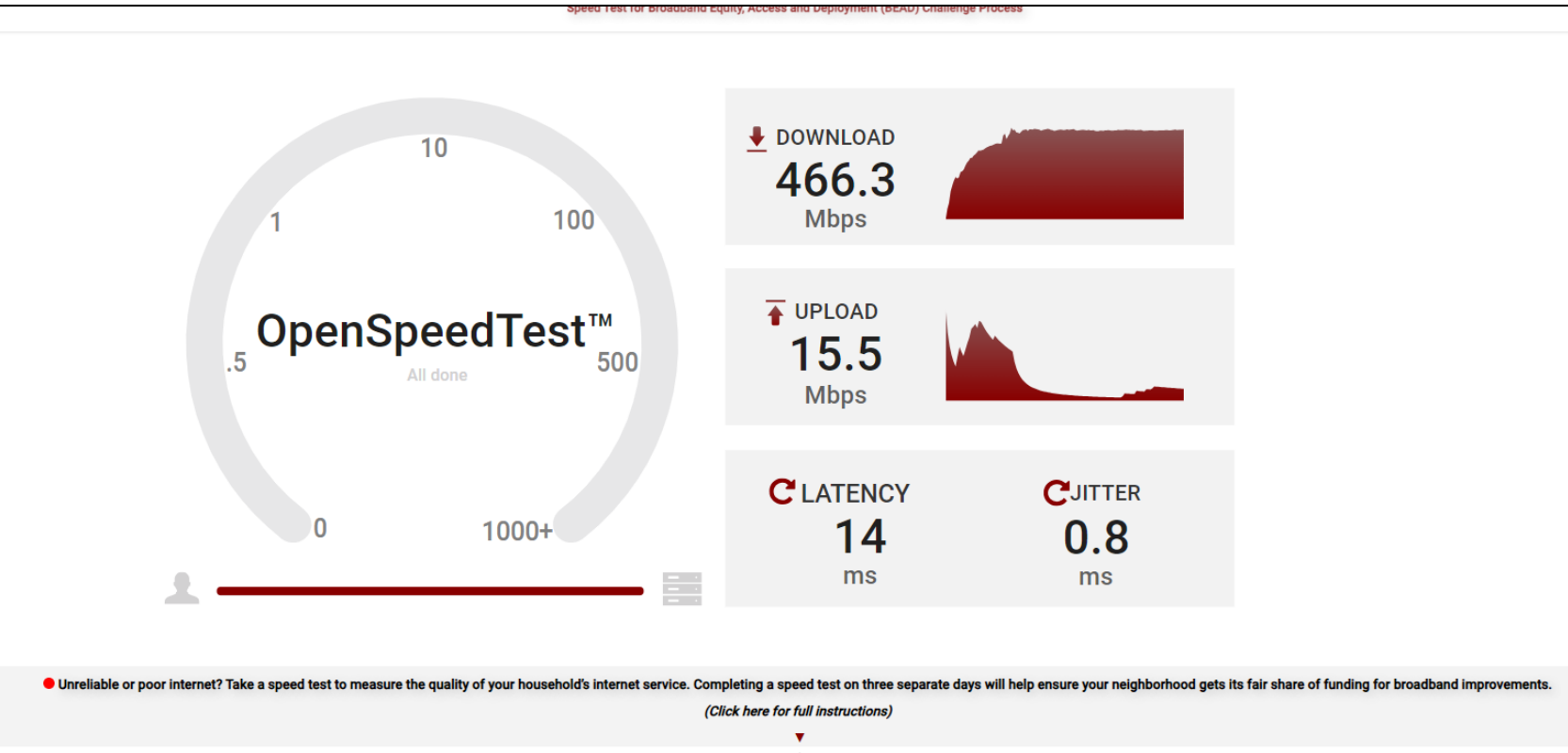


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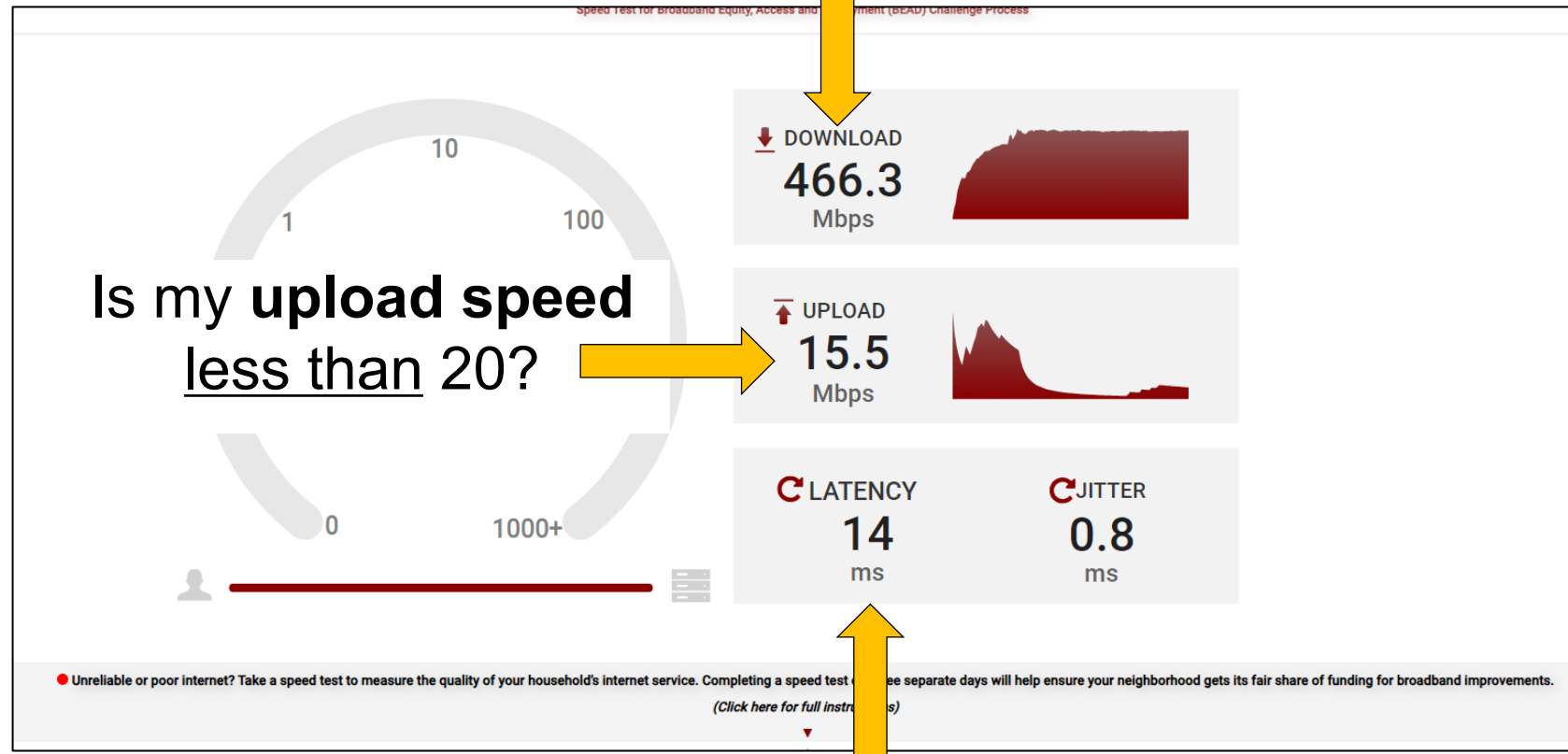
# Speed Test Tool Instructions

View your speed test results.

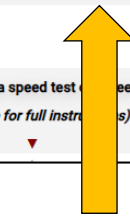


# Speed Test Tool Instructions


What are we looking for?



Is my **download speed** less than 100?



Is my **latency** greater than 100?

**Knowledge Check!** 

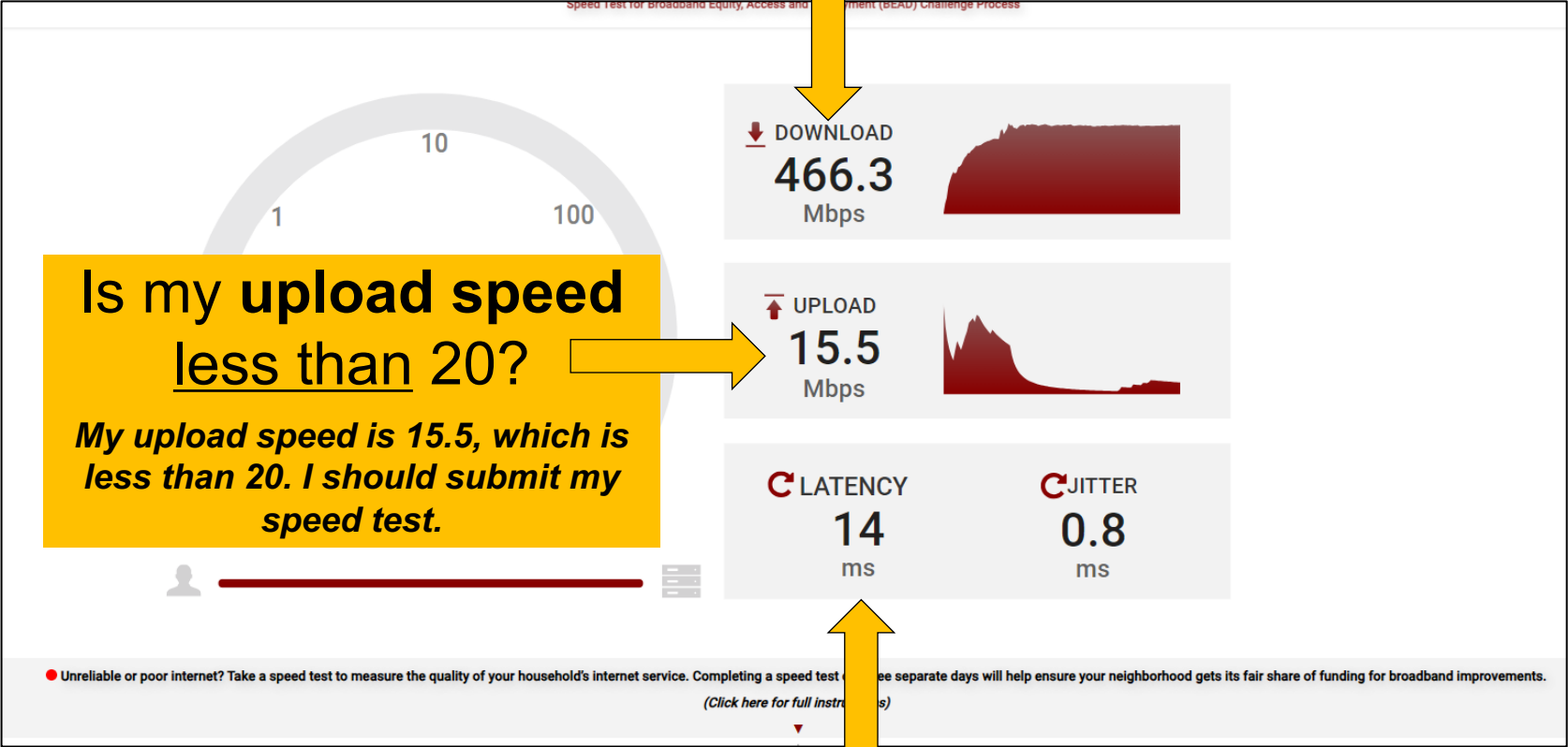
Is there any result of this speed which should prompt me to submit my speed test as part of a challenge?




# Speed Test Tool Instructions

What are we looking for?

Is my download speed less than 100? **No.**



Is my latency greater than 100? **No.**

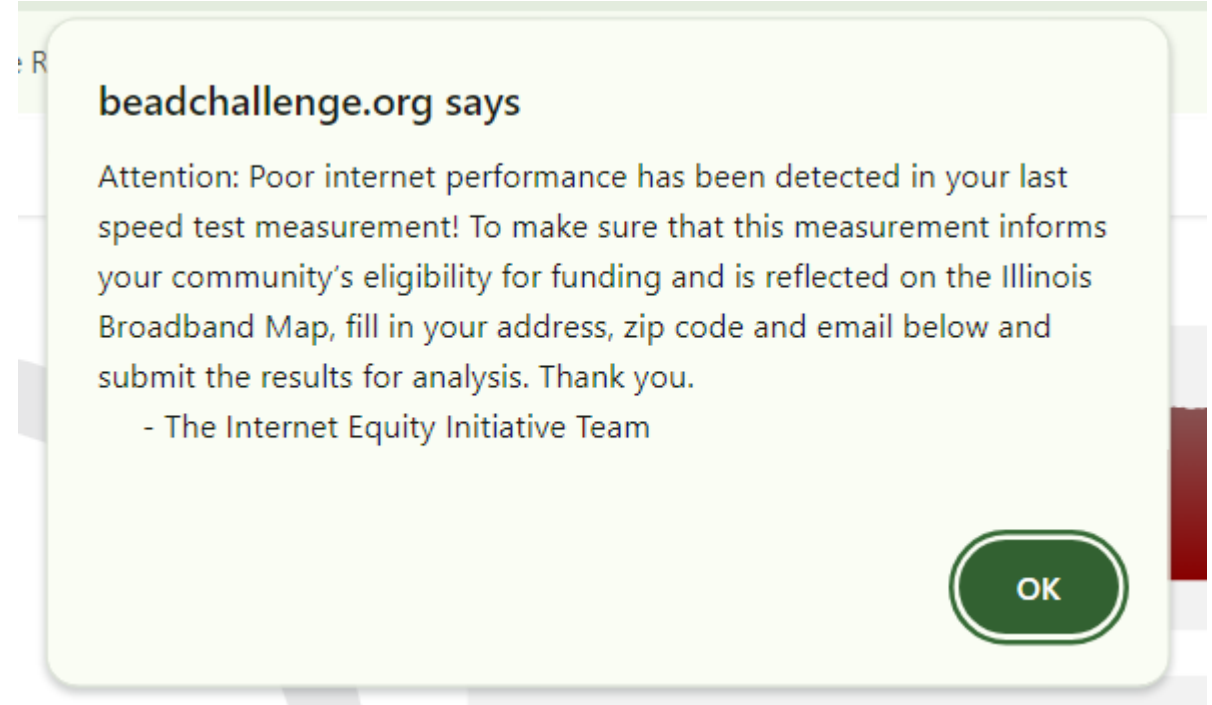
**Knowledge Check!** 

Is there any result of this speed which should prompt me to submit my speed test as part of a challenge? → **YES!**

# Speed Test Tool Instructions

If your speed tests generates one of the following, you'll receive this notification

- Latency over 100 ms
- Download speed less than 100 mbps
- Upload speed less than 20 mbps



# Speed Test Tool Instructions

Speed Test for Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Challenge Process

OpenSpeedTest™  
All done

DOWNLOAD  
466.3 Mbps

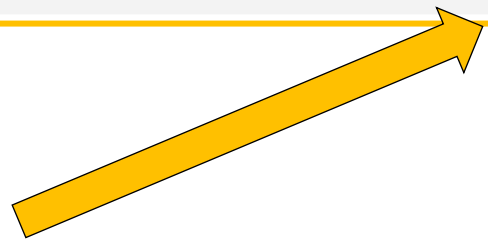
UPLOAD  
15.5 Mbps

LATENCY  
14 ms

JITTER  
0.8 ms

Unreliable or poor internet? Take a speed test to measure the quality of your household's internet service. Completing a speed test on three separate days will help ensure your neighborhood gets its fair share of funding for broadband improvements.  
[\(Click here for full instructions\)](#)

Click on the down arrow to fill in your information



# Speed Test Tool Instructions

Fill in your information,  
then click Submit



First Name  Last Name

Email  ZIP Code

Street Number  Street Name

Unit #  City  State

***I attest that I have subscribed for an Internet plan of (Mbps):***

Download Speed  Upload Speed

**Submit**

Now, **REPEAT!**



Take **two more speed tests, over two separate days**, and **submit** your information each time.

A challenge won't count unless there are **three speed tests across three days**.

(Does not need to be three days in a row, just three separate days.)

# Community outreach materials downloadable at:

[dceo.illinois.gov/beadchallenge](https://dceo.illinois.gov/beadchallenge)

Facebook

Calling all Illinois Residents:  
**Let's get the Illinois broadband map right!**  
How you can help: Take 3 speed tests over 3 days!

- 1 Confirm your Current Subscription**  
Confirm what internet speed your household subscribes to, and write it down.  
(Your subscription speed will include a download speed and an upload speed. For example, "100/20 mbps.")
- 2 Test your speed**  
Visit [BEADChallenge.org](https://BEADChallenge.org) and click "Start" to run a speed test
- 3 Submit and Repeat**  
Fill in your name, email, zip code, address, and speed you currently subscribe to, then submit!  
(Repeat two more times, on two separate days)

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Instagram

Calling all Illinois Residents:  
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LinkedIn

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Fill in your name, email, zip code, address, and speed you currently subscribe to, then submit!  
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Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

Twitter

Calling all Illinois Residents:  
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Visit [BEADChallenge.org](https://BEADChallenge.org) and click "Start" to run a speed test
- 3 Submit and Repeat**  
Fill in your name, email, zip code, address, and speed you currently subscribe to, then submit!  
(Repeat two more times, on two separate days)

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Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

# One-Pager for Individuals

Instructions for Individuals

## Let's get the Illinois broadband map right!

Help make sure Illinois broadband dollars go where they're needed most by completing three speed tests, on three different days.

Visit [BEADChallenge.org](http://BEADChallenge.org) to get started.

**It's as easy as 1-2-3!**

1

Confirm what internet speed your household subscribes to, and write it down or take a screenshot. Log into your internet service account to check.

Your subscription speed will include a download speed and an upload speed. For example, "100/20 mbps."

2

Visit [BEADChallenge.org](http://BEADChallenge.org) and click "Start" to run a speed test.

3

Click on "Click here for full instructions!" and then fill in your name, email, zip code, address, and speed you currently subscribe to. Then click "Submit!"

Repeat steps 1 - 3 two more times on two separate days to make sure your challenge is complete.

?

- **What is a speed test?**  
A speed test measures the speed and quality of your internet at a point in time.
- **Why should I take a speed test?**  
Taking a speed test will help ensure that the Illinois Broadband Map accurately shows where there is and is not quality internet available to residents.
- **What is this tool?**  
By completing a speed test using this tool and sharing your location information, the University of Chicago Internet Equity Initiative will submit internet quality information on your behalf.
- **What happens after I submit my speed test?**  
You'll then be prompted to complete two more speed tests on two separate days to complete the process. To help you out, you'll receive email reminders to complete your second and third speed tests.

Questions? Email [broadband@illinois.gov](mailto:broadband@illinois.gov) or visit [DCEO.illinois.gov/BEADChallenge](http://DCEO.illinois.gov/BEADChallenge).



# One-Pager for Residents of Multi-Dwelling Units

Instructions for Multi-Dwelling Units



## Let's get the Illinois broadband map right!

Do you live in an apartment building? Do you have slow internet service in your unit, or believe that quality internet is not offered in your unit?

Your help is needed to make sure Illinois broadband dollars go where they're needed most!

**It's as easy as 1-2-3!**

1

Confirm what internet speed your household subscribes to, and write it down or take a screenshot. Log into your internet service account to check.

Your subscription speed will include a download speed and an upload speed. For example, "100/20 mbps."

2

Visit [BEADChallenge.org](http://BEADChallenge.org) and click "Start" to run a speed test.

3

Click on "Click here for full instructions!" and then fill in your name, email, zip code, address, and speed you currently subscribe to. Then click "Submit!"

Repeat steps 1 - 3 two more times on two separate days to make sure your challenge is complete.

?

- **How many units need to participate?**
  - In a 2 to 15-unit building, at least 1 unit must participate
  - In a 16 to 24-unit building, at least 2 units must participate
  - In a building with 25 or more units, at least 3 units must participate
- **How do I know if my speed tests will change the map?**  
The entire building may be considered eligible for funding to improve broadband quality if:
  - 1) the median of three speed tests taken on three separate days delivers a result slower than 100/20 mbps or latency above 100 ms, and
  - 2) units subscribe to a plan 100/20 mbps or higher.

Questions? Email [broadband@illinois.gov](mailto:broadband@illinois.gov) or visit [DCEO.illinois.gov/BEADChallenge](http://DCEO.illinois.gov/BEADChallenge).



Download  
One-Pager:

[dceo.illinois.gov/  
beadchallenge](http://dceo.illinois.gov/beadchallenge)

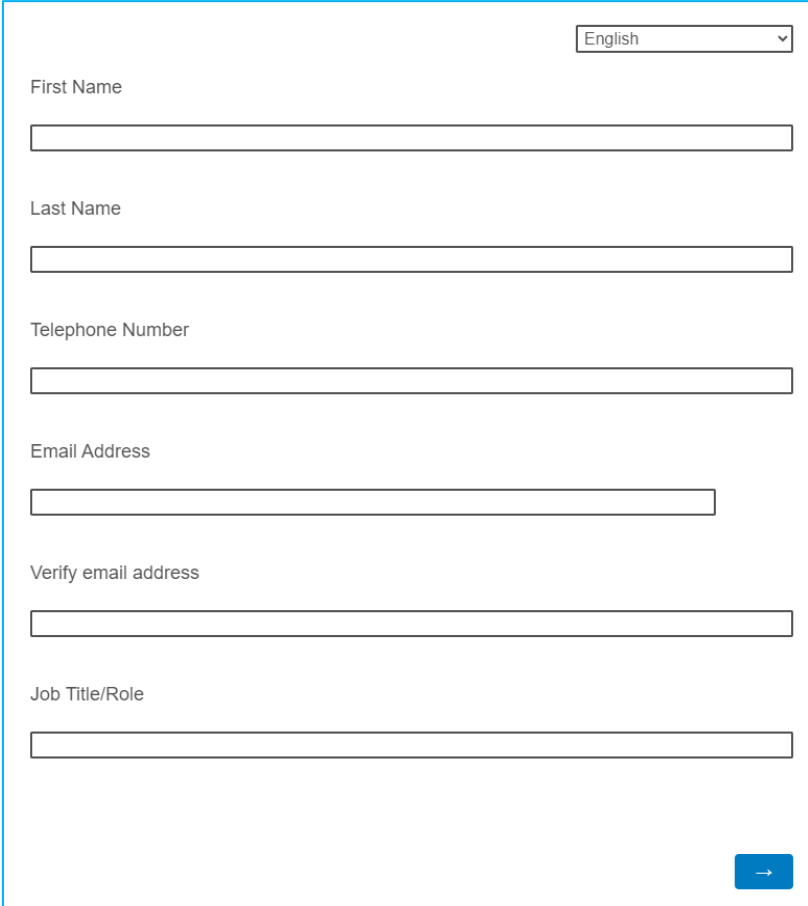


# Non-profits, local gov, ISPs can submit challenges directly – but pre-registering for the challenge process online is required

Why is pre-registration required?

- 1) Communications:** Receive up-to-date communication about the challenge process, including important dates, resources, and updates
- 2) Identity Verification:** For a challenge to be submitted, the IOB needs to verify that the entity submitting the challenge is eligible

It's an easy and quick way to make sure you're able to help ensure the broadband map is accurate. [Click here to pre-register.](#)



A screenshot of a pre-registration form. At the top right, there is a language selection dropdown menu set to "English". Below this are several input fields: "First Name", "Last Name", "Telephone Number", "Email Address", "Verify email address", and "Job Title/Role". Each field is represented by a horizontal text box. At the bottom right of the form, there is a blue button with a white right-pointing arrow.

*Sample screenshot from pre-registration form*



# Next steps

## 1 Pre-register for the Challenge Process

at: [https://uchicago.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_dai1rp1AsMsXqBg](https://uchicago.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dai1rp1AsMsXqBg)

- **ISPs, local governments, non-profits:** Registration before Jan. 29 is strongly encouraged, but credentials can also be created during the challenge window
- **Residents:** Conduct and submit speed tests on three separate days using [beadchallenge.org](http://beadchallenge.org)

## 2 Upcoming webinars:

- Portal walk-through
- End-to-end challenge process training

## 3 Regularly check for updates in Illinois Broadband Connections newsletter and at the new landing page, [DCEO.Illinois.gov/BEADchallenge](https://DCEO.Illinois.gov/BEADchallenge)

## 4 Check the broadband availability status of locations of interest at [bead.connectednation.org/illinois](http://bead.connectednation.org/illinois)

# Today's Agenda

Introductions



State Digital Equity Plan

Unpacking the Plan

Regional Findings

Breakout & Discussion



Submitting Comments

BEAD Challenge Process

**Regional Updates & READY**



Closing

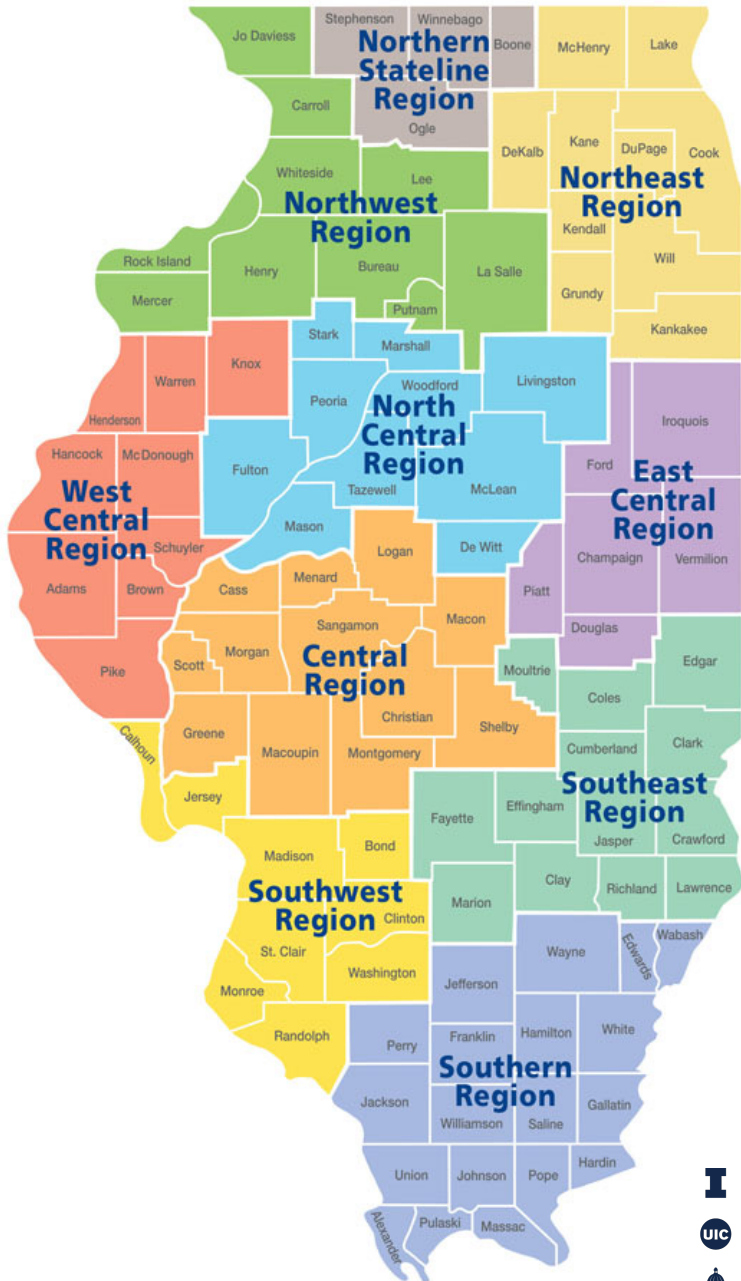
Announcements & General Discussion



**Group Discussion &  
Recharge**

# Broadband *READY*

## Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY)



# Scope of Work Drilldown

## Meeting Attendance

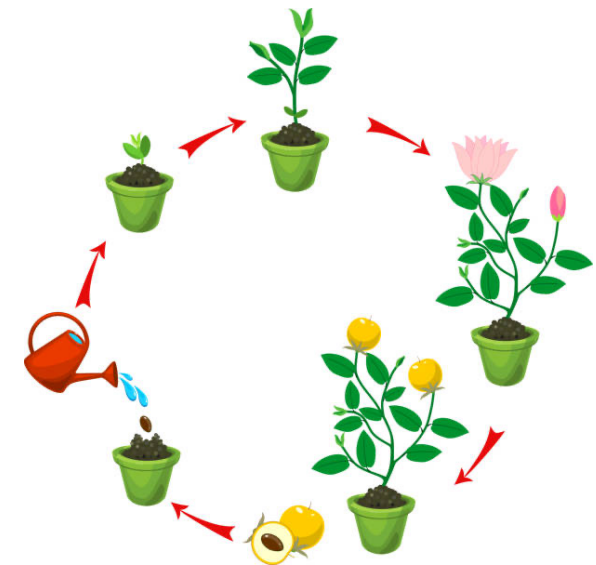
- Monthly Statewide Cohort Meeting
- Monthly Regional Meeting
- (Suggested) Other IBL/State Calls & Programming (ACP, Digital Equity, Webinars)

## Digital Equity Impact Project

- Proposed Project
  - Developing Digital Literacy Curriculum
  - Wi-Fi Hotspot or Device Distribution
  - ACP Outreach Events & Other Affordability Initiatives

## Regional Digital Equity Coalition Building

- Hosting a Regional Stop as Part of Reunion Tour for the State Digital Equity Plan **January 2024**
- Bi-directional Communication on State BEAD and DEA Implementation

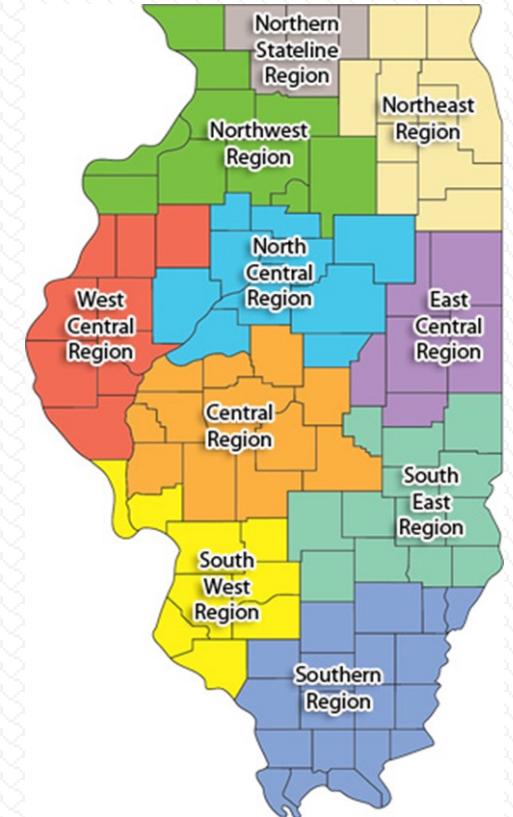




# BROADBAND READY Meetings Calendar



- Meeting monthly with **Regional** READY team & IBL staff.
  - Example: Southwest Team meets First Wednesdays at 10am
- Meeting monthly with **Statewide Cohort** READY program
  - Third Fridays of the Month, 1-2pm
  - Next Meetings:
    - **Friday February 9<sup>h</sup>, 1-2pm**
      - *Note: Net Inclusion Conference Feb 13-15, 2024*
    - *March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1-2pm*
- Optional Team Leads: Meeting regularly for progress check-ins with Illinois Broadband Lab (IBL) READY program managers.
- Optional for All: Joining regular statewide broadband access and digital equity learning convenings (e.g. Statewide Digital Equity Coalition, ACP Outreach Call, Broadband Advisory Council meetings, IBL webinars, etc.).





# Illinois Broadband Lab

## Statewide Meetings Calendar

- **ACP Outreach – Monthly Call**
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 11-12pm
- **Statewide Digital Equity Call – Monthly**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Fridays 1-2pm
  - Next Call: Feb 2, 2024
- **Illinois Broadband Advisory Council (Quarterly Meetings)**
  - Next Meeting: Presumably Feb 14, 2024

Questions? Email: [IllinoisBroadbandLab@Uillinois.edu](mailto:IllinoisBroadbandLab@Uillinois.edu)



# Today's Agenda

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**Group Discussion &  
Recharge**

State Digital Equity Plan

Unpacking the Plan

Regional Findings

Breakout & Discussion



Submitting Comments

BEAD Challenge Process

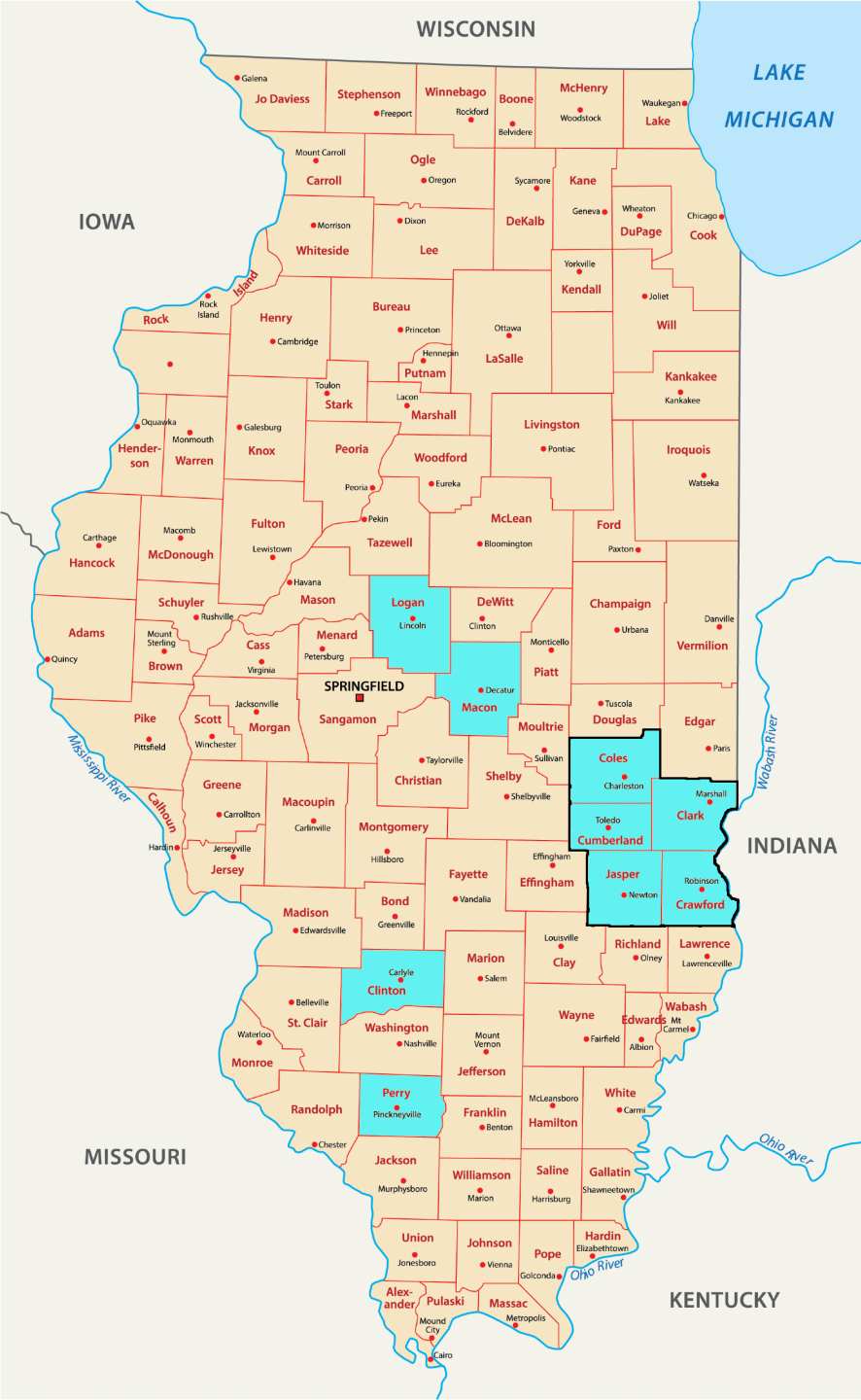
Regional Updates & READY



**Closing**

Announcements & General Discussion





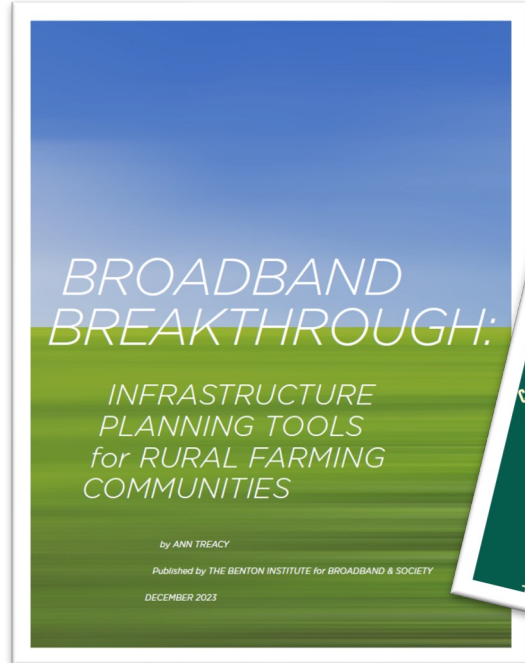
# Broadband Breakthrough Update

Thursday mornings beginning Jan 4, 2024

## Participating Counties

- Clinton County (Southwest)
- Cumberland, Jasper and Crawford Counties (Joint effort) (Southeast)
- Logan County (Central)
- Macon County (Central)
- Perry County (Southern)

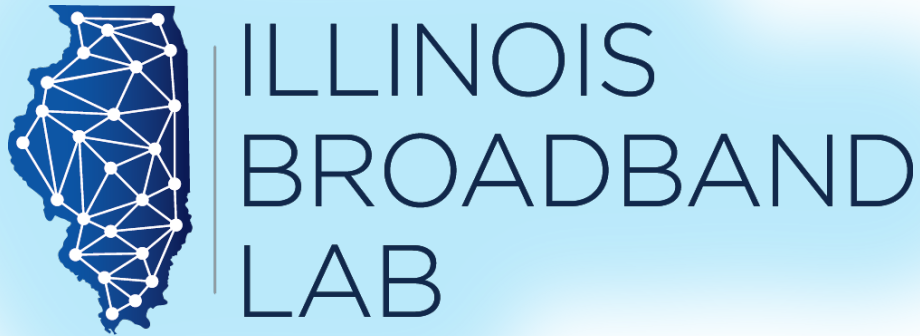
Accepting applications for the second cohort. The deadline for applying is **January 30th.**



Email Bill Coleman  
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# Contact Team

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**Illinois  
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OFFICE OF BROADBAND  
JB Pritzker, Governor

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# Where you can find additional information

01

**Visit our websites:**

**IOB:** [dceo.illinois.gov/connectillinois](https://dceo.illinois.gov/connectillinois)

**IBL:** [broadband.uillinois.edu](https://broadband.uillinois.edu)

02

**Email IOB** at [broadband@Illinois.gov](mailto:broadband@Illinois.gov)

Email IBL at [illinoisbroadbandlab@Uillinois.edu](mailto:illinoisbroadbandlab@Uillinois.edu)

03

**Subscribe to Illinois' Bi-Weekly**

**Broadband Newsletter** at

[go.Illinois.edu/illinoisbroadbandconnections](https://go.Illinois.edu/illinoisbroadbandconnections)

04

**Join Broadband READY**

**Central | University of Illinois Springfield**

**East Central | University of Illinois Urbana - Champaign**

**North Central | Illinois State University**

**Northeast | Chicago State University**

**Northern Stateline | Northern Illinois University/Region 1**

**Northwest | WIU Quad-Cities (TBD)**

**South | Southern Illinois University Carbondale**

**Southeast | Eastern Illinois University**

**Southwest | Southern Illinois University Edwardsville**

**West Central | Western Illinois University**

# Closing Announcements