



Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)

112 State Street

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

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**VERMONT COMMUNITY BROADBAND BOARD AWARDS ALMOST \$60 MILLION
IN GRANTS TO FUND VERMONT'S BROADBAND BUILDOUT**

Montpelier, Vermont –The Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) has awarded \$58.9 million in grants to Vermont's Communications Union Districts (CUDs) this summer. The construction grants were approved to expand broadband in five different CUDs across the state, bringing broadband to at least 13,000 currently underserved homes and businesses.

"Continuing our progress to build out high speed broadband remains a top priority in Vermont," said Governor Phil Scott. "Closing the digital divide is key to growing our rural economy and taking full advantage of the modern marketplace. I want to thank the VCBB and their partners for their ongoing work."

"Getting connected to high-speed broadband is key to supporting the growth and development of rural communities – it's a necessity of today's digital economy, not a luxury. I'm thankful for the work the Vermont Community Broadband Board is doing to support broadband buildout in rural Vermont and will continue to fight for more funding to expand these grants in our state and across America," said Sen. Peter Welch.

"Narrowing the digital divide takes significant investment, especially in our most rural communities. Without reliable broadband access, communities are left without access to jobs, education, health care, and so much more. Grants like these ensure no Vermonter gets left behind by providing high speed internet access to all," said Congresswoman Becca Balint.

The most recent grants were approved earlier this month. They include a \$13.59 million grant to Lamoille FiberNet. "Approval of our grant means that by the end of 2024, almost all the unserved or underserved homes and businesses in our CUD will have access to super-fast fiber," said Jeff Tilton, Waterville resident and chair of Lamoille FiberNet CUD. "We are grateful the VCBB appreciated the merits of our plan, and we are very excited to start building. We chose Fidium Fiber because it is the best option in

terms of affordability and sustainability, and Fidium committed to bringing fiber to our communities much sooner and with less cost than the other options we explored.”

“I’ve long supported funding for Broadband in the Legislature. It’s great to see that money now going out to underserved rural areas in grants like this. Broadband has become critical to the economic and social well-being of everyone,” said Sen. Richard Westman, Lamoille County.

Also this month VCBB approved a \$9.95 million grant to Otter Creek. “This grant will enable over 2000 previously underserved locations to have access to high-speed fiber broadband service by the end of 2024. Otter Creek’s partnership with Fidum Fiber ensures that materials and labor are readily available for our project which translates to swift construction of the fiber network in the Rutland County area. We are thrilled that our constituents will soon have access to some of the lowest cost high-speed internet services in Vermont,” said Laura Black, Otter Creek CUD Governing Board Chair.

ECFiber was awarded a \$13.23 million grant in August. “ECFiber looks forward to spending this money as quickly as possible and getting our 1 Gig service to folks in the northern part of our district, the same way thousands of Vermonters have been enjoying our 1 Gig service for more than a year. We hope to win additional ARPA-backed grants from the VCBB as more of that money becomes available,” said F.X. Flinn, ECFiber Governing Board Chair.

In July VCBB approved \$17.94 million in additional funds to NEK Broadband and \$2.16 million in additional funds to Maple Broadband. “We are now up to eight out of ten CUDs that are in construction. That, along with our work in digital equity, is fast-tracking our progress toward getting all Vermonters connected and bridging the digital divide,” said VCBB Executive Director Christine Hallquist.

Act 71 established the Broadband Construction Grant Program in 2021 to provide grants to finance the broadband projects of eligible providers that are part of a Universal Service Plan. A Universal Service Plan is a plan for providing each on-grid unserved and underserved location in a Communications Union District or in a municipality that is not part of a Communications Union District, access to broadband service capable of speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload. Funding for the grants comes from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to cover construction costs (materials, equipment, labor) related to broadband projects.

More information is available at [Act 71 Broadband Construction Grant Program | Department of Public Service \(vermont.gov\)](#).

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