



**Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VERMONT ONE STEP CLOSER TO UNLOCKING \$229 MILLION FEDERAL FUNDS**

**The State's BEAD Initial Proposal Has Been Approved**

**Montpelier, Vermont** – Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) is proud to announce that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has approved Vermont's Initial Proposal for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, which describes Vermont's plans to use \$229 million allocated to the state. This funding is key to finishing the work of ensuring every Vermonter has access to high speed and reliable broadband.

The Initial Proposal outlines the process Vermont will use to select the Internet Service Providers who will receive BEAD money to build out unserved and underserved addresses and details the requirements these providers must meet to be eligible for funding. With this approval, Vermont can move from the planning phase to the action phase. It enables the state to request access to funding and begin implementation of the BEAD program.

“High-speed internet must be treated as a fundamental and essential public utility for everyone,” said Senator Bernie Sanders. “It is central to the basic functions of families, students and businesses; access to health care depends on it; small businesses cannot exist without it. Yet too many people in our state lack access to an internet connection or cannot afford the options available. I am pleased that, with this approval, we will begin to provide quality broadband to working families and hard-to-reach pockets of Vermont that have gone without internet for too long. I look forward to seeing the remainder of this historic federal investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which was passed in the Senate in August 2021, bring affordable internet to every corner of our state.”

“High-speed Internet isn’t a luxury, it’s a necessity. But right now, there are more than 33,000 homes, small businesses and farms in Vermont that don’t have access to a high-speed connection and are being left behind in the digital transformation. Thanks to the work of the Biden-Harris Administration and Congress’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – which I was proud to help pass – Vermont is on its way to accessing nearly \$230 million to build out broadband across the state. This will connect rural communities and ensure all Vermonters have access to the technology, skills and tools needed to participate in today’s digital economy,” said Senator Peter Welch. “Today’s announcement by the NTIA and the Department of Commerce is welcome and exciting news and is a step forward in our coordinated effort to get Vermont connected.”

“We thank the NTIA, Vermont’s Congressional Delegation, Governor Phil Scott, Commissioner Tierney, the VCBB Board, and the hundreds of Vermonters who have volunteered countless hours to get us to this point. These volunteers helped the VCBB incorporate the values of Vermont communities into the work and improved the quality of Vermont’s BEAD Initial Proposal. Vermont is already connecting underserved Vermonters every day, and Vermont is working to bridge the digital divide. With this approval, the VCBB is taking the next step with confidence that the BEAD funding will get Vermont to the goal of getting Vermonters to the access they need to get connected to broadband,” said VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist.

The BEAD program is a \$42.45 billion state grant program authorized by the Biden-Harris Administration’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The states, territories and Washington D.C. are being allocated funding to deploy or upgrade high-speed Internet networks to ensure that everyone has access to reliable, affordable, high-speed Internet service. Once deployment goals are met, any remaining funding can be used on high-speed Internet adoption, training, and workforce development efforts, among other eligible uses.

BEAD-eligible entities—the 56 states, territories, and the District of Columbia—are required to submit for NTIA’s approval an Initial Proposal detailing how they plan to spend their BEAD allocation to deliver high-speed Internet access to all unserved and underserved locations within their borders.

One year from Initial Proposal approval, states must submit a Final Proposal that details, among other things, the outcome of the subgrantee selection process and how the state will ensure universal coverage.

You can watch today’s official announcement by Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Alan Davidson, who was joined by Vermont Public Service Department Commissioner June Tierney and VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist, on our website [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program | Department of Public Service \(vermont.gov\)](#).

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