



Board Packet Executive Summary

February 12, 2024

Christine Hallquist, Executive Director

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The agenda for this meeting is quite full so we may not get to all the items. We have moved the time-sensitive items to the front of the agenda.

### **Digital Equity Plan Approval**

The Digital Equity Plan has followed the requirements of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for Board public outreach, review, and comments. The current version is being presented to the Board for approval to submit to the NTIA within the required timeline. The VCBB will continue to take comments and make changes to the plan as needed. This approval is necessary to meet the timeline and should not be considered the final word.

There has been concern from the CUDs that the DE plan imposes additional restrictions. To be clear, the VCBB also wishes to clarify that this Digital Equity Plan does not impose additional requirements on BEAD subgrantees. Nor does the Digital Equity Plan propose to impose obligations on ISPs choosing not to participate in the BEAD program or in formal Digital Equity grant programs. While the BEAD and Digital Equity Plans are intentionally linked and complementary, as instructed by NTIA, they are two separate and distinct initiatives and should be considered as such. While BEAD subgrantees may choose to participate in Digital Equity grant and other programs and will likely be a valuable resource for fostering digital equity in Vermont, BEAD subgrantees are not the focus of this plan.

### **Ookla performance monitoring**

South Carolina Congressman and House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn partnered with the Director of the South Carolina Broadband Office, Jim Stritzinger (former CEO and Founder of Revolution D) and Ookla to create accurate, reliable maps of South Carolina's broadband network performance. The proposal is for Vermont to mimic the program at a fraction of the cost. VCBB's GIS contractor Stone Environmental would utilize a third-party contract to bring Ookla speed test services for performance monitoring into the VCBB's program availability mapping and tracking dashboards. ISPs are required to perform a performance test upon completion of a customer installation, the data can be pulled and reported on daily, and ongoing network performance will be recorded in the platform to show statewide availability as customers are connected. The additional services

would be about \$70K/year, which will be part of the Stone Environmental contract. The current GIS budget and Stone Environmental contract has capacity to do this within the budget. This presentation is for information purposes. No resolution is needed from the Board.

### **BEAD Subrecipient Support Program**

Staff recommends approving support via the Potential BEAD Subrecipient Support Grant Program for CVFiber, NEK Broadband, and Maple Broadband in the amount of \$445,600. The projects proposed meet the requirements outlined in the request for proposals. These include the likelihood of participation in BEAD and the presence of significant barriers to participation, among others. Additionally, most of the efforts proposed are ready to be executed (i.e. consultants identified). The program will fund modeling, application preparation, match analysis, legal analysis for partnerships and consortiums, and evaluating and updating plans to connect all BEAD eligible applications with fiber. These were the only three applications submitted for consideration at this time. (CVFiber - \$145,600; NEKBroadband - \$200,000; Maple Broadband - \$100,000)

### **Key Performance Indicators for Grantees**

Christine Hallquist will lead this discussion. VCBB staff work on reporting has been an ongoing effort. Staff met with the CUDs to obtain agreement on the set of indicators that will be presented to the Board. This was an action item on the Parking Lot – “Policy for certification of Grantee compliance to Performance and Operating Standards.” While this is not a complete response to the policy, it is a key part of performance compliance.

### **Annual Report Discussion and Approval**

Herryn Herzog will lead this discussion. The VCBB has revised the submission date to the legislature to February 13. The report is included in the Board packet. Per Act 71, “The report shall include an operating and financial statement covering the Board’s operations during the year, including a summary of all grant awards and contracts and agreements entered into by the Board. In addition, the report shall include a description of the progress each start-up communications union district has made in achieving long-term financial sustainability that is not dependent upon public funding, an update on its efforts to secure additional federal funds for broadband deployment, and progress made towards meeting the State’s goal of ensuring every E-911 location has access to broadband capable of delivering a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrical service...”

### **Tiger Team CVFiber/NEK**

Alexei Monsarrat will lead this discussion. CVFiber is working with NEK Broadband to develop a revised plan to meet the requirements of the grant agreement. This plan includes sharing of resources to improve the overall business plan success. This plan will be discussed in the Executive Session.

### **Tiger Team DVfiber**

Alexei Monsarrat will lead this discussion. This will be an update from DVfiber and GWI (DVfiber’s operations partner). The update will be provided in the Executive Session.

# Vermont Community Broadband Board Meeting

## Monday, February 12, 2024, 12:00pm – 4:00pm

### AGENDA

Meeting is being held virtually.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Join by Phone; +1 802-828-7667,677685337#

*Note: there may be executive sessions as needed.*

12:00 1) Call Meeting to Order, Roll Call, Approval of Agenda

12:05 2) Record of the Reappointment of Holly Groschner; Status Report on the Reappointment of Laura Sibilia; Election of the Board's Vice-Chair

12:10 3) Public Comment

12:20 4) Approval of January Meeting Minutes

12:25 5) Digital Equity Plan Approval – *Britaney Watson*

1:00 6) Presentation of GIS Performance Monitoring Services Based on Ookla Data– *Christine Hallquist*

1:15 7) BEAD Subrecipient Support Applications – *Rob Fish*

1:45 8) 17) Key Performance Indicators for Grantees – *Christine Hallquist*

2:00 9) Annual Report Discussion and Approval – *Herryn Herzog*

2:25 10) VCUDA Updates – *Rob Vietzke*

2:40 11) Public Comment

2:50 12) Parking Lot – *Christine Hallquist*

3:00 13) Tiger Team: CVFiber/NEK – Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. s. 313(a)(1)(A), “authorizing executive session to consider contracts where premature public knowledge would clearly place the public body or person involved at a substantial disadvantage.” See also 1 V.S.A. s. 313(a)(1)(6) “protecting records exempt from the public records act”, specifically 1 V.S.A. s. 317(c)(15) “exempting records relating to the negotiation of contracts.” – *Alexei Monsarrat*

3:30 14) Tiger Team: DVFiber - Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. s. 313(a)(1)(A), “authorizing executive session to consider contracts where premature public knowledge would clearly place the public body or person involved at a substantial disadvantage.” See also 1 V.S.A. s. 313(a)(1)(6) “protecting records exempt from the public records act”, specifically 1 V.S.A. s. 317(c)(15) “exempting records relating to the negotiation of contracts.” – *Alexei Monsarrat*

4:00 15) Motion to Adjourn

Press inquiries: please contact Herryn Herzog, [herryn.herzog@vermont.gov](mailto:herryn.herzog@vermont.gov) | (802) 522-3396.

# Vermont Community Broadband Board Meeting

## Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 12:00pm – 4:00pm

### Minutes

#### I. Meeting Call to Order, Roll Call, and Approval of Agenda

Patty Richards called the meeting to order at 12:07 and completed roll call.

- Patty Richards, Chair (Remote)
- Laura Sibilila (Remote)
- Brian Otley (Remote)
- Holly Groschner (Remote)
- Dan Nelson (Remote)
- Christine Hallquist - Staff (Remote)
- Robert Fish – Staff (Remote)
- Alissa Matthews – Staff (Remote)
- Toni Clithero – Staff (Remote)
- Heryn Herzog – Staff (Remote)
- Britaney Watson – Staff (Remote)
- Steven Zubkoff – Staff (Remote)
- Alexei Monsarrat - Staff (Remote)
- Thomas Malinowski – Staff (Remote)

Patty Richards made a motion to approve the agenda. Christine asked to remove the annual report item from the agenda because staff was recently made aware they were not in compliance with Act 71 because they included information in the draft annual report that happened after FY 2023 was over June 30, 2023. Christine said staff will review the law, and we will send a notice that we will submit the report on February 15, which will allow the Board to review and approve it at their Feb. 12 meeting.

Laura suggested tabling item 11 (make ready) because of a miscommunication.

Toni brought up a change to item 6 Legislative Affairs. There was a typographical error in the legal reason for the Executive Session. It should read 313(a)(1)(f).

The modified agenda was approved unanimously.

#### II. Public Comment

Christa Shute gave an update on NEK Broadband's progress and affordability efforts. She also said there needs to be more discussion about how to define a mile when they are reporting their progress. Christine said there will be time to discuss that when they discuss key performance indicators.

Holly commented that they have a work group on the annual report. They are not finished with their report yet, but they discuss the definition of miles in reporting.

Mary Kay Raymond joined to introduce Northwest FiberworX's new business finance manager Brad Lewis.

**III. Approval of December 11 Meeting Minutes**

Patty made a motion to approve the December 11 Meeting Minutes. Dan seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

**IV. Outreach/Marketing Video Trailer**

Herryn Herzog introduced the video, which is a short version of the approximately 35-minute full version that will be completed soon. The link for the trailer is: [CONNECTED Documentary Teaser - YouTube](#).

Holly commented that we should not use the work "marketing" in relation to the video.

**V. Digital Equity Plan Review – Britaney Watson**

Britaney presented an update on the digital equity timeline, plan, and focus groups. She summarized the concerns she is hearing from Vermonters, a couple of which are lack of competition and regulation. Holly commented that it would be helpful for us to be clear that VCBB has no control over the competition that exists and regulation. Patty asked staff to work on a summary of the concerns we are hearing from Vermonters and what VCBB can and cannot do based on current legislation.

**VI. Legislative Affairs - Executive Session - Premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage (1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(f) – Christine Hallquist**

Patty made a motion to go into Executive Session. Holly seconded. Christine said she would like to have staff members Toni, Rob, and Herryn join, as well as Gwynn Zakov, and all Board members.

Upon return, Patty said the only action item was that the Board is asking staff to present at the next meeting on how the sale of private ISPs will impact ISP operating agreements of the CUDs.

**VII. Otter Creek Grant Update – Laura Black**

Laura Black, Chair of Otter Creek Communications Union District gave an update on the CUD including that the CUD Board agreed to accept the GoNetSpeed network build plan in the Otelco territory as part of their universal service plan, and VCBB staff has the draft of their grant agreement amendment since they will not be accepting the full amount of the grant they previously requested (about \$1.5 million less). She affirmed that they will be able to build to all of their addresses in 2024, except possibly a few outliers in 2025.

Patty asked if they are reducing their number of addresses. Laura said they're reducing the number of addresses they're seeking funding for, but not overall addresses they will serve.

Laura Sibilia asked if they have made any progress toward the sustainability of the CUD in terms of accountability. Laura Black answered they have developed a request for proposal for executive director and posted it. The rest of it will be work they will do this year.

Holly said she thinks the Board does need to review this amendment because it makes it a different deal than it was before. Holly asked if there is an operator agreement with GoNetSpeed and is it signed? Laura Black answered that they have terms and conditions they have agreed to, but the actual legal document is being drawn up.

Laura Sibilia said if there is a change in the grant agreement, it should come to the Board, and they should sign off. Laura Sibilia pointed out that getting more addresses served for less money in less time is not their only objective.

Holly said she doesn't feel like they know what the deal OCCUD worked out is. Christine said the deal addresses a Board concern to not fund addresses that were going to be built by private providers.

Holly asked for a confidential memo describing the difference between what will be served under the new deal and what would have been served under the original deal.

Dan said he doesn't think the VCBB Board needs to vote on this.

Patty decided to take a straw poll of the Board to decide if they need to take a vote. Brian said no. He thinks they are getting what they need in this case, which is an update.

Laura said she will vote no on the deal because she thinks they are on the wrong track. Holly said she's fine with the deal.

Patty said since Toni gave her opinion that a vote of the Board is not needed, she (Patty) agrees, and based on the results of the straw poll, she doesn't believe a vote is needed. She noted that Laura Sibilia disagrees with the other four Board members and is moving ahead.

**VIII. CVFiber Update-Executive Session, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. s. 313 (a)(6), which protects from public session the discussion of information contained in "records exempt from the access to public records act", 1 V.S.A. s. 316.**

Patty made a motion to move into Executive Session. Holly seconded it. Christine said to include Alexei, Toni, and Rob from VCBB staff, all Board Members, and CVFiber leaders. The motion passed unanimously, and they went into Executive Session.

**IX. BEAD Challenge Process Update & Next Steps – Alissa Matthews**

Alissa presented an update on the challenge process. The challenge portal is ready, the information is posted, and we're ready to start once the NTIA gives its approval, at which point everyone will be put on notice for a week before the process starts.

**X. VCUDA Update – Ellie de Villiers**

VCUDA is planning their Legislative Day for Jan. 31. CUDs have sent in comments on the Digital Equity Plan. Ellie shared some of the CUDs' concerns.

**XI. Public Comment –**

Jan Jones from Hubbardton wanted to express gratitude for what the Board is doing and to Britaney for going to their town to see what they're facing. She also expressed her frustration with the company she has service with now. She said it's helpful to know what the Board can and can't help with. She also commented on keeping in mind that there are a lot of people in Vermont who are artists and work part time and rely on their internet connection.

Christa Shute commented that the ACP is expected to run out of funds by Q2 2024. Sen. Welch and others are sponsoring a bill to extend it. She said we should look at addressing that as a state issue in case it doesn't pass federally.

**XII. Confirm Next Regular Meeting 2/12 and Motion to Adjourn**

Christine pointed out it will be an organizational meeting. Toni will look at whose terms are up and will need to nominate whoever has a term that's up.

Patty asked if they could take action on any completed accountability policies at the next meeting. Christine said she would reach out to the chairs of the subcommittees. Holly said she would like staff to review and comment on the policies first. And then they need to be published before the Board can take them up.

Patty made a motion to adjourn. Laura seconded it, and it was approved unanimously.

Press inquiries; please contact Herryyn Herzog, [Herryyn.herzog@vermont.gov](mailto:Herryyn.herzog@vermont.gov), (802) 522-3396





Vermont Community Broadband  
Board  
**Summary of Public Input on  
Vermont's Digital Equity Plan**

January 25, 2024







# Introduction

As part of the [Internet for All](#) programs funded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to help states increase broadband and technology availability and adoption, Vermont developed its first-ever statewide Digital Equity Plan. To shape this strategic plan, the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) has provided several opportunities for public comment. This document provides a summary of that process and the results.

The VCBB is deeply appreciative of the time and effort its partners, stakeholders, and communities have contributed to make the Digital Equity Plan as strong as possible.

# Mechanisms for Stakeholder Engagement

The VCBB sought comprehensive input and feedback from diverse stakeholders through various mechanisms, summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Mechanisms for Public Input

Engagement Mechanism	Stakeholders Reached Includes
Bi-weekly Digital Equity Core Planning Team meetings	State agencies and nonprofit organizations providing social and digital equity-related services statewide
Broadband workforce development working group	Department of Labor, technical colleges, workforce development organizations, labor organizations, adult education institutions
Participation in other equity-related working groups	Other state agencies, Black, Indigenous, People of Color affiliation groups
Targeted engagement and partnerships	Nonprofits, community anchor institutions, representatives of Covered Populations, civil rights organizations
Liaison with CUDs and ISPs	CUDs, Internet service providers
Public requests for input and public comment periods	General public
Public listening sessions	General Public
VCBB Board meetings	VCBB Board, general public



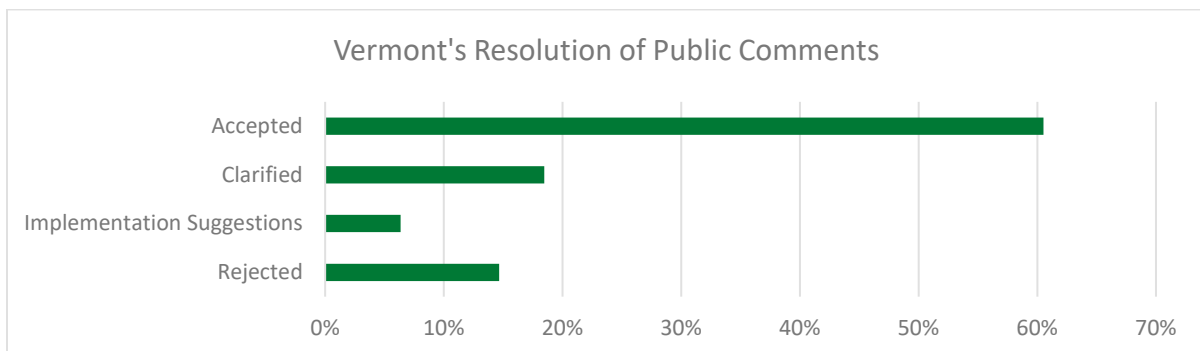
Engagement Mechanism	Stakeholders Reached Includes
Grassroots outreach with Community Action Partnership agencies	General public, Covered Populations
Focus groups	Covered Populations

## Feedback Received and How It Has Informed the Plan

Vermont's vision for digital equity was developed with the Digital Equity Core Planning Team. Extensive stakeholder engagement during the development of Vermont's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Action Plan as well as the VCBB's request for input specific to Digital Equity (26 responses) informed the early design of the draft Digital Equity Plan, including the assessment of needs, asset inventory, and some of the goals and objectives. The VCBB engaged the Digital Equity Core Planning Team for input on the first concepts and drafts of each section of the Digital Equity Plan. Meetings with approximately 55 organizations directly informed the plan's development.

The draft Digital Equity Plan was released for public comment from December 1, 2023, to January 8, 2024. A total of 15 organizations and individuals submitted formal comments, including NTIA. The comments were comprehensive, providing valuable direction to strengthen the draft plan. Below is a summary of the quantity of comments received and the themes and how the VCBB resolved them (Figure 1). The VCBB accepted and incorporated most suggestions. Some comments informed revisions to improve clarity but were not directly accepted. Comments that were "rejected" were not incorporated because they conflicted with federal program requirements or for editorial reasons. Other comments were helpful considerations for Vermont's work-planning and implementation phase but did not warrant revisions to the plan.

Figure 1. Vermont's Resolution of Public Comments





Below is a summary of themes within the public comments and how the VCBB resolved the feedback into the Digital Equity Plan:

- ▶ *Purpose of the document and alignment with BEAD:* Several comments reflected a need for further clarity regarding the purpose of the document, particularly how it relates to the BEAD program. **Resolution:** The VCBB added more context to the plan to explain its purpose, its audiences, and its function including that it is separate but aligned to the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan. The Digital Equity Plan is broader than broadband access and defines an aspirational vision for digital equity across the state. The Digital Equity plan does not place any requirements or obligations on organizations beyond the VCBB. It is a high-level strategy that will set the direction for detailed work planning and budgeting. Resources have not yet been confirmed for implementation, and the VCBB plans to work collaboratively with partners to detail the work plan.
- ▶ *Affordability:* Affordability of broadband service is a topic of concern for individuals and for broadband service providers, for different reasons. Some individuals are concerned broadband costs are too high. Some providers are concerned that the State of Vermont plans to regulate prices and/or require low-cost options, which could impede business viability to provide service at all. **Resolution:** No substantive changes were made to the plan on this topic, but several points were clarified. Regarding concerns of Vermont households' ability to afford broadband service, this challenge is described in detail in the plan and both BEAD and Digital Equity programs are designed to connect Vermonters to resources to help address this barrier. The VCBB did add that, while there are global standards set (described in the plan) for how much broadband service should cost in relation to one's household income, what is considered "affordable" is subjective to the individual. Regarding concerns some Internet providers expressed, the plan does not impose any requirements on broadband service providers. As the Digital Equity Plan states, the VCBB will work with Vermont stakeholders and the Vermont State Legislature to implement and promote resources for broadband and device affordability and adoption to Vermonters.
- ▶ *Barriers to digital equity:* Suggestions and information regarding socio-economic inequities that inform the context and barriers to digital equity in Vermont, and suggestions of specific barriers and resources for certain Covered Populations. **Resolution:** The VCBB worked to incorporate suggestions provided as well as to draw from information gathered in focus groups with specific Covered Populations to bolster the assessment of barriers to digital equity with both data and testimonials of lived experiences.
- ▶ *Overlap between goals:* Overlap between some of the goals and objectives. **Resolution:** The VCBB incorporated the objectives, activities, and key



performance indicators related to a sixth goal in the draft for public comment, which was focused on broader socio-economic impact, into other relevant goals, reducing the total number to five goals and improving the implementation strategy to be simpler and more streamlined.

- ▶ *Public survey data:* Requests for additional detail on the respondents of the VCBB's public survey, which informed the baselines for this plan. **Resolution:** The VCBB added some context in the beginning of the plan, adding to what was already in the document's Appendix. Data on the geographic distribution of survey respondents was not collected due to privacy concerns and therefore could not be added to the Digital Equity Plan.
- ▶ *Quality of baseline data:* Dissatisfaction with the availability of high quality and standardized data to inform and compare the baselines. **Resolution:** This challenge is not unique to Vermont—many of the indicators of digital equity specific to Covered Populations are not consistently measured today. The VCBB has taken a thoughtful approach to using primary and secondary sources to inform its assessment of the current state of digital equity and the design of its KPIs. A key priority, as already stated in the Implementation Strategy, will be to establish a strong data collection and management platform and a mechanism for public visibility and accountability.
- ▶ *Federal program requirements:* Some comments the VCBB did not incorporate related to misunderstandings of definitions or program requirements from NTIA or the Federal Communications Commission.

The VCBB appreciates the thoughtful and thorough public comments it received. These comments have strengthened the quality of the plan. This will not be the end of stakeholder engagement. The VCBB plans to take an inclusive, transparent, and adaptive approach to ensure accountability to Vermonters and to maximize impact.



**VERMONT**

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**VERMONT COMMUNITY BROADBAND BOARD**

**Ookla Performance Data**

Presentation to the VCBB Board of Directors – February 12, 2024

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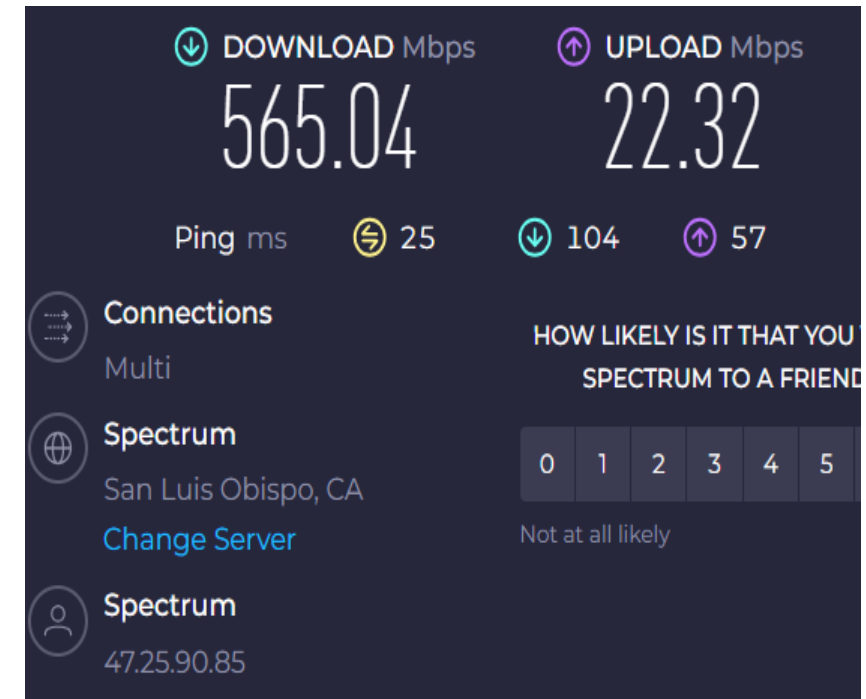
[HTTPS://PUBLICSERVICE.VERMONT.GOV/VCBB](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb)

# Executive Summary

- Ookla performance testing is widely used – 50 Billion tests and counting
- On-site performance testing is the way to verify the installation and provide on-going assurance to the quality of the network
- Ookla data is geo-tagged enabling the performance data to be tied to a physical address

# South Carolina performance monitoring

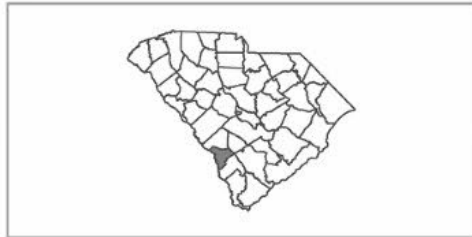
- South Carolina partnered with IBM and Ookla to develop a platform
- South Carolina's can accurately identify areas of over-reporting by Internet service providers (ISPs)
- Thanks to their leadership, Vermont can implement the system for a fraction of the cost









# Uses Uber's Hexagonal Hierarchical Spatial Index

## Allendale County South Carolina Construction Dashboard



### H3 Resolutions (square meters / acres)

-  Res 6 36,129,062 sq. m / 8,928 acres
-  Res 7 5,161,293 sq. m / 1,275 acres
-  Res 8 737,328 sq. m / 182 acres
-  Res 9 105,332 sq. m / 26 acres

### Managed Investment

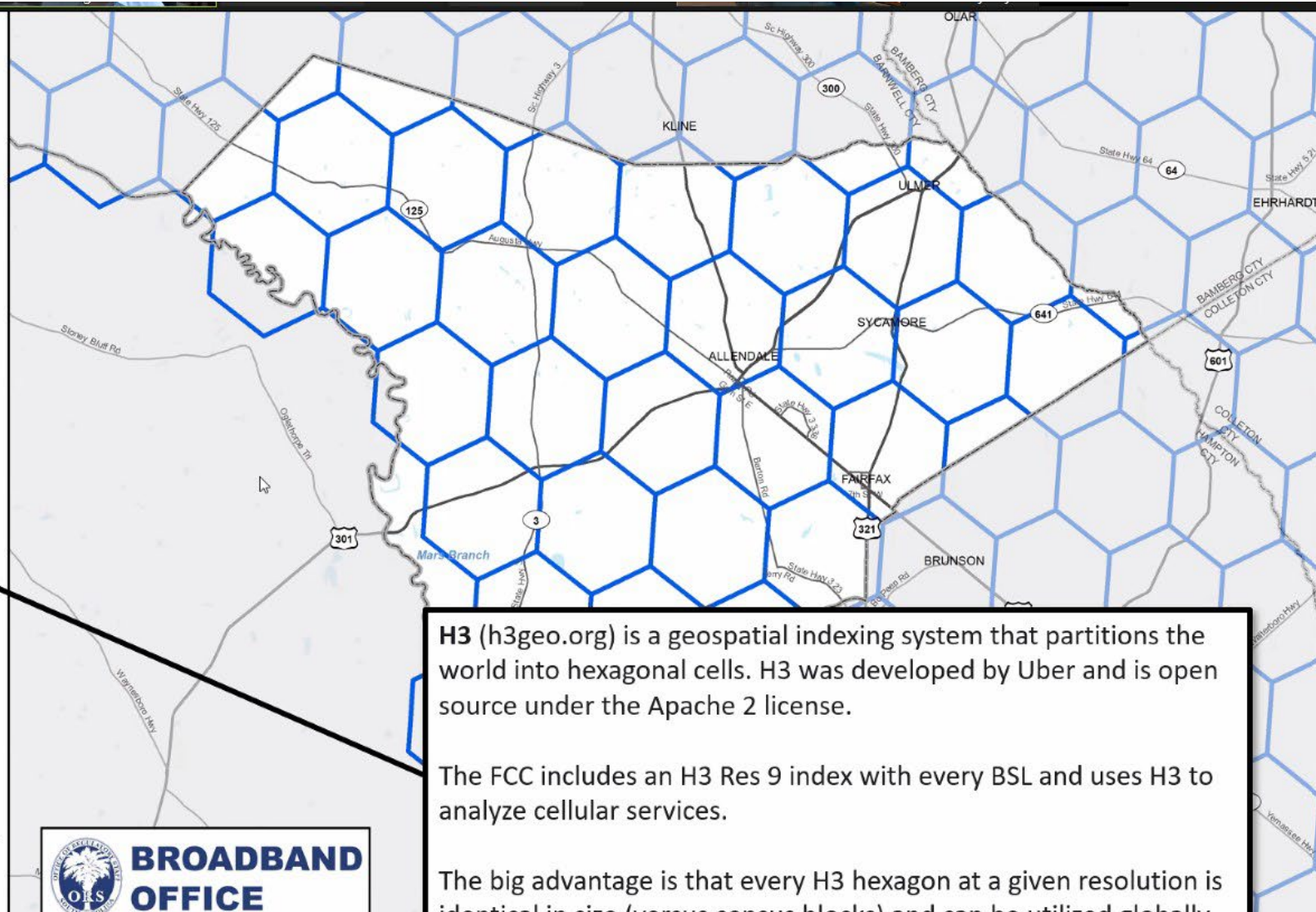
-  State
-  County
-  Federal
-  Private

Data Sources: H3 is a geospatial indexing system that partitions the world into hexagonal cells. H3 is open source under the Apache 2 license. The H3 Core Library implements the H3 grid system. It includes functions for converting from latitude and longitude coordinates to the containing H3 cell, finding the center of H3 cells, finding the boundary geometry of H3 cells, finding neighbors of H3 cells, and more.

The SCBBO is neither responsible nor liable for damages or injuries caused by failure of performance, error, omission, inaccuracy, inaccessibility, incompleteness or any other errors in information or formatting on this map.



**BROADBAND  
OFFICE**



H3 (h3geo.org) is a geospatial indexing system that partitions the world into hexagonal cells. H3 was developed by Uber and is open source under the Apache 2 license.

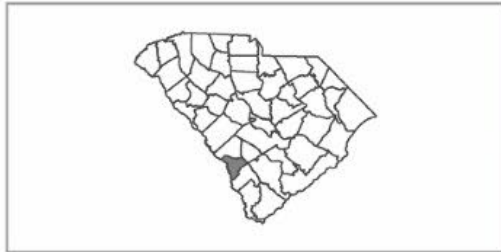
The FCC includes an H3 Res 9 index with every BSL and uses H3 to analyze cellular services.

The big advantage is that every H3 hexagon at a given resolution is identical in size (versus census blocks) and can be utilized globally.







# Enables accuracy to identify carriers and funding areas

## Allendale County South Carolina Construction Dashboard



### H3 Resolutions (square meters / acres)

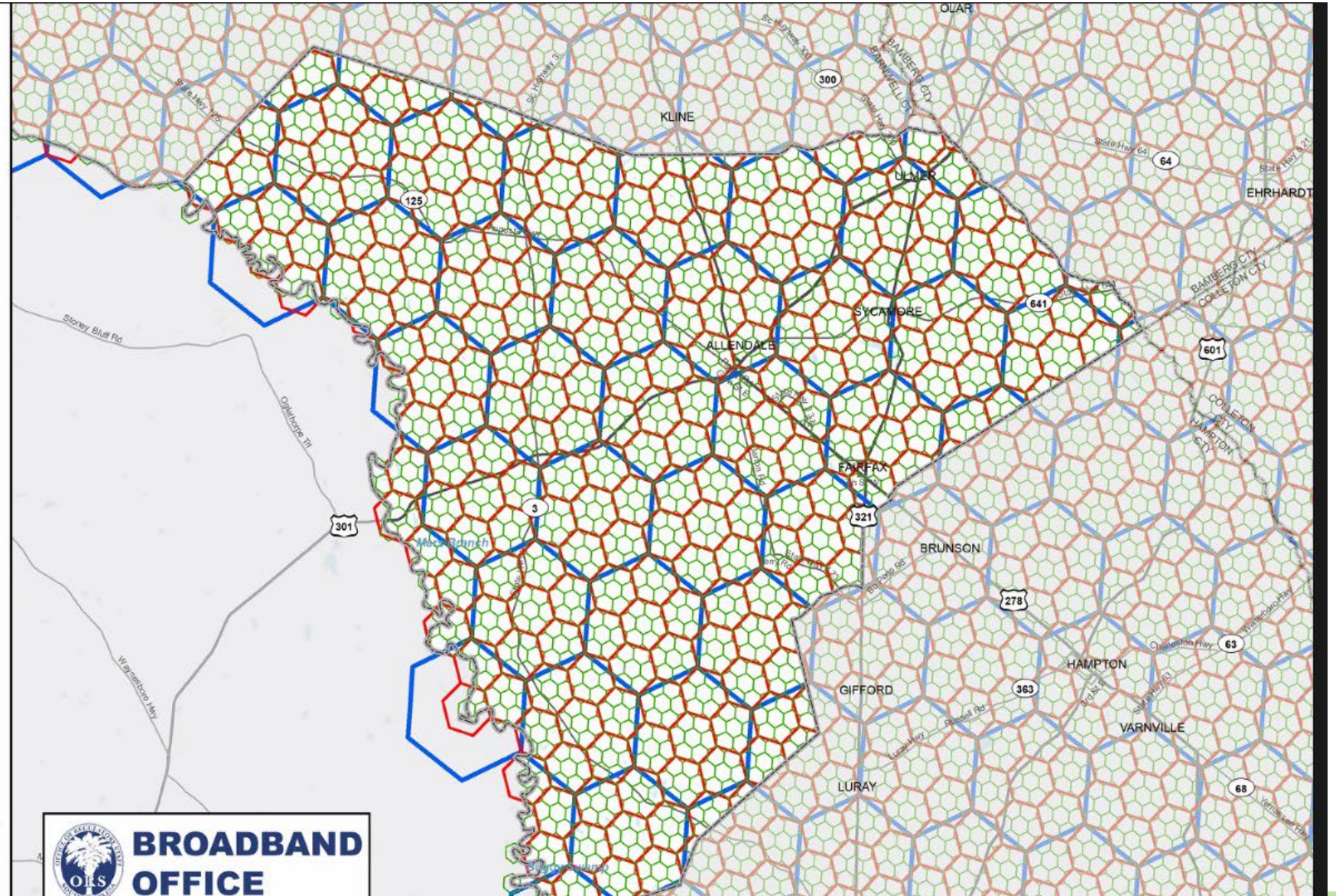
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	State		County
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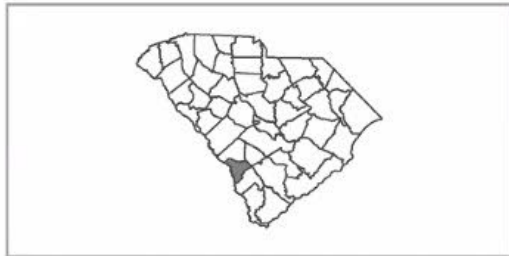
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



# Example of a funding area analysis

## Allendale County South Carolina Construction Dashboard



### H3 Resolutions (square meters / acres)

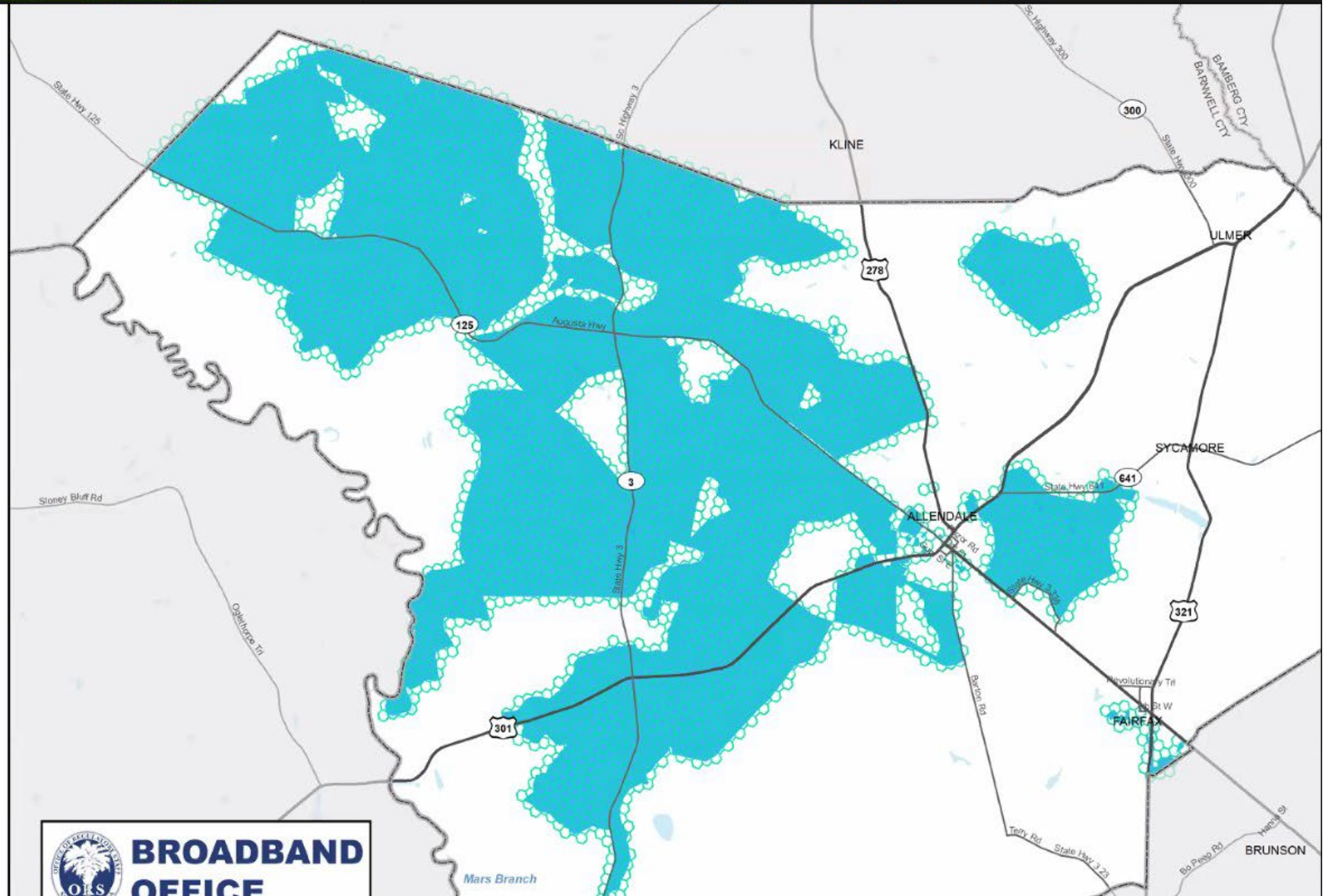
	<b>Res 6</b> 36,129,062 sq. m / <b>8,928 acres</b>
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# Example of a search routine

## STEP 1



### FILTER / FORMATTING / GEOPROCESSING:

- SCBBO Blacklist Applied
- **Download Speed  $\geq$  100 Mbps**
- Comes from GPS-equipped device
- Location Accuracy  $<$  500m
- Geocoded for H3 Res 6, 7, 8 & 9

## STEP 2



### FIXED WIRELINE

CUMULATIVE JAN. 1, 2019 through JAN. 7, 2024:

# 3,885,624 Speedtest Results

Receive ~2,000 to 3,000 new tests daily

## STEP 3







# Example 1 – 100 Mbps progress



## South Carolina Construction Dashboard

October 1, 2023

### Verified Speed Tiers (download / upload)

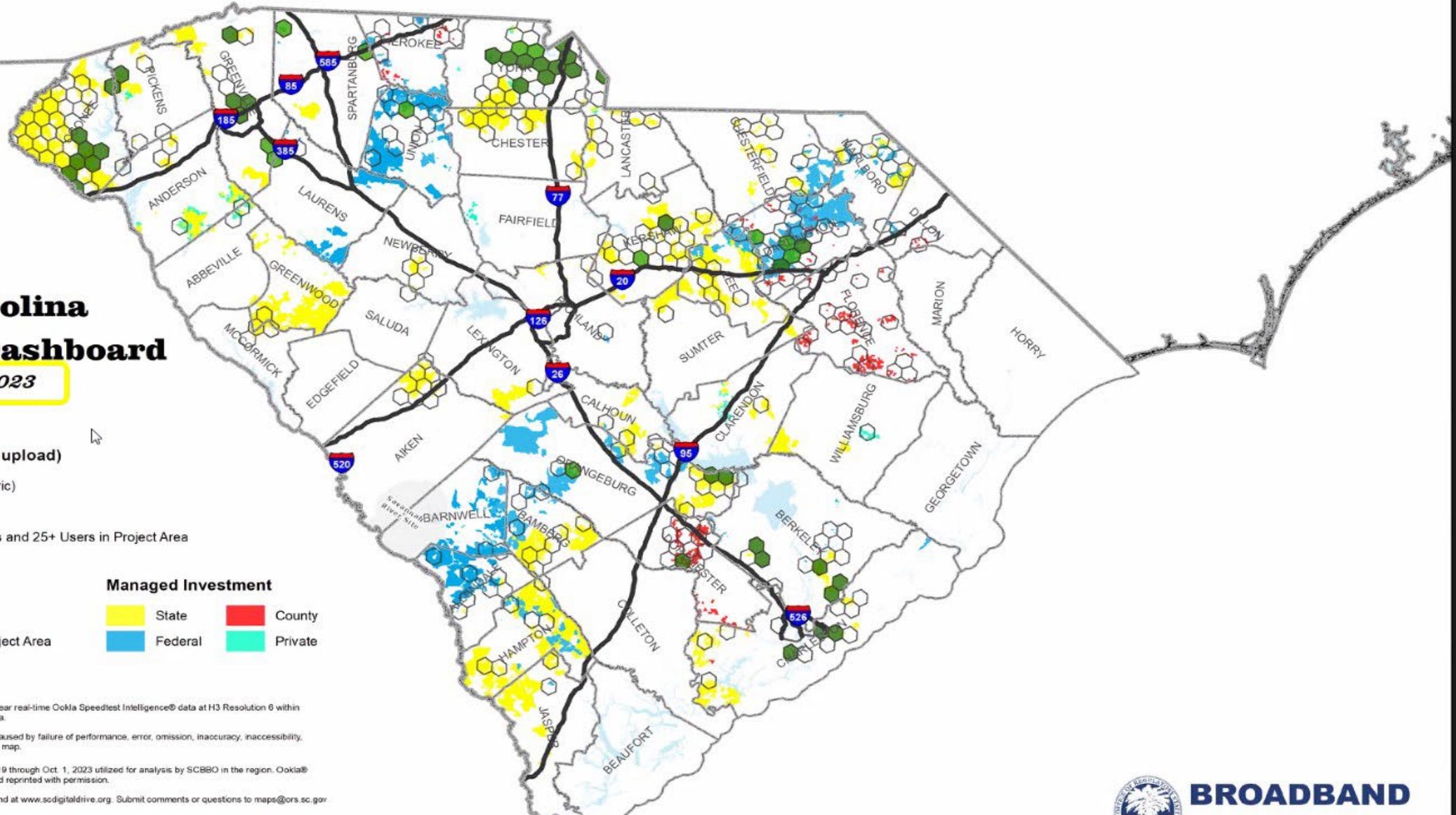
-   $\geq 100$  Mbps / 100 Mbps (symmetric)
  -   $\geq 100$  Mbps / 20 Mbps
- with 250+ Ookla Speedtest Results and 25+ Users in Project Area

### Construction Status

-  Network Live in Last 30 Days
-  1+ Ookla Speedtest Results in Project Area

### Managed Investment

-  State
-  County
-  Federal
-  Private



Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office (SCBBO) analysis of near real-time Ookla Speedtest Intelligence® data at H3 Resolution 6 within funded projects that are currently under construction in South Carolina.

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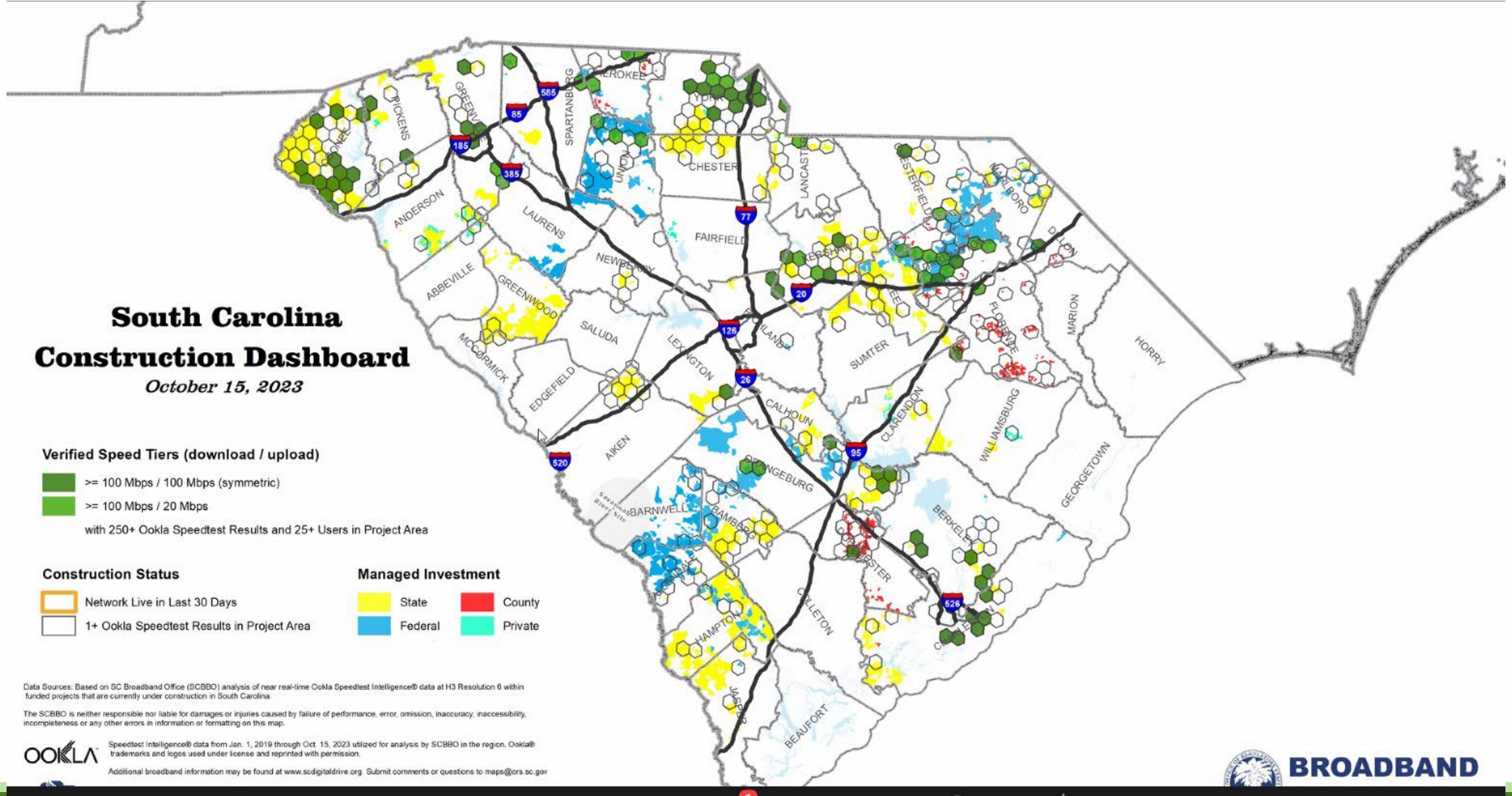
Ookla Speedtest Intelligence® data from Jan. 1, 2019 through Oct. 1, 2023 utilized for analysis by SCBBO in the region. Ookla® trademarks and logos used under license and reprinted with permission.

Additional broadband information may be found at [www.scdigitaldrive.org](http://www.scdigitaldrive.org). Submit comments or questions to [maps@ors.sc.gov](mailto:maps@ors.sc.gov)



**BROADBAND**

# Example 2 – 100 Mbps progress







# Example 3 – 100 Mbps progress

## South Carolina Construction Dashboard



December 17, 2023

### Verified Speed Tiers (download / upload)

-   $\geq 100$  Mbps / 100 Mbps (symmetric)
-   $\geq 100$  Mbps / 20 Mbps

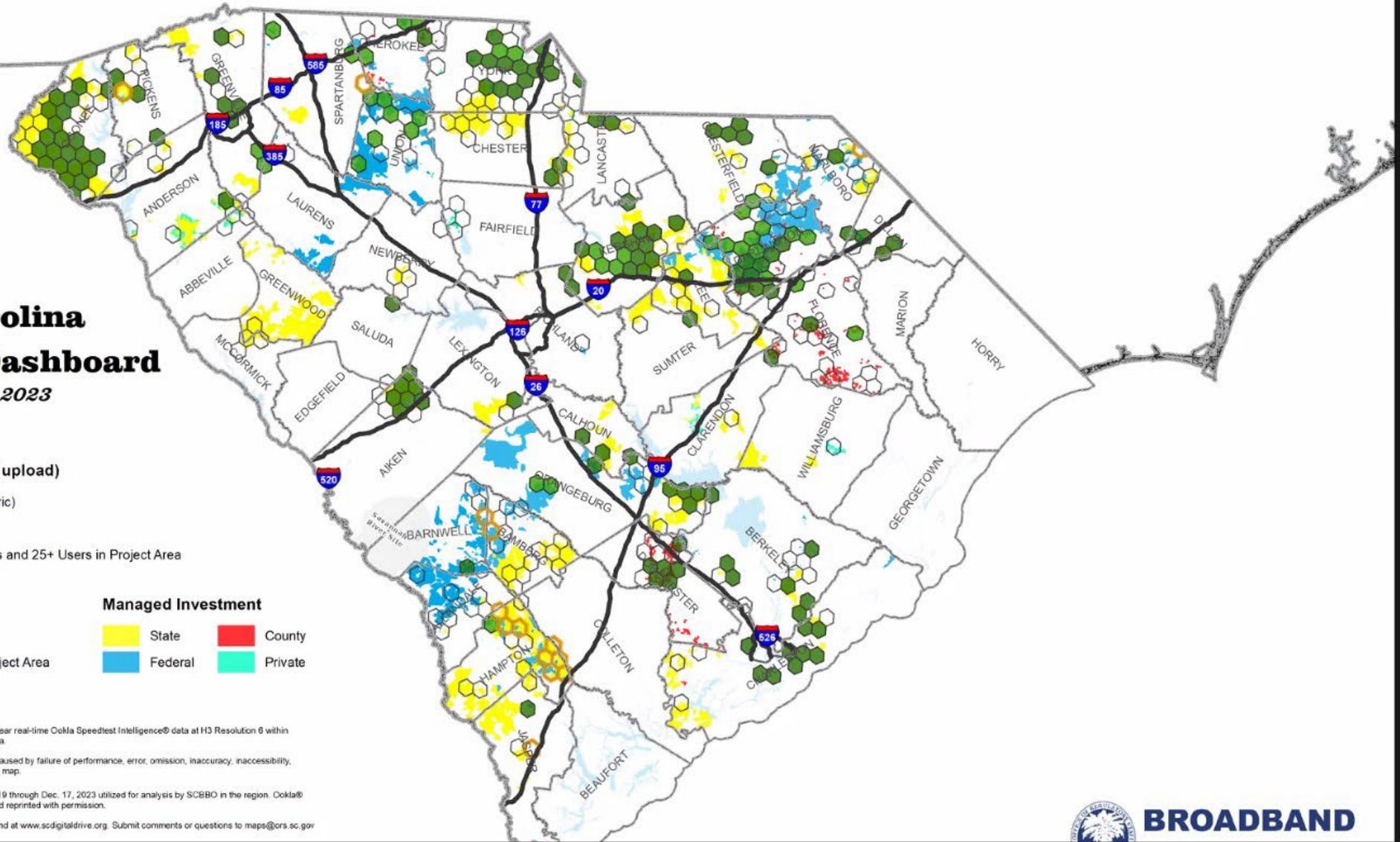
with 250+ Ookla Speedtest Results and 25+ Users in Project Area

### Construction Status

-  Network Live in Last 30 Days
-  1+ Ookla Speedtest Results in Project Area

### Managed Investment

-  State
-  Federal
-  County
-  Private



Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office (SCBBO) analysis of near real-time Ookla Speedtest Intelligence® data at H3 Resolution 6 within funded projects that are currently under construction in South Carolina

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**BROADBAND**



# Example 1 of an ISP area specific performance algorithm

## Oconee County South Carolina Construction Dashboard

September 30, 2023



### Verified Speed Tiers (download / upload)

- >= 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps (symmetric)
- >= 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps

with 50+ Ookla Speedtest Results and 15+ Users in Project Area

### Construction Status

- Network Live in Last 30 Days
- 1+ Ookla Speedtest Results in Project Area

### Managed Investment

- State
- County
- Federal
- Private

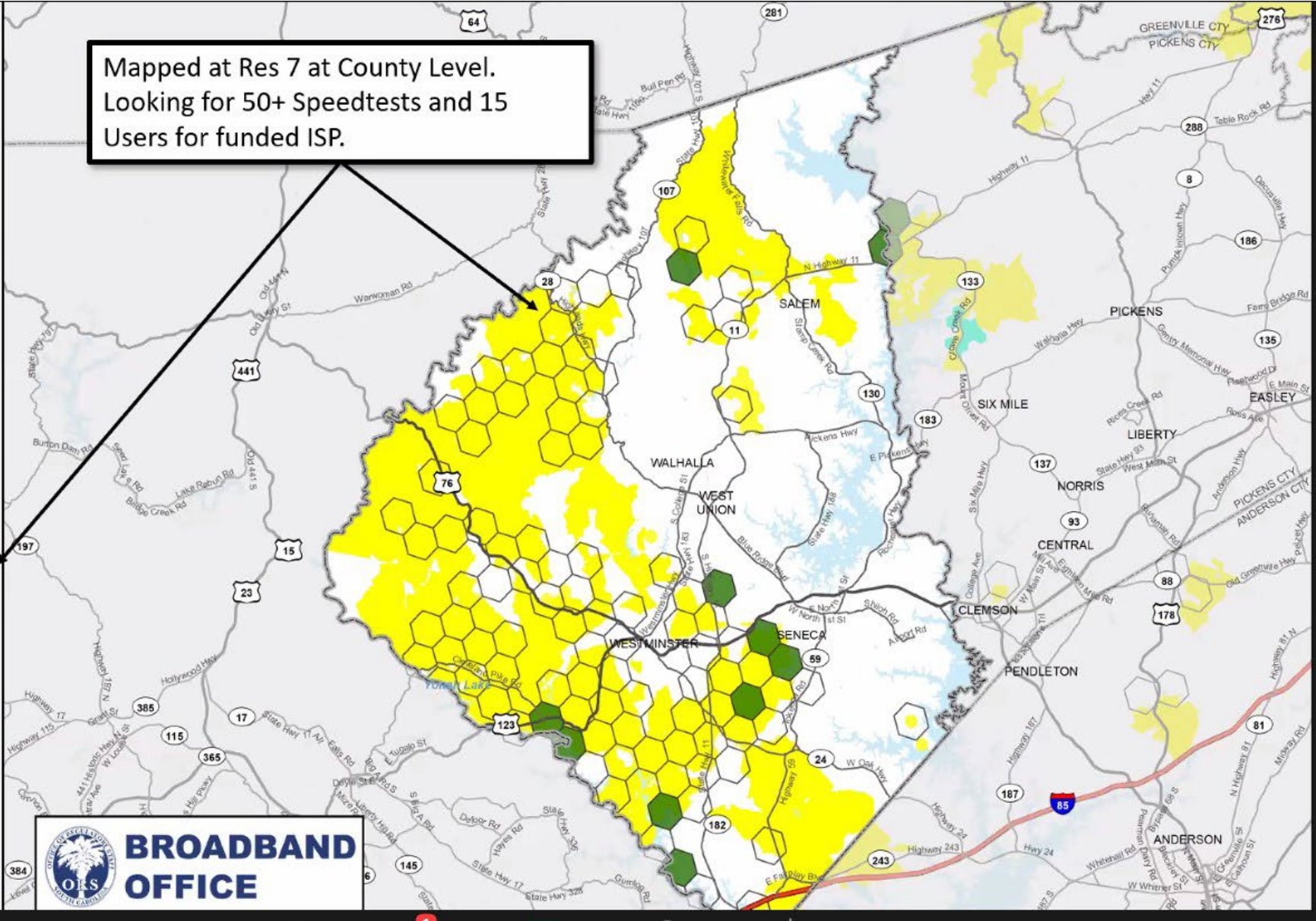
Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office (SCBBO) analysis of near real-time Ookla Speedtest Intelligence® data at H3 Resolution 7 within funded projects that are currently under construction in South Carolina.

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Speedtest Intelligence® data from Jan. 1, 2019 through Sep. 30, 2023 utilized for analysis by SCBBO in the region. Ookla® trademarks and logos used under license and reprinted with permission.



Mapped at Res 7 at County Level.  
Looking for 50+ Speedtests and 15  
Users for funded ISP.



# Example 2 of an ISP area specific performance algorithm

## Oconee County South Carolina Construction Dashboard

December 17, 2023



### Verified Speed Tiers (download / upload)

>= 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps (symmetric)

>= 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps

with 50+ Ookla Speedtest Results and 15+ Users in Project Area

### Construction Status

Network Live in Last 30 Days

1+ Ookla Speedtest Results in Project Area

### Managed Investment

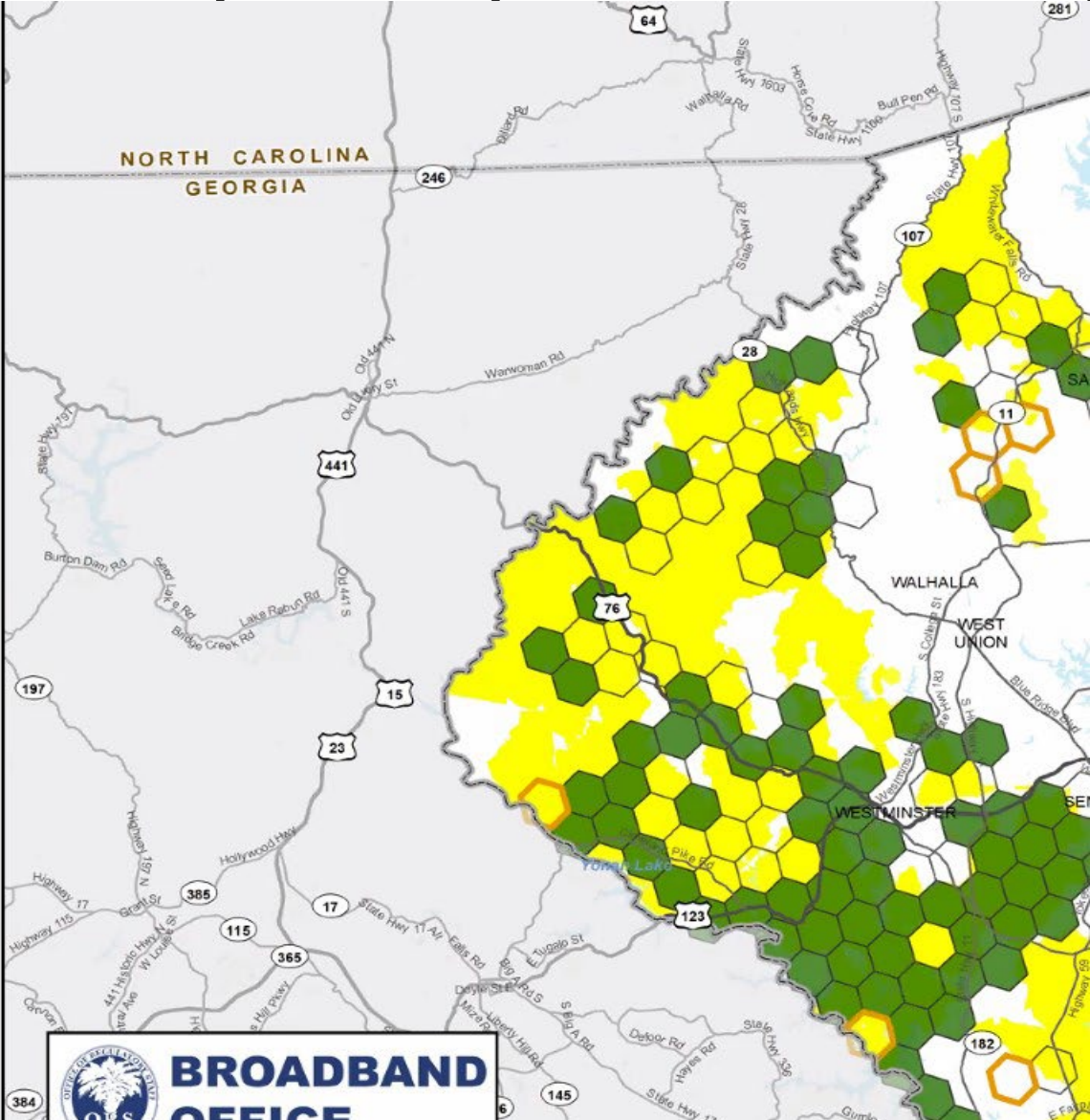
State  County

Federal  Private

Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office (SCBBO) analysis of near real-time Ookla Speedtest Intelligence® data at H3 Resolution 7 within funded projects that are currently under construction in South Carolina.

The SCBBO is neither responsible nor liable for damages or injuries caused by failure of performance, error, omission, inaccuracy, inaccessibility, incompleteness or any other errors in information or formatting on this map.

Speedtest Intelligence® data from Jan. 1, 2019 through Dec. 17, 2023

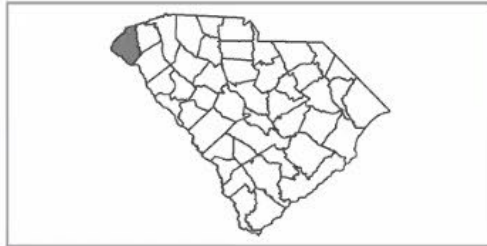




# Example 2 – ISP information

## Oconee County South Carolina Construction Dashboard

September 30, 2023



### Verified Speed Tiers (download / upload)

■ >= 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps (symmetric)

■ >= 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps

with 5+ Ookla Speedtest Results and 3+ Users in Project Area

### Construction Status

Network Live in Last 30 Days

1+ Ookla Speedtest Results in Project Area

### Managed Investment

■ State

■ County

■ Federal

■ Private

Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office (SCBBO) analysis of near real-time Ookla Speedtest Intelligence® data at H3 Resolution 8 within funded projects that are currently under construction in South Carolina.

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## **BEAD Subrecipient Support Grant Program- Funding** **Recommendations 2/12/24**

In 2023, the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) was awarded \$229 million in funding from the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. In an effort to promote a competitive program, the VCBB established the BEAD Subrecipient Support Program. The VCBB Board has approved \$1 million to provide needs-based grants to Eligible Providers to ensure they have the resources required to participate in the competitive BEAD grant program.

### **Goals of the Programs:**

- To ensure all types of Eligible Providers have the ability to compete in the BEAD program.
- To encourage collaboration among potential subgrantees to promote the efficient expenditure of grant funding. This can lower costs and promote greater oversight and accountability.
- To encourage planning in expectation of the subrecipient selection process raising the quality of applications received.
- To raise the caliber of the applications received during the BEAD subrecipient selection process.
- To gather information to inform the implementation of the program from key stakeholders.

### **Scoring of Proposals:**

- o 25 points – Likelihood of participating in the BEAD Program
- o 25 points – Extent of Barriers to participation (This can include new market entities, non-traditional entities, entities challenged to meet other BEAD Requirements)
- o 20 points – Proposed scope and budget
- o 10 points – Evidence of pursuing a collaborative approach or evidence of outreach to communities in the proposed service area
- o 10 points – Commitment to provide speeds of at least 100/100 Mbps via a Fiber Optic Connection, participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program, and agreement to meet Outside Plant Design Standards

o 10 points – Provision of required data in the appropriate format. Current Grantees are exempt since data has previously been submitted to the VCBB.

### **Scoring of Individual Proposals:**

- **CVFiber - \$145,600 (170/170 possible points)**  
Support will fund technical assistance, modeling, and application preparation. Technical assistance includes match analysis, legal analysis for potential consortium applications, and evaluating off-grid addresses not included in the original business plan.
- **NEKBroadband - \$200,000 (167.5/170 possible points)**  
Support will fund grant writing and strategy consulting. Technical assistance includes match analysis and adjust designs to account for off-grid addresses and building workforce capacity.
- **Maple Broadband - \$100,000 (164/170 possible points)**  
Support will include modification to the current network management partnership and a new legal agreement governing the obligations in the WCVT area of the territory in the event of a successful BEAD application. Maple will also pursue an analysis of match and audit of processes necessary to comply with BEAD.

### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends approving support via the Potential BEAD Subrecipient Support Grant Program for CVFiber, NEK Broadband, and Maple Broadband total \$445,600. The projects proposed meet the requirements outlined in the request for proposals. These include the likelihood of participation in BEAD, the presence of significant barriers to participation, among others. Additionally, most of the efforts proposed are ready to be executed (i.e. consultants identified). The program will fund modeling, application preparation, match analysis, legal analysis for partnerships and consortiums, and evaluating and updating plans to connect all BEAD eligible applications with fiber. These were the only three applications submitted for consideration at this time. (CVFiber - \$145,600; NEK Broadband - \$200,000; Maple Broadband - \$100,000)

Note – miles refer to pole miles

14	Planned	
15	Planned Expenditures	Quarterly
16	Planned 'Construction Miles Built' is completed construction for fiber routes that are ready to be tested and lit for	Monthly
17	Planned 'Construction Miles Lit' is total route miles where fiber is lit and service is available to customers	Monthly
18	Planned Total Number of Eligible Addresses With Access to Service	Monthly
19	Planned Total Number of Passings - Addresses With Access to Service	Monthly
20	Planned Passings Lit - cumulative total customers	Monthly
21	Actual	
22	Actual Expenditures	Monthly
23	Actual 'Construction Miles Built' is completed construction for fiber routes that are ready to be tested and lit for se	Monthly
24	Actual 'Construction Miles Lit' is total route miles where fiber is lit and service is available to customers	Monthly
25	Actual Total Number of Eligible Addresses With Access to Service	Monthly
26	Actual Number of Passings - Addresses With Access to Service	Monthly
27	Actual Passings Lit - cumulative total customers	Monthly

**Report to Staff Monthly  
Report to the Board Quarterly**

**Report to Staff Monthly  
Report to the Board Quarterly**

**Proposed Key Performance Measures for monitoring  
Grantees – VCBB Board Meeting – 01/08/24**

# 2023 VCBB Annual Report





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**Vermont Community Broadband Board**

**Annual Legislative Report**

Submitted to: Senate Committees on Finance and on Natural Resources and Energy, the House Committee on Energy and Technology, and the Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee

*30 VSA § 8089. ANNUAL REPORT (a) Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), on or before January 15 of each year, the Board shall submit a report of its activities pursuant to this chapter for the preceding year to the Senate Committees on Finance and on Natural Resources and Energy, the House Committee on Energy and Technology, and the Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee. The report shall include an operating and financial statement covering the Board’s operations during the year, including a summary of all grant awards and contracts and agreements entered into by the Board. In addition, the report shall include a description of the progress each start-up communications union district has made in achieving long-term financial sustainability that is not dependent upon public funding, an update on its efforts to secure additional federal funds for broadband deployment, and progress made towards meeting the State’s goal of ensuring every E-911 location has access to broadband capable of delivering a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrical service as required in subdivision 202c(b)(10) of this title.*

About the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)

**Mission Statement**

It is the purpose of the VCBB and Vermont Community Broadband Fund to support policies and programs designed to accelerate community efforts that advance the

State's goal of achieving universal access to reliable, high-quality, affordable, and fixed broadband. The VCBB was created to coordinate, facilitate, support, and accelerate the development and implementation of universal community broadband solutions.

## **Board Members**

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Herryn Herzog, Communications & Outreach Manager – [Herryn.Herzog@Vermont.gov](mailto:Herryn.Herzog@Vermont.gov)

Britaney Watson, Digital Equity Officer – [Britaney.Watson@Vermont.gov](mailto:Britaney.Watson@Vermont.gov)

Alexei Monsarrat, Rural Broadband Technical Assistance Specialist – [Alexei.Monsarrat@Vermont.gov](mailto:Alexei.Monsarrat@Vermont.gov)

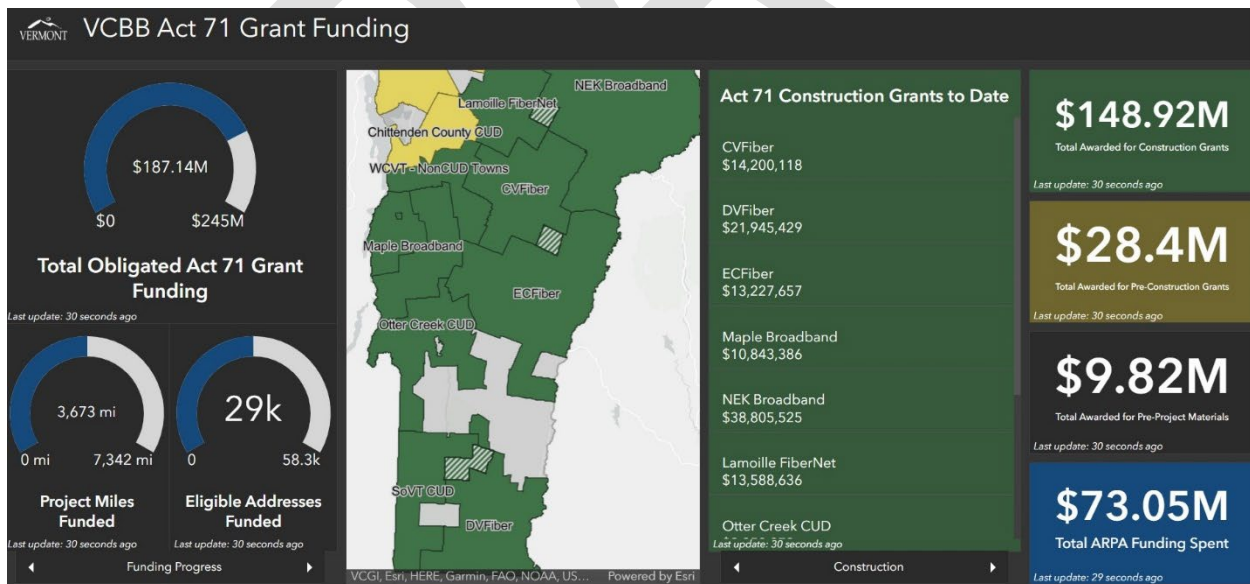
Lucie Fortier, Administrative Manager III – [Lucie.Fortier@Vermont.gov](mailto:Lucie.Fortier@Vermont.gov)

## **Executive Summary**

2023 was a year full of accomplishments. This report will show a snapshot of the progress VCBB made in fiscal year 2023, as well as where we are at the end of calendar year 2023, and our goals and next steps as we start 2024.

- Vermont is the only state committed to get fiber to every on-grid address. Fiber is future-proof and provides the greatest bandwidth, highest reliability and the lowest latency. Other states are falling back on wireless solutions. The topography and the extensive tree cover in Vermont does not allow for effective wireless solutions.

- Six out of ten CUDs are actively connecting previously underserved homes. Two CUDs held well-attended press events announcing their first customer connections, and several CUDs have significant numbers of customers requesting service. One CUD earned a bond rating based solely on the CUD's revenue from Standard and Poor's, a significant milestone in accessing capital markets.
- 800 miles have been built as of the end of the 2023 calendar year. That is approximately 15% of the total. Before construction started, detailed high-level design, budgeting, and make ready were completed.
- \$229 million federal allocation for BEAD. This is at least \$100 million more than was expected. The extra funds are due to the many challenges to the FCC National Broadband Map filed by Vermonters and VCBB staff.
- Submitted BEAD plans for approval. Vermont's BEAD Five-Year Action Plan was accepted by the NTIA. We are awaiting approval on the Initial Proposals Volume 1 and 2.
- Draft Digital Equity Plan out for public comment until January 8. More revisions of the plan will follow. It will be submitted to the NTIA for approval in March.
- Below is a summary of grant funding through the end of the 2023 calendar year:



Fiscal year 2023 started in July 2022 with the announcement of \$48.8 million in broadband construction grant awards to four of Vermont's Communications Union Districts (CUDs). \$26.5 million in additional grants were announced in October 2022 to two more CUDs and WCVT to serve underserved addresses that are not part of a CUD.

Also in October 2022, VCBP announced the expansion of the town match grant, in which VCBP matched town ARPA contributions to CUDs or eligible providers in towns not a part of a CUD up to \$100,000 for the buildout of broadband.

In November 2022, Chittenden County communities voted to form Vermont's tenth CUD. It started with five towns and has grown to include eight towns.

In December of 2022, VCBP issued a call to action, asking Vermonters to check the [FCC National Broadband Map](#) and challenge any incorrect data. This was of utmost importance because Vermont's allocation for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program depended on how many underserved locations are on the map. The map showed many more addresses as served than they actually were. Vermonters filed individual challenges, and VCBP staff filed bulk challenges.

In June of 2023, the White House announced the amount of BEAD funding for each state and territory. Vermont has been allocated \$229 million, which is up to \$100 million more than we were expecting, thanks to the thousands of addresses that were challenged.

During the summer of 2023, VCBP awarded \$58.9 million in construction grants to five CUDs to bring broadband to at least 13,000 previously underserved homes and businesses.

In May 2023, VCBP began working on Vermont's BEAD and Digital Equity Plans. We did extensive public outreach and engagement throughout the state and incorporated the feedback into the [BEAD Five-Year Action Plan](#), [Initial Proposal Volume 1](#), and [Initial Proposal Volume 2](#).

The BEAD Five-Year Action Plan was submitted to the NTIA in August 2023 and was accepted. The Initial Proposal Volume 1 was submitted to the NTIA in September 2023. We are awaiting final approval, at which time the state-led BEAD challenge process will start. Initial Proposal Volume 2 was submitted to the NTIA in November 2023. We are awaiting approval.

We currently have a [draft copy of Vermont's Digital Equity Plan](#) that was posted for public comment from December 1 through January 8. It will be submitted to the NTIA in February 2024 for approval. Implementation of the plan will follow approval.

Workforce development efforts continued through the fiscal and calendar year 2023. As of the end of 2023, we have trained trainers for our Broadband Installer Apprenticeship Program and are scheduling dates to start training participants. We have partnered with the Vermont Department of Labor, IBEW, Vermont Works for Women, and Vermont employers to ensure our program is successful.

One notable point of 2023 was a report from the State Auditor's office, [Universal Broadband in Vermont: Managing Risks](#), which identified risks that could compromise

the success of the buildout of broadband in Vermont. VCBP addressed each of the findings of the report and took action to ensure the continued success of our work.

## Accountability

In response to that report, the VCBP developed accountability policies. The Board decided on what policies were needed and divided into subcommittees to write them. They include affordability, annual report, construction standards, consumer standards certification, grantee agreement, liens, sunset provision, and untimely documents and agenda item changes.

### **Affordability and Low-Income Inclusivity**

The VCBP recognizes that the affordability of broadband service is as essential as physical access to broadband infrastructure to achieve universal broadband service and to meet the public purpose of the Act. The VCBP seeks to implement both universal service and affordable broadband service as required by the Act or as required by federal funding programs distributed by the VCBP. VCBP awards grants for the construction of broadband networks and provisioning of broadband service to all Vermont locations regardless of resident income or property value. The affordability of broadband service is dependent on the circumstances of each consumer and the deployment and service costs of each grantee. The legislature has directed the VCBP to balance the sustainability of the grant-funded network and the affordability of each grantee's service. Approved and funded network designs should therefore achieve universal service that provides broadband access to unserved and underserved locations, without regard to consumers' ability to afford service. In addition, the policy of the VCBP is to ensure grantees provide broadband service to locations that are the subject of the grant, with a range of business practices and service options that make broadband service financially available to as many Vermonters as reasonably possible without making operation of the network unsustainable.

### **Annual Report**

Within the scope of broadband funding available to and distributed by the VCBP, the VCBP is accountable for the delivery of universal broadband service in the State of Vermont and to otherwise meet the public purposes of the Act, by setting policy standards and issuing an annual report to the legislature. 30 VSA 8086(c); 8089(a). The VCBP seeks to ensure that the grants it awards are used to implement universal and reliable broadband service that is affordable as required by the Act, and to do so consistent with requirements of federal funding programs distributed by the VCBP.

The Annual Report policy of the VCBP seeks to set standards for accountability for itself and its grantees, including designating metrics that are periodically evaluated and analyzed to measure the success of funded efforts to meet the goals of the Act and the federal programs. The VCBP shares the obligation for accountability with the

Communications Union Districts, which are also accountable for performance by law. VCBB's accountability for the appropriate use of grant funds to deliver the required broadband service and operations extends also to non-municipal grantees, and to grant subrecipients and operators of grant-funded broadband infrastructure.

Transparency in the process and the purpose of the data is essential. Nevertheless, grantees are allowed to consider the route of proposed construction plans to be proprietary (with confidential disclosure to the VCBB) and individual customer addresses are confidential. The obligations of the VCBB must be clearly reflected in the metrics it reports. The terms of the grants under which the VCBB provides funding must clearly state grantees' obligations for data collection consistent with these metrics and timely reporting. Interim reporting may be required of grantees at the discretion of VCBB staff if required to protect the objectives of the program or the grant program from noncompliance.

This policy focuses on the metrics for each standard, the source and format of data, the period of reporting, and the party responsible for reporting.

### **Consumer Standards Certification**

The policy of the VCBB, to meet the public interest in consumer protection and service standards, is to require certification of each grantee annually that it meets the service conditions described in Subsection 348(b). The grantee receiving Community Broadband Funds, and any owner of assets paid for in part by such funds, shall certify to the Secretary of Administration, with copy to the VCBB or its designee, the terms and conditions of 3 VSA 348(b) for a period of 20 years from the date of the grant award.

### **Grantee Agreements**

To fulfill the VCBB's statutory obligation to establish policies, grant terms and grant conditions that establish a process for reviewing and developing remediation commitments when a grantee either fails to comply with grant conditions or gives an indication that it might not be able to comply with a grant condition soon based on normal grant review processes performed by the VCBB and its staff. The remediation process precedes, and attempts to avoid, progressing a grantee that has failed to meet grant conditions to be assessed under the Recoupment and Transfer of Ownership Policy.

### **Liens**

VCBB is created by statute to distribute funding and coordinate support to Vermont's CUDs and other internet service providers for the purpose of building and operating fiber networks for the distribution of broadband internet services in areas of Vermont where high-speed broadband is not otherwise available. The VCBB is authorized to, among other things, provide construction standards, set operating standards, and administer grants. The VCBB is charged to ensure accountability in distributing grants to

broadband providers, and whether the accountability and public broadband interest is served by requiring a lien (UCC 1) in favor of the VCBB.

Most of the funding distributed by the VCBB is used to pay for goods and services (not real estate) and derives from federal programs. Those federal programs carry an obligation for the grant recipient to hold title to the assets paid for with the federal funds, and to execute a lien in favor of the federal government if the assets are encumbered. The form of lien is not yet available for review but is anticipated to be in the form of a UCC 1, and to require that the federal government “share” any first position with a third-party lender. The lien is intended to provide notice to the public of the federal government’s public interest, the obligations of the grant, and the method of calculating the value of the federal interest in the assets if they are liquidated. The lien is narrowly ascribed to the funded assets. The VCBB is discussing the scope of the public interest in broadband that the Vermont legislature has entrusted to the VCBB to administer, and whether the scope of that interest overlaps with the federal interest.

### **Sunset Provision**

The VCBB is scheduled to sunset in 2029. This policy will recommend to the legislature how to continue to serve the purpose of Act 71 beyond this date. This will include the language needed in contracts to ensure on-going performance from grantees. Transfer of obligations to other state entities should first look to CUDs which are special purpose entities created by the state which will live on past Act 71 and to the courts for investments in regions not covered by a CUD. By 2029 all construction will be complete. The policy will address management of the assets that were created by the grant funds.

### **Construction Standards Policy**

The VCBB is to implement Universal Service as required by Act 71 by establishing policies and construction standards that adopt industry-accepted engineering standards, which promotes network reliability, resiliency, and interoperability. The intent of this policy is to provide Grantees construction and design guidance while supporting flexibility to meet network goals, business objectives, and in compliance with industry standards.

The objective, as outlined in the Act and summarized here, is to ensure at a minimum that:

- Any alternative operator can reasonably assume operation of the facilities and network without interruption, substantial cost, or effort. (8086 C.4)
- Ensures design and installation promotes network reliability, resiliency, and interoperability (8086 C.2)
- All performance measures meet the purchased service level and can deliver a minimum 100MB/100MB for subscribed customers (8086 F.1)
- Demonstrates utilization of available partnerships for cost effective broadband deployments (8086 B.1; 8086 B.6)



- Demonstrates sustainable usability and scalability for life of the installed asset for shared provider access and other public purposes (8086 B.7)

To meet these goals, VCBB intends to build fiber optic networks. While the definition of fixed broadband under the Act, as amended, includes retail service by wire or radio that delivers service at speeds of at least 100/100 Mbps, it is the policy of the VCBB to prioritize the funding of fiber networks that deliver 1/1 Gbps, use existing infrastructure, including the use of utility poles and power, in the public right of way, even though the cost of construction may be higher than other methods, in order to meet the Act's objective of providing the highest standard of connectivity speed, reliability, resilience and interoperability of broadband service. Nevertheless, radio fixed wireless, where it meets the VCBB's standards for accountability for the public interest, and including but not limited to affordability, reliability, resiliency, and interoperability, is an acceptable means of delivering broadband service as defined in the Act.

### **Untimely Documents and Agenda Item Changes Policy**

The VCBB shall avoid adding agenda items unless it is necessary and is consistent with the recommendations of the Vermont Secretary of State's Office (SOSO). The SASO cautions that "last-minute agenda items, especially those requiring Board action, be added at a meeting only in an emergency," and that the better practice is "to handle items that were not included on the posted agenda at the next regular meeting or, if necessary, to call a special meeting so that the public gets notice of the item and has an opportunity to attend and participate." The Open Meeting Law allows public notice "as soon as possible before the meeting" where an emergency meeting is necessary to respond to an "unforeseen occurrence or condition". 1 V.S.A. § 312(c)(3). Thus, a practice to limit the addition of agenda items to circumstances where it is necessary.

### **Affordability**

VCBB is researching and analyzing a variety of programs to ensure that all Vermonters will have access to broadband internet service regardless of income. This will be achieved by utilizing as much grant funding from BEAD and other sources combined with a comprehensive Digital Equity Plan to ensure the needs of all Vermonters are identified and addressed. Through the outreach and engagement, we did in preparing our BEAD and Digital Equity Plans, we've have received extensive feedback on affordability and access, and we're working to address both issues with various approaches.

The FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provides \$30 per month to households at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Currently we estimate there are 65,000 to 75,000 households in Vermont who qualify for ACP, but only 20,000 have enrolled in the ACP program to date. VCBB suggests that we utilize the Medicaid program or other social service agencies to register eligible households and manage

the distribution of vouchers and additional subsidies. PEW Foundation and the Brookings Institute are currently developing such a program at the federal level utilizing the Medicaid system to manage broadband registration and subsidy programs.

For very low-income households the VCBB recommends the state of Vermont consider a USF (Universal Service Fee) for all telecommunication subscriptions to subsidize the cost of broadband. Based on research conducted by the Benton Foundation, it is recommended that internet service fees be at or below 1% of gross monthly household income.

VCBB is also exploring additional funding sources and programs such as revenues generated by the new on-line gambling and Vermont Lottery to reduce and subsidize the cost of installation and equipment.

## Operating and Financial Statement

Below is the operating and financial statement for the VCBB for the State Fiscal Year 2023. *Please note that while the remainder of this document reports on achievements from calendar year 2023, the fiscal report represents the state fiscal year.*

The report outlines the fiscal expenditures made to achieve the policies, goals, and investment priorities for broadband infrastructure for the state fiscal year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. The funds came from the \$150 million appropriation that was committed by the legislature through Act 71 of 2021 (and appropriated through Act 74 of 2021, the FY23 state budget), and additional funds from Act 9 of 2021, the Covid-19 relief bill. Also included is the portion of the Universal Service Fund that has been committed to the VCBB. We also received new grants (BEAD Planning Grant, Digital Equity Planning Grant, and NBRC) which became effective during state fiscal year 2023.

VCBB Fiscal Year 2023 Revenues and Expenditures		
Revenues		
Funding Source	Total Awarded	SFY 2023 Expended
Universal Services Fund	827,945.16	1,952,882.12
BEAD Planning Grant	5,000,000	301,073.93
Digital Equity Planning Grant	518,154.20	48,737.82
NBRC	1,250,000	17,909.00
ARPA-SFR (Act 74)	150,000,000.00	45,120,214.87
H.315 (Act 9)	1,800,000.00	161,305.31
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 47,602,123.05</b>
Expenditures		
Personnel		876011.24
Board Costs		11000
Grants		45785065.90
Contracts		834165.12
Internal Service Fees		52928.29
Travel and Training		25275.68
Equipment and Software		11487.65
Supplies		1406.25
Misc Costs		4782.92
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 47,602,123.05</b>

## Grants

### Securing the Public Interest Through Shared Expertise and Services (SPISES) Program

As Vermont has accelerated the build-out phase of its community-owned broadband infrastructure, the VCBB recognized that there was a growing need for shared services across the Communications Union Districts (CUDs) for experienced experts who can guide implementation, transition to operations, compliance, and sustainability/growth. In an effort to provide for these needs, the Securing the Public Interest Through Shared Expertise and Services (SPISES) Program was created through funding provided by a grant from the Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC). This grant funding to the VCBB allowed a sub-grant to be executed with the Vermont Communications Union District Association (VCUDA) in the amount of \$1,219,763.17.

This SPISES grant award will provide seed funding to VCUDA to support functions that will increase its ability to support the CUDs. Eligible expenditures under this grant award include the funding of a shared financial expert, the costs of hiring a program coordinator, and additional capacity needs as approved by the VCBB. These specific

deliverables enjoy strong support from most CUDs, represent urgent and immediate needs, and are functions that are appropriately to be provided by VCUDA.

### **Act71 Preconstruction Grant Program**

As provided by Sec. § 8085 of Act 71, which became law on June 8, 2021, the purpose of the [Broadband Preconstruction Grant Program](#) is to provide grants to CUDs for preconstruction costs related to broadband projects that are a part of a universal service plan and meet other criteria as specified in Act 71. As provided by Sec. 2 § 8085 of Act 71, eligible costs include expenses for feasibility studies, business planning, pole data surveys, engineering and design, and make-ready work associated with the construction of broadband networks, including consultant, legal, and administrative expenses, and any other costs deemed appropriate by the Board.

Additional funds were added to the program for Implementation and Materials Costs. Each CUD has an allocation available to them for pre-purchase of materials under the Pre-Construction program, and additional funds beyond this allocation must be transferred into their Materials Supplement fund from their Construction Grant allocation.

### **Act71 Construction Grant Program**

As provided by § 8086 of Act 71, which became law on June 8, 2021, the purpose of the [Act 71 Broadband Construction Grant Program](#) is to provide grants to eligible entities to finance the broadband projects of eligible providers that are part of a Universal Service Plan. Service providers must achieve speeds of at least 100/100 Mbps symmetrical at all on-grid underserved and unserved locations within their Universal Service Plan.

Eligible applicants are (A) a Communications Union District (CUD), (B) a small communications carrier, or (C) an Internet service provider working in conjunction with a Communications Union District to expand broadband service to unserved and underserved locations as part of a plan to achieve universal broadband coverage in the District.

### **Town ARPA Match Program**

The VCBB agreed to match Town ARPA contributions Communications Union Districts and other small provider solicited from towns. The [Town ARPA Match Program](#) resulted

in the leveraging of over \$2.8M dollars in additions funds toward the construction of broadband networks.

### **Broadband Financing Program**

In 2020 the General Assembly appropriated \$1.5 million in general funds for the purpose of supporting the efforts of the CUDs to secure financing necessary to advance broadband projects. In fiscal year 2021 funds were appropriated from the general fund as follows: \$1.5 million to the Department of Public Service to be awarded as grants to CUDs. These grants were to be used to provide cash equity to secure loans to finance broadband projects including the ten percent of project costs required to secure financing through the Broadband Loan Expansion Program administered by the Vermont Economic Development Authority. A CUD could not receive more than \$400,000 in awards under this appropriation via this [Broadband Financing Program](#).

The chart below summarizes the Act 71 Preconstruction and Act 71 Construction grants that the VCBB has issued from its founding until December 31, 2023. Funding for both programs was provided by \$150 million in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds as part of the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in 2021 and an additional \$95 million from the ARPA Capital Funds Program appropriated to the VCBB by the General Assembly in 2022.

	Original Total Allocation	Pre-C Implementation Costs (Materials)	Shift to Construction	Match Program Allocation Shifts	TOTAL Allocation	Total Awarded as of 12/31/23	Remaining
<b>Act 71 Pre-Construction Project List</b>							
Maple Broadband	4,202,083	418,806	362,478		4,983,367	4,983,367.00	-
CVFiber	2,804,667	410,186	5,589,814		8,804,667	8,804,667.00	-
DVFiber	4,122,703	468,141	640,659		5,231,503	5,220,118.00	11,385.00
ECFiber	3,218,067	274,170			3,492,237	2,841,130.00	651,107.00
Lamoille Fibernet	2,563,363	281,652	-		2,845,015	2,563,362.53	281,652.47
NEK Broadband	6,670,000	1,353,915	-		8,023,915	8,023,915.00	-
NwFiberWorX	3,558,933	399,674	323,949		4,282,556	3,987,106.00	295,450.00
Otter Creek	1,705,442	203,605			1,909,047	1,349,936.17	559,110.83
Southern Vermont	854,742	189,851			1,044,593	-	1,044,593.00
Chittenden County	300,000	-			300,000	300,000.00	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,000,000</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>	<b>6,916,900</b>		<b>40,916,900</b>	<b>38,073,602</b>	<b>2,843,298.30</b>
<b>Act 71 Construction Project List</b>							
Maple Broadband	11,205,864		(362,478)	415,000	11,258,386	10,843,386	415,000
CVFiber	19,789,932		(5,589,814)	863,000	15,063,118	14,200,118	863,000
DVFiber	22,586,088		(640,659)	217,852	22,163,281	21,945,429	217,852
ECFiber	13,227,657				13,227,657	13,227,657	-
Lamoille Fibernet	13,588,636		-	225,900	13,814,536	13,588,636	225,900
NEK Broadband	65,321,385			816,334	66,137,719	38,805,525	27,332,194
NwFiberWorX	20,219,979		(323,949)		19,896,030	-	19,896,030
Otter Creek	9,971,393				9,971,393	9,952,273	19,120
Southern Vermont	9,159,571				9,159,571	9,009,085	150,486
Chittenden	1,635,369			50,000	1,685,369	-	1,685,369
Other Towns	6,343,700			(2,831,916)	3,511,784	-	3,511,784
wCVT	17,950,426			243,830	18,194,256	17,348,243	846,013
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>211,000,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(6,916,900)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>204,083,100</b>	<b>148,920,352</b>	<b>55,162,748</b>
<b>Total ARPA Grants</b>	<b>241,000,000</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>245,000,000</b>	<b>186,993,954</b>	<b>58,006,046</b>

The chart below summarizes the increase in grants under both the Act 71 Preconstruction and Act 71 Construction grants that the VCBB has issued from 6/30/23 to 12/31/23. Over \$59 million in new grant awards were approved by the Board during this time period.



	Total Awarded as of 6/30/23	Total Awarded as of 12/31/23	Change
<b>Act 71 Pre-Construction Project List</b>			
Maple Broadband	4,983,367.00	4,983,367.00	-
CVFiber	8,804,667.00	8,804,667.00	-
DVFiber	5,220,118.00	5,220,118.00	-
ECFiber	2,841,130.00	2,841,130.00	-
Lamoille Fibernet	1,622,057.53	2,563,362.53	941,305.00
NEK Broadband	8,023,915.00	8,023,915.00	-
NWFiberWorX	3,558,933.00	3,987,106.00	428,173.00
Otter Creek	441,000.00	1,349,936.17	908,936.17
Southern Vermont		-	-
Chittenden County	300,000.00	300,000.00	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35,795,188</b>	<b>38,073,602</b>	<b>2,278,414.17</b>
<b>Act 71 Construction Project List</b>			
Maple Broadband (includes Maple WCVT)	8,686,000	10,843,386	2,157,386.00
CVFiber	14,200,118	14,200,118	-
DVFiber	21,945,429	21,945,429	-
ECFiber	-	13,227,657	13,227,657.00
Lamoille Fibernet	-	13,588,636	13,588,636.00
NEK Broadband	20,865,889	38,805,525	17,939,636.00
NWFiberWorX	-	-	-
Otter Creek	-	9,952,273	9,952,273.00
Southern Vermont	9,009,085	9,009,085	-
Chittenden		-	-
Other Towns		-	-
WCVT-Non-CUD Towns	17,348,243	17,348,243	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92,054,764</b>	<b>148,920,352</b>	<b>56,865,588.00</b>

## CUD Finance Program

[NEK Broadband](#) is comprised of over 50 towns primarily in the Northeast Kingdom. On October 31, 2022, the Board voted to award \$400,000 to NEK Broadband from the Broadband Finance Program for the purpose of securing a loan from the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) to serve as the non-federal match for a roughly \$24 million grant from the USDA ReConnect Program. The Board recognizes that this grant will enable NEK Broadband to lower financing costs, leverage additional funding, accelerate the build-out of its universal service plan, and access the preferred financing source available at this time.

The \$400,000 grant will initially be used as a debt service reserve with VEDA and also allow NEK Broadband to borrow less from the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA). This, in turn, enables NEK to take advantage of an SBIC program lowering the interest rate by 1%. The Board also agrees that the financing offered by the VEDA program is the preferred source of funding for the match since the VEDA program does not require principal or interest payments for three years. Furthermore, if received, the \$24 million USDA ReConnect grant will cover most portions of northern Essex County, eastern Caledonia County, and eastern Orleans County. The density in these areas is less than 5 people per square mile and therefore requires supplemental grant funding support.

## Contracts/Agreements Entered into by the Board

### **GIS Services – Stone Environmental**

#### **Amount of Contract Amendment: \$200,000**

Purpose: The purpose of this contract amendment is to continue updating Vermont's Broadband Atlas and develop the necessary interactive GIS web applications to provide ongoing information status and capability to track progress updates for Act 71 Funding Programs. Turnover in staffing at the Public Service department required additional support from Stone for Vermont's Broadband Availability Map, and Stone Environmental completed the aggregation, processing, and analysis of Internet Service Provider data to identify availability of Internet service level across the state.

The scope of work was amended to prepare and submit modifications to reflect data that is not present in the National Broadband Map by working with state leaders to refine methodology for aligning Vermont's Broadband Map and the FCC Location Fabric to ensure all E-911 addresses are accurately included. Additionally, Stone prepared data for Vermont's BEAD Initial Proposal Eligible Location Classifications, including data compilation and aggregation to identify unserved locations, underserved locations, and Eligible CAIs using the most recently published National Broadband Map and developing the methodology, processing, and analysis of broadband service eligibility data to assist with Vermont's State-Led BEAD Challenge Process, creating a portal for challenge submissions, reviews, and final adjudication to finalize the BEAD eligibility dataset. This work is planned to continue through June, 30 2024.

### **Fiber Optics Engineer Services – CTC Energy and Technology**

#### **Amount of Contract Amendment: \$200,000**

Purpose: CTC Energy and Technology was the vendor selected in 2022 to review and evaluate Act 71 Construction Grant Applications including applicants' business plans, universal service plans, reports, drawings, and calculations. CTC provides expert advice to the VCBB Governing Board that identifies key questions to ask applicants, confirms compliance with Outside Plant Design Standards and best practices for resilient and

redundant networks, and provides recommendations for improvement. This contractor provides resources to support the application process, monitoring, and reporting to ensure accountability and efficient technical assistance to grantees pursuing the phased approach plans outlined in the Act 71 Broadband Construction Grant Program RFP. This Contract and the review and suggestions provided ensure the effective use of existing state assets and compliance with Outside Plant Design Standards set by the VCBB, among other goals established by Act 71. The contractor also examines plans collectively to ensure the resulting statewide network follows good design practices and provides an assessment of notable issues and/or concerns to the Board.

### **BEAD & Digital Equity Plans & NTIA Proposals – Vernonburg**

**Amount of Contract: \$895,720**

The subject matter of this contract is to assist the VCBB in the development of Vermont's Internet for All Plans and proposals for federal funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The Contractor works at the direction of the VCBB to provide strategic program development services, research and data analysis, community outreach and engagement, and writing services to facilitate the development of Vermont's 5-Year BEAD and State Digital Equity Plans and Vermont's Initial Proposal for funding under the BEAD Program that meet the requirements set forth by the NTIA Internet for All Programs.

### **Rural Innovations/RISI**

RISI provided the VCBB will an analysis of rules and requirements detailed in the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Notice of Funding. The analysis examined whether there were any conflicts between Vermont's broadband expansion strategy and the BEAD program, outstanding questions that required clarification from the NTIA, and strategies to explore when crafting Vermont's program.

Amount: \$15,000

### **IceMiller/Qualified Ventures**

Ice Miller and Qualified Ventures provides strategic advice to the VCBB regarding funding and financing. This included drafting a proposal to the Treasure's Local Investment Program to fund a Letter of Credit to enable public entities to participate in the BEAD program. The proposal was not considered due to the July flooding disaster. IceMiller also provided introductions to other potential funding sources for the Communications Union Districts and affordability efforts.

Amount: \$17,909

### **Well Told Films – 7/24/23**

Amount: \$35,000

Purpose: This contract is to shoot, produce, and edit high-quality videos for outreach and marketing purposes. This included working with VCBB staff on pre-production to develop the creative concept and script, shooting interviews and B-roll at various locations across the state, and producing and editing into a final 30- minute documentary and a shorter form outreach video. The contract also includes shooting, producing, and editing a shorter video for marketing for the Workforce Development Plan Apprenticeship Program, which will include shooting at locations where the job training program is taking place.

## CUD Update

### **CVFiber**

CVFiber put out an RFP for private funding and received four interested responses. Full responses are due January 9, 2024. It is our expectation that CVFiber will receive up to \$13 million in private funding to work through the 2024 construction season in advance of the allocation of BEAD funding. CVFiber retained NRTC to develop a business plan in June of 2022 and is in the process of updating the plan and business model based on what was learned during its first construction season in 2023. CVFiber based its ARPU and long-term business plan on the anticipated take rates and construction pace, as well as materials costs and market conditions.

CVFiber has investigated and continues to investigate Reconnect and other federal funding opportunities with its retained financial analysis partner NRTC.

CVFiber built 202 miles of fiber during its first construction season in 2023, which reflects 1,563 passings. CVFiber connected 56 customers in 2023. It continues to press forward with an aggressive winter installation schedule in partnership with Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom and continues constructing in five of its twenty member towns.

### **Northwest FiberworX**

Northwest FiberworX has secured its partnership with GWI for network operations and ISP services. Under the agreement Northwest has a guaranteed revenue share, creating long-term financial sustainability. Northwest is seeking to apply in early 2024 for Act 71 Construction and BEAD funding.

### **ECFiber**

During 2023 EC fiber completed its original mission of bringing broadband to all locations in its original 23 town footprint and began work on building out in three of the eight new towns that added in 2020.

This year our \$7.5 million bond received a BB rating from Standard & Poor's Global Credit arm. This represents the first time any CUD has secured a municipal revenue bond backed only by revenues of the system (rather than by the taxing power of the



entity, guarantee of exclusivity, etc.) The rating demonstrates that our model of bringing broadband to rural Vermont is recognized, not only by our customers, but also by financial markets.

### **Otter Creek**

OCCUD has recently been awarded and has signed a pre-construction grant agreement which provides funding to work on development of financial sustainability and operational plans for the future of OCCUD. OCCUD has just posted a Request for Proposals for an executive director to carry out this task.

A significant area of the OCCUD territory, consisting of ~1420 unserved addresses, will now be served by an ISP with E-ACAM federal funding. This recently approved plan allows OCCUD to build the rest of its territory with the currently awarded VCBB construction grant and even reduces and amends the grant request by a significant amount (close to \$1.5 million).

OCCUD is planning for high-speed broadband service to be available to all of its underserved addresses in 2024. (Some outliers may have service available in early 2025).

OCCUD now has two established ILEC providers offering high-speed broadband services to previously unserved addresses in our CUD area. The ILEC provider funded through the VCBB grant is scheduled to begin construction in June 2024, with plans to release the system for sales in November 2024 Surveys. Detailed engineering and procurement activities are slated to take place January to May 2024. Meanwhile, the ILEC not funded by the VCBB grant is currently in the process of building their network and will continue construction throughout 2024, aiming to serve most, if not all, addresses by the end of the year.

### **Southern Vermont CUD**

The Southern Vermont CUD (SoVT CUD) Board is currently working on identifying the ongoing organizational requirements and funding model for sustainability. The SoVT CUD is not currently seeking additional federal funds for broadband deployment.

The SoVT CUD has completed its planned construction program (Stages 1 and 2), making fiber broadband service up to 2Gb symmetrical available to over 99% of eligible locations. The CUD has identified 17 remaining eligible, unserved locations and is currently working on identifying viable strategies for service at these locations. This Stage 3 effort will be a focus of work for the SoVT CUD Board in 2024.

### **Chittenden County CUD**

The CCCUD is looking to form a public/private partnership with one or more ISPs to deliver high speed internet service to the unserved and underserved sites in its district and ensure compliance with the public funding it is awarded for this purpose.

The CCCUD is still considering whether additional federal funding will be necessary and if it will be in line with its business plan. The CCCUD finalized an RFP for internet service providers, which was released on December 8, 2023.

### **Maple Broadband**

Maple Broadband launched active service in February 2023. Our revenue from services was just over \$70,000 through the end of November, and our projected revenues for 2024 are over \$500,000. Take rate in the first areas to launch was over 27% in under one year of service, exceeding business plan projections. The first step in financial sustainability is to show customer demand and demonstrate traction.

At present there are nearly 150 active customers and another 250+ in the installation pipeline across the Phase 1 build area, which is projected to be completed in early 2024.

Maple Broadband conducted exploratory calls with multiple financial institutions in 2023 either individually or through VCUDA, including VEDA, Municipal Capital Markets, Key Bank, PFM, Connect Humanity, Mayfair Capital, and Post Road. We are currently refining our financial modeling in order to determine the exact amount of private funding that we anticipate will be necessary, presuming that we are successful in our BEAD application, and our 2024 budget calls for obtaining \$3 million of private funding in Q4 2024.

At the end of 2023, Maple Broadband had active service across 103.7 miles and 1,259 passings. 1,041 of those passings had service speeds less than 100/20 when construction began in late 2022.

### **Lamoille FiberNet**

In 2023, Lamoille FiberNet assigned a task force to develop a Sustainability Plan, which will include governance, compliance oversight, budgeting, and strategic planning. Because LFCUD's CCI partnership does not include revenue sharing, the task force will explore alternative funding opportunities. The committee's first progress report is expected at the February 2024 Governing Board meeting, with a final report and recommendations in Q4 2024.

LFCUD's 2024 Plan includes designing and securing funding for Phase 2. In addition to maximizing available ARPA funding, LFCUD is exploring BEAD grants and USDA funding. Although not deployment per se, LFCUD also anticipates participating in digital equity and adoption programs, whether state, federal, or privately funded.

LFCUD secured VCBB grant and private funding to fully-fund and construct Phase 1 (86%- 4,170 of unserved and underserved addresses). Our construction schedule anticipates completing Phase 1 by December 2024.

LFCUD's 2024 Plan includes designing and securing funding for Phase 2 during 2024, with construction completion by December 2025. Phase 2 is equal to or less than 633 addresses or 80 miles, and when finished will achieve our universal service plan for on-grid addresses in LFCUD's footprint. Based on investments by other providers and updated serviceability information, LFCUD is confident its Phase 2 will be smaller in scope and cost than currently anticipated.

## **DVFiber**

Over the past year, DVFiber has successfully initiated the construction of its network and has begun connecting customers. We have constructed and lit more than 60 miles of our network which passes more than 500 locations. The receipt of customer revenue and ongoing construction to expand our network are milestone steps towards long-term financial viability and independence from public funds.

DVFiber has applied for other federal funds, namely the Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program. We continue to research and actively pursue additional federal programs, such as BEAD and USDA, that may be applicable to this project.

DVFiber's currently constructed network, which is capable of providing at least 100/100 Mbps service, passes more than 370 un/underserved locations in Readsboro and Stamford.

## **NEK Broadband**

NEK Broadband gained significant traction, capacity, and results in its monumental task of getting fiber internet to all the unserved and underserved households in Essex, Orleans, and Caledonia counties and the town of Wolcott in Lamoille County. We expanded our network in the Concord, Lunenburg area to include most of Waterford, and then launched new areas in parts of Lyndon, St. Johnsbury, Wheelock, Walden, Danville, and Kirby. As of the end of 2023 NEK Broadband had constructed fiber optic infrastructure to serve just over 200 miles of roadway servicing over 2000 premises. We doubled our number of customers and now 179 households and businesses enjoy fast, reliable internet service. To build capacity, we added a second construction contractor, some key staff positions, and we now have three warehouses in Danville, St. Johnsbury, and Brighton. On the horizon are network activation in parts of Peacham, Barnet, Sutton, Lowell, Irasburg, Westfield, Troy, and Newport Town, as well as additional areas of Walden, Concord, and Lunenburg. Stories of customer elation in finally having reliable, fast internet inspire us to keep picking up speed as we dive into 2024.

In addition to the \$65 million allocated under the Construction Fund, and the \$8 million under the PreConstruction Fund, NEK Broadband has secured an additional \$17,463,911 from a USDA Rural Utilities Service ReConnect 4 grant and a \$5,821,304 loan from the Vermont Economic Development Authority to be used as match for the

ReConnect grant. NEK Broadband has participated in national level conversation providing testimony to members of the U.S. Senate, speaking at national conferences, and participating in a coalition that was instrumental in helping reduce the letter of credit requirements under BEAD. NEK Broadband continues to identify other potential funding sources such as applying for USDA Community Connect, leveraging wholesale agreements with RDOF participants, and preparing for a substantive BEAD application.

NEK Broadband's universal service plan calls for up to 2,800 miles of fiber optic infrastructure. We have designed roughly 50% of those miles; put in make-ready applications for over 1,000 miles, and secured permits for nearly 500 miles. Service is about more than just having access; it is also about affordability. In addition to participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), NEK Broadband has started a digital equity program that provides an additional \$25 discount per ACP participant.

## Next Steps

### **\$20 Million in BAA**

\$30 million was set aside for VCBB to use as match for a federal grant program in last year's Budget Adjustment Act (BAA). After the flooding in July 2023, \$20 million of that was borrowed to go to flood relief efforts. That \$20 million is currently in this year's BAA and is expected to be voted on in the House Appropriations Committee this week.

The return of that money is critical for VCBB in order to have enough money for match for the BEAD Program. Vermont was allocated \$229 million dollars for the program. It requires a 25% match, which equals \$57.25. VCBB has other potential funds to draw from to contribute to the match, but they are less certain. Being able to rely on having at least \$30 million from the state is crucial for us to get to \$57.25 million for match.

### **Funding Nontraditional Drops**

VCBB is working on solutions to fund nontraditional drops including drops to long driveways (greater than 400 ft), to manufactured home communities, and underground utilities.

### **Bridge Funding**

Another next step for VCBB is ensuring bridge funding to keep the crews that are working on building broadband infrastructure working through any possible gaps in funding. This would ensure the work continues to progress and avoid costs associated with stopping and restarting work, which is complicated by worker shortages. It also keeps revenue coming into the CUDs.

### **Affordability Program**

Universal service is central to our mission. In order to achieve that, service needs to be affordable for all Vermonters. The Digital Equity Plan aims to achieve that, and VCBB



continues to explore additional ideas and potential programs to ensure affordability. See the Affordability section on page 8.

DRAFT

#	Priority	Item	Date entered	Assigned to	Resolution and date
51		Application scoring criteria policy	11/13/23	Staff	Awaiting approval from the NTIA.
35	1	Patty Richards to lead the Board in a response to the auditor's report	04/10/23	Dan Nelson/Christine Hallquist	Completed response, Currently awaiting finalization of Board Policies.
37	1	Develop Construction Standards <sup>1</sup>	07/18/23	Holly Groschner/Christine Hallquist	Submitting for approval at 2/22/2024 meeting
38	1	Annual Report Submission List <sup>2</sup>	07/18/23	Christine Hallquist	Included in the Board Policy that will be submitted for approval at the 2/22/2024 meeting
39	1	Develop Grantee agreement that VCBB will operate the system in the event of failure to comply	07/18/23	Christine Hallquist	This will follow the Lien policy that is being revised.
40	1	Develop Lien for the VCBB funded network and components <sup>3</sup>	07/18/23	Patty Richards/Christine Hallquist	Policy is in revision
41	1	Policy for certification of Grantee compliance to Performance and Operating Standards	07/18/23	Christine Hallquist	Key Performance Indicators to be presented to the Board for approval at the 02/12/24 meeting. Further discussion is needed.
48		Policy development Timeline, if needed	11/13/23	Patty	Complete

<sup>1</sup> Include open architecture policy, safety, reporting process on compliance and detailed description for each attribute. Staff process required for compliance to Board policy.

<sup>2</sup> Identify all criteria, including how to address affordability, geographic diversity, Universal Service, operating standards, and reliability. Staff process required for compliance to Board policy.

<sup>3</sup> Include sunset provision for the Lien

47		Process for Approval of Working Group Policy drafts	11/13/23	Rob V/ Patty	Complete
44		Letters/memos to House and Senate Appropriations Committees		Christine Hallquist	Complete
42	1	Produce an overlay of the BEAD and ARPA timelines and the grant request timelines in the upcoming work of the Board.	09/11/23	Board	Complete
49		Develop an RFP for Government Affairs to bring on someone prior to January 01, 2024 and determine funding source	11/13/23	Staff	Completed
43	1	Propose strategy for Government Affairs	09/11/23	Christine	Completed- Government Affairs contractor hired – will tailor strategy suited for individual committees
45		Revise September 11 meeting minutes	11/13/23	Staff/	December meeting
46		Create folder on VCBB website for Board Policies, starting with Ex parte Communications	11/13/23	Patty Richards	Patty sent memo to Board members
36	1	Determine what restrictions exist for ex parte communications	07/18/23	CH	Passed policy at 09/11/23 meeting
26	1	Establish policy to address issue of enforceability with any of the partners and the CUDs.	8/22/22	CH	Policy discussion to be held at 4/10/23 meeting. This is now part of the Board Policy discussions related to the Auditor's report.
29		Include placeholder for budget update, dashboards, and policy	11/03/22	CH	Budget and Dashboards addressed at January and February Board Meetings

		and goals discussion to all Board Meeting Agendas			Christine will confirm with Patty what Board expectations are for the policy and goals discussion
24	1	Invite to the Federal Delegation to future Board Meeting	8/8/22	CH	Delegation will be invited to the January Board meeting
22	3	VCBB's approach to mapping and strategy for challenging the FCC.	6/14/22		Presented initial strategy 12/12/22. A Federal Program Officer at the NTIA will be needed to work on this with and that has finally been announced as Clay Purvis from the Public Service Department. He will be invited to January meeting.
28		Finalize subsequent overbuild policy and data policy.	10/31/22		This is addressed in the VCBB Data and Overbuild Policy submitted to the Board for continued discussion at the 12/12/22 meeting.
32		Alignment of VCBB Mission Statement based on Act 71	11/14/22	CH	Patty Richards to lead this 12/12/22.
25	2	Host workshop for the CUDs on Uniform Guidance	8/8/22		Completed December 7th
30		Adjust timing of Board Packet to at least 5 business days before the Board Meeting	11/03/22		Plan to start new schedule in January
33		Create a Communication Procedure Plan for Board notifications of updates from Staff (press releases, legislative presentations,	11/14/22		Completed in the November 28 Board meeting.
34		Discussion regarding development of a separate website			Staff recommends we continue with the current website which follows state protocols.

27		Board requested that a grant agreement template be shared	10/31/22	CH	Item closed – agreement was shared
23	1	Define audit criteria and post award grant reporting and review process for grantees/CUDs	8/8/22	CH	Item Closed - Compliance Recommendation Memo presented October 31 <sup>st</sup> . Additional reporting requirements will be shared once the new form is updated and staff will create a dashboard for tracking.
18	1	Signature Authority of Executive Director	03/28/22	CH	Closed. Approved in July.
19	1	Policy around hiring staff	03/28/22	CH	Closed. Approved in July.
21	1	Invite to Doug Farnum to future Board Meeting	6/14/22	CH	Attended August 8 <sup>th</sup> meeting.
20	3	Recommendation for designation of an entity for Digital Equity & Affordability Office	03/28/22	board	Closed. This is being addressed by the Governor's office per a directive from the NTIA. This falls into the responsibility of the VCBB as a subset of the IJA program.
8	2	Policy on "Material Default" see §8086(c)(2)	11/1/21	CH	Closed. Issue has been resolved through legislation.
5	3	VCBB Dashboard – to be shared monthly to show progress. What are the milestones?	11/1/21	CH	Closed. Stone Environmental has presented its proposal and the software platform meets the needs.
16	1	Provide Board with impact of Commitment letter	02/14/22	CH	Closed with material pre-purchasing proposal.
17	2	Statewide marketing collaboration with VCUDA	02/14/22	CH	Closed. VCUDA is not interested.
15	2	Provide Benchmarks for what telecom companies spend on Marketing	02/14/22	CH	Will research and present back on 3/14/22 Board meeting
1	1	Budget	10/18/21	CH	Completed. 2021 budget approved. 2022 will be presented in March.



2	1	Overbuild – what is the standard (20% of total served?)	11/1/21	CH	Completed. See Construction RFP Definition
3	2	Business Plans – what is the scope? Will they be updated before construction grants?	11/1/21	CH	Completed. The updated business plans will be included in the Construction RFP responses.
6	3	Fiber purchase – VCBB involvement? authorization? Status?	11/1/21	board	Completed
7	1	Make Ready Construction – policy: part of §8085 grants or not?	11/1/21	RF	Policy established. Make ready construction will be part of the construction grant program.
9	2	Revisiting timeline for VCBB – construction RFP & reporting timelines	11/22/21	CH	Completed. Part of the construction RFP. RFP approved by the Board on 01/03/22
10	2	Sequence assumptions for preconstruction and construction & reporting timelines	11/22/21	CH& board (LS)	Completed. Part of the Construction RFP. RFP approved by the Board on 01/03/22
11	2	DPS 2021 Map – Unserved	11/1/21	CH/Legal	Completed
12	1	Confidentiality. Grant Agreement Art 5 (state standard). Is the product of a grant a “public document” – e.g. will we post construction plans?	11/1/21	Board LS/HG	The RFP and construction schedules will be public.
13	2	USP & contiguous CUD construction- policy	11/22/21		Completed. Addressed in the Construction RFP.
14		Legislative Consideration – Purchase of consolidated services/goods	11/29/21		Not needed.