



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



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

Presentation

Aneta Thomas Lee – Visiting Assistant Director, Digital Equity, Inclusion & Navigation – Illinois Broadband Lab

Alicia L. Ross – Community Engagement Manager – Illinois Office of Broadband

Agenda:



Illinois Office of Broadband, Chair

- Digital Equity Act
- Digital Navigator Program
- Digital Navigators
- BEAD
- Broadband READY
- Listening Tour – Townhall Meetings 2023-24
- Next Steps...



Aneta Thomas Lee

Visiting Assistant Director, Digital Equity, Inclusion & Navigation

**Digital Equity
Champion**



DIGITAL EQUITY ACT

The programs are sequential and participation in planning is essential to receive capacity (i.e., implementation) funds

Funding pool
\$2.75B



State Planning Grant

State Capacity Grant

Competitive Grant



Who Open to **U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico**

Open to U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, that **completed the State Planning Program**

Open to **certain entities**, such as political subdivisions, Tribal entities, nonprofits, community anchor institutions, local educational agencies, and workforce development orgs

What Grants will be used to **develop a State Digital Equity Plan**

Grants will be used to **implement State Digital Equity Plans**

Grants will be used to **develop and implement digital inclusion activities**

Other U.S. territories, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian orgs have a separate statutory set-aside and separate program requirements under the State Planning and Capacity Programs



Digital Equity Act created three programs to promote digital equity and inclusion

Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed Internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.

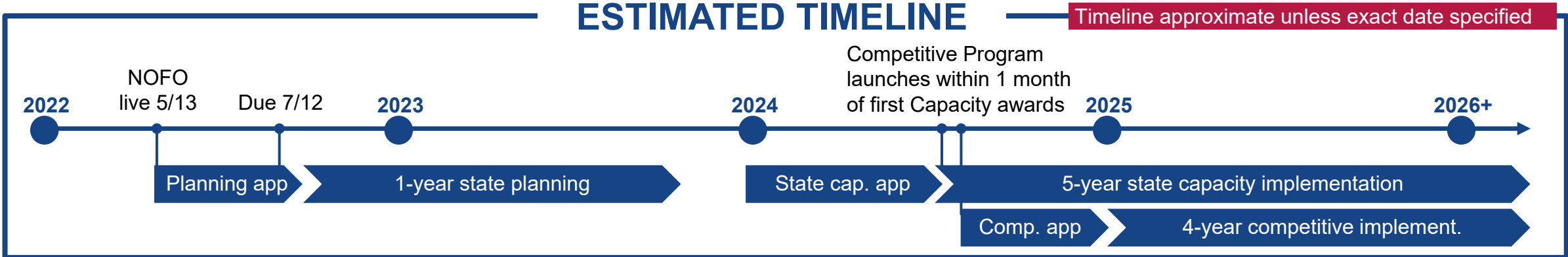
PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS

The Digital Equity Act created three programs:

<p>State Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$60M formula funding program to develop digital equity plans 	<p>State Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.44B formula funding program to implement plans & promote digital inclusion 	<p>Competitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.25B to implement digital equity and inclusion activities
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Example eligible uses of funds across three programs include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Developing digital equity plans; states must develop a plan to be eligible for state capacity grants ☆ Implementing digital equity plans and related activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Making awards to other entities to help make digital equity plans ☆ Providing digital literacy and digital skills education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Improving accessibility and inclusivity of public resources ☆ Facilitating the adoption of high-speed Internet
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WHO IS A DIGITAL NAVIGATOR?

Digital navigators are trusted guides who assist community members in internet adoption and the use of computing devices. Digital navigation services include ongoing assistance with affordable internet access, device acquisition, technical skills, and application support.

~National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA)



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ILLINOIS DIGITAL NAVIGATOR CORPS PROGRAM

- Illinois Office of Broadband received a \$700,000 award from the Federal Communication Commission (FCC)
- Lead for America/American Connection Corps/AmeriCorps Fellowship Program
- Eleven Digital Navigators placed throughout 10 DCEO economic regions in partnership with Broadband READY Teams



Lead for America Digital Navigators

East Central - Jessica Black

Central - Layla Brown

West Central - Vikkie Becker

North Central - John Scott

Northwest - Grace (Gracie) Clucas

Northeast I (City of Chicago) - Chanel Scott

Northeast II (Cook County) - Jennel Hooper

Northern Stateline - Cade Zima

Southwest - Marva Rucker

LatinxDLN (in Chicago) - Alejandra Sanchez



Other Descriptors for Digital Navigators

- Community Health Worker
- Case Worker
- Social Services Agent
- Library Technician
- CNA/Nurse Navigator
- Neighborhood Organizer
- Intake Counselor
- Immigrant Services Worker



Alicia L. Ross
Community Engagement
Manager
Illinois Office of Broadband

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Illinois has a historic opportunity to close the digital divide with funding from **three** federal programs

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law could allocate hundreds of millions in federal funding to expand broadband access and digital equity in communities across Illinois



The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) allocates \$42.45B focused on **broadband infrastructure deployment** to all states

Timeline: Planning: 2023-2024; Implementation: mid-2024- 2030

The Digital Equity Programs provides \$2B to states for **digital inclusion programs**

Timeline: Planning: 2023; Implementation: mid-2024- 2029



The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Fund distributes \$14.2B in funding to **subsidize broadband services** and for **connected devices** for low-income households across the country

Timeline: 2022 until funds are depleted

Four plans must be submitted for Illinois to receive BEAD and DE funding



42.45B

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

Required state submissions (and due dates):

- 1 BEAD Five-Year Action Plan (Aug 2023)
- 2 Initial Proposal (Dec 2023)
- 3 Final Proposal (2024)



2.75B

Digital Equity (DE) Programs

- 4 State Digital Equity Plan (Dec 2023)

Illinois has been allocated ~\$1B¹ from BEAD and could receive \$35M – \$40M² from the DE program

1. NTIA: Biden-Harris Administration Announces State Allocations for \$42.45 Billion High-Speed Internet Grant Program as Part of Investing in America Agenda ([link](#)); Illinois was allocated \$1.04B 2. Estimation based on State Planning Program funding and Digital Equity Act of 2021

Key goals and requirements of the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program

NON-EXHAUSTIVE



Drive toward universal coverage across the state by prioritizing broadband access to unserved (< 25/3 Mbps service) and underserved locations (at least 25/3 and less than 100/20 Mbps service)



Prioritize end-to-end fiber projects, and only using non-fiber where fiber costs are extremely high (i.e., costs above the extremely high cost per location threshold (EHCPLT))



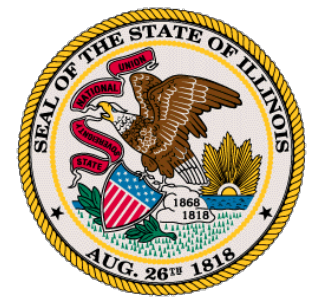
Run subgrantee process within 1 year of approval of the Initial Proposal, and **complete implementation within four years** of receipt of funds



Focus on improving broadband affordability through a required low-cost broadband service option, and a middle-class affordability plan

BROADBAND READY PROGRAM

Broadband Regional Engagement & Adoption for Digital Equity (READY)

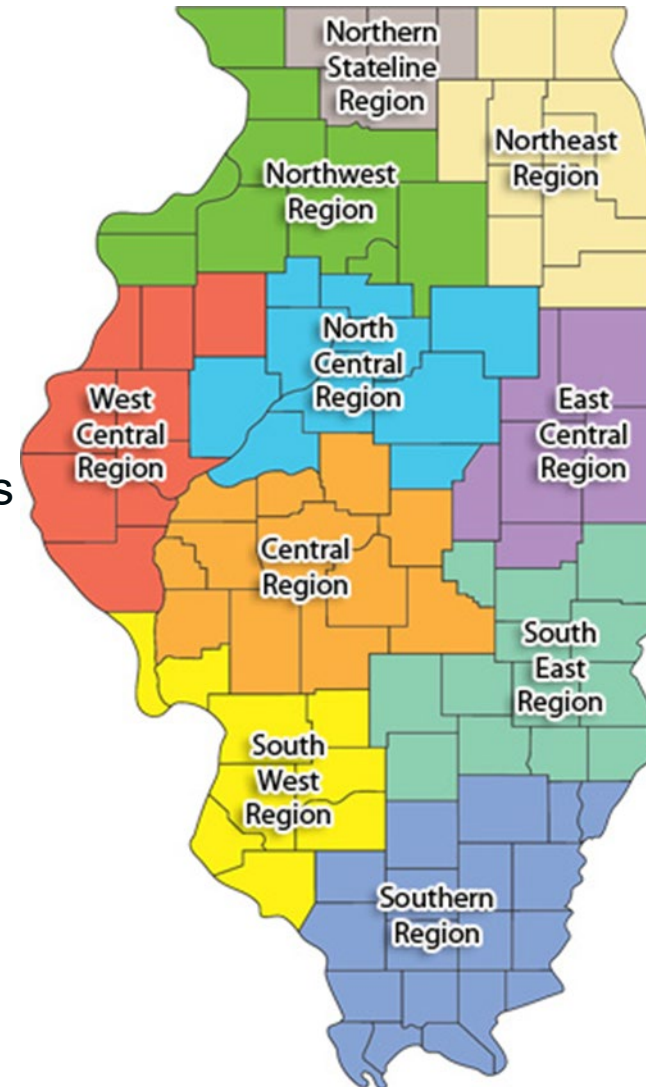


[Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity \(READY\)](#) grants are provided to qualified regional entities statewide to explore opportunities for equitable advances in the areas of broadband access, adoption, and utilization.

The program is designed to identify current digital inequities as well as next steps in **creating a digital inclusion ecosystem through regional collaboration.**

- 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 [Digital Equity Act](#), signed into law as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and serves as a foundation for [Office of Broadband work in Digital Equity + Inclusion.](#)”



BROADBAND READY

Regional Roster Construction



- READY Team Leads
 - READY Team Lead – Principal Investigator
 - Co-Principal Investigator
 - Digital Navigator or Lead for America Fellow
- Regional Economic Development
 - Regional Planning Council Member
 - Illinois Extension Member
 - DCEO Team RED Member
- IBL/IOB Program Participant
 - *Illinois Connected Communities*
 - *Accelerate Illinois*
 - *Broadband Breakthrough*
 - *Connect Illinois Infrastructure Grant Program Recipient*
- Sector-Specific
 - Education Member
 - Health Member
 - Agriculture Member
 - Business Member
 - Library Member
 - Housing Member
 - Covered Populations Representative
 - Workforce Development Member

Broadband stakeholder listening session overview

Sessions were held across the state from March to June 2023



Residents

24 in-person listening sessions¹

- On average, **17** attendees per session

2 webinars

- On average, **10** attendees per session



Local Organizations & Non-Profits

22 in-person listening sessions¹

- On average, **19** attendees per session

2 webinars²

- On average, **10** attendees per session



Local Government

19 in-person listening sessions

- On average, **18** attendees per session

2 webinars

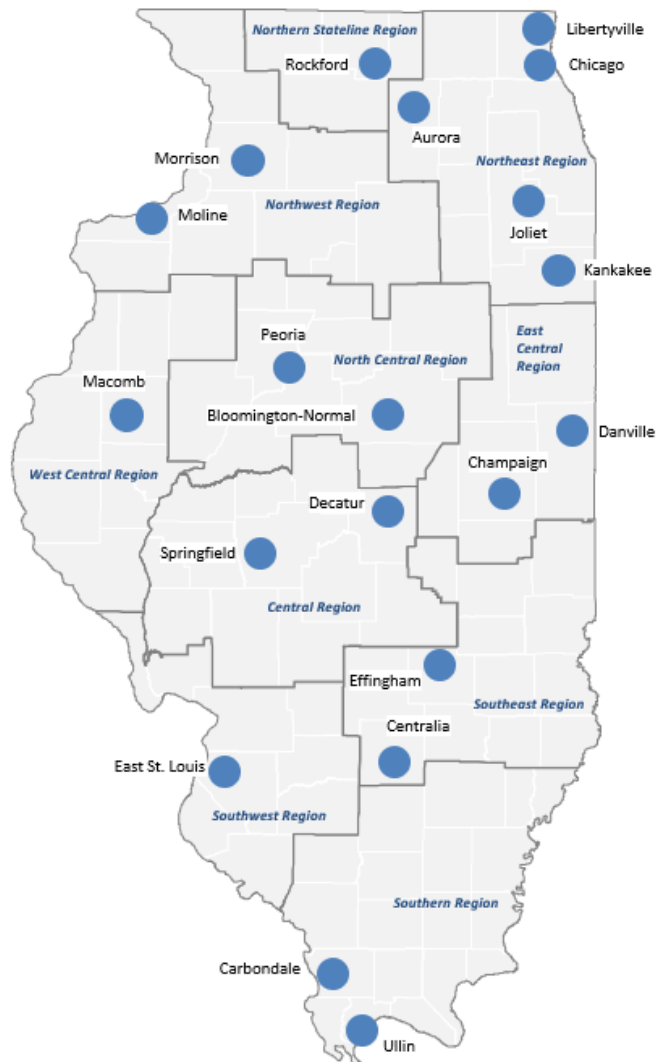
- On average, **8** attendees per session



Internet Service Providers

1 webinar

- 32** attendees



1256

attendees

1168 for in-person sessions

88 for virtual sessions

40+

organizations represented

54

listening sessions¹

20 cities visited

76

stakeholders convened for event coordination

¹ Includes 18 combined resident and local organization sessions

² Includes the follow-up session with the Northwest Center Digital Coaches

A Close-Up on What We Heard

Affordability

Difficulty affording a broadband subscription and devices.

Internet As Essential

Across the state: “The Internet Should Be A Utility.”

Essential for work, education, staying in touch with family, and emergency communication.

Safety — On and Offline

Privacy and Data Worries; Unsafe environments leading to desire for in-home broadband use and avoiding public Wi-Fi.

Skepticism & Anger Over History of Disinvestment

Concerns that money from government will ultimately go to large providers who have not delivered. Distrust of digital equity opportunities from government or private sector.

Reliability

Fixed Wireless speed & bandwidth fluctuations. High-density areas experiencing slower speeds than advertised.

“In Peoria, we have an area of the community in the zip code, it’s the most unserved area in the city. We have absolutely no high-speed internet there. That area is predominantly Black, and because its a poorer area, providers don’t want to invest in the infrastructure there. There is no option there.”

– Webinar Participant May 9, 2023

Spring 2023 Listening Session - Aurora



Spring 2023 Listening Session Libertyville – Local Government



Spring 2023 Listening Session – Chicago Local Agencies



ILLINOIS: \$1 BILLION

FOR AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE,
HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICE



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FOR ALL**

INTERNETFORALL.GOV



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