

# PENNSYLVANIA NEWSLETTER

Pittsburgh, PA

## Important Statewide Updates

### [PA Broadband Development Authority Approves Five-Year Plan to Expand Access Across the State](#)

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA) Executive Director Brandon Carson published the five-year action plan to expand internet access across the Commonwealth using \$1.16 billion in funding through the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. Governor Josh Shapiro recently announced the Commonwealth's BEAD allocation as part of President Biden's "Internet for All" initiative. Shaped by feedback from Pennsylvanians, the BEAD five-year action plan is now in the queue for National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) approval.

### [More Money, More Problems for National Broadband Expansion](#)

A federal broadband expansion program triggers similar complaints across the country: red tape and labor shortages make the process daunting, even by bureaucratic standards, and many worry about the logistics of such a massive undertaking. At a summit hosted by the National Conference of State Legislatures on August 14th, officials highlighted artificial barriers set up by the federal Broadband Equity Access and Deployment program, or BEAD, which provides \$42.5 billion in federal cash to states.

### [Money, Labor Central to Pennsylvania Broadband Expansion](#)

Pennsylvania's action plan was recently adopted by the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority, an entity created through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The plan details efforts needed to make high-speed Internet available universally in five years' time, recognizing that expanding broadband Internet access across the rural reaches of Pennsylvania requires billions of dollars and thousands of workers.

# Important Statewide Updates

## What State Broadband Offices Are Focused on Now: BEAD Initial Proposals and More

The \$42.5 billion Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program is officially underway, and the NTIA has announced how much BEAD funding will be allocated to each of the 50 states. What are state broadband offices doing now? The answer varies from state to state, but one thing they all have in common is that Volume 1 and Volume 2 of their initial proposals are due December 27, 2023. Once NTIA approves a state's proposal, the state will get 20% of its BEAD funding.

## Obstacles abound as Pa. plans for surge of federal broadband funding

In the coming years, Pennsylvania will receive more than \$1 billion in federal funding to bring high-speed internet access to everyone in the state. It's a historic opportunity and a serious challenge, according to a new plan from the state Broadband Development Authority that outlines how it will accomplish that goal over the next five years. Here are five obstacles Pennsylvania will have to navigate as it spends the money, according to the authority's plan

## Big Money, Labor Central to Broadband Buildout in Pennsylvania

As it stands, local governments, including regional collaboratives, are encouraged to partner with internet service providers and others to initiate and complete a buildout. It will be a huge undertaking. All told, more than 116,000 workers making up more than 38,000 crews will be needed to expand wired and wireless internet infrastructure as the plan envisions.





# PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITIES IN THE NEWS

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## The Group Developing Plans to Expand Internet Reach in Pennsylvania is Looking for Public Input in Lehigh Valley

Whether you have a poor Internet connection or a good one, the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority wants to hear from you. It will hold a public meeting at **6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 30th**, at the Fowler Center, 511 E. Third Street, in Bethlehem. The PBDA is developing plans to supply broadband service to unserved and underserved areas while supporting digital skills enhancement.

## Clearfield County: Pennsylvania State Broadband Authority Seeking Local Feedback for Broadband Infrastructure Project

The Pennsylvania State Broadband Authority (PSBA) is asking for local government feedback for Broadband Infrastructure Project (BIP) grant applications that may impact the area. The local government feedback period opens Aug. 23 and closes in early October. To assist local municipalities with preparing feedback, the Clearfield County Commissioners will hold a series of forums to review the various project applications that have been submitted to PSBA, discuss the potential impact for citizens and address questions to the best of their ability.

## Clearfield County: Pennsylvania State Broadband Authority Seeking Local Feedback for Broadband Infrastructure Project

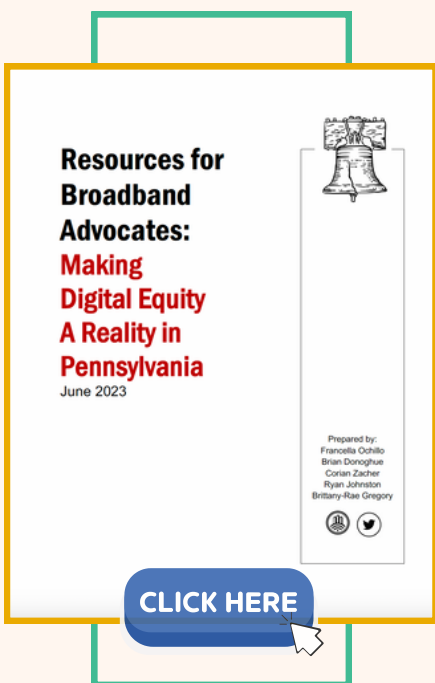
Badly needed cell phone and Internet coverage in Broad Top Township may be coming to the municipality and surrounding areas of northeastern Bedford County. The topic was one of several discussed at the August session of the township supervisors held in Defiance, a community within Broad Top. During the meeting, township secretary Stacy Woomer announced that the township received a notice from the state Department of Community and Economic Development stating that the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority announced that a public comment period has been set up, seeking comments about the Commonwealth's Broadband Equity, Access and Development plan release.

# NEXT CENTURY CITIES IN

# Pennsylvania

Since 2021, Next Century Cities has worked to equip local leaders in Pennsylvania with pathways to make digital equity a reality in their communities. As one of the only organizations of its kind nationwide, NCC keeps local governments and community leaders informed of changes in the broadband landscape while creating opportunities for them to tell their own impact stories in the federal and state proceedings where broadband programs are made.

## NCC elevates local leadership.



NCC creates opportunities for communities to participate in broadband decision-making. You may see NCC staff at **conferences**, **sponsoring local leaders**, or **hosting broadband events** that bring local, state, and federal policymakers together. NCC is also uniquely focused on developing educational resources and platforms that promote peer learning and equip people to advocate for themselves.

For example, NCC creates **talking points** and **funding explainers** that enable concerned residents to start conversations with their elected officials about chronic digital divides. When local officials wanted to ensure that Pennsylvania's Digital Equity Plan and the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment reflected community-based needs, they reached out to NCC. We created a **proposal** to address concerns from several municipalities, including Philadelphia and members of the statewide digital equity coalition.

## NCC started a movement. We still need you.

Almost two years since we started planting digital equity seeds in the Commonwealth, the landscape is starting to change. NCC has supported PBDA's **broadband listening tour** and other **conferences** where state and federal officials finally recognize the importance of developing broadband programs with — not only for — communities.

We still have so much work to do. Share your stories. Use our microphone. Tell us how we can help your community get closer to its digital equity goals. Email Brian Donoghue, NCC's Deputy Director, at **brian@nextcenturycities.org** with news or requests.

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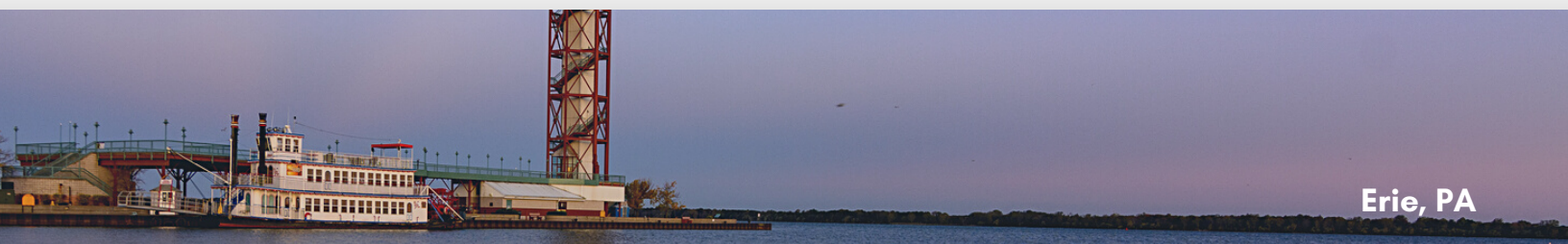
# Building Smart, Equitable, and Sustainable 21st Century Cities

**REGISTER TODAY**

Local officials and community leaders should email [info@nextcenturycities](mailto:info@nextcenturycities) for free registration.



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2023 NEWSLETTER HERE**