

# HORIZONS

## UPDATES

We are pleased to announce we have received NTIA approval of our Initial Proposal Volume 2! This is an important milestone in the program and it wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and hard work of all the staff involved. A big thank you to everyone who made this happen!

It's been a busy and exciting month for us. Deputy Director Patrick Redmond participated in a panel at the Governor's One Nebraska Economic Summit in August while staff hosted a booth with our map and connected with many stakeholders. We've been building some exciting partnerships recently. We had the opportunity to meet with staff and faculty at UNL, who showcased the Nebraska Experimental Testbed of Things (NEXTT). We also connected with UNL Extension for a tour of the Eastern Nebraska Research, Extension, and Education Center (ENREEC) in Mead, NE. These visits gave us a sneak peek into how broadband will transform daily life—from precision agriculture to public safety, telehealth, education, and more. Their forward-thinking approach is inspiring, and we're eager to continue working together on these vital initiatives.

## WELCOME CALEB PRUSS-HUSEN!



NBO is thrilled to introduce Caleb Pruss-Husen as our new Administrative Programs Officer. Caleb recently graduated from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in May 2024, having earned a degree in Political Science with minors in National Security and English.

Driven by a passion for policy, Caleb sought an opportunity with the State of Nebraska to expand his knowledge and hone his skills. In his role at NBO, he will be primarily focused on monitoring legislation and ensuring our programs stay aligned with evolving policies. Caleb has already been instrumental in the transition to the Ferguson House.

Caleb is eager to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Nebraskans and looks forward to contributing across various areas within our organization.

# Digital Equity Goals

- 1** Increase the proportion of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service.
- 2** Improve public internet access in Nebraska communities.
- 3** Increase the percentage of Nebraska households with applicable internet devices.
- 4** Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans, including use of privacy and security practices.
- 5** Increase the use of telehealth technologies in Nebraska to increase access to care in underserved areas and to reduce health disparities.

## Upcoming Opportunities for Digital Equity

NBO is excited to announce the launch of three separate tranches of funding to support our Digital Equity (DE) program. Each tranche will be awarded one year apart, focusing on specific goals aligned with the program's mission, and will run for a five-year period once awarded.

The first tranche, expected to launch in early 2025, will distribute approximately \$6.5 million through the Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program (DECAP4) from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). This funding aims to help close the digital divide for covered populations by addressing critical needs and advancing digital equity in Nebraska. The first tranche will focus on achieving goals 1, 4, and 5 of the DE program.

We're actively planning our outreach efforts across the state, engaging partners to ensure that everyone has opportunities to apply, access to information, and technical assistance. If you're interested in connecting with our DE team, please email us at [ndot.broadbandoffice@nebraska.gov](mailto:ndot.broadbandoffice@nebraska.gov). We look forward to working with you to advance digital equity in Nebraska.

Energy District map

# Coming Soon





*Patrick Redmond explains the vision of BEAD*



*ENREEC Spider Cam*



*NEXTT demonstration*

## NBO STAFF

**Patrick Haggerty**, Director  
**Patrick Redmond**, Deputy Director  
**Diane Lowe**, Grants and Budget Director  
**Rachel Kilcoin**, Communications Director  
**Trevi Harrison**, Outreach Coordinator  
**Josh Russo**, Grants Manager  
**Amber Ross**, Grants Analyst  
**Caleb Pruss-Hansen**, Administrative Program Officer

## We've Moved!

We are excited to share we found our forever home just southeast of the Capitol in the historic Ferguson House. As with any move, it's been an adjustment, and we're learning how to make the most of working in this beautiful, unique space. From organizing the layout to getting our tech fully up and running, we're working hard to settle in. A huge thank you to everyone who has been supporting us throughout this transition—we truly appreciate it! Once we're fully settled, we can't wait to welcome our stakeholders and give you a tour of our new space. Check out more photos on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/nebraska.broadband.office](http://www.facebook.com/nebraska.broadband.office).



*Photo credit, Nebraska State Historical Society, May 1972*

Thank you to Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) for being our guest speaker at our most recent town hall and sharing great insights about how reentry programs can benefit employers, especially as we gear up for BEAD deployment.

## TOWN HALLS

Watch for upcoming Town Halls on our website and follow us on Facebook.

Previous Town Hall recordings are available on our website if you are unable to attend. Attending live provides the opportunity to ask questions to staff directly.

If there is a topic you would like to hear more about or a speaker you would recommend, we welcome your input.

