

**Nebraska Information Technology Commission  
Community Council  
Monday, September 26, 2022  
9:30 A.M. CT – 11:00 A.M. CT  
Nebraska Public Service Commission Hearing Room  
1200 N Street, Suite 300  
Lincoln, NE 68508,**

Zoom Videoconferencing –E-mail [anne.byers@nebraska.gov](mailto:anne.byers@nebraska.gov) for connection information

**Tentative Agenda**

9:30	Roll Call Notice of Posting of Agenda Notice of Nebraska Open Meetings Act Posting <b>Review and Approve</b> <a href="#">March 14, 2022</a> minutes* Public Comment
9:35	<b>Membership*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pam Adams has resigned</li> <li>• Connie Hancock has retired--Jason Tuller is interested in representing University of Nebraska Extension</li> <li>• David Young is no longer with the City of Lincoln.</li> <li>• Nichole Reiner is no longer with DED.</li> </ul>
9:45	<b>Updates--Broadband Funding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadband Bridge Program</li> <li>• ARPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Capital Projects Fund</li> </ul> </li> <li>• IJA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Middle Mile</li> <li>○ Broadband Equity Access and Deployment</li> <li>○ State Digital Equity Planning Grant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10:30	<b>Discussion of how the NITC Community Council can support federally funded state broadband efforts</b>
10:45	<b>Action items for the State Technology Plan</b>
10:55	<b>Other Updates</b>
11:00	<b>Adjourn</b>

\*Denotes action item.

[Nebraska Open Meetings Act](#) | [Community Council Meeting Documents](#)

The Community Council will attempt to adhere to the sequence of the published agenda, but reserves the right to adjust the order and timing of items and may elect to take action on any of the items listed.

Meeting announcement was posted on the Nebraska Public Meeting website on Sept. 1, 2022 and Rural Broadband Task Force website on Sept. 2, 2022. The agenda was posted on Sept. 20, 2022.

**Nebraska Information Technology Commission  
Community Council  
Monday, March 14, 2022  
1:30 P.M. CT  
Nebraska Public Service Commission, Hearing Room  
1200 N Street, Suite 300  
Lincoln, NE 68508**

**Zoom videoconferencing was also available.**

*The meeting was held as a virtual meeting of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission conducted pursuant to Neb. Exec. Order No. 21-02 (<http://govdocs.nebraska.gov/docs/pilot/pubs/eofiles/21-02.pdf>).*

## **MINUTES**

### **ROLL CALL, NOTICE OF POSTING OF AGENDA, NOTICE OF NEBRASKA OPEN MEETINGS ACT POSTING**

**Members Present:** Jay Anderson, Rod Armstrong, Charlotte Narjes for Connie Hancock, Johnathan Hladik, Rick Nelson, Nichole Reiner, Judy Peterson, Mary Ridder, Debora Robertson, Danny Rockhill, Holly Woldt.

**Members Absent:** Chris Anderson, Randy Bretz, Karen Connell, Meghan McGown, Mehmet Can Vuran.

The meeting was called to order by Rod Armstrong at 1:30 p.m. Seven members were present in person and four were present via Zoom. The chair determined that this meeting would be an official videoconferencing meeting. A quorum was present.

Meeting notices were posted on the Public Meeting and NITC websites on March 4, 2022. The agenda was posted on the NITC website on March 7, 2022. A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available on the wall.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **APPROVAL OF April 1, 2021 and October 25, 2021 MINUTES**

Judy Petersen made a motion to approve the April 1, 2021 and October 25, 2021 minutes. Mary Ridder seconded the motion.

**Roll call vote: J. Anderson-Yes, Armstrong-Yes, Charlotte Narjes for Connie Hancock-Yes, Hladik-Yes, Nelson-Yes, Petersen-Yes, Reiner-Yes, Mary Ridder-Yes, Robertson-Yes, Rockhill-Yes, Woldt-Yes. Results: Yes-11, No-0, Abstained-0. Motion carried.**

### **Membership**

Pam Adams has accepted a position with a company based in Iowa and has resigned. David Young is no longer with the City of Lincoln. He is now with NIFA. Rod Armstrong asked Anne Byers to identify nominees to fill these positions.

## UPDATES

**PSC And Broadband Bridge Program Update.** Cullen Robbins reported that the Nebraska Public Service Commission recently awarded \$19.2 million in funding to 61 projects to connect 12,634 locations in the Nebraska Broadband Bridge program's first grant cycle. The PSC has opened a docket seeking comments on adjustments to improve the administration of the Nebraska Broadband Bridge program. A hearing is scheduled on March 22.

**Rural Broadband Task Force Update.** Anne Byers reported that the Rural Broadband Task Force submitted its 2021 report in late October. The report included findings and recommendations from the task force's Agriculture Subcommittee on the broadband needs of farmers and ranchers in Nebraska.

**Federal Broadband Funding.** Anne Byers reported that Nebraska is expected to receive more than \$200 million for broadband deployment and broadband-related projects and at least \$7.5 million for digital equity planning and implementation projects from the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

- Nebraska is expected to receive \$128.7 million from the American Rescue Plan Act's Capital Projects Fund for broadband deployment, digital equity, or community facilities which enable work, education and health monitoring.
- Nebraska is expected to receive a minimum of \$100 million from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program. In order to receive BEAD implementation funds, states must first develop a broadband plan.
- States can also receive a minimum of \$300,000 through the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program Planning Grant program to develop a digital equity plan with the opportunity to apply for a minimum of \$7.2 million in implementation funding over 5 years through the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program.

A table summarizing federal broadband funding sources and a tentative timeline for distribution of the funds was included in the meeting materials.

**Legislative Update.** LB 1144 would make adjustments to the Broadband Bridge Program, including reducing the match required for projects in high cost areas to 25%. The committee amendment to LB 1144 inserted amended versions of several other broadband bills. The committee amendment would also authorize the PSC to develop a broadband map and would create a precision ag infrastructure grant program.

**Library Updates.** Holly Woldt reported that she has been working with several libraries to go through the RFP process to procure a fiber connection using E-Rate Special Construction matching funds. Tom Rolfes has also been working with several libraries to go through the Network Nebraska RFP process. The deadline for applications for the E-Rate Special Construction Fund is March 22. A small number of libraries will likely complete applications. Some librarians reported not having time to go through the process because they were busy with special projects funded by ARPA. Sixteen libraries may be impacted by the first round of Broadband Bridge Grants. Holly Woldt has been contacting libraries in communities receiving grant funding. Judy Petersen asked for more information on the program that she could share with others in her region.

**NROC Broadband Event.** Judy Petersen gave an update on the March 21 broadband conference. Nearly 200 people have registered so far. Several members indicated that they had registered and were planning to attend. The conference will kick off regional planning efforts by the state's economic development districts.

## NEXT STEPS

Since the State of Nebraska will be required to develop a 5-year broadband deployment action plan and a digital inclusion plan in order to receive federal broadband funding through the BEAD program and the

State Digital Equity Capacity Grants program, Anne Byers suggested that the Community Council could help support the expected planning efforts by updating outreach materials and by participating in the broadband deployment and digital equity planning efforts. She has interviewed Doc Winger, Tom Shoemaker and Tonya Mayer for updated case studies or a lessons learned document. She also started an update of a quiz which was included in a 2014 broadband planning workbook. The quiz can be used to start discussions about broadband in a community or region. Jay Anderson, Judy Petersen, Charlotte Narjes and Nichole Reiner volunteered to help revise the quiz. Nichole Reiner shared that her last day with the Department of Economic development will be April 8. She would be willing to help as a private citizen.

Anne Byers said that the NITC will be updating the statewide technology plan including action items by all of the commission's advisory groups. She recommended having the Community Council's action plans focus on developing outreach materials and supporting planning efforts. She also recommended drafting the action plans later after more is known about the administration of the funding.

Judy Petersen made a motion to adjourn. Jay Anderson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. CT.

**Community Council Members**

*ANDERSON, CHRIS*

City of Central City

*ANDERSON, JAY*

NebraskaLink

*ARMSTRONG, ROD*

Armstrong Enterprises

*Bretz, Randy*

*CONNELL, KAREN*

Columbus Public Library

*TBD*

Alt. NARJES, CHARLOTTE

*HLADIK, JOHNATHAN*

Center for Rural Affairs

*McGown, Meghan*

*RICK NELSON*

Custer Public Power District and Nebraska Rural Electric Association

*REINER, NICOLE*

Dept of Economic Dev

*PETERSON, JUDY*

Central Neb Econ. Dev. District

*RIDDER, MARY*

Alt. Cullen Robbins

Public Service Commission

*ROBERTSON, DEBORA*

Kilgore Public Library, York

*ROCKHILL, DANNY*

Bankfirst

*CAN VURAN, MEHMET*

University of Nebraska

*WOLDT, HOLLY*

Alt. Sam Shaw

*VACANT – Pam Adams resigned*

*VACANT—David Young is at NIFA*

## Connect Nebraska Broadband Initiative

*"A connected Nebraska—especially in our rural areas—is essential for us to grow in our state."*  
—Governor Pete Ricketts

[broadband.Nebraska.gov](http://broadband.Nebraska.gov)

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## Connect Nebraska Working Group

The Connect Nebraska Working Group, comprised of staff members from the State Budget Office, Governor's Policy Research Office, Nebraska Public Service Commission, and the Nebraska Information Technology Commission/Office of the CIO is coordinating all federally funded broadband programs.

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## Middle Mile Grant Program

<b>Funding Agency:</b>	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
<b>Program Established By:</b>	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
<b>Funding Available:</b>	\$980,000,000
<b>Purpose:</b>	Middle mile infrastructure grants
<b>Application Deadline:</b>	Sept. 30, 2022
<b>Eligible applicants:</b>	Telecommunications providers, others
<b>Expected award range:</b>	\$5,000,000 to \$100,000,000
<b>Match required:</b>	30%
<b>Expected award date:</b>	March 2023

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## Middle Mile Grant Program

Nebraska applicants should submit a completed Nebraska Middle Mile Coordination Form [by Sept. 23, 2022](#).

The form is available for download at:  
<https://broadband.nebraska.gov/MiddleMileGrantProgram>

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## Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program

<b>Program Established By:</b>	Nebraska Legislature, LB 388, 2021; updated provisions in LB 1144, 2022.
<b>Amount Appropriated:</b>	\$20 million annually beginning in fiscal year 2021-22
<b>Purpose:</b>	Broadband deployment projects in unserved or underserved areas.
<b>Application Deadline:</b>	July 1, 2022 (2022 Round)
<b>Expected Award Date:</b>	December 6, 2022 (2022 Round)

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## Broadband Bridge Program

- Program started after Nebraska Legislature approved it in 2021
- Requires:
  - 100/100 Mbps Speeds
  - At least 25% match (50% in Year 1)
  - Prioritizes Unserved over Underserved

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## Broadband Bridge Program

Additional details:

- Applicants have to show that they are capable of providing the service – demonstrated history.
- Applicants have to provide details on the rates to be assessed, and get points awarded if they are within a benchmark rate.
- Applicants have to provide GIS shapefiles that show the project area, and GIS shapefiles that show the locations to be served.
- Challenge Process – In place to allow providers that either have service, or are in the process of building to provide service, to intervene in an application.

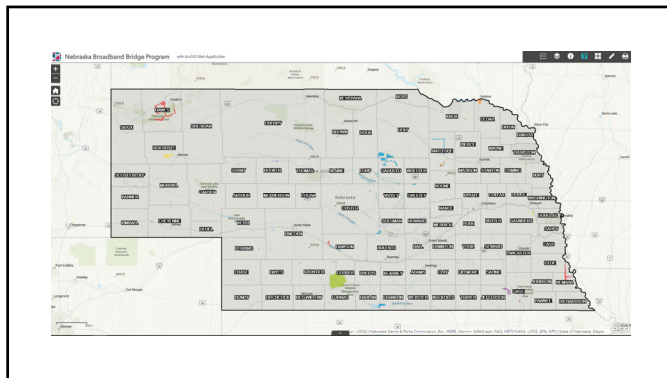
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## Broadband Bridge Program

### Year 1

- 76 grant applications
- 61 grants awarded for \$19.2 million
- Locations to be served: 12,640
  - 1,765 Unserved; 10,962 Underserved

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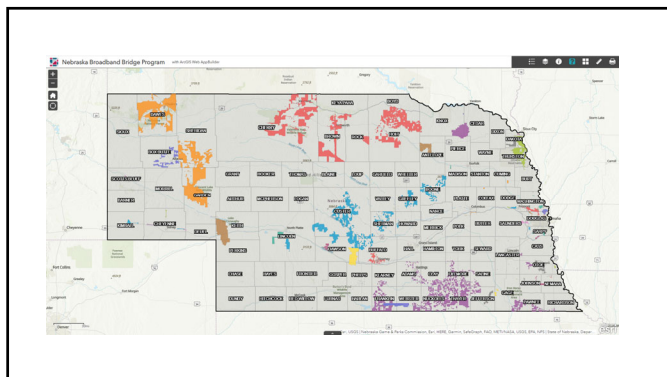
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## Broadband Bridge Program

### Year 2

- 115 applications, \$74.76 million in requested funding.
- Grants will be awarded in December 2022.
- Applications include 22,346 locations:
  - 9,081 Unserved; 13,265 Underserved.

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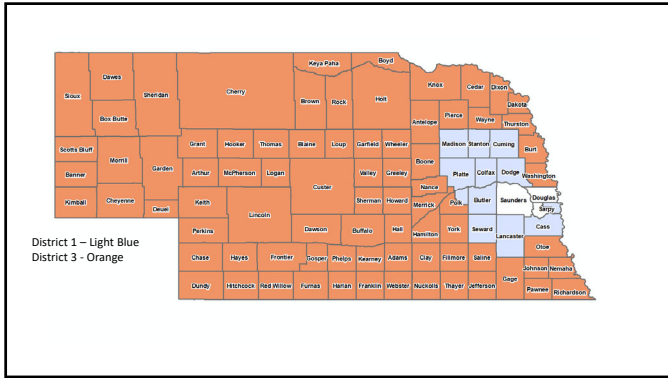


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## Capital Projects Fund

- Funding Agency:** U.S. Department of the Treasury
- Program Established By:** American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
- Nebraska Allocation:** \$128.7 million total –
- LB 1024 Allocation:**
  - At least \$40 million to Congressional District 1
  - At least \$40 million to Congressional District 3
  - No more than \$35 million to Congressional District 2 for multi-purpose community facilities.
- Federal Award Date:** (\$87.7 million)- August 30, 2022 for Congressional Districts 1 and 3.

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### Capital Projects Fund

- Funds allocated to Congressional Districts 1 and 3 will be awarded through the Broadband Bridge Program.
- Requires no matching funds from applicants.
- Anticipated grant cycle in early 2023.

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### Broadband Equity Access Deployment (BEAD)

**Funding Agency:** National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)  
**Program Established By:** Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)  
**Nebraska Allocation:** \$100 million minimum  
 Announcement of funding expected in 2023  
**Expected Award Date:** October 2022  
**State Entity Administering:** Nebraska Public Service Commission

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### Broadband Equity Access Deployment (BEAD)

- Involves extensive planning and outreach activities
- Requires completion of a 5-year plan once Initial Planning Funds are awarded
- Money to be distributed primarily through a future Broadband Bridge grant cycle
- Grant cycle dates TBD - likely in 2024

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### State Digital Equity Planning Grant

**Funding Agency:** National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)  
**Program Established By:** Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)  
**Nebraska Allocation:** \$600,000  
**Expected Award Date:** Late September 2022  
**State Entity Administering:** Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC)/Office of the CIO

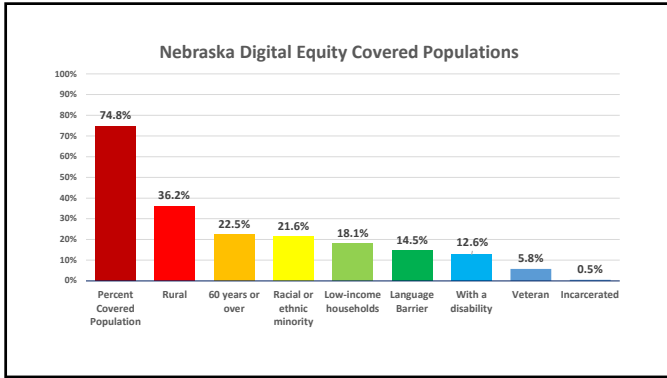
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### State Digital Equity Planning Grant

- Digital Equity is the goal of achieving parity in digital participation in the economy and society.
- Digital Equity Plan will guide the development of a state digital equity grant program.
- Nebraska will receive a minimum of \$7.2 million over 5 years for implementation through the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program.

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### Digital Equity Planning Activities

- Webinars
- Listening sessions
- Inventory of digital equity assets and best practices
- Development of regional digital equity plans
- State planning conference
- Digital equity planning activities will coordinate with BEAD planning activities.

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### How you can participate

- Spread the word about digital equity resources and planning events
- Share information on digital equity assets and best practices
- Participate in or host listening sessions
- Participate in regional planning groups
- Submit comments

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### Form ore information

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