



**Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)**

112 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05620-2601

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VERMONT COMMUNITY BROADBAND BOARD ANNOUNCES STATE KICKOFF OF DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN**

**Montpelier, Vermont** –The Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) is kicking off a project to develop Vermont’s digital equity plan to bridge the digital divide and ensure all Vermonters have access to affordable broadband as well as the knowledge and equipment to use it.

“This is Vermont’s opportunity to build out broadband and do it right, and we want to hear from you. We are asking for your input and ideas on how we can ensure digital equity for all Vermonters so our investments benefit everyone in our state,” said Governor Phil Scott.

The effort is part of the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program and Digital Equity Act, which will distribute more than \$45 billion nationwide to expand high-speed Internet by funding planning, infrastructure deployment, mapping, adoption programs, and promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all.

“In 2023 Broadband is essential for public safety, education, economic development, health care, workforce development, agriculture, and fighting climate change. We want all Vermonters to have the connection, resources, and skills to be able to participate fully. This work is an important step toward that goal,” said VCBB Chair Patty Richards.

The federal government requires states to engage with and reach out to people who are affected by the digital divide when planning their programs. Over the next few months, the VCBB will be calling for input from all Vermonters and specifically members of the following populations: aging people, those with household incomes below 150% of the federal poverty level, people with a language barrier, people living in rural areas, veterans, incarcerated people, members of a racial or ethnic minority group, people with disabilities, tribal populations, LGBTQ+ people, unhoused people, and migrant farmworkers.

“Our mission is to improve the lives of every Vermonter. Universal broadband connectivity is a critical part of our world today. But without a plan to bridge the digital divide, many Vermonters would be left behind,” said VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist.

The VCBB will have representatives at various public events over the next few months and will also be holding listening sessions in locations across Vermont. If you would like to share your experience with internet access, the digital divide, and/or have ideas about how to ensure digital equity, you can email your comments to [vcbb.info@vermont.gov](mailto:vcbb.info@vermont.gov), write to VCBB, 112 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620, or call (800) 622-4496. You can find this and more information on our website, [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program and Digital Equity Act | Department of Public Service \(vermont.gov\)](#). More information about specific events will be coming soon.

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