Broadband READY

Regional Digital Equity Engagement – West Central Region

January 17, 2024

Group Discussion & Recharge

Today's Agenda

Introductions

State Digital Equity Plan

    Unpacking the Plan

    Regional Findings

    Breakout & Discussion

    Submitting Comments

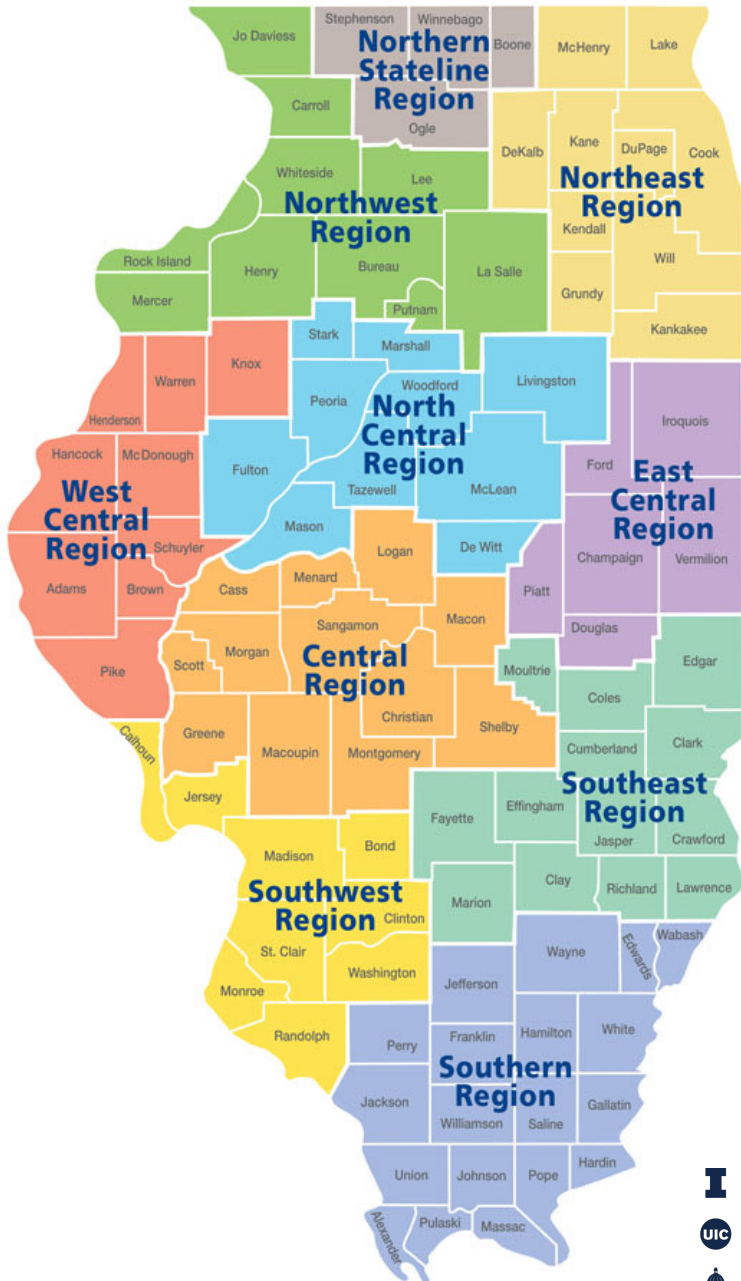**BEAD Challenge Process**

Regional Updates & READY

Closing

    Announcements & General Discussion

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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 31st

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

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

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

"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
1. Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program	~$1.44B[1] 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
2. Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program	~$1.25B[2] 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[3]

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)

Source: US Senate H.R. 3684, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

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The Digital Equity Act of 2021 identifies eight "Covered populations"

Covered Populations
Identity groups and communities disproportionally impacted by digital inequity

- Low-income households
- Aging populations
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans

- People with disabilities
- People with language barriers
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- 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

*Adopted from NTIA

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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
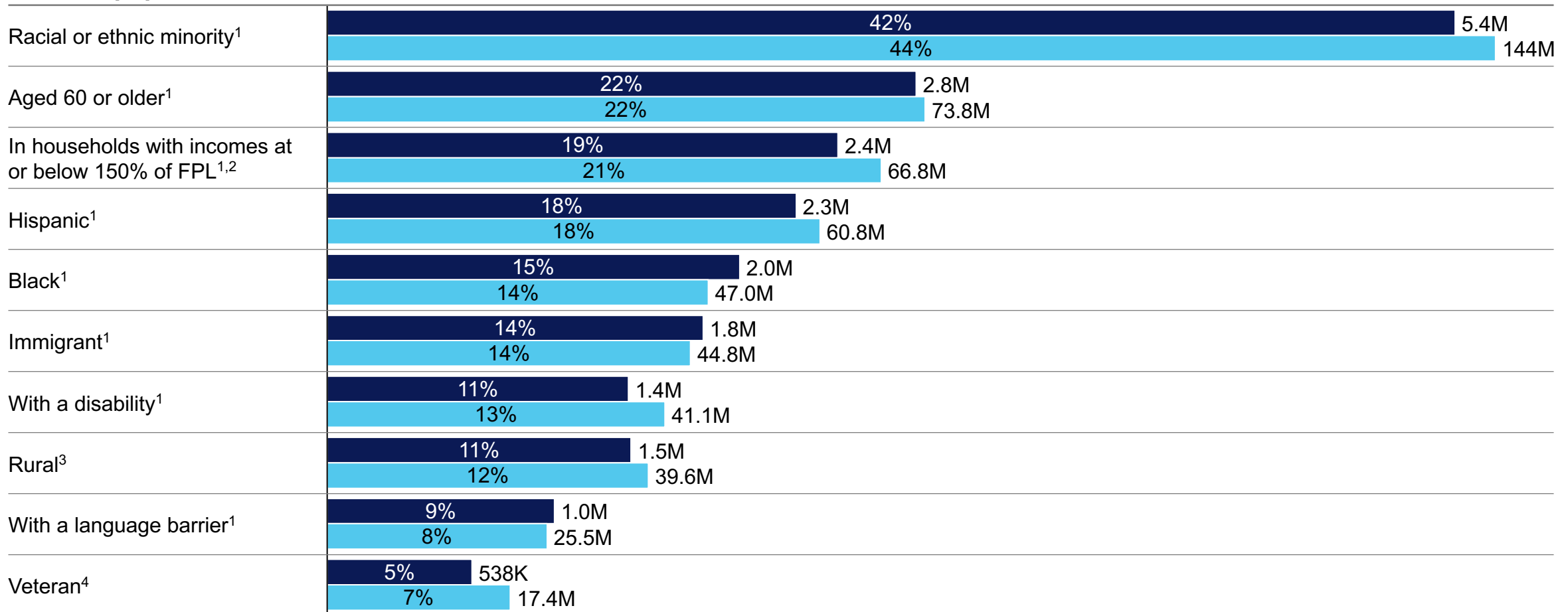
■ Illinois ■ United States

DATA AS OF 03/21/2023

Covered population

Breakdown of covered populations in IL
Percent of total population, total covered population count

Covered population	Illinois	United States
Racial or ethnic minority[1]	42% — 5.4M	44% — 144M
Aged 60 or older[1]	22% — 2.8M	22% — 73.8M
In households with incomes at or below 150% of FPL[1,2]	19% — 2.4M	21% — 66.8M
Hispanic[1]	18% — 2.3M	18% — 60.8M
Black[1]	15% — 2.0M	14% — 47.0M
Immigrant[1]	14% — 1.8M	14% — 44.8M
With a disability[1]	11% — 1.4M	13% — 41.1M
Rural[3]	11% — 1.5M	12% — 39.6M
With a language barrier[1]	9% — 1.0M	8% — 25.5M
Veteran[4]	5% — 538K	7% — 17.4M

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

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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[1]

2 webinars

Local Organizations & Non-Profits
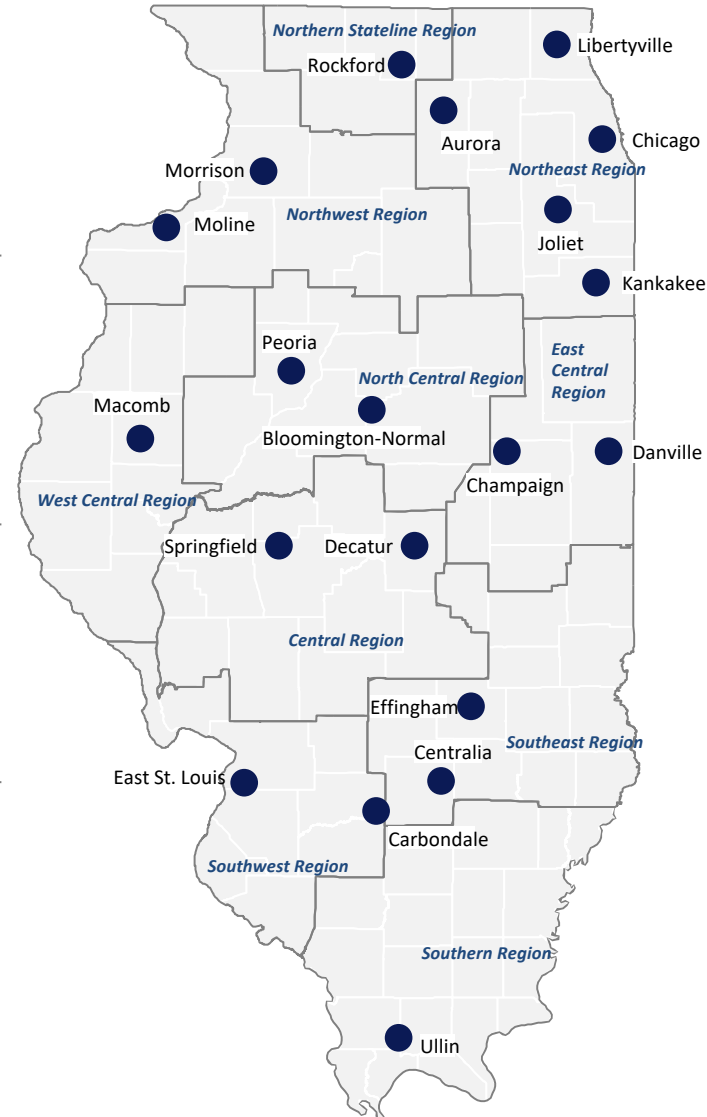**22** in-person listening sessions[2]

2 webinars[2]

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[1]

20 cities visited

Northern Stateline Region
Libertyville
Rockford
Aurora
Chicago
Morrison
Northeast Region
Moline
Northwest Region
Joliet
Kankakee
Peoria
East Central Region
North Central Region
Macomb
Bloomington-Normal
Danville
West Central Region
Champaign
Springfield
Decatur
Central Region
Effingham
Southeast Region
Centralia
East St. Louis
55+
Carbondale
Southwest Region
Southern Region
Ullin

1 Includes 18 combined resident and local organization sessions
2 Includes the follow-up session with the Northwest Center Digital Coaches

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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

- 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

- Following public comment, the state will **review and respond** to all comments, **incorporate** feedback in the plan, and submit to NTIA by Feb. 13th

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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

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Birdseye View:
Digital Equity Plan Section Overview

Key sections   **Subsections**

1. **Executive Summary**

2. **Introduction and Vision for Digital Equity**
   - Vision
   - Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes
   - Goals and Objectives

3. **Current State of Broadband and Digital Inclusion**
   - Asset Inventory
   - Needs Assessment

4. **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement**
   - Coordination and Outreach Strategy

5. **Implementation**
   - Implementation Strategy and Key Activities
   - Timeline

6. **Conclusion**

Notes: Excludes Appendices

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

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Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

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

go.illinois.edu/SDEP

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Vision for Digital Equity (Section 2)

Connect Illinois seeks to:

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

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

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

(Page 13-14)

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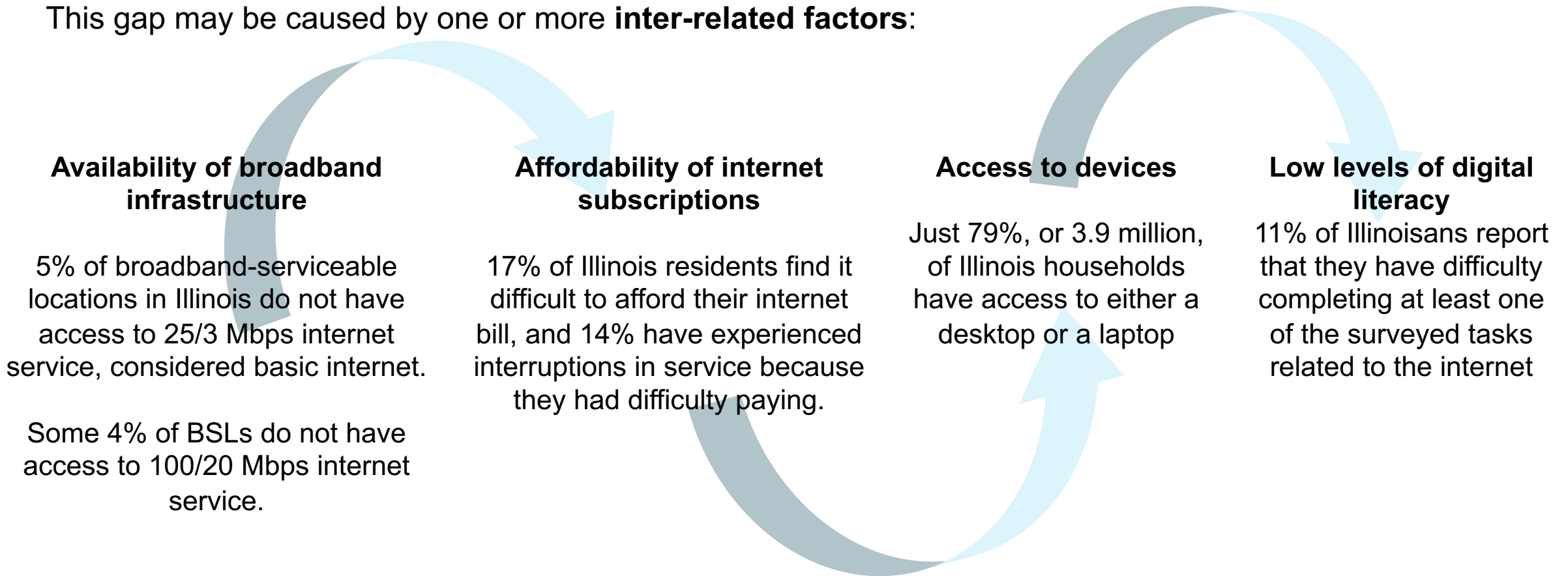
The complete list of assets can be found on pg. 47 in the Plan.

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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**:

Availability of broadband infrastructure

5% of broadband-serviceable locations in Illinois do not have access to 25/3 Mbps internet service, considered basic internet.

Some 4% of BSLs do not have access to 100/20 Mbps internet service.

Affordability of internet subscriptions

17% of Illinois residents find it difficult to afford their internet bill, and 14% have experienced interruptions in service because they had difficulty paying.

Access to devices

Just 79%, or 3.9 million, of Illinois households have access to either a desktop or a laptop

Low levels of digital literacy

11% of Illinoisans report that they have difficulty completing at least one of the surveyed tasks related to the internet

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

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

Legend[1]
- 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	**Broad-band adoption[1]**	**Access to devices**	**Income less 150% of FPL**	**Aging ind. (60+)**	**Veterans**	**Ind. with disabili-ties**	**Ind. with low English literacy**	**Racial & ethnic minorities[2]**	**Immi-grants**	**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%
Illinois average	**5%**	**72%**	**93%**	**19%**	**22%**	**5%**	**11%**	**9%**	**45%**	**14%**	**11%**

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, LGBQT+ 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

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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%
Total	**100%**	**39%**	**33%**

Key insights

As of September 1, 2023, 33% of eligible Illinois households were

enrolled in ACP, ranking Illinois 23rd 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)

Source: Calculated based on data from USAC ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker, September 2023, and methodology from Estimating participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), October 2022

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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%
Total	**100%**	**67%**	**18%**	**10%**	**5%**

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

Source: Provider distribution based on FCC Data Maps, accessed Mar 21, 2023. Internet price based on desk research conducted in March 2023.

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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%
Total	**100%**	**0%**	**77%**	**15%**	**9%**

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

Source: Provider distribution based on FCC Data Maps, accessed Mar 21, 2023. Internet price based on desk research.

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

Source: Statewide listening tour

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

Source: Statewide listening tour

Community events in the West Central region highlighted gaps in internet connectivity, high costs, and limited provider options

Includes content tailored for West Central Illinois
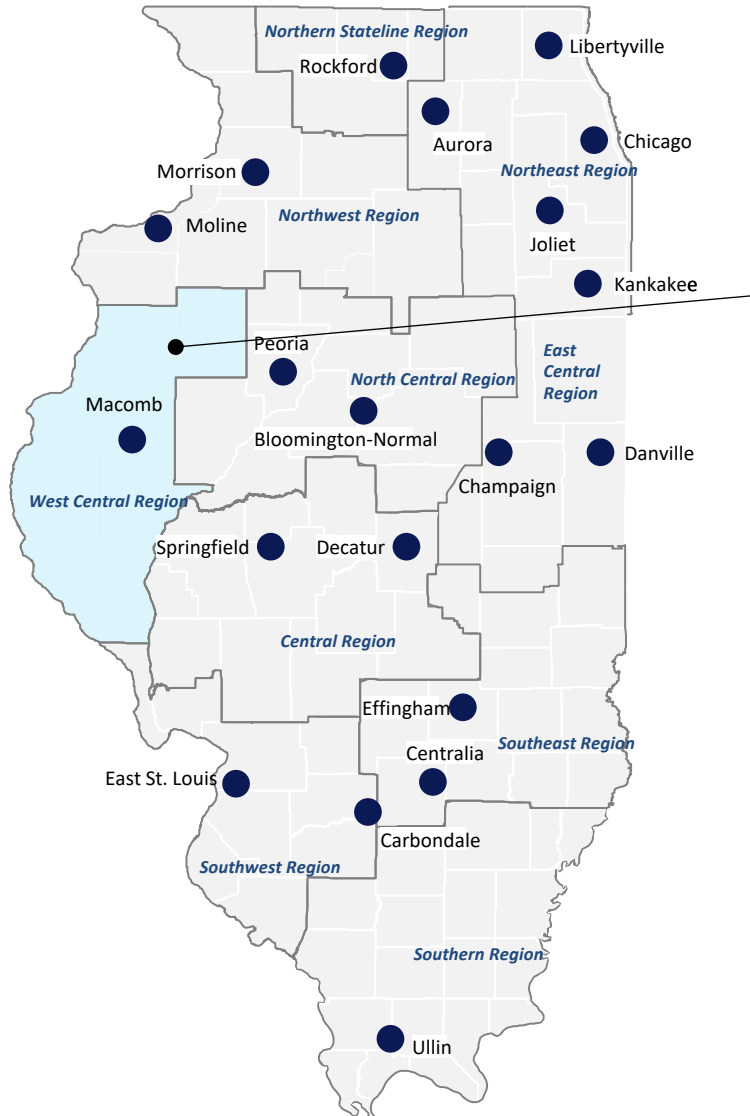
West Central region (3 events, 85 participants)

Gaps in reliable broadband service can significantly limit broadband adoption

- Many residents reported that the lack of reliable at-home connectivity inhibits them from utilizing digital platforms for daily tasks

- Community leaders shared that many residents and businesses (e.g., farms) cannot take advantage of key services and opportunities (e.g., remote learning) online

High monthly service and device costs and limited provider options

- Many residents shared difficulties with affording monthly internet service and devices due to high costs

- Further, residents shared that financial assistance from ACP is not sufficient to offset costs

- Many residents from low-income neighborhoods expressed concern with limited providers in their area, citing a lack of options for monthly costs and speed

Source: Statewide listening tour

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Analysis of public data sources and survey responses reveals strong concentrations of covered populations and gaps in affordability

NON-EXHAUSTIVE

Includes content tailored for West Central Illinois
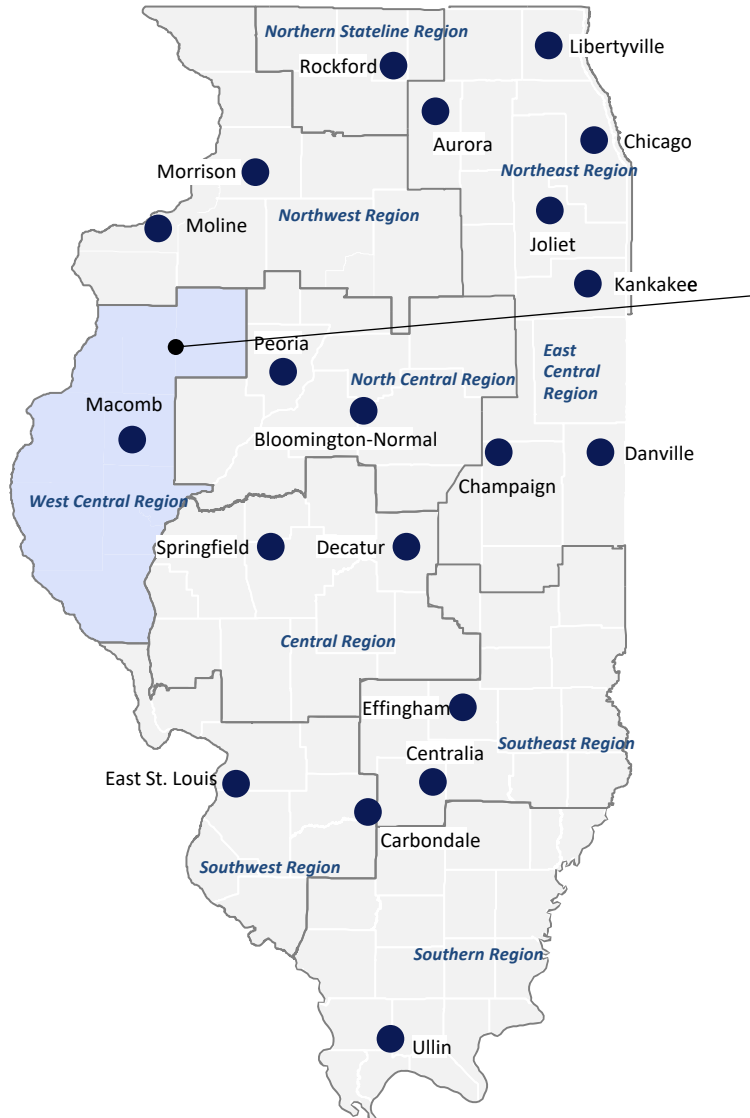
Category	Quantitative insights from public data sources
Broadband access	**6%** of locations in the West Central region of Illinois are unserved[1]
	60% of households are subscribed to broadband internet[2]
Device access	**70%** of residents in the West Central region have access to a desktop or laptop computer[2]
Affordability	**23%** of eligible households are enrolled in ACP, below the state's total enrollment (33%)[3]
	45% of providers in the West Central region advertise internet for download speeds of 100Mbps between prices of $25 – 50/month[1]
	46% of all households (40,100 out of 86,300) in the West Central region are eligible for ACP, of which **30,700** are not enrolled[3]
Demographics	The West Central region hosts high representations of several covered populations: Aging individuals (60+) (**27%**), Individuals with income <150% of the FPL (**23%**), and Individuals with disabilities (**15%**)[2]

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

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Regional digital equity plans in the West Central region highlight gaps in broadband access due to limited infrastructure and high device costs

Includes content tailored for West Central Illinois

Insights from regional digital equity plans

Broadband READY, Western Illinois University

Supported by the The Broadband READY team, the plan emphasizes **gaps in broadband access** stemming from **high device costs**. In partnership with the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) and the Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), the initiative established multiple equipment-lending programs (e.g., Chromebooks, Wi-Fi hotspots) in the region.

Hancock County

Hancock County's Broadband Breakthrough report highlights gaps in **broadband access**, **speeds**, and **household adoption** due to the **lack of network infrastructure in rural communities**. The plan identifies the potential **unrealized economic value among farmers** and **small businesses and** outlines several initiatives to increase adoption, including local grants and provider incentives.

Source: West Central Report – 2022; Hancock County Broadband Breakthrough Report – September 2023

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The Digital Equity asset inventory includes several key organizations and contacts in the West Central region

NON-EXHAUSTIVE
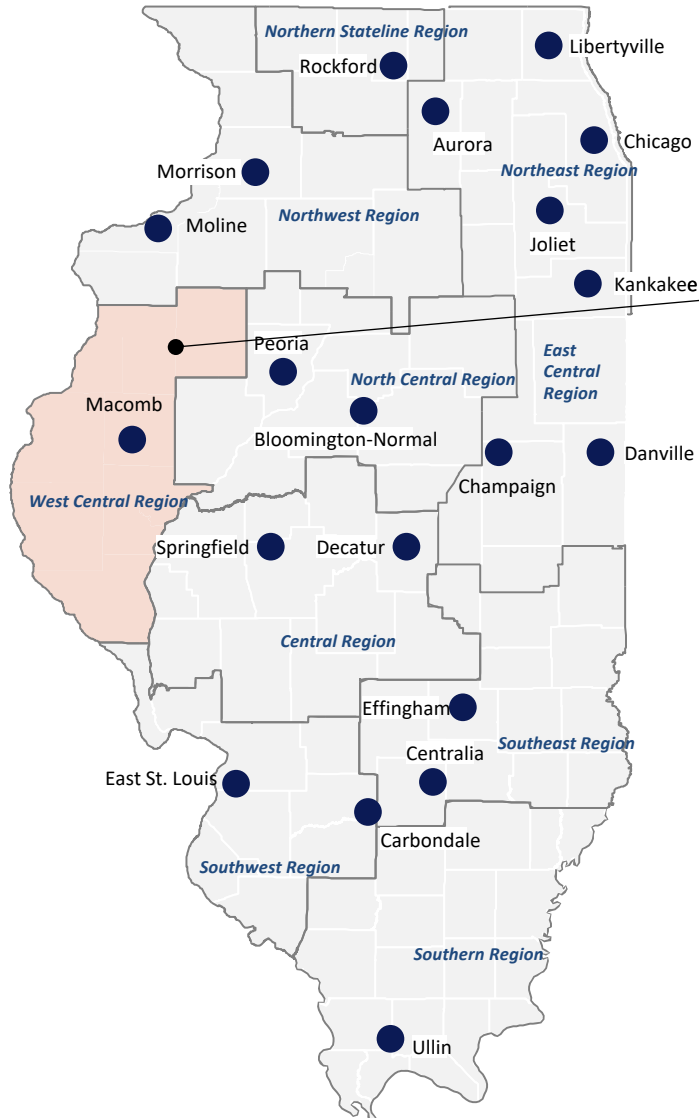
Digital Equity assets and key organizational contacts

Quincy Public Library

See website for details[1]

Tech Tutor Services

Tech tutors assist QPL members in building the skills they need to access the digital resources they want. Sessions are tailored specifically to the individual's skills, experience, and goals.

West Central READY

See website for details[2]

Data analytics and cybersecurity training program

The West Central READY team has hosted data analytics and cyber security workshops online and in person at Spoon River College, John Woods Community College, and McDonough Telephone Cooperative

1. Additional details and contact information for Quincy Public Library's Technology Tutoring program can be found here
2. Additional details on the Broadband READY program can be found here

Source: Illinois State Digital Equity Plan

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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:
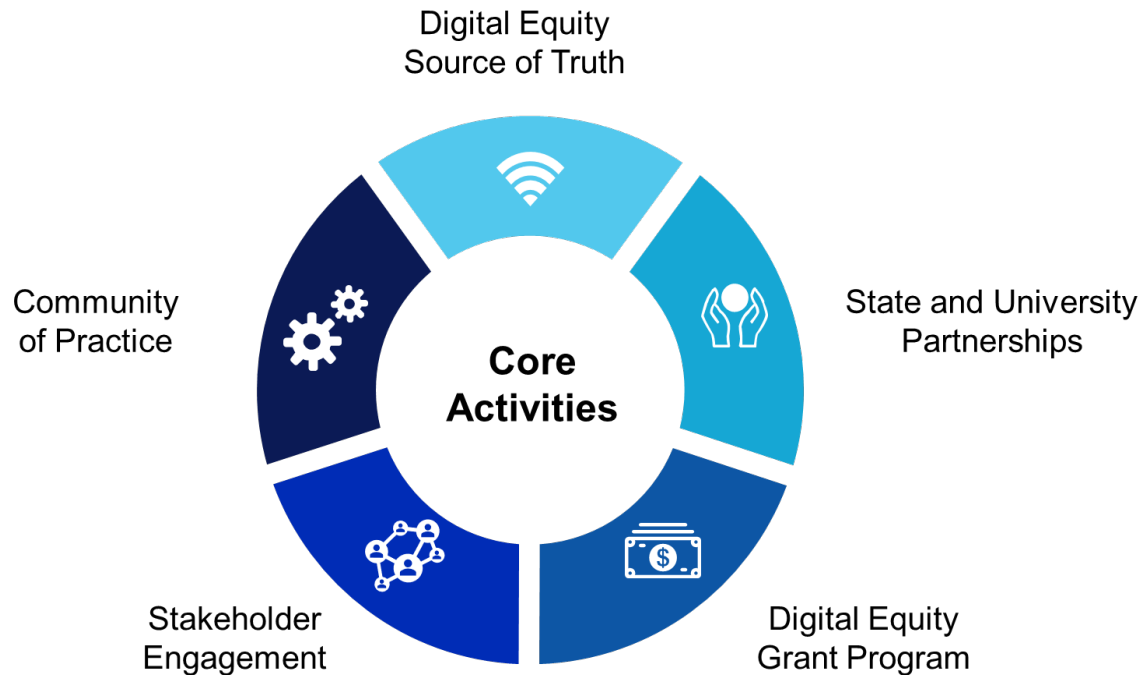
- ✓ Maintain and make available an Illinois digital equity data sets to serve as the common source of truth

- ✓ 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
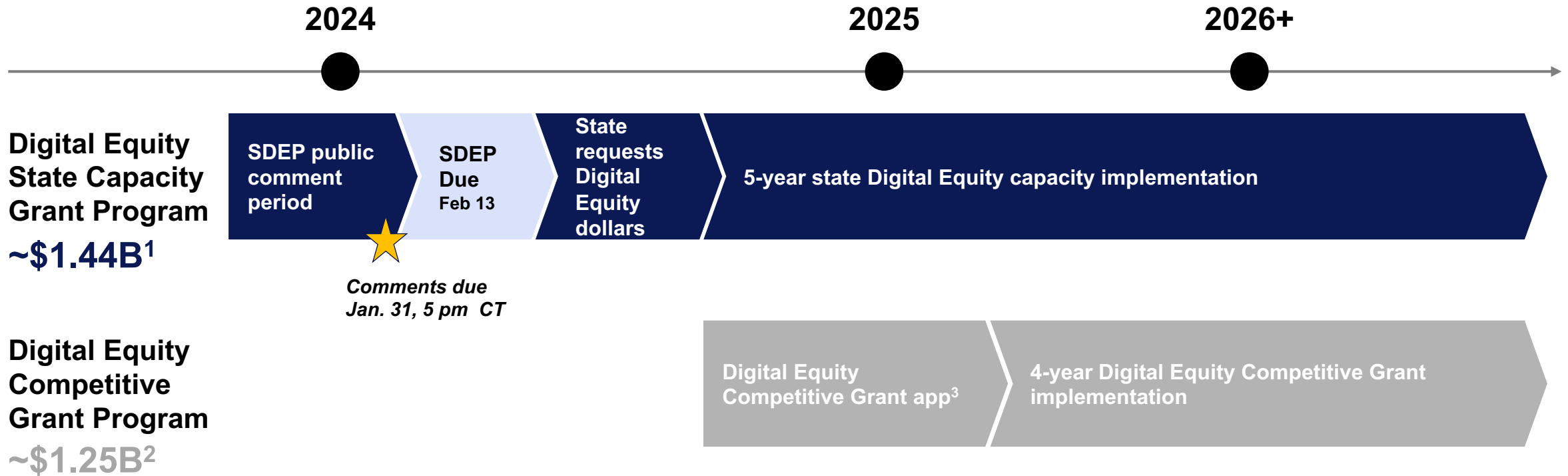
2024   2025   2026+

Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program

~$1.44B[1]

| SDEP public comment period | SDEP Due Feb 13 | State requests Digital Equity dollars | 5-year state Digital Equity capacity implementation |

Comments due Jan. 31, 5 pm CT

Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program

~$1.25B[2]

| Digital Equity Competitive Grant app[3] | 4-year Digital Equity Competitive Grant implementation |

State of IL expects to receive $30M to $35M from the Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program[4]

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)

Source: Digital Equity Act Programs Overview, US Senate H.R. 3684, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

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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
1. Digital Equity State Capacity Grant Program	~$1.44B[1] 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
2. Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program	~$1.25B[2] 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[3]

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)

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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

Public comments may be submitted at:

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

Submit

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
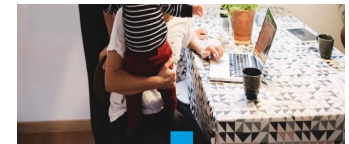
2 Introduction and Vision for Digital Equity

3 Current State of Broadband and Digital Inclusion

4 Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

5 Implementation
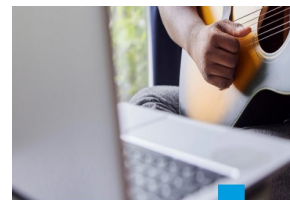
6 Conclusion

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.

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Breakout Session

Public comments may be submitted at:

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?

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Today's Agenda

Group Discussion & Recharge

Introductions

State Digital Equity Plan

Unpacking the Plan

Regional Findings

Breakout & Discussion

Submitting Comments

BEAD Challenge Process

Regional Updates & READY

Closing

Announcements & General Discussion

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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

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[2]

Select sub-grantees to implement broadband within one year, and complete implementation within four years[3]

Improve broadband affordability through a low-cost broadband service option and middle-class affordability plan[4]

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

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**
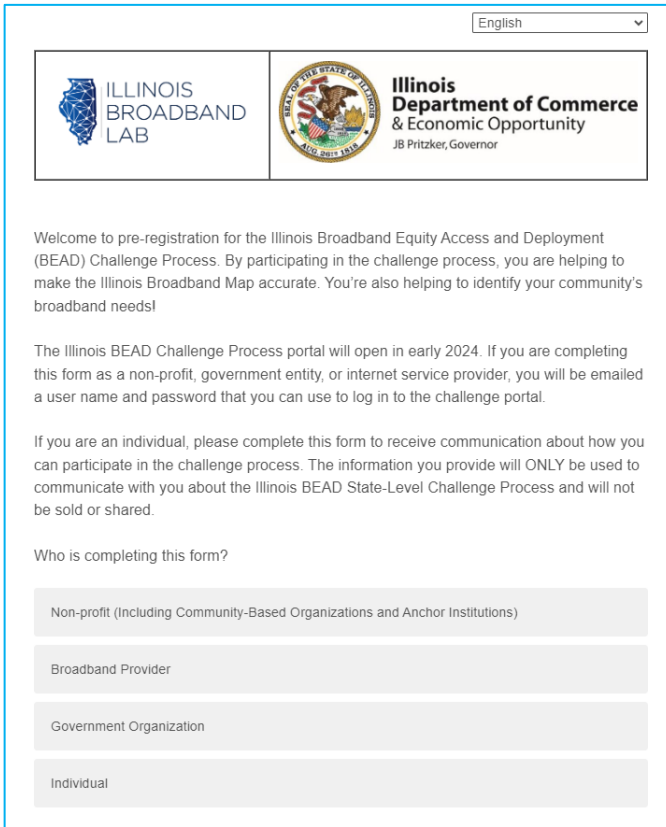
When will the challenge process be held?

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

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What will the challenge process look like?

Step 1:

Pre-register

Step 2:

Select location or area to challenge on the map
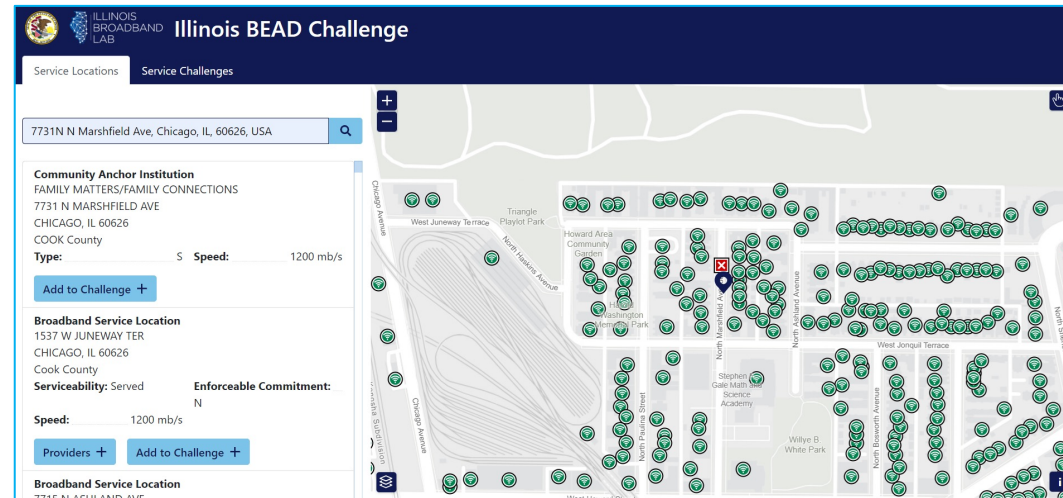
Step 3:

Submit evidence of challenge in the portal

Coming soon

Now!

January 22*

January 29*

*Dates pending final approval of Initial Proposal Volume I from NTIA
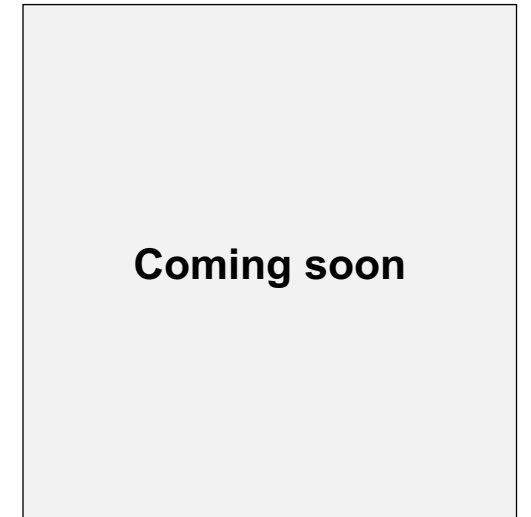
What can you challenge?

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

BEAD Challenge Process

How individuals can participate

How can individuals participate in the challenge process?

- Only eligible entities may submit challenges <u>directly</u>, including:

  - Non-profit organizations

  - Local government entities

  - Internet service providers

- **However, these entities can also submit challenges on behalf of <u>individuals</u>**

- 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:

Individual takes speed test 3 times, on 3 separate days	Individual includes information, such as name, address, and current internet subscription	Internet Equity Initiative receives data, and submits it to the Illinois Office of Broadband as a challenge
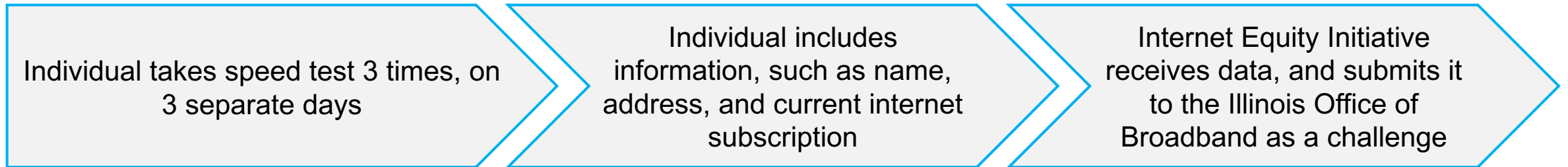
Only you know what internet quality you get in your home, and communities where your experience may be different than what's reflected on the map. The more community members who participate, the more we understand broadband need and can ensure funding goes to where it's needed most.

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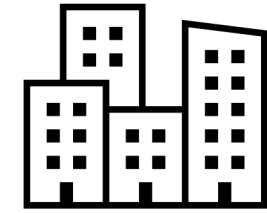
In some instances, an apartment building may be marked as connected to high-speed internet on the broadband map, when not all units are.

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

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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)
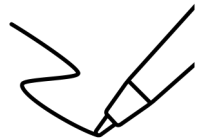
Write this down!

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

Visit
<u>BEADChallenge.org</u>

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*

Speed Test Tool Instructions

View your speed test results.
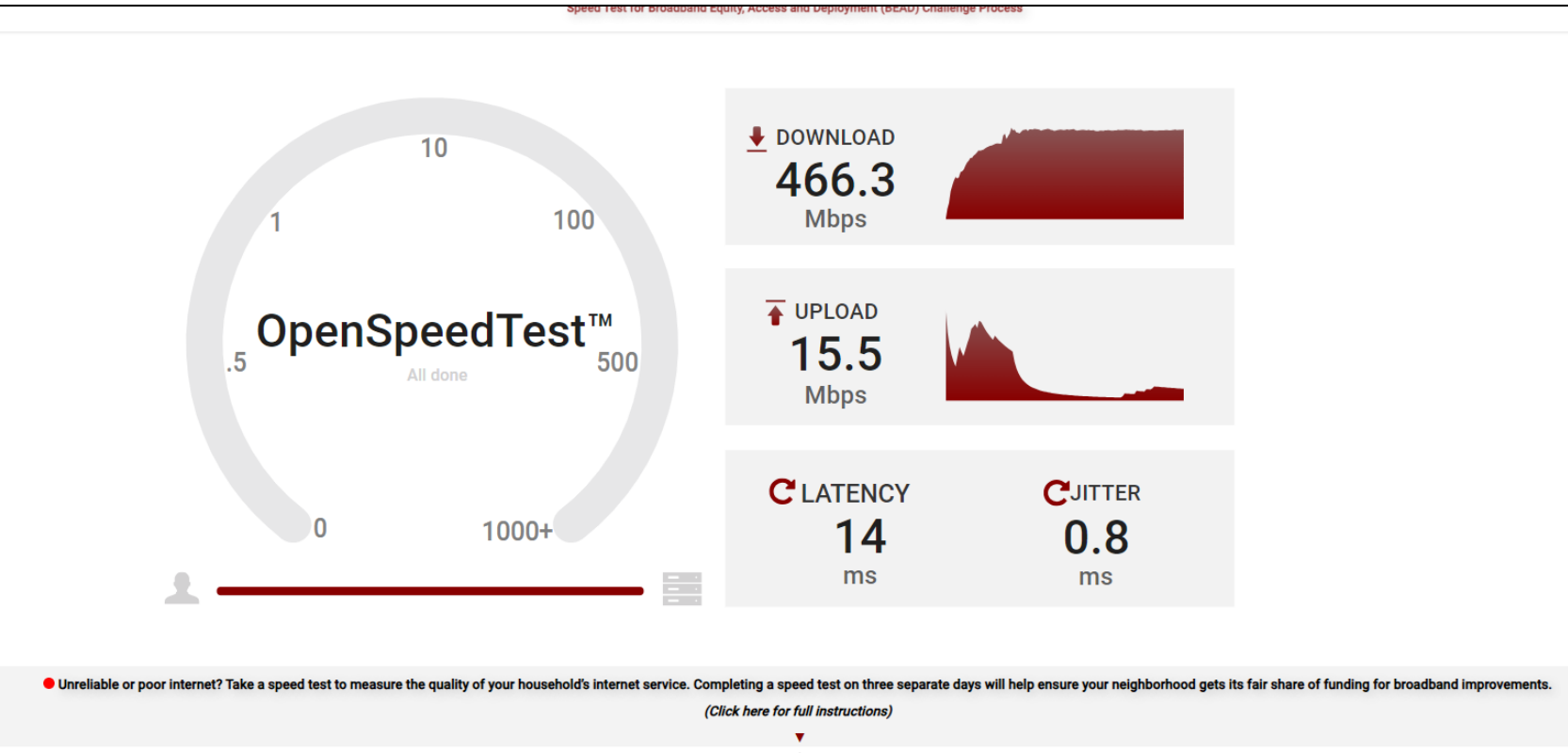
Speed Test Tool Instructions

Is my **download speed** <u>less than</u> 100?

What are we looking for?

Is my **upload speed** <u>less than</u> 20?

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

10

1

100

0

1000+

⬇ 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 ... ...ee separate days will help ensure your neighborhood gets its fair share of funding for broadband improvements.

(Click here for full instr... ...s)

▼

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?

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Speed Test Tool Instructions

Is my **download speed** <u>less than</u> 100? *No.*

What are we looking for?

Is my **upload speed** <u>less than</u> 20?

My upload speed is 15.5, which is less than 20. I should submit my speed test.

↓ DOWNLOAD
466.3
Mbps

↑ UPLOAD
15.5
Mbps

C LATENCY
14
ms

C JITTER
0.8
ms

Speed Test for Broadband Equity, Access and [...]ment (BEAD) Challenge Process

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

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!**

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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

beadchallenge.org says

Attention: Poor internet performance has been detected in your last speed test measurement! To make sure that this measurement informs your community's eligibility for funding and is reflected on the Illinois Broadband Map, fill in your address, zip code and email below and submit the results for analysis. Thank you.

- The Internet Equity Initiative Team

OK

Speed Test Tool Instructions

Click on the down arrow to fill in your information
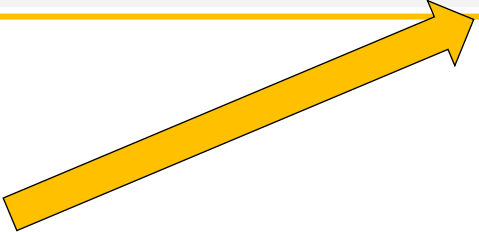
Speed Test Tool Instructions

Fill in your information,
then click Submit

55

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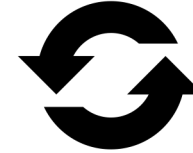
Take **two more speed tests, over two separate days**, and **submit** your information each time.

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

Facebook

Instagram

LinkedIn

Twitter

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 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 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 or visit DCEO.illinois.gov/BEADChallenge.

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Download One-Pager:

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 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 or visit DCEO.illinois.gov/BEADChallenge.

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Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

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

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. <u>Click here to pre-register.</u>

English

First Name

Last Name

Telephone Number

Email Address

Verify email address

Job Title/Role

→

Sample screenshot from pre-registration form

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Today's Agenda

Group Discussion & Recharge

Introductions

State Digital Equity Plan

Unpacking the Plan

Regional Findings

Breakout & Discussion

Submitting Comments

BEAD Challenge Process

Regional Updates & READY

**Closing**

Announcements & General Discussion

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Regional Updates & *READY*

Digital Navigator Corps

- Central - *Layla Brown*
- East Central - *Jessica Black*
- North Central - *John Scott*
- Northeast I (City of Chicago) - *Chanel Scott*
- Northeast II (Cook County) - *Jennel Hooper*
- Northeast III LatinxDLN (in Chicago) – *Alejandra Sanchez*
- Northern Stateline - *Cade Zima*
- Northwest - *Grace (Gracie) Clucas*
- Southeast – *TBD: Graduate Assistant at Eastern Illinois University to serve early 2024*
- Southern - *TBD: A Graduate Assistant at Southern Illinois University – Carbondale to serve early 2024*
- Southwest - *Marva Rucker*
- West Central - *Vikkie Becker*

Group Discussion & Recharge

Today's Agenda

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Illinois Broadband Lab
Statewide Meetings Calendar

- **ACP Outreach – Monthly Call**

  - 3rd Thursday 11-12pm

- **Statewide Digital Equity Call – Monthly**

  - 1st Fridays 1-2pm

  - Next Call: Feb 2, 2024

- **Illinois Broadband Advisory Council (Quarterly Meetings)**

  - Next Meeting: TBD

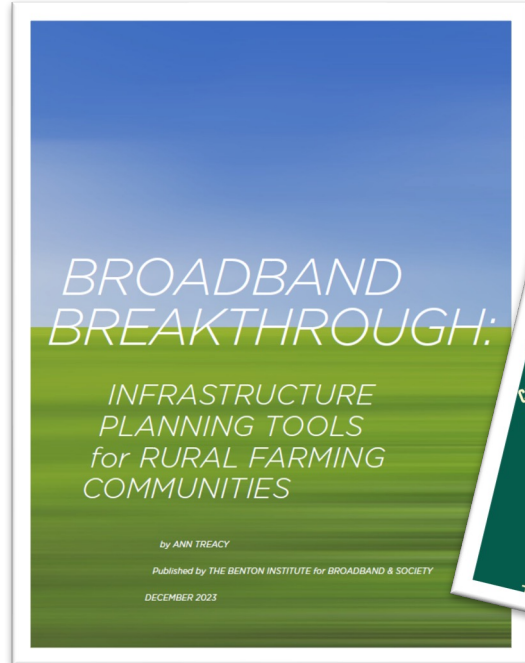Questions? Email: IllinoisBroadbandLab@Uillinois.edu
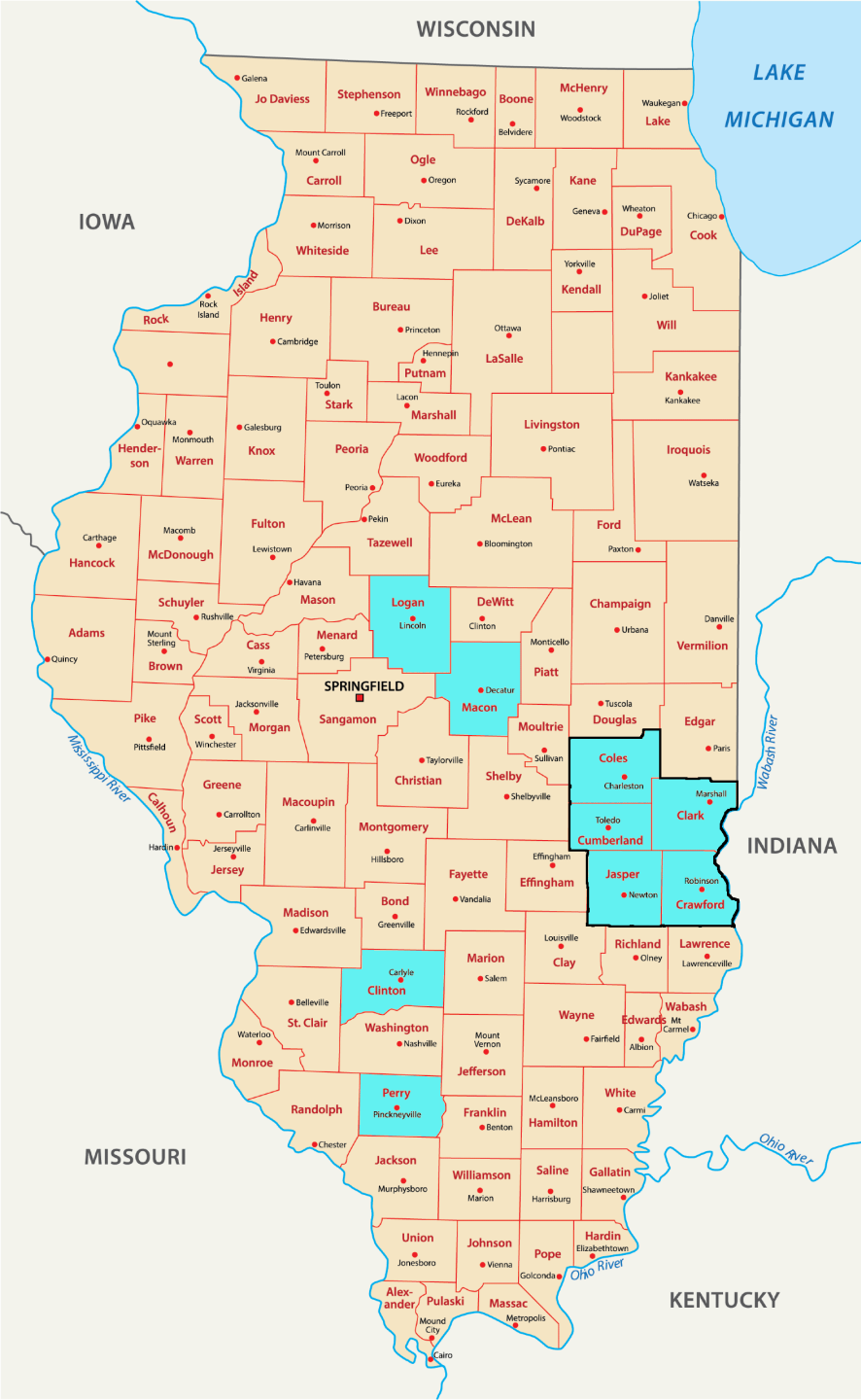
Broadband Breakthrough Update

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
bcoleman@Benton.org

BROADBAND BREAKTHROUGH:

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING TOOLS for RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES

by ANN TREACY

Published by THE BENTON INSTITUTE for BROADBAND & SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2023

Illinois Field & Bean
A PUBLICATION OF THE ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

CLOSING THE ACCESS GAP FOR ILLINOIS FARMERS

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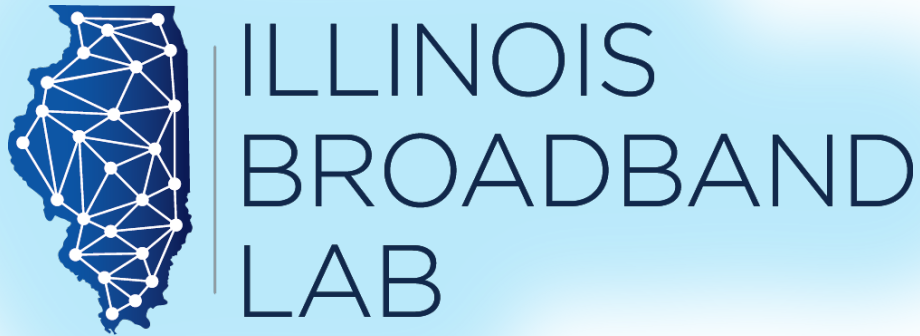
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Where you can find additional information

01 **Visit our websites:**
IOB: dceo.illinois.gov/connectillinois
IBL: broadband.uillinois.edu

02 **Email IOB** at broadband@Illinois.gov
Email IBL at illinoisbroadbandlab@Uillinois.edu

03 Subscribe to Illinois' Bi-Weekly
Broadband Newsletter at
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

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Closing Announcements