

Broadband READY Overview

Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY)

Description

Broadband READY is statewide broadband and digital equity initiative of the Illinois Broadband Lab—a collaboration between the Illinois Office of Broadband and the Illinois Innovation Network. Funding is provided to higher education institutions and qualified regional entities statewide to explore opportunities for equitable advances in the areas of broadband access, adoption, and utilization. The program is designed to identify current digital inequities as well as next steps in creating a digital inclusion ecosystem through regional collaboration, and it seeks to provide scalable solutions for broadband utilization across all 10 Illinois economic development regions. The program was designed as a forerunner to provisions included in the federal [Digital Equity Act](#), signed into law as part of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), and serves as a foundation for Office of Broadband work in Digital Equity + Inclusion.

Broadband READY follows a model of engaging universities and wider campus communities in key partnerships in service toward the goals and implementation Illinois' [State Digital Equity Plan](#).

Broadband READY Program Breakdown

Broadband READY Fiscal Year 2025 (READY FY25) initiative is two-fold:

University as READY Partner – Part 1: Digital Equity Impact Project

- Implementing a specific digital equity impact project that further specific objectives in the [State Digital Equity Plan](#) (SDEP).
- Enrolling a Graduate Assistant or other University Staff to assist with project implementation & digital navigation.

University as READY Partner – Part 2: Regional Convener-Collaborator

- Serving as a Regional Convener-Collaborator for one of Illinois' ten economic development regions to bring key stakeholders together, create open communication channels between the Illinois Office of Broadband and Illinois Broadband Lab, and track and contribute to the region's digital equity ecosystem.

The READY FY25 cohort will occur July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025, with the proposed teams:

Region	University
Central	University of Illinois – Springfield (UIS)
East Central	University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)
North Central	Illinois State University (ISU)
Northeast	Chicago State University (CSU)
Northern Stateline	Northern Illinois University (NIU)
Northwest	Western Illinois University – Quad Cities (WIU-QC)
Southeast	Eastern Illinois University (EIU)
Southern	Southern Illinois University – Carbondale (SIU)
Southwest	Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville (SIUE)
West Central	Western Illinois University (WIU)

