

2024
ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE STATUS OF
BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

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Glossary

BEAD Program: A \$42.5 billion federal program to expand access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet nationwide administered by the NTIA. NBO administers the \$405 million from this program allocated to Nebraska.

BEAD Eligible Location: A broadband serviceable location that is currently underserved or unserved and that does not have an enforceable commitment from another program to deploy broadband access to that location.

Broadband Serviceable Location: A business or residential location in the United States at which fixed broadband Internet access service is, or can be, installed.

Digital Equity: The competencies and skills required for navigating digital literacy skills.

Digital Inclusion: The activities that are necessary to ensure that all individuals in the United States have access to, and ability to use, affordable information and communication technologies.

Digital Literacy: The skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information.

Last Mile: The physical infrastructure that connects a provider's network to a home, business, or other end-user device.

Middle Mile: The physical infrastructure that connects a network operator's core network to local networks.

Served Location: A broadband serviceable location is considered served by NTIA if it has access to Internet service speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload (100/20 Mbps).

Underserved Location: A broadband serviceable location is considered underserved by NTIA if it has access to Internet service speeds less than 100/20 Mbps but greater than or equal to 25/3 Mbps.

Unserved Location: A broadband serviceable location is considered unserved by NTIA if it has access only to Internet service speeds less than 25/3 Mbps.

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List of Abbreviations

BEAD	Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment
BSL	Broadband Serviceable Location
CPF	Capital Projects Fund
DE	Digital Equity
DECAP	Digital Equity Capacity Grant
FTTP/FTTH	Fiber-to-the-Premises/Fiber-to-the-Home
ISP	Internet Service Provider
Mbps	Megabits per second
NBBP	Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program
NBO	Nebraska Broadband Office
NTIA	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
NUSF	Nebraska Universal Service Fund
PRO-AG	Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program
PSC	Nebraska Public Service Commission
RDOF	Rural Digital Opportunities Fund
TBCP	Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

Letter from the Director

Located within the heartland of the United States, Nebraska is a vibrant agricultural state with growing metropolitan centers. Its population is nearly 2 million and has a land area of over 77,000 square miles. This leads Nebraska to have a population density of nearly 26 people per square mile, with over two-thirds of the state's population considered Urban.

Last year I wrote that it would take a village to ensure every unserved Nebraskan is served. My office remains committed to that central goal, and we believe we come closer to achieving it every day. Through our discussions and outreach to Nebraska's many communities and stakeholders, it only becomes clearer that what I wrote a year ago remains true. Fortunately, we have found many like-minded, motivated partners willing to be villagers and work with us throughout Nebraska to see every under- and unserved Nebraskan served.

The importance of broadband access only increases as the world continues to digitize. My office has supported and will continue to support enhancing Nebraskan's access to broadband to the very best of our abilities. We remain confident that we will be able to reach every unserved Nebraskan with quality broadband service by the end of the decade. The dividends of this historic investment will be well worth the time and effort my office and our many statewide partners have dedicated. I cannot wait to share in that success with all of Nebraska.

Sincerely,



Patrick Haggerty

State Broadband Director | Nebraska Broadband Office



Executive Summary

This report covers the requirements of the annual report outline in LB 683 (2023).

These requirements are as follows:

- I. Describe the status of all publicly administered broadband deployment programs, including the number of projects funded through October of the report year.
- II. Describe the quality of broadband service being provided to Nebraska residents.
- III. Provide any updates to the strategic plan.
- IV. Summarize the Nebraska Broadband Office's outreach efforts and collaboration with all interested stakeholders.
- V. Provide an update on efforts to promote digital equity and inclusion on behalf of Nebraska residents.
- VI. Provide an update on state advocacy on broadband issues being conducted at the federal level.

The report was written using data and information provided by the Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) through ongoing collaboration concerning broadband service.

Status of Broadband Deployment Programs

- 1. Describe the status of all publicly administered broadband deployment programs, including the number of projects funded through October of the report year.*

State

Currently, there are four state-funded broadband buildout programs administered by the State of Nebraska. Each of these programs are administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) through statutes established in LB686 (1997), LB338 (2021), LB1024 (2022), and LB1144 (2022). In total, \$156.9 million was awarded or allocated in funding across the four programs in the report year (10/2023-10/2024). Each of these programs were established with distinct structures to achieve the goal of broadband access for all Nebraskans. Each of these programs were operative in the last report year and will be discussed within their own sections below.

Nebraska Universal Service Fund (NUSF)

The NUSF was created in 1997 by the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund Act and prompted PSC to open an investigation on how to meet the universal voice service obligations set forth by the new statute concerning voice. This investigation culminated in 1999 with PSC implementing a multi-year transitional mechanism to reform intercarrier compensation and establishing funding from NUSF. In 2001, PSC sought comment on methodologies to determine permanent funding for NUSF from Nebraska eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs). In 2002, PSC adopted goals for the NUSF long-term support mechanism set forth as outlined in the 1997 legislation.

This mechanism is funded through a \$1.75 surcharge per connection for residential and businesses, and a 6.95% assessment for all other assessable services. Originally, the residential surcharge was assessment based, but was changed on a per connection basis in 2019. The mechanism changed similarly for businesses in 2021. These surcharges provide funding necessary to support high-cost areas throughout the State and ensure that the quality service provided is affordable.

When the legislature passed the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund Act it provided the PSC authority to create and regulate programs to further the goals set out within the legislation. The PSC then created several NUSF subprograms, each denoted by an order number. Pursuant to several statutory changes, the NUSF now supports development of broadband-capable networks as well as support for traditional voice networks.

The order numbers specific to broadband buildout are NUSF-99, NUSF-108, and NUSF-131. One of the criteria for NUSF awards was changed recently, requiring projects filed on or after 1/1/2022 to provide a minimum broadband speed of 100/100 Mbps pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. 86-324.01. As of October 31, 2024, \$62,664,788.95 has been

allocated through NUSF-99, \$14,579,149.85 allocated through NUSF-108, and \$38,228,972.06 has been allocated through NUSF-131. These allocations pertain to projects submitted to PSC over multiple years and are at varying stages of completion. NUSF support is not provided to companies until proof of costs incurred are submitted, reviewed, and reimbursed.

Table 1 provides further details on NUSF-99, where each row is a company's unique project with year the award was made, award amount, amount (if any) reimbursed so far, and project completion deadline.

Company	Year	Amount	Reimbursed	Deadline
Qwest Corporation	2018	\$15,185,900.00	\$5,553,430.55	12/31/2024
Windstream Nebraska, Inc.	2020	\$180,415.00	-	12/31/2024
United Telephone Company of the West	2020	\$5,444,000.00	\$1,631,511.42	10/1/2024
Qwest Corporation	2021	\$4,391,903.67	\$444,371.62	10/1/2024
Windstream Nebraska, Inc.	2021	\$1,025,689.00	-	6/30/2023
Windstream Nebraska, Inc.	2021	\$582,274.00	-	6/30/2024
Windstream Nebraska, Inc.	2022	\$1,109,008.00	-	12/31/2024
Windstream Nebraska, Inc.	2022	\$6,240,397.12	-	12/31/2024
Qwest Corporation	2022	\$52,545.00	-	10/1/2024
Qwest Corporation	2022	\$1,803,410.90	-	7/22/2024
Qwest Corporation	2022	\$4,296,706.00	\$610,810.62	9/22/2024
Qwest Corporation	2022	\$4,052,998.00	\$607,304.54	12/1/2024
United Telephone Company of the West	2022	\$655,180.75	-	10/1/2024
United Telephone Company of the West	2022	\$3,957,537.26	\$2,246,838.37	1/22/2024
Qwest Corporation	2023	\$2,797,143.77	-	-
Qwest Corporation	2023	\$4,813,303.19	-	-
Qwest Corporation	2023	\$6,076,377.29	-	-
Total		\$62,664,788.95	\$11,094,267.12	

Table 1

Table 2 details NUSF-108 where each row is a company's unique project including year the award was made, award amount, and amount (if any) reimbursed so far.

Company	Year	Amount	Reimbursed
Dalton	2021	\$80,841.00	-
Dalton	2021	\$23,255.00	-
Dalton	2021	\$286,048.29	-
Dalton	2021	\$18,544.93	-
Dalton	2021	\$116,212.87	-
Consolidated Telco	2021	\$124,233.47	\$116,367.00
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2021	\$175,141.41	\$169,330.11
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2021	\$223,442.92	\$33,120.44
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2021	\$321,210.10	\$181,572.71
Great Plains	2022	\$321,325.70	\$240,797.13
Great Plains	2022	\$66,136.81	\$49,561.28
Hartman Telephone Exchanges, Inc.	2022	\$6,100.00	\$4,135.13
Great Plains	2022	\$557,940.82	\$358,769.98
Great Plains	2022	\$508,646.07	\$312,634.51
Consolidated Telco	2022	\$120,000.00	-
Consolidated Telco	2022	\$25,000.00	-
Consolidated Telco	2022	\$300,000.00	-
Consolidated Telco	2022	\$114,652.01	-
Consolidated Telephone Company	2022	\$400,000.00	-
Consolidated Telephone Company	2022	\$345,174.90	-
Consolidated Telecom, Inc.	2022	\$50,000.00	-
Consolidated Telecom, Inc.	2022	\$259,255.53	-
Curtis Telephone Company	2022	\$80,676.05	-
Curtis Telephone Company	2022	\$56,701.90	-
Pierce	2022	\$87,395.70	-
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2022	\$158,448.13	-

Table 2, continued on next page

Company	Year	Amount	Reimbursed
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2022	\$189,126.26	-
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2022	\$31,634.44	-
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2022	\$22,708.40	-
Great Plains	2023	\$17,207.93	\$15,860.64
Great Plains	2023	\$297,468.62	\$289,079.03
Great Plains	2023	\$3,442.13	\$3,011.24
Great Plains	2023	\$96,086.02	\$81,190.74
Great Plains	2023	\$152,191.23	\$58,198.37
Great Plains	2023	\$543,842.82	\$207,973.02
Great Plains	2023	\$1,136,255.09	\$689,619.78
Great Plains	2023	\$417,687.50	\$253,564.93
Arapahoe Telephone Company	2023	\$58,340.42	-
Arapahoe Telephone Company	2023	\$72,806.39	-
Arapahoe Telephone Company	2023	\$156,810.38	-
Arapahoe Telephone Company	2023	\$29,476.51	-
Consolidated Telco	2023	\$65,926.52	-
Consolidated Telco	2023	\$137,409.59	-
Consolidated Telephone Company	2023	\$266,974.37	-
Consolidated Telephone Company	2023	\$221,953.00	-
Consolidated Telephone Company	2023	\$180,035.63	-
Consolidated Telephone Company	2023	\$60,608.59	-
Consolidated Telecom, Inc.	2023	\$236,599.73	-
Consolidated Telecom, Inc.	2023	\$20,608.96	-
Consolidated Telecom, Inc.	2023	\$41,779.43	-
Consolidated Telecom, Inc.	2023	\$24,251.77	-

Table 2, continued on next page

Company	Year	Amount	Reimbursed
Curtis Telephone Company	2023	\$213,929.77	-
Curtis Telephone Company	2023	\$47,772.82	-
Pierce	2024	\$130,728.86	-
Pierce	2024	\$42,721.67	-
Arapahoe Telephone Company	2024	\$196,085.93	-
Arapahoe Telephone Company	2024	\$16,903.53	-
Dalton	2024	\$182,962.29	-
Dalton	2024	\$53,959.75	-
Dalton	2024	\$206,322.89	-
Dalton	2024	\$40,673.58	-
Hartman Telephone Exchanges, Inc.	2024	\$174,645.54	-
Elsie	2024	\$40,388.84	-
Elsie	2024	\$5,956.91	-
K&M	2024	\$89,870.11	-
K&M	2024	\$120,293.08	-
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2024	\$315,016.92	-
Cozad	2024	\$1,855,665.21	-
Pierce	2024	\$747,868.78	-
Pierce	2024	\$42,337.58	-
Great Plains	2024	\$560,478.23	-
Great Plains	2024	\$186,952.22	-
Total		\$14,579,149.85	\$3,064,966.04

Table 2

Table 3 details NUSF-131 where each row is a company’s unique project with year the award was made, award amount, amount (if any) reimbursed so far, and project completion deadline. Consolidated’s “TBA” awards will be approved at a later date pending PSC approval.

Company	Year	Amount	Paid	Deadline
Hamilton Telecommunications	2022	\$22,814.50	-	-
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$3,275,181.46	\$1,637,590.73	3/26/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$1,158,258.72	\$579,129.36	3/26/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$640,322.70	\$320,161.35	3/26/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$352,510.24	\$176,255.12	3/26/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$46,015.65	\$23,007.83	3/26/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$1,653,992.27	\$826,996.13	3/26/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$981,669.53	\$490,834.76	3/26/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$807,329.35	\$403,664.67	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$832,827.70	\$416,413.85	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$5,919.64	\$2,959.82	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$7,698.55	\$3,849.27	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$348,241.45	\$174,120.73	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$193,215.27	\$96,607.63	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$82,518.61	\$41,259.30	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$103,955.84	\$51,977.92	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$456,062.67	\$228,031.34	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$66,971.31	\$33,485.65	3/26/2026

Table 3, continued on next page

Company	Year	Amount	Paid	Deadline
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$130,738.10	\$65,369.05	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$525,303.04	\$262,651.52	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$40,345.28	\$20,172.64	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$17,659.83	\$8,829.91	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$139,376.21	\$69,688.11	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$44,290.77	\$22,145.38	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$13,652.39	\$6,826.19	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$8,343.30	\$4,171.65	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$7,280.60	\$3,640.30	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$14,204.76	\$7,102.38	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$16,793.72	\$8,396.86	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$40,462.76	\$20,231.38	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$238,715.06	\$119,357.53	3/26/2026
Great Plains Communications LLC	2024	\$213,227.84	\$106,613.92	3/26/2026
Hamilton Telephone Company	2024	\$598,421.08	\$299,210.54	3/26/2026
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	2024	\$864,335.11	\$432,167.55	3/26/2026
Midstates Data Transport, LLC	2024	\$102,592.39	\$51,296.20	3/26/2026
Midstates Data Transport, LLC	2024	\$825,093.53	\$412,546.77	3/26/2026
Midstates Data Transport, LLC	2024	\$1,704,025.14	\$852,012.57	3/26/2026
Midstates Data Transport, LLC	2024	\$1,031,589.83	\$515,794.91	3/26/2026

Table 3, continued on next page

Company	Year	Amount	Paid	Deadline
Midstates Data Transport, LLC	2024	\$2,283,517.52	\$1,141,758.76	3/26/2026
Midstates Data Transport, LLC	2024	\$702,263.28	\$351,131.64	3/26/2026
Midstates Data Transport, LLC	2024	\$387,324.62	\$193,662.31	3/26/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$816,260.55	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$471,450.92	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$6,104.89	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$3,460.36	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$28,914.84	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$122,081.69	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$54,798.69	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$158,796.77	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$160,572.49	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$6,796.84	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$42,026.41	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$18,983.25	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$5,772.17	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$6,747.78	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$9,929.93	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$3,367.10	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$17,673.84	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$12,253.32	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$5,573.21	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$20,659.41	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$19,497.81	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$73,264.88	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$15,798.48	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$32,295.34	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$59,080.71	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$5,585.27	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$25,848.33	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$3,074.62	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$732.48	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$31,770.15	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$50,403.38	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$10,577.63	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$12,789.46	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$90,121.58	-	9/30/2026

Table 3, continued on next page

Company	Year	Amount	Paid	Deadline
Great Plains	2024	\$14,695.16	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$69,398.78	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$15,500.46	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$9,561.68	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$22,559.26	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$14,190.35	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$12,561.72	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$12,568.42	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$15,737.34	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$63,922.29	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$105,931.79	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$149,589.32	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$15,546.60	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$13,748.57	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$11,492.45	-	9/30/2026
Great Plains	2024	\$27,329.31	-	9/30/2026
Nebraska Central	2024	\$379,828.63	-	9/30/2026
Nebraska Central	2024	\$278,802.25	-	9/30/2026
Hamilton Telephone Company	2024	\$151,574.62	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$504,348.63	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$194,480.20	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$175,880.24	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$92,639.44	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$132,368.39	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$523,849.08	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$684,857.84	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$90,392.11	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$438,205.73	-	9/30/2026
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$916,448.79	-	9/30/2026

Table 3, continued on next page

Company	Year	Amount	Paid	Deadline
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	2024	\$1,080,896.10	-	9/30/2026
Glenwood	2024	\$568,025.77	-	9/30/2026
Glenwood	2024	\$1,149,015.08	-	9/30/2026
Glenwood	2024	\$1,524,198.67	-	9/30/2026
Glenwood	2024	\$338,120.54	-	9/30/2026
Consolidated	TBA	\$1,038,000.06	-	9/30/2026
Consolidated	TBA	\$1,175,474.77	-	9/30/2026
Windstream	2024	\$623,826.98	-	9/30/2026
Northeast Nebraska	2024	\$2,205,278.48	-	9/30/2026
Total		\$38,228,972.06	\$10,481,123.53	

Table 3

Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP)

On May 26, 2021, Governor Pete Ricketts signed the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act, LB 388 (2021), which created the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP) to facilitate and fund the deployment of broadband networks in unserved and underserved areas of Nebraska. Each biennium the legislature must appropriate \$20 million each fiscal year from the State General Fund to be distributed as grants through the program and to pay administrative costs associated with the program. PSC is allowed under Neb. Rev. Stat. 86-1310 to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the NBBP.

PSC is directed by the legislature to distribute grants based on three priorities ordered accordingly:

1. A project in an area that is determined to be unserved by PSC pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. 75-160 or Neb. Rev. Stat. 86-166 and is in need of further support but has not received public assistance for the development of a broadband network.
2. A project in a similarly determined unserved area that has received federal support for development of a broadband network that will not be completed within 24 months after the grant application deadline if PSC determines that a grant through NBBP will accelerate the deployment of the broadband network.
3. A project in a similarly determined unserved area that PSC determines to have a digital inclusion plan.

Furthermore, a minimum weighted scoring system was established by the legislature for PSC to rank the applications received each fiscal year. The legislature determined the following criteria to be included at a minimum:

1. The financial, technical, and legal capability of the applicant to deploy and operate broadband internet service.

2. Whether the applicant is an ETC.
3. Ability of the applicant to offer comparable market rates inside the project area as they do outside of the project area.
4. Available minimum broadband speeds scored in favor of higher speeds, with a minimum of 100/100 Mbps.
5. Scalability of the project in the future.
6. Whether the applicant has committed to fund more than 50% of the total development costs of the project is located outside of a high-cost area, or more than 25% of the total development costs if the project is located inside a high-cost area.
 - a. High-cost areas as determined by PSC.¹

The PSC distributes NBBP grant funds on the following schedule:

- 25% of funds distributed upon award of the grant.
- 25% of funds distributed in the ninth month following the grant award.
- 50% of funds distributed upon project completion alongside successful speed testing results and receipt of invoice submittals to justify allowable expenses.

Figure 1 is a map of Nebraska with the report year NBBP cycles overlaid.

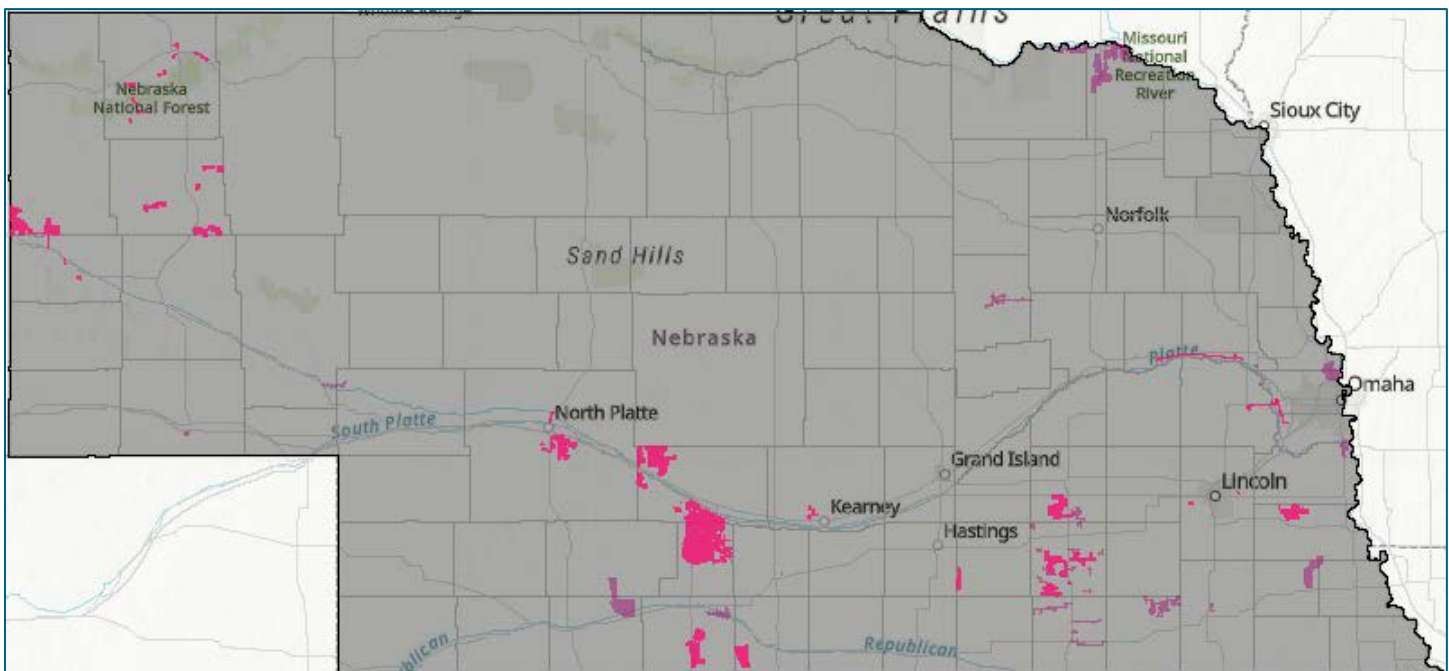


Figure 1. Light Purple Areas = 2023 NBBP Award Areas; Pink Areas = 2024 NBBP Application Areas.

¹ The PSC publishes information and maps showing eligible high-cost areas in Nebraska for participants. High-cost areas include areas outside of cities, villages, or unincorporated areas as defined in the 2020 US Census, and census blocks with less than 20 households and densities lower than 42 households per square mile.

The 2023 NBBP Award areas (areas with projects awarded to providers) are shown in light-purple while the 2024 NBBP Application Areas (areas where providers have applied for grants in the 2024 cycle) are shown in pink.

Awards for the 2023 NBBP cycle were announced on January 1, 2024. In total, \$25,259,711.13 was requested with \$19,713,379.26 in funding awarded. Table 4 below represents all projects funded in the 2023 NBBP cycle. These projects are to be completed by July 9, 2025.

Company	Total Est. Cost	Match %	Grant Funding Committed
Allo Communications, LLC	\$36,428.00	25%	\$27,321.00
Allo Communications, LLC	\$ 261,845.00	25%	\$196,384.00
Cambridge Telephone Company	\$1,500,000.00	25%	\$1,125,000.00
Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC	\$2,005,037.00	100%	\$1,381,744.00
Diller Telephone/Diode Cable Company	\$400,00.00	35%	\$260,000.00
Diller Telephone/Diode Cable Company	\$1,525,000.00	35%	\$987,750.00
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$1,429,615.38	25%	\$1,072,211.54
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$80,455.56	30%	\$56,318.89
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$503,256.99	25%	\$377,442.74
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$1,834,960.49	25%	\$1,376,220.37
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$852,964.95	25%	\$639,723.72
Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc (dba Hartelco)	\$1,233,883.63	25%	\$925,413.00
Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc (dba Hartelco)	\$1,715,967.25	25%	\$1,286,975.00
Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc (dba Hartelco)	\$1,374,280.05	25%	\$1,030,710.00
Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc d/b/a Hartelco	\$4,407,309.83	25%	\$3,949,781.00

Table 4, continued on next page

Company	Total Est. Cost	Match %	Grant Funding Committed
Midstates Data Transport, LLC d/b/a Stealth Broadband	\$1,047,850.00	25%	\$787,887.00
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$714,000.00	25%	\$535,500.00
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$1,554,000.00	25%	\$1,165,500.00
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$1,260,000.00	25%	\$945,000.00
Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC	\$184,559.00	50%	\$92,280.00
Spectrum Mid-America, LLC	\$1,271,419.00	-	\$491,881.00
Total	\$25,192,832.13		\$18,709,043.26

Table 4

On July 24, 2024, Cox Nebraska Telecom, LLC filed a motion with the PSC seeking to return the \$1,004,336.00 grant awarded for the “Cass-Sarpy” project because the mapping data they relied on was incorrect. On October 8, 2024, the PSC approved an order granting the motion to return grant funding. As such this award is not represented in Table 4.

Additionally, the 2024 NBBP cycle is underway with grant awards to be released on January 14, 2025. \$27,691,558.55 in total grant funding was requested. Table 5 details the applications made for the 2024 NBBP cycle further.

Company	Total Est. Cost	Match %	Grant Funding Requested
Allo Communications, LLC	\$230,777.41	25%	\$173,083.06
Allo Communications, LLC	\$993,393.99	50%	\$496,697.00
Allo Communications, LLC	\$2,682,049.83	25%	\$2,011,537.37
Allo Communications, LLC	\$452,376.26	25%	\$339,282.20
Allo Communications, LLC	\$806,299.48	25%	\$604,724.61
Allo Communications, LLC	\$256,655.78	50%	\$128,327.89
Allo Communications, LLC	\$210,865.48	25%	\$158,149.11
Allo Communications, LLC	\$587,644.89	25%	\$440,733.67
Allo Communications, LLC	\$781,856.89	25%	\$586,392.67
Allo Communications, LLC	\$279,182.71	50%	\$139,591.35
ATC Communications	\$709,800.00	25%	\$532,350.00

Table 5, continued on next page

Company	Total Est. Cost	Match %	Grant Funding Requested
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$2,112,260.87	25%	\$1,584,195.65
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$361,603.93	25%	\$271,202.95
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$136,705.34	50%	\$68,352.67
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$1,402,802.83	30%	\$981,961.98
Mobius	\$1,351,545.18	25%	\$1,013,658.89
Mobius	\$1,074,546.10	25%	\$805,909.58
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$400,000.00	25%	\$300,000.00
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$1,969,025.00	25%	\$1,476,768.75
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$1,008,206.00	25%	\$756,154.50
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$1,185,258.00	25%	\$888,934.50
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$4,600,000.00	25%	\$3,450,000.00
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$3,500,000.00	25%	\$2,625,000.00
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$2,913,715.00	25%	\$2,185,286.25
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$1,700,000.00	25%	\$1,275,000.00
Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink QC	\$270,250.00	50%	\$135,125.00
Vistabeam	\$5,648,185.20	25%	\$4,263,138.90
Total	\$37,625,006.17		\$27,691,558.55

Table 5

Capital Projects Fund (CPF)

On April 18, 2022, Governor Pete Ricketts signed the Economic Recovery Act, LB1024 (2022), which created the 2023 Capital Projects Fund (CPF) Grant Cycle to facilitate and fund the deployment of broadband networks in unserved and underserved areas of rural Nebraska. This program received a one-time infusion of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The purpose of the funding was to allow the State to carry out capital projects enabling work, education, and health monitoring in response to the public health emergency at the time. The broadband buildout locations were limited

to locations in the 1st and 3rd Congressional Districts pictured in Figure 2 and Figure 3, respectively.

Congressional District 1 (CD-1)

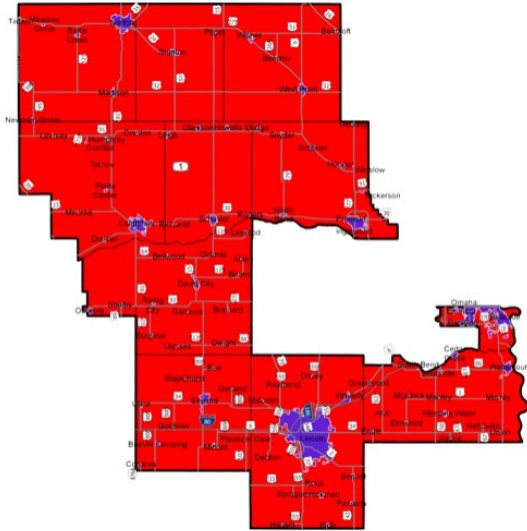


Figure 2

Congressional District 3 (CD-3)

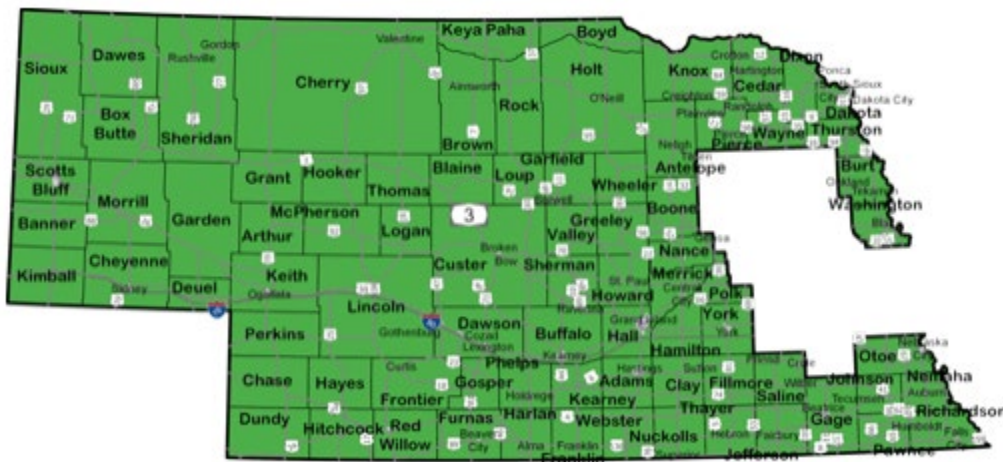


Figure 3

The State of Nebraska was awarded \$128,740,178 for the fulfillment of the goals established by the CPF, inclusive of administrative costs. The original plan submitted to treasury was for all the funding to be awarded to broadband, but the Economic Recovery Act changed the framework and allocated the funding into categories as follows:

1. No less than \$40 Million for Broadband Projects in CD-1
2. No more than \$35 Million for Multipurpose community facilities in CD-2

3. No less than \$40 Million for Broadband Projects in CD-3
4. No more than \$5 Million for total administration of the program

The funds were statutorily awarded to the Department of Economic Development (DED), which entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the PSC so the PSC would administer the broadband projects in CD-1 and CD-3 in a manner similar to the NBBP. As such, qualifying projects in this program must provide service scalable to 100/100 Mbps or greater. No match is required but is encouraged for additional points to be awarded. Still, with no required match the provider community on average was able to match grants at 15%, with some projects matching as high as 60%.

Furthermore, eligible project areas were defined under Neb. Rev. Stat. 81-12,245 to be in an unserved area or underserved area within CD-1 or CD-3 as defined by the PSC. In the case of CD-3, projects in the first round of awards (CPF-1) must be entirely located within the geographical boundaries (as defined by the 2020 US Census) of cities of the second class and villages. Cities of the second class and villages are defined as followed:

- **Cities of the second class:** Neb. Rev. Stat. 17-101 states these are municipalities containing between 800 and 5,000 inhabitants, unless such an entity adopts or retains a village form of government.
- **Villages:** Neb Rev. Stat. 17-201 states these are municipalities containing between 100 and 800 inhabitants. Incorporated villages with fewer than 100 residents are also considered eligible project areas for the purposes of the CPF program.

On June 27, 2023, the Commission entered an order issuing grant awards and resolving challenges for CPF-1. In Congressional District 1, the Commission issued at least \$40 million in grant awards. In Congressional District 3, the Commission issued approximately \$20 million in grant awards. Due to a lack of awards in CD-3, only about half of the obligated funds were disbursed in the first round of grants. Therefore, a second round of grants (CPF-2) was initiated on December 20, 2023, to utilize the remaining program funds. This 2024 CPF grant cycle is anticipated to be the final round of CPF grants.

Unlike in CPF-1, all unserved or underserved areas in Congressional District 3 were eligible project areas in CPF-2. For CPF-1, awarded areas are designated in **Figure 4** below by yellow and red dots in CD-3 and CD-1 respectively. For CPF-2, awarded areas are designated with blue dots.

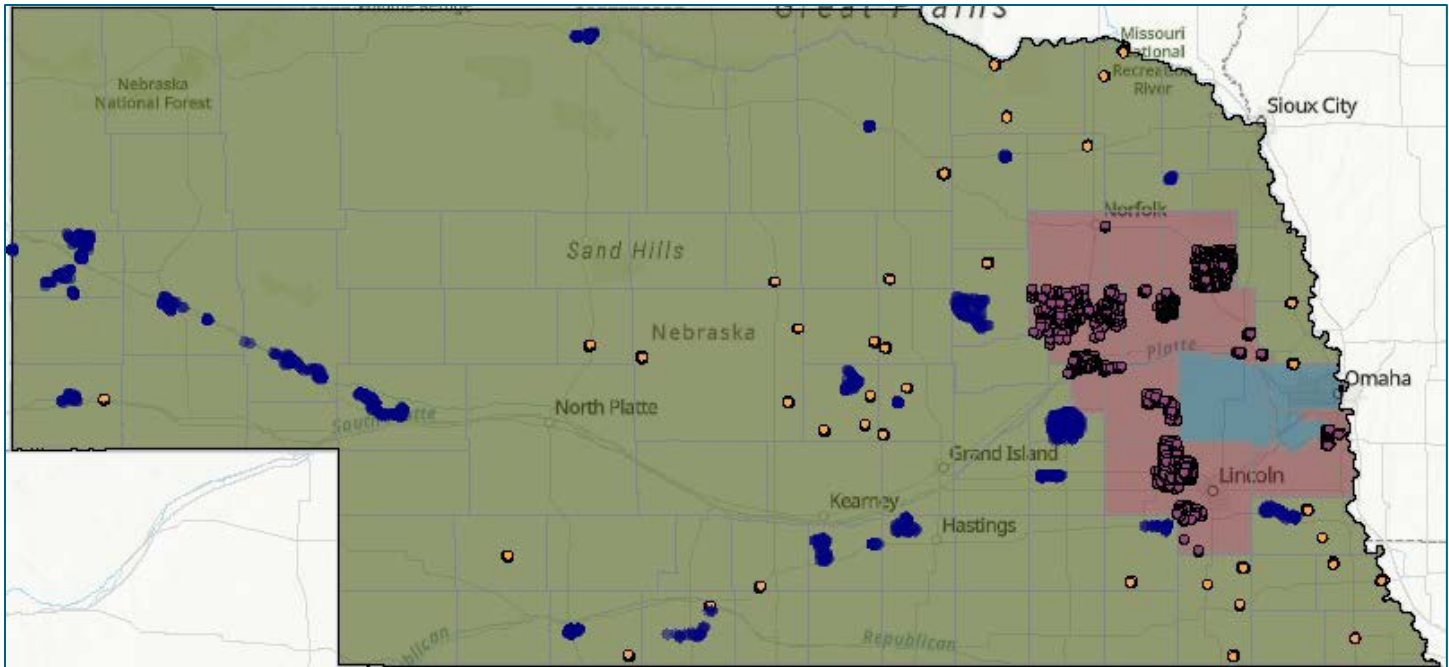


Figure 4. Yellow dots = CPF-1, CD-3 awarded areas; Red dots = CPF-1, CD-1 awarded areas; Blue dots = CPF-2 awarded areas.

To ensure compliance with grant requirements, funds for projects are distributed at specific intervals during and after construction, and the final grant payment is not made until all requirements have been met. The schedule to disburse funds is as follows:

1. One-quarter dispersed upon award of the grant.
2. One-quarter dispersed in the ninth month following the award.
3. One-half dispersed upon completion of the buildout, successful speed testing results, and receipt of invoice submittals justifying expenses.

Table 6 summarizes all projects funded in the report year through CPF-2. These projects were limited to areas within CD-3. In total, \$30,921,432.28 was awarded. Projects funded through CPF-1 must be completed by December 27, 2024. Projects funded through CPF-2 must be completed by December 25, 2025. For both CPF-1 and CPF-2, no reimbursements can be made by the PSC to awardees after December 31, 2026, per U.S. Treasury guidance.

Applicant	Cost	Grant	Match %
ALLO Communications LLC	\$837,686.00	\$760,354.00	9%
ALLO Communications LLC	\$359,985.00	\$320,912.00	11%
ALLO Communications LLC	\$4,020,962.00	\$3,610,697.00	10%
ALLO Communications LLC	\$319,798.00	\$266,886.00	17%
ALLO Communications LLC	\$125,988.00	\$121,103.00	4%

Table 6, continued on next page

Applicant	Cost	Grant	Match %
ALLO Communications LLC	\$276,167.00	\$225,698.00	18%
ALLO Communications LLC	\$762,576.00	\$594,074.00	22%
ALLO Communications LLC	\$565,687.00	\$539,639.00	5%
ALLO Communications LLC	\$299,656.00	\$275,235.00	8%
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$400,886.12	\$364,217.08	0%
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$1,085,729.29	\$1,005,167.02	0%
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$1,526,064.27	\$1,417,886.03	0%
Great Plains Communications LLC	\$1,120,098.28	\$1,120,098.28	0%
Great Plains Communications LLC	\$381,651.52	\$381,651.52	0%
Great Plains Communications LLC	\$1,161,237.12	\$1,161,237.12	0%
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$4,147,854.00	\$2,974,350.00	28%
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$1,341,092.00	\$903,336.00	33%
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$2,026,530.00	\$1,420,250.00	30%
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$591,457.00	\$413,725.00	30%
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$2,468,051.00	\$1,931,875.00	22%
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$2,233,505.00	\$1,702,215.00	24%
Midstates Data Transport, LLC d/b/a Stealth Broadband	\$2,441,834.25	\$2,197,650.83	10%
Northeast Nebraska Telephone Company	\$3,812,285.00	\$3,777,885.00	0%
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$1,000,000.00	\$900,000.00	10%
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$825,000.00	\$742,500.00	10%
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$1,250,000.00	\$1,125,000.00	10%
Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC	\$518,650.00	\$414,920.00	20%
Spectrum Mid-America, LLC, managed by Charter Communications, Inc. ("Charter")	\$1,123,635.00	\$252,871.00	-
Total	\$ 37,024,064.85	\$ 30,921,432.88	

Table 6

Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program

Established in LB1144 (2022), the Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program (PRO-AG) is administered by the PSC with the 2023-2024 cycle docketed as C-5529. The Legislature allocated \$906,478 of State General Funds to be used for the grants for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. PRO-AG has two subprograms, the Connectivity Subprogram and the Devices and Technology Subprogram. By statute, the Commission is required to award up to 50% of the total available funds to each of the subprograms.

The Connectivity Subprogram supports the provision of adequate precision agriculture connectivity to farm structures and devices. Broadband buildout direct costs are permitted under this subprogram, though they are not to exceed 25% of the total project costs and must demonstrate alignment with program objectives. Awardees have twelve months after being awarded to complete the project and must submit to speed tests to verify they are providing the required 100/20 Mbps minimum service. The PSC may grant one six-month extension upon request with good cause shown.

Awards for the **2023-2024 PRO-AG cycle** were announced on April 30, 2024, with three Connectivity Subprogram awards being made for a total of \$391,280. **Table 7** summarizes the awards. Each project is to be completed by April 30, 2025, unless granted an extension. 90% of the awards were disbursed following PSC receiving the applicants' Acknowledgement and Attestation Form and State of Nebraska W9/ACH form. The final 10% is to be disbursed upon project completion and certification of speed test results.

Applicant	Cost	Match %	Grant	Paid
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$100,442.04	24%	\$76,110.00	\$68,499.00
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$86,061.58	27%	\$62,480.00	\$56,232.00
Inventive Wireless of Nebraska, LLC dba Vistabeam	\$334,007.24	24%	\$252,690.00	\$227,421.00
Total	\$520,510.86		\$391,280.00	\$352,152.00

Table 7

The PSC is currently in the process of administering the 2024-2025 PRO-AG cycle, docketed C-5600, with \$564,538.85 in funding available to each subprogram. Applications are due by January 17, 2025. Awards are expected to be issued on April 15, 2025.

Federal

USDA ReConnect Loan and Grant Program

The USDA ReConnect Program offers loans, grants, and loan-grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in areas of rural America that currently do not have sufficient access to broadband. It seeks to facilitate the expansion of broadband services and infrastructure, thereby fueling long-term rural economic development and opportunities in rural America.

In 2019, Eastern Nebraska Telephone Company was awarded \$5,734,822 through this program to deploy a FTTP network to rural areas of Peirce, Wayne, and Madison counties. The project covered a 212.12 square mile area with 489 households. The award stipulates completion of the project within 5 years of funds being released. The award is listed by USDA as being made in fiscal year 2019 with a 2020 announcement, placing a deadline on project completion in late 2024 or early 2025 depending on when precisely funds were released. Similarly, in 2020 Rock County Telephone Company was awarded \$3,105,462 to deploy a FTTH network in rural Nebraska. The project covered 287.88 square miles and 115 households. With a similar completion stipulation, the deadline for this project is in 2025. **Table 8** summarizes these projects.

Applicant	Award Amount	Households Reached	Award Year	Deadline
Eastern Nebraska Telephone Company	\$5,734,822	489	2019	Late 2024/Early 2025
Rock County Telephone Company	\$3,105,462	115	2020	2025
Total	\$8,840,284	604		

Table 8

There were no new awards approved in Nebraska under this program in the report year. However, a \$12,960,931 grant request by the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska is currently under review. The project is described as enabling fiber to the home to 200 households and 100 MB symmetrical fixed wireless access to 818 households by building on top of a National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Middle Mile Grant, which prohibits retail funding, and upgrades a smaller and slower Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program grant. The project would cover 252.88 miles in the Omaha Reservation spanning across Nebraska’s First and Third Congressional Districts and serve 1,018 households that currently lack sufficient access to broadband.

Figure 5 is a screenshot of the USDA ReConnect mapping website showing the project area proposed by the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska in brown.

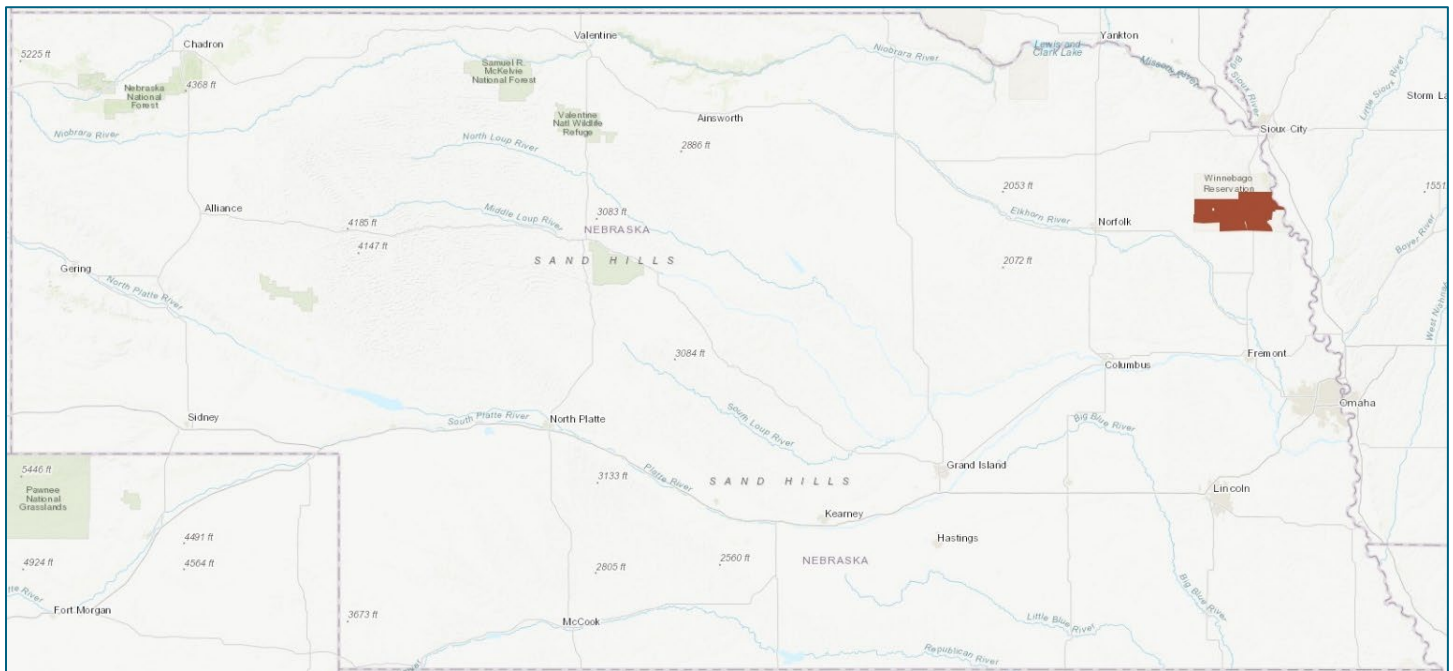


Figure 5. Brown Area = Proposed Project Area.

Rural Digital Opportunities Fund

The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) was a reverse auction program that provided support to connect rural homes and small businesses to high-speed broadband networks administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Nebraska was allocated \$60,377,577 for broadband buildout to be awarded through reverse auction to internet service providers (ISPs). On October 15, 2024, the FCC released a public notice announcing Pinpoint Communications, Inc. had notified the Commission of their decision to withdraw from the RDOF program in their three awarded census block groups in Nebraska. As a result, the FCC will remove Pinpoint’s RDOF service area from the FCC Broadband Funding Map.

The relevant entities have been made aware of the default and are exploring solutions that would still see these areas receive broadband access. There are ongoing discussions between NTIA and NBO on whether these locations can be accounted for and served via the BEAD program. It is possible that other broadband deployment programs (state or federal) could alternatively account for these areas as well.

Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program

The Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program is a \$1 billion federally funded program intended to enhance middle mile broadband infrastructure. On June 16, 2023, the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska was awarded \$36,374,797 under the

program. The proposed project would see the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska and its 100% Tribally owned subsidiary Quick Current LLC deploy a fiber-based middle mile network to cover currently unserved and underserved Tribal and adjacent rural areas in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa with a specific focus on providing Middle Mile infrastructure and services to the tribal and surrounding areas of The Omaha Tribe of Nebraska and Iowa. The network will consist of 418 route miles of new fiber, 100 route miles of IRU dark fibers and 50 miles of upgraded fiber.

In accordance with the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the program, the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska agreed to complete the project within five years of receiving grant funding. This places the deadline for project completion in 2028. The Middle Mile Tracking Dashboard maintained by NTIA lists overall project completion at 25% with 0 of 568 miles of fiber deployed or upgraded as of November 27, 2024.

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

NTIA describes the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) in the program NOFO as seeking “to improve the quality of life, spur economic development and commercial activity, create opportunities for remote employment and online entrepreneurship, remote learning, and telehealth by expanding broadband access and providing digital training and inclusion programs to Native American communities.” NTIA invited proposals that included broadband infrastructure deployment on Tribal lands. In the first round of grants awarded throughout 2022 and 2023, Nebraska had five projects awarded for a total of \$41,248,827.19 in funding.

Two of these projects supported broadband buildout in the program year. These projects are summarized in **Table 9**.

Applicant	Award Amount	Award Date	Deadline
Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska	\$498,000.00	7/20/2023	7/24/2024
Santee Sioux Nation	\$500,000.00	5/24/2023	5/24/2024
Total	\$998,000.00		

Table 9

As the initial award period for the first round of the TBCP is one year from the receipt of grant funds unless granted an extension, these TBCP projects in Nebraska will have been completed during the report year. NTIA has initiated a second round of TBCP grants. These awards are to be announced soon. It is possible that additional entities within Nebraska will receive awards in this second round.

Connecting Minority Communities Program

NTIA's intention with the Connecting Minority Communities Program as stated on their website is "to directly address the lack of broadband access, connectivity, adoption and equity at our nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and in their surrounding anchor communities."

On February 22, 2023, Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC) was awarded \$2,938,816 from this program. The project aims to bridge the digital divide for its students, the majority of whom are Native American. Through this project they intend to hire the professionals needed to facilitate the college's major technology shift to online classes and remote coursework. NICC also plans to provide laptops to all students and invest in equipment that augments the build-out of their 2.5Ghz network.

The initial award period of this program is no more than two years from the receipt of grant funds. This places a deadline on project completion in early 2025, though extensions may be granted in some circumstances by the Assistant Secretary of NTIA.

Quality of Broadband Service

II. Describe the quality of broadband service being provided to Nebraska residents.

The quality of broadband service being provided to Nebraska Residents can be described in multiple ways. Three primary ways are explored in this report, which are the average levels of service, the cost of the buildouts, and the summary of the distribution of technology across the State.

Average Levels of Service

Nebraska residents receive vastly different qualities of broadband service, generally bifurcated between the western half of the State and the eastern half of the State. **Figure 6** shows the average levels of service by county with darker greens representing higher average levels, and darker pinks representing lower average levels.

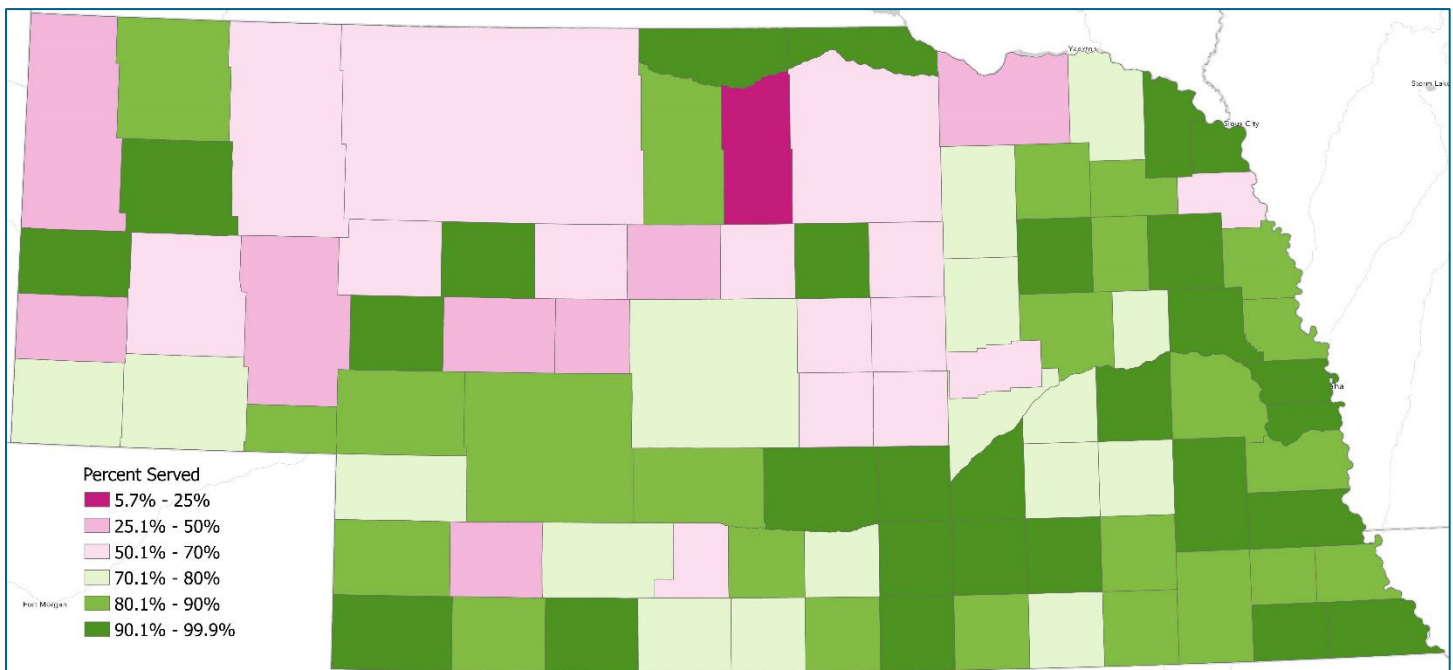


Figure 6. See included key for further details.

Data as of November 27, 2024, indicates that there are a total of **798,448 Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)** in the State with **29,563** of them being BEAD eligible, meaning they are un- or underserved. **12,084** of them are classified as **Underserved** (currently have access to service speeds between 100/20 Mbps and 25/3Mbps) and **17,479** of them are classified as **Unserved** (having access to service speeds less than 25/3 Mbps). This is broken down by county in **Table 10** with data current as of November 27, 2024, for served and BEAD eligible locations. These numbers are approaching final as NBO nears completion of the State's BEAD challenge process. This new information will make its way to the Nebraska Broadband Map.

County	Served	Underserved	Unserved	Total
Adams	13,465	80	31	13,576
Antelope	3,209	69	416	3,694
Arthur	275	0	0	275
Banner	211	21	32	264
Blaine	193	0	0	193
Boone	2,536	23	85	2,644
Box Butte	5,354	19	52	5,425
Boyd	1,806	0	0	1,806
Brown	1,842	10	94	1,946
Buffalo	17,381	518	858	18,757
Burt	4,065	24	38	4,127
Butler	4,700	169	248	5,117
Cass	11,859	387	887	13,133
Cedar	3,968	40	48	4,056
Chase	2,088	0	0	2,088
Cherry	2,492	1	13	2,506
Cheyenne	4,246	189	190	4,625
Clay	3,701	58	163	3,922
Colfax	3,691	230	285	4,206
Cuming	4,730	4	12	4,746
Custer	5,064	78	132	5,274
Dakota	6,939	14	136	7,089
Dawes	3,537	188	315	4,040
Dawson	9,442	1,005	251	10,698
Deuel	1,071	26	18	1,115
Dixon	2,970	4	8	2,982
Dodge	15,573	16	155	15,744
Douglas	183,562	1,248	775	185,585
Dundy	1,486	0	0	1,486
Fillmore	3,574	55	157	3,786
Franklin	1,937	26	143	2,106
Frontier	1,372	1	6	1,379
Furnas	2,671	241	51	2,963
Gage	9,754	200	190	10,144
Garden	753	169	154	1,076
Garfield	1,146	0	0	1,146

Table 10, continued on next page.

County	Served	Underserved	Unserved	Total
Gosper	963	367	47	1,377
Grant	240	0	0	240
Greeley	899	26	79	1,004
Hall	21,097	261	167	21,525
Hamilton	4,722	12	21	4,755
Harlan	2,413	171	43	2,627
Hayes	262	0	3	265
Hitchcock	1,755	0	3	1,758
Holt	4,650	119	300	5,069
Hooker	447	0	5	452
Howard	1,915	364	375	2,654
Jefferson	3,645	120	106	3,871
Johnson	2,673	4	29	2,706
Kearney	2,721	138	500	3,359
Keith	5,032	256	116	5,404
Keya Paha	703	0	0	703
Kimball	1,937	64	48	2,049
Knox	2,721	0	0	2,721
Lancaster	102,590	681	1,236	104,507
Lincoln	14,192	594	239	15,025
Logan	168	0	0	168
Loup	323	0	6	329
Madison	13,657	136	305	14,098
McPherson	135	0	0	135
Merrick	3,263	322	337	3,922
Morrill	2,013	41	126	2,180
Nance	1,413	104	210	1,727
Nemaha	3,556	135	253	3,944
Nuckolls	2,751	62	147	2,960
Otoe	7,364	79	321	7,764
Pawnee	1,934	15	43	1,992
Perkins	1,342	1	10	1,353
Phelps	4,152	105	18	4,275
Pierce	3,300	84	354	3,738
Platte	12,300	234	376	12,910
Polk	2,520	137	273	2,930

Table 10, continued on next page

County	Served	Underserved	Unserved	Total
Red Willow	5,426	8	37	5,471
Richardson	4,933	24	56	5,013
Rock	79	0	0	79
Saline	5,354	247	392	5,993
Sarpy	63,918	113	110	64,141
Saunders	9,422	505	1,267	11,194
Scotts Bluff	16,651	69	85	16,805
Seward	6,468	635	1,055	8,158
Sheridan	1,740	1	84	1,825
Sherman	1,230	71	87	1,388
Sioux	488	63	502	1,053
Stanton	2,527	24	128	2,679
Thayer	2,641	40	142	2,823
Thomas	364	0	2	366
Thurston	1,474	0	10	1,484
Valley	1,804	9	100	1,913
Washington	7,808	9	4	7,821
Wayne	3,427	12	56	3,495
Webster	2,224	0	0	2,224
Wheeler	495	0	0	495
York	5,413	509	1,323	7,245

Table 10

Buildout Cost

However, there is a reason why there is such a divide between the west and the east. The cost of buildout is vastly different. Cherry County, for instance, contains only 14 BEAD eligible BSLs within its 6,009 square miles, with an average estimated cost per location to establish broadband service of \$53,134. Compare that with 247-square-mile Sarpy County, which has 223 BEAD eligible BSLs at an estimated cost of \$669 per location to establish broadband service. It is not even close to which would be more attractive to buildout. It is simply more economical for providers to buildout a county such as Sarpy rather than Cherry, which has led to this digital divide in the state. These high-cost geographic areas may inhibit prospective subgrantees from applying for grants in these areas, as even with the required program applicant match of 25%, an applicant would be required to contribute greater than \$12,500 per location passed to a project.

Figure 7 shows an estimated average cost of deployment to each individual BEAD eligible BSL along with how many BSLs are present by county.

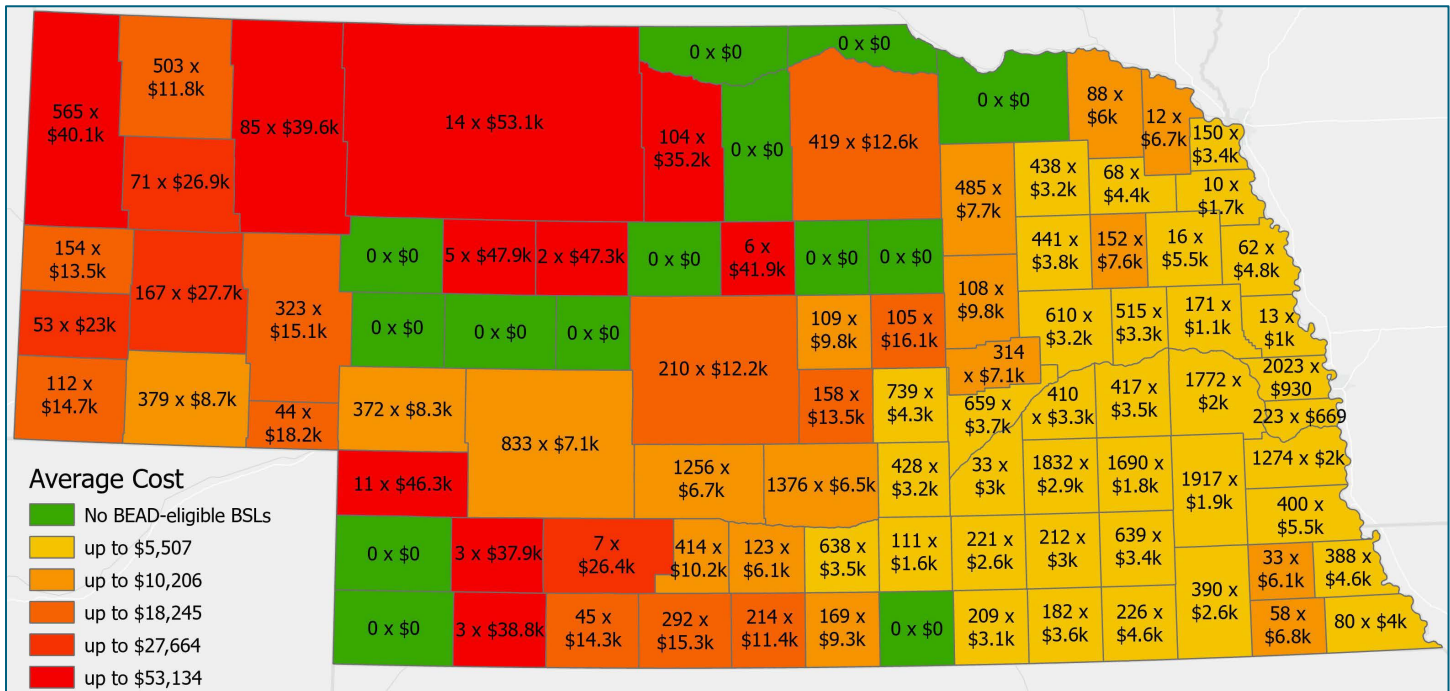


Figure 7. See included key for further details.

Technology Summary

One factor contributing to service discrepancies is the type of technology available. Many, if not most, locations in Nebraska have the opportunity to subscribe to one of many different types of technologies, and as such there is some overlap in the data. However, for some there are few options. The following is a definition for each of the four main types of technology:

Fiber

Fiber-optic internet, otherwise known as “fiber,” is an extremely fast broadband connection that can reach speeds of up to 10 Gbps. This technology uses glass cables that can send data at a rate that is 70% the speed of light and is resilient to severe weather conditions when compared to other types of technology. Rather than using electricity to transfer data like other technologies, fiber utilizes light to transmit information along tiny fibers that are only about 125 microns in diameter (roughly the size of a human hair), which are bundled together into cables. Fiber is widely considered to be the fastest and most reliable technology commonly available.

Fixed Wireless

Fixed Wireless internet uses radio waves sent by a cell tower to a subscriber’s house through an exterior antenna. This requires the construction of a cell tower in the vicinity of the subscriber (typically within 5 miles), relatively no geographic obstructions,

and a fiber line to be run to the cell tower itself. Fixed Wireless is a great solution for locations (such as rural ones) that cannot otherwise be served through physical cables as it operates on radio waves. However, due to the nature of radio waves, subscribers can experience variable speeds and latency issues, especially during times of turbulent weather conditions.

Digital Subscriber Line (DSL)

DSL is a type of technology that transmit digital data of telephone lines. The most common form of this is an asymmetric digital subscriber line for internet access. Telephone lines can handle both internet access and phone calls, so this technology is different from dial-up and typically faster. Because the information is transmitted via copper telephone wires, this technology is also colloquially referred to as “copper.”

Cable

Cable internet uses the same type of line that a TV service uses, which is called a “coaxial cable.” In this case, a coaxial wire runs from the modem located at the ISP to the modem located within the house of the subscriber. Typically, this is bundled with TV channels and the service is usually provided by a local cable TV service provider.

Table 11 shows the four main types of technology used to deliver broadband service by county.

County	Fiber	Fixed Wireless	DSL	Cable
Adams	11,322	13,623	12,016	11,000
Antelope	3,028	3,466	2,502	1,656
Arthur	270	210	0	0
Banner	0	368	191	0
Blaine	181	146	215	0
Boone	299	2,815	2,616	1,661
Box Butte	5,336	4,730	3,486	3,761
Boyd	1,807	830	0	0
Brown	1,843	1,924	1,229	1,373
Buffalo	10,065	18,366	12,621	15,716
Burt	1,750	4,472	2,251	2,095
Butler	1,797	4,807	3,066	1,807
Cass	7,242	12,849	11,714	5,191
Cedar	2,648	4,604	2,461	1,205
Chase	1,939	2,109	1,774	1,126
Cherry	2,490	2,824	2,454	0
Cheyenne	3,139	4,996	4,580	3,063
Clay	2,233	3,888	2,963	1,522

Table 11, continued on next page

County	Fiber	Fixed Wireless	DSL	Cable
Colfax	1,245	4,548	3,080	2,190
Cuming	2,563	4,869	3,891	2,981
Custer	4,004	6,070	4,356	1,780
Dakota	4,216	7,391	4,891	6,073
Dawes	1,521	3,542	3,227	1,910
Dawson	8,275	10,618	6,495	8,236
Deuel	697	1,245	392	295
Dixon	1,648	2,585	1,353	1,102
Dodge	13,920	15,857	13,697	11,736
Douglas	103,503	181,578	89,221	175,359
Dundy	1,486	611	64	0
Fillmore	2,247	3,686	3,003	1,879
Franklin	1,387	1,806	1,121	853
Frontier	1,345	1,387	281	0
Furnas	2,188	3,290	1,765	0
Gage	8,012	11,004	9,339	6,905
Garden	40	1,122	1,064	605
Garfield	1,138	958	83	3
Gosper	482	1,390	719	826
Grant	240	58	202	0
Greeley	221	1,438	1,173	608
Hall	19,208	22,286	17,849	19,779
Hamilton	4,485	4,306	386	445
Harlan	2,409	2,873	1,393	731
Hayes	84	397	526	0
Hitchcock	116	1,933	1,896	0
Holt	4,105	6,172	3,748	2,711
Hooker	447	393	24	0
Howard	640	3,267	2,255	1,215
Jefferson	2,748	4,409	3,222	2,354
Johnson	954	2,774	2,010	1,400
Kearney	2,151	3,354	1,917	2,222
Keith	4,337	5,675	3,180	3,196
Keya Paha	703	39	0	0
Kimball	68	2,218	2,032	1,470
Knox	2,040	4,397	4,894	652
Lancaster	95,607	103,853	99,406	95,682
Lincoln	13,379	15,484	12,013	11,418
Logan	168	331	257	0
Loup	323	420	231	0

Table 11, continued on next page

County	Fiber	Fixed Wireless	DSL	Cable
Madison	11,158	14,380	12,100	12,119
McPherson	56	174	175	0
Merrick	2,284	4,119	2,957	2,361
Morrill	842	1,748	1,800	1,533
Nance	98	2,057	1,474	1,186
Nemaha	2,212	4,071	3,023	1,926
Nuckolls	1,967	2,836	2,100	0
Otoe	4,029	7,763	6,213	4,337
Pawnee	844	2,043	1,402	804
Perkins	275	1,300	1,446	623
Phelps	1,809	4,716	3,414	3,354
Pierce	1,365	3,915	2,639	1,504
Platte	11,068	13,581	8,590	10,781
Polk	1,823	3,020	2,157	1,646
Red Willow	3,700	5,390	4,440	3,716
Richardson	4,579	4,962	783	2,814
Rock	77	951	1,091	0
Saline	3,380	6,407	5,283	3,460
Sarpy	31,076	62,619	46,200	56,161
Saunders	5,332	10,363	8,173	4,069
Scotts Bluff	10,669	16,859	12,877	12,942
Seward	5,329	7,772	5,641	2,925
Sheridan	1,331	1,851	2,824	390
Sherman	346	1,943	963	845
Sioux	109	456	296	247
Stanton	2,085	2,828	1,004	864
Thayer	1,912	3,135	2,417	831
Thomas	334	399	174	0
Thurston	64	2,645	2,150	640
Valley	587	2,104	1,455	1,240
Washington	6,073	8,758	8,464	0
Wayne	2,625	3,724	2,569	2,432
Webster	1,922	2,292	505	678
Wheeler	495	258	183	0
York	4,906	6,905	5,053	3,531

Table 11

Strategic Plan Updates

III. Provide any updates to the strategic plan.

The Nebraska Strategic plan was developed in 2023 through regular engagement with stakeholders and industry leaders from a diverse set of backgrounds. Meetings took place in-person and virtually between February and July of 2023. As a living document, the plan will continue to get updated as feedback is received, programs are developed, and technology is improved. NBO understands that any plans implemented now need to be created with the future decades ahead in mind. A copy of the current Nebraska Broadband Strategic Plan can be viewed in Annex A at the end of this report.

Table 12 is a dashboard of current strategic plan metrics. References for where this information is sourced is included in Appendix A.

		2022	2023	2024	2025
1.1	Access to high-speed internet (100/20)	-	760,604	768,889	-
1.1	Unserviced	-	21,482	17,574	-
1.1	Underserved	-	16,362	11,985	-
1.3	Broadband Map	-	Complete/ Ongoing	Ongoing	-
2.1	Digital Equity Plan	-	Complete		-
2.2	Connected Libraries	97%	97%		-
2.3	ACP Enrollment	60,289	92,238	96,140	-
2.4	Fiber Connected Libraries	41%	52%		-
2.5	Household Without Device	42%	37%		-
3.1	Precision Farming Operations	29%	-		-
	Farm Broadband Access	46%	-		-
3.2	Industry Jobs	1,218	1,250		-
3.4	Business Formation	20,633	21,586		-
4.1	Stakeholder Meetings	-	116	201	-
5.1	NUSF Funding	\$25,891,520.25	\$18,186,289.47	\$25,972,079.01	-

Table 12

Nebraska Broadband Office's Outreach

IV. *Summarize the Nebraska Broadband Office's outreach efforts and collaboration with all interested stakeholders.*

NBO continues to be an exemplar among state broadband offices in outreach efforts. Most recently NBO has been engaging with county and other local officials across the state to highlight the permitting that will come alongside BEAD projects. These early conversations have been productive and informative for both sides of what resources they offer each other in handling permitting. By beginning these conversations earlier rather than later, NBO aims to preempt any BEAD project delays resulting from permitting issues.

NBO has also continued to build and strengthen relationships with critical organizations throughout Nebraska in the report year. Highlights include the economic development districts, the NREA and public power districts, the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO), the Public Service Commission, and UNL Nebraska Extension and Nebraska Experimental Testbed of Things (NEXTT). NBO continues to welcome the opportunity for partnerships wherever they may present themselves.

Lastly, NBO has cultivated positive relationships throughout the provider community in Nebraska. These positive relationships seek to encourage participation in BEAD first and foremost as NBO cannot reach every unserved Nebraskan with broadband service without the provider community. But they also demonstrate Nebraska's unique advantage among other state broadband offices afforded by Director Haggerty's industry and professional experience. These positive relationships, which is not something all state broadband offices are fortunate to have, only enhance the number of partners Nebraska has in its' effort to reach every unserved Nebraskan with broadband service.

Nebraska Digital Equity

V. *Provide an update on efforts to promote digital equity and inclusion on behalf of Nebraska residents.*

In January 2024, responsibility for leading digital equity efforts in Nebraska was moved from the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) to NBO. NBO has continued efforts with the Digital Equity Planning, and Capacity grant programs through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. NBO took over efforts on the State Digital Equity Planning Grant and the completion of the State Digital Equity Plan. NTIA approved the plan on March 29, 2024, and NBO closed out the Digital Equity Planning Grant in July 2024.

This plan is a result of multiple discussions, listening sessions, focus groups, surveys, webinars, outreach sessions, and meetings with stakeholders across the state, and it would not have been possible without those contributions. By completing the plan,

Nebraska became eligible to apply for future funding for capacity building and implementation.

This State Digital Equity plan is for all Nebraskans, but it intentionally focuses on eight covered populations as required by NTIA. These populations are:

- People with low incomes.
- Older people.
- People who are incarcerated.
- Veterans.
- People with disabilities.
- People with language barriers.
- Racial ethnic minorities and Native American people.
- People who live in rural areas of the state.

For the plan, a comprehensive needs assessment of digital equity was completed. The results indicated:

- Availability and affordability of broadband service were the two issues identified most frequently by participants in listening sessions across the state.
- 96.93% of Nebraskans have broadband service of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload as of February 2024.
- About 7.2% of Nebraska households lack digital devices. To be fully connected, many households require both a mobile and a large-screen device.
- Many Nebraskans are not confident in their ability to use security and privacy practices, according to the Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey.
- To be fully connected and able to participate in the economy and society, many people need two kinds of connectivity: fixed and mobile.
- Rural residents and people living in urban areas with high percentages of low-income households have the lowest rates of broadband access at home.
 - Groups that have lower rates of broadband access at home differ demographically, but expressed similar needs:
 - The need for businesses to grow in the community.
 - The need for older adults to access health care through telehealth.
 - The need to completing homework and accessing online classes.
 - The need for their children to have opportunities to stay in their communities.

Nebraska also has multiple assets, which include:

- The state's economic development districts (EDDs) are actively involved in regional digital opportunities planning and have developed their own digital equity plans that offered foundational support for the statewide plan.

- The Nebraska Career Scholarship program provides scholarships to students at the University of Nebraska, state colleges, community colleges, and private postsecondary institutions for students pursuing degrees in programs of study leading to high wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers.
- Libraries are key community partners in promoting digital opportunities across the state. Nebraska has 273 public libraries with 78% of libraries having a service population size of 2,499 or less.
- The University of Nebraska system, state colleges, community colleges, and private colleges offer several technology-related courses and degrees.
- Nebraska’s 145 multi-purpose senior centers can be a resource for older adults. Approximately two-thirds of the state’s senior centers provide Wi-Fi access.

Five goals and seven strategies form the backbone of Nebraska’s digital equity plan:

- **Goal 1:** Increase the proportion of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service.
 - *Strategy 1.1:* Utilize funding from BEAD and other sources to ensure that broadband is available at all locations in Nebraska.
- **Goal 2:** Improve public internet access in Nebraska communities.
 - *Strategy 2.1:* Increase the proportion of internet access points available for public use in Nebraska communities.
 - *Strategy 2.2:* Increase awareness of accessibility issues with state agency and local government websites.
- **Goal 3:** Increase the percentage of Nebraska households with applicable internet devices.
 - *Strategy 3.1:* Address barriers to the development or expansion of programs which refurbish and repair digital devices and/or distribute new devices to members of covered populations.
- **Goal 4:** Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans, including use of privacy and security practices.
 - *Strategy 4.1:* Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations.
 - *Strategy 4.2:* Support the development or expansion of privacy and security training programs for Nebraskans.
- **Goal 5:** Increase the use of telehealth technologies in Nebraska to increase access to care in underserved areas and to reduce health disparities.
 - *Strategy 5.1:* Support efforts by Nebraska hospitals, healthcare providers, associations, and other stakeholders to increase the use of telehealth in Nebraska.

Looking forward, Nebraska's approved Digital Equity Plan includes progress assessments in 2026 and 2029. These planned progress assessments allow for potential changes to be made over time in accordance with changes in needs.

NBO also submitted its application for the Digital Equity Capacity (DECAP) Grant in May 2024. With \$44 billion in funding available to all U.S. states, territories, and Native Entities, work under DECAP will build on the plans and recommendations from the Planning grant. Intended outcomes with DECAP funding include:

- Increasing the number of broadband providers in Nebraska offering affordable plans for low-income and middle-class households.
- Increasing the number of digital navigators across the state.
- Increasing the proportion of people who report they use the internet to address their health-related needs.
- Increasing the number of people with improved digital privacy and security skills.

NBO's plan is to address these objectives largely via subgrants, as the state intends to subgrant out the bulk of the state's DECAP funding. Efforts will be made to target all eight of the covered populations, geographic coverage of the entire state; and Goals 1, 4, and 5 and the four associated strategies of Nebraska's DE Plan. These three goals were prioritized based on NBO's assessment of the goals with the greatest potential reach, with the knowledge that a second or third round of DECAP funding is not assured.

On November 21, 2024, NBO received its' notice of award for the DECAP grant program. Nebraska was awarded \$6,500,627.76 through this program. In anticipation of this award, NBO has been communicating with stakeholders and potential applicants to promote participation in the program. These meetings will be followed by the release of the program RFA and initiation of the subgrantee selection process. NBO wants to generate as large an applicant pool as possible in its subgrantee selection process, so a significant part of the first program year will be spent meeting with stakeholders and potential applicants.

NBO staff will meet with organizations or groups before the RFA is released to offer technical assistance, encouragement, and opportunities for questions and answers. There are meetings and ongoing discussions with many different groups. Among sister agencies and organizations these include:

- Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- DHHS Office of Health Disparities
- New Americans Task Force (NATF)
- Nebraska Library Commission
- Nebraska Department of Correctional Services
- Local health departments

- Economic development district offices

NBO has also engaged local and community organizations. These include Bryan Health, Rural Prosperity Nebraska, University of Nebraska Extension Office, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, and the Southeast Nebraska Development District.

Finally, NBO has played a minor role in the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. This \$1.25 billion program seeks to support efforts to achieve digital equity, promote digital inclusion activities, and spur greater adoption and meaningful use of broadband among the covered populations. State broadband offices were not eligible to apply for Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program funding. However, NBO was successful at bringing together interested parties to collaborate on applications. Based on information shared by partners, several applications were submitted by Nebraska-based groups.

Federal Broadband Advocacy

- VI. *Provide an update on state advocacy on broadband issues being conducted at the federal level.*

In the report year, NBO has continued to engage in federal advocacy across many levels to ensure Nebraska's interests are properly and adequately represented in broadband policy. NBO's cooperation with our state's congressional delegations, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and NTIA on a range of matters is demonstrative of this advocacy in practice. The approval of Nebraska's IPV 2 was facilitated through extensive dialogues with Nebraska's congressional delegations and NTIA. This ultimately led to a product that adhered to the federal standards required of it while being as representative of Nebraska's unique broadband needs as possible.

Nebraska's Low-Cost Broadband Service Option is also product of these dialogues with NTIA. NBO recognizes the need of affordable broadband service in Nebraska. However, the requirement for such an option by NTIA as part of BEAD concerned NBO that such a requirement equated to rate regulation which was specifically prohibited by Congress thereby exposing the state to legal action. NBO through collaboration and cooperation with NTIA remedied this concern with a formulaically created rate based on Nebraska's federal poverty level estimated take-home pay and the generally accepted definition of affordable broadband being 2% of monthly household income. Based on these, a family of four at the top of Nebraska's poverty line could afford a service priced within a range of \$0 - \$70, thus supporting Nebraska setting the upper limit of the Low-Cost Broadband Service Option to be \$70 per month.

Additionally, Director Haggerty and NBO staff have continued to attend conferences where federal representatives, state broadband office representatives, and key stakeholder groups are present. Highlights among these were NTIA's Joint Cohort Summit and NTTA's Tribal Broadband Summit both held in September. Director Haggerty

and NBO staff had the opportunity at these events to interact directly with representatives of the federal agencies NBO is working with on a range of issues. Also present at these events were representatives of other state broadband offices and stakeholder groups. Consequently, Nebraska continues to have a forceful presence not only representing its' interests federally but also as a leader among states on BEAD policy. Nebraska's concept of defined project areas rather than location-based granting has been adopted by other states and iterated upon, illustrating this leadership.

Legislatively, NBO remains supportive of the Last ACRE Act of 2023 sponsored by Senator Fischer. Though the bill has not seen any action taken on it in the report year, the proposed Last Acre Program it would create within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development would address a critical element of broadband connectivity. Nebraska stands to benefit greatly from such a program given the state's extensive amount of agricultural land. Additionally, further supporting precision agriculture connectivity efforts in Nebraska as the program would seek to has the potential to further leverage Nebraska's leadership in this area to an even greater degree than today.

NBO will continue to advocate for broadband issues affecting Nebraska on the Federal level.

Appendix A – Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan Dashboard References

Reference:

- 1.1 - Nebraska Broadband Map Data, available from <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7dcc2182601a4b339ab687f673a9811f>.
- 2.2 - Public Library Statistical Data, available from the Nebraska Library Commission at <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/stats/statlist.aspx>.
- 2.3 - ACP Funding Summary by Geography, available from the Universal Service Administration Company at <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/#:~:text=The%C2%A0ACP%20Funding%20Summary>.
- 2.4 - See resource referenced in 2.2.
- 2.5 - 2023 American Community Survey B28010, available from the United States Census Bureau at https://data.census.gov/map/040XX00US31/ACSDT1Y2023/B28010?q=access%20to%20computer&layer=VT_2023_040_00_PP_D1&loc=41.5182,-99.9160,z6.9022
- 3.1 - Nebraska – Table 77 – Land Use Practices (pg.224) - Use of Precision Ag Practices, USDA Census of Agriculture available at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/Nebraska/st31_1_077_077.pdf
- 3.2 - Occupational Employment Projections – Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairs, Except Line Installers, available from NEworks Occupation Employment Projections Download Center at <https://networks.nebraska.gov/vosnet/gsipub/documentView.aspx?enc=EV+mnVfK6qRWnoXwN+RfXg==>.
- 3.4 - Business Formation Statistics, available from the United States Census Bureau at [https://www.census.gov/econ/currentdata/?programCode=BFS&startYear=2023&endYear=2023&categories\[\]=TOTAL&dataType=BA_BA&geoLevel=NE&adjusted=1¬Adjusted=0&errorData=0](https://www.census.gov/econ/currentdata/?programCode=BFS&startYear=2023&endYear=2023&categories[]=TOTAL&dataType=BA_BA&geoLevel=NE&adjusted=1¬Adjusted=0&errorData=0)

Annex A



Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan



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Executive Summary

Overview

Broadband enables essential activities of residents and improves society through different channels such as economic development, healthcare, public safety, government services, and education. The country will see the largest ever investment in broadband by the federal government, of over \$100 billion nationwide, with Nebraska receiving \$405 million in funding over the next 5 years through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. On January 6, 2023, Governor Jim Pillen issued Executive Order 23-02 to establish the Nebraska Broadband Office housed within the Nebraska Department of Transportation.

The purpose of the Nebraska Broadband Office is to provide for policy level direction and coordination across all levels of government to reach the goal of connecting 100% of Nebraska households to high-speed Internet by 2027. Therefore, the Nebraska Broadband Office, in coordination and consultation with impacted stakeholders across the State, developed the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan. Included in the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan are four goals geared towards addressing issues in the realms of connectivity, digital equity, digital economy, and stakeholder engagement. State and federal funding is critical to ensure the state can accomplish these goals.

Disclaimer: The Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan is subject to changes based on internal and external stakeholder feedback that will be solicited on an ongoing basis. The execution of the strategies, goals, and metrics identified in the Plan relies on the funding timelines of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA). Programs administered by these agencies are evolving and the timelines are not always known. The Nebraska Broadband Office will review the Plan and update it as new information is made available.

Problem Statement

In Nebraska, 13.26% of locations are unserved or underserved, and 105,000 households lack acceptable access to the internet. A consequence of limited access includes an unfavorable business case for investment, especially in rural areas. The primary drivers for the adoption gap are affordability, devices, and literacy. The Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan identifies strategies that will address gaps to expand access and close the digital divide.

Recommendations

Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and E-Rate Special Construction (E-Rate), state and local governments have access to federal funding resources to bridge the digital divide. Per BEAD, Nebraska now has a mandate to connect every unserved location across the State, turning broadband deployment into a strategic imperative at a local level. Based on these opportunities, the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan includes recommendations to achieve specific goals. The implementation of these goals can be found in detail in the Goals and Action sections below.

Goal One: Bolster economic opportunity by connecting 100% of residents, particularly those in rural communities, to high-speed Internet by 2027.

Strategies:

1. Prioritize deployment and target funding in areas where a negative business case for private investment for the unserved and under-served exists.
2. Set an extreme high cost per location threshold for difficult to serve areas.
3. Utilize location-level mapping and analytics to assess areas of critical need and to target unserved and underserved areas.

Goal Two: Expand digital inclusion and adoption to achieve affordability, access, and digital literacy by 25% by 2027.

Strategies:

1. Conduct a landscape analysis of existing digital literacy programs and develop strategies to address any gaps.
2. Conduct digital navigator pilots within targeted populations, evaluate strategies that work and leverage public-private partnerships to build skills and confidence in the use of technology.
3. Partner with libraries across the State to provide opportunity for every library access to a fiber Internet service of 1Gbps or greater.

Goal Three: Enable Nebraska to thrive by fostering and supporting a digital economy by 2027.

Strategies:

1. Expand workforce development programs to prepare and support industry to address labor shortages that are barriers to deployment.
2. Improve delivery of government services by leveraging technology to facilitate a culture of innovation and efficiency.
3. Ensure investments in broadband leverage existing strategies and programs already in place to improve the digital economy.

Goal Four: Develop robust collaboration across Nebraskan communities through strategic planning of broadband and digital equity to ensure that all unserved, underserved, and underrepresented communities are connected.

Strategies:

1. Link the operations of infrastructure and public, private and community broadband networks to encourage collaboration and ensure economic resiliency.
2. Leverage broadband to support public safety infrastructure.

Goal Five: Ensure the long-term sustainability of deployed infrastructure necessary to preserve access by all Nebraskans to affordable and reliable communications services provided by broadband capable networks.

Strategies:

1. Encourage Federal and Nebraska policymakers to modernize the FUSF and NUSF.
2. Determine alignment of FUSF support programs (i.e., A-CAM and “Legacy” programs) with Nebraska broadband policies, including NUSF.
3. Ensure that long-term commitments are satisfied under state administered broadband deployment grant programs other than FUSF and NUSF programs.

Key Findings

The Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan includes ten key findings: (1) build the capabilities of the broadband office, (2) set a vision and run diagnostics to align policy objectives and feasibility studies to achieve program goals, (3) build location-level mapping & analytics capabilities, (4) set deployment strategies, (5) design a competitive and nimble granting process that ensures competition, (6) execute and evaluate proposals based on robust criteria that considers viability and the efficient use of funds, (7) set up oversight functions and report on results, (8) ensure external stakeholder engagement, (9) establish strong internal project management and (10) consider additional funding for broadband to ensure the long term sustainability for these one-time capital investments. The goals, actions and key findings will ensure successful implementation of the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan.

Next Steps

The Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan outlines short and long-term steps to bridge the digital divide. In the short-term, the Broadband Office needs to continue assessing office-level capabilities and baseline the current state of broadband access across Nebraska. Ongoing refinement of individual grant strategies through federal and state funding is necessary in mobilizing to execute funding. The Broadband Office in partnership with the Public Service Commission and state leadership must identify risks and conduct mitigation planning to avoid barriers to deployment and adoption.

The long-term steps include consideration of permanent funding for the sustainability of the state’s broadband infrastructure and programs. It is also important that the Broadband Office engage and coordinate with stakeholders throughout the process. Nebraska will apply for every funding opportunity offered through the US Treasury Department and NTIA. The share of funding that Nebraska will receive is \$405M over the next 5 years. The next steps are to develop a competitive grant program for BEAD that includes criteria and matching requirements for sub-recipients and update the Plan annually as broadband programs evolve.

Conclusion

The establishment of Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan was the first step in providing clear direction with the goal of connecting 100% of households to high-speed broadband and developing plans to implement effective strategies. The historic funding available through the BEAD program will result in unprecedented opportunities to accomplish the goals of the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan and bridge the digital divide. The Broadband Office is uniquely positioned to successfully leverage resources where they are needed most in Nebraska. Accelerating broadband will bolster Nebraska's economy, improve resiliency, help communities thrive, and ensure that everyone has access to essential activities and services needed for a better quality of life.

Roadmap to Connect 100% by 2027 Table

The Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan will connect 100% of Nebraskans to high-speed Internet by 2027. The following table is a projection of the percentage of residents that the Broadband Office proposes to connect through 2027. Included is the percent of funding that will be utilized per federal programs each year. The success of connecting residents to broadband by the projected date is based on variables that the Broadband Office does not influence.

Projections are subject to the following variables:

- Completion of Nebraska mapping by the FCC
- Completion of the challenge process by the FCC
- The total amount allocated by the NTIA for BEAD
- The time of funding allocations made available by the NTIA for BEAD
- Grant awards to sub-recipients to the NTIA for middle mile
- Labor and supply chain delays
- Local permitting, easement, and right-of-way delays
- Dynamics that impact the drivers of adoption
- Complete applications by sub-recipients
- State procurement and contracting process
- Completion and closeout of construction of broadband projects
- Compliance and monitoring of sub-recipients

Connectivity and Funding Utilization Percentage Table*

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027***	Total
% of Households Connected	86.7%	89%	93%	95%	100%	100%
Federal & State Program Utilization						
E-Rate	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	100%
Bridge**	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	100%
CPF	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%
DE	53%	47%	0%	0%	0%	100%
BEAD	0%	25%	50%	25%	0%	100%
EMM	0%	20%	40%	40%	0%	100%

*Projections are predictions and based on variables that the Broadband Office does not influence. The table is based on the draw-down of funds. The Internet gap is defined as residents who do not receive at least 100/20 mbps.

**Bridge is a state funded program administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission, and is an ongoing program

***All federal programs are required to be executed by 2027

Broadband Goals and Actions

To accomplish the strategies identified in the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan, the Nebraska Broadband Office has developed a list of goals to orient any State plan or program. Since the state’s broadband program is a new initiative, revisiting and refining the implementation plan will be necessary. Incremental evaluation is included and required to benchmark success against different strategies and report regularly to elected officials on progress to ensure transparency.

Goal 1: Bolster economic opportunity by connecting every Nebraskan household and business to high-speed internet

Universal access to broadband will bring significant economic opportunities. Developing high-speed networks, however, is an expensive proposition. Network deployment should maximize the scalability of that network to minimize future investments required to meet evolving consumer needs. This concept is referred to as the deployment of a “future proof” network. The State's broadband policies give preference to symmetrical speeds of 100/20Mbps or higher. The grant program design must be nimble and competitive as Nebraska is a high-cost state and criteria will include incentives for investment in rural areas with critical need. Successful grant applicants will include both last and middle mile infrastructure and where necessary, may involve the use of alternative technologies.

Strategy 1.1

Target State grants and programs to unserved or underserved areas where private investment alone cannot sustain the investment needed to provide 100/20 Mbps broadband service.

Activities:

- Design grant programs which encourage investment by providers, grantees, and other stakeholders. Such programs shall:
 - Encourage partnerships, including public-private partnerships and network deployment projects where business risk can be shared, and existing infrastructure can be used to extend broadband service.
 - Weigh past performance of broadband service suppliers and quantify the local and statewide impacts of proposed projects.
 - Connect all unserved homes and businesses, taking into consideration state and federal regulations, the economic impact of a proposed project, and the maximization and efficient use of the limited funding resources available.
 - Utilize available public funds to connect important economic drivers in rural areas that will lead to further economic development.
- Invest in community anchor institutions (CAI) through Network Nebraska where possible to provide reliable high-speed access.
- The Nebraska Broadband Office will monitor and review the design, engineering, site prep, construction, close-out, and performance of last and middle-mile projects to ensure that investments are built on time and to design specifications per contract terms and conditions.
 - Provide updates on public facing milestones that track easily understood progress such as Grant awarded, Design completed, Materials ordered, Materials received, Construction started, etc.

Performance Metrics:

- Increase broadband access (minimum 100/20) for households and businesses to 100%
- Work with tribes to increase the number of homes and businesses on tribal lands connected to broadband speeds of 100/20 mbps.

Strategy 1.2

Maximize private funding and investment in broadband buildouts to provide broadband service of 100/20Mbps.

Activities:

- Incentivize private broadband investment through use of State and local assets such as access to State and local Right of Ways.
- Encourage regional broadband planning and promote state and local projects that will serve largely unserved areas of the state.

- Where appropriate, utilize existing infrastructure to deploy broadband infrastructure most efficiently in high-cost areas.

Performance Metrics:

- Number of households connected by independently funded broadband projects

Strategy 1.3

Utilize the best available location-level mapping and analytics to assess areas of critical need and to target areas that require subsidies.

Activities¹:

- Initiate a process to obtain inputs from all stakeholders regarding the scope of "necessary information" that is appropriate to request from broadband providers in order to create and keep current the official Nebraska location fabric broadband access map (the "State Broadband Map").
- Create a broadband projects dashboard to inform stakeholders where investments are occurring in the state.
- Provide data layers that aggregate information based on information including, but not limited to;
 - State Senator Districts
 - Counties
 - Public Service Commissioner Districts
 - Economic Development Districts
 - Congressional Districts

Performance Metrics:

- Creation of the Broadband Map
- The Broadband Office has received stakeholder inputs to determine necessary information for completion of the State Broadband Map showing broadband availability and available speed for all serviceable locations in Nebraska as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. section 86-333(1) and (2).
- The Broadband Office, with the assistance of third party contractor(s), has created the State Broadband Map.
- Practices and procedures have been developed by the Broadband Office for periodic updates of the State Broadband Map to keep it as current and accurate as possible.
- Policies and procedures have been implemented to protect the confidentiality of trade secret information provided to the Broadband Office as part of the process for creation of the State Broadband Map.

¹ Information provided to the Broadband Office pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. Sec. 86-333(3) for the State Broadband Map shall be subject to applicable confidentiality protections.

Goal 2: Expand digital inclusion and adoption to achieve affordability, access, and digital literacy

Connecting all Nebraskan households to high-speed internet access requires investment in digital equity. Nebraska's digital equity efforts are focusing on affordable access to service, access to internet-enabled devices, and digital literacy. The Nebraska State Digital Equity Plan will support the digital equity strategies of the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan and provide more detail.

Strategy 2.1

Conduct a landscape analysis of existing digital equity and affordability programs and develop strategies to address any gaps.

Activities:

- Develop a statewide Digital Equity Plan in partnership with the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

Performance Metrics:

- Completion of State Digital Equity Plan.

Strategy 2.2

Leverage E-rate special construction and ensure that connectivity to network infrastructure is available during emergencies.

Activities:

- Prioritize connectivity at CAIs such as schools, community centers, libraries, and recreation centers.

Performance Metrics:

- Number of libraries connected to high-speed internet.

Strategy 2.3

Address broadband affordability

Activities:

- Increase enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program and Lifeline Program by increasing awareness and decreasing barriers.
- Encourage providers currently not participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program to participate.

- Partner with broadband providers to advance digital inclusion efforts targeting low-income households such as training, device refurbishment programs or other programs included in the state digital equity plan.
- Incentivize providers to offer low-cost and affordable service options as an evaluation criterion for broadband grant funding.
- Support continued funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Performance Metrics:

- Increase enrollment by 50% in the Affordable Connectivity Program and the Lifeline program by January 2025 considerate of continued funding.

Strategy 2.4

Expand digital literacy training and support throughout Nebraska.

Activities:

- Build capacity in libraries, senior centers, and other organizations to provide technical support and training by focusing on the following:
 - Increase fiber connectivity.
 - Increase technical support provided by the Nebraska Library Commission (NLC) to help libraries improve network infrastructure, install CIPA-compliant filtering, meet cybersecurity standards for public use technologies, and address the ongoing need for maintenance options.
 - Decrease barriers to providing training and classes in libraries, senior centers, and other organizations.
- Leverage partnerships to expand digital literacy training and support throughout Nebraska, including partnerships with 4-H, schools, and youth organizations.
- Expand access and awareness to digital training resources to households and through the Broadband Office, libraries, and other community anchor institutions.
- Explore funding for targeted digital literacy training programs with a focus on NTIA-defined covered populations with the Digital Equity Capacity Grant.

Metrics:

- Increase the percentage of Nebraska libraries with fiber connections by 2027
- Increase the percentage of Nebraska libraries with at least one up to date laptop or desktop computer by 2027

Strategy 2.5

Expand access to digital devices.

Activities:

- Increase awareness of device refurbishment and repair programs.
- Explore ways to establish or expand device refurbishment programs.
- Explore ways to expand access to affordable device repair services.

Performance Metrics:

- Increase the percentage of Nebraska households with at least one digital device by 2025.

Goal 3: Enable Nebraska to thrive by fostering and supporting a digital economy by 2027

The state plays an important role in supporting the digital economy. Supporting and funding programs that address labor shortages, implementing digital government strategies, removing administrative barriers, increasing efficiencies, and aligning broadband efforts with existing programs will all help foster the digital economy.

Strategy 3.1:

Encourage the utilization of broadband technology to create efficiencies for key industries and constituencies within the state.

Activities:

- Encourage cutting-edge broadband technologies to empower rural and underserved communities by providing interactive medical training, consultation, and real-time telehealth services, thereby enhancing the state's healthcare infrastructure.
- Encourage the use of broadband technologies to support precision farming and resource efficiency techniques in collaboration with agricultural machinery companies, thereby elevating Nebraska's agricultural technology landscape.
- Promote the use of broadband technologies to improve animal welfare, productivity, and promote smart farming practices through remote consultations and real-time livestock monitoring.
- Attract more manufacturing capacity to rural and underserved areas by connecting those communities to high-speed broadband through State grant programs.

Performance Metrics:

- Number of households that can access telehealth services in rural and underserved communities
- Percent increase in agricultural operations utilizing precision farming technologies and resource efficiency.

Strategy 3.2:

Grow workforce development programs to prepare and support industry to address labor shortages in targeted industries.

Activities:

- Coordinate partnerships between the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Labor, the broadband industry, and higher education to take advantage of workforce development programs and strategies to increase deployment-related roles in Nebraska, especially in outdoor and labor-intensive roles (e.g., apprenticeship, technical/vocational training, and school partnerships.)
- Encourage investment in academic curricula for key industries to meet the demands of the digital economy by fostering industry-academia collaboration for research and development and supporting apprenticeship and internship programs.
- Champion business-led initiatives and collaborations that proactively invest in the development of a skilled workforce that is capable of tackling labor shortages in the broadband industry and

- adapting to the emergence of new broadband-based technologies.
- Reach out to and partner with employers, unions, community partners, and local organizations focused on workforce development to identify existing training programs and next steps to close the workforce deficit.
- Encourage the engagement of youth early through career academies and workforce development initiatives to ensure a steady supply of skilled professionals to support the growth of the broadband industry and targeted industries.
- Consider partnering with adjacent states to develop a multi-state approach to workforce development to address gaps in deployment related roles.
- Create a landing page on the Nebraska Broadband Office’s website containing information on existing workforce development programs and resources.

Performance Metrics:

- Number of effective public-private partnerships supporting workforce development needs for the broadband industry and targeted industries.
- Number of individuals who have successfully participated in a broadband industry or an industry focused workforce development program.
- Number of job placements in the broadband sector and industry focused positions
- Percentage of students who can access and effectively utilize broadband technologies.

Strategy 3.3:

Improve delivery of government services by leveraging technology to facilitate a culture of innovation and efficiency among government agencies.

Activities:

- Develop a Broadband Community Readiness Certification program for local governments to support permitting processes and prioritize those who participate in the program.
- Optimize emergency response by utilizing broadband capabilities to improve emergency response and enhance the Next Generation 911 system for more efficient triaging and responses to emergency calls.
- Promote a culture of innovation within government agencies by promoting creative problem-solving, adopting agile methodologies, and leveraging technology to automate routine tasks.
- Agricultural Collaboration and Connectivity.
 - Encourage local agriculture producers to engage with agribusiness suppliers at all levels in discussions about area connectivity shortcomings that may be impeding use of precision agricultural technologies and collaborate to experiment with pilot connectivity projects.

Performance Metrics:

- Percent of local government units engaged through the establishment of a Broadband Community Readiness Certification program.
- Measure improvements to emergency response time in communities leveraging broadband technology to enhance its Next Generation 911 system.

Strategy 3.4:

Leverage strategies and public-private partnerships to improve the digital economy within Nebraska to maximize broadband investment.

Activities:

- Align broadband funding in areas of the state where there is targeted investment that supports economic development, improved health outcomes, enterprise and opportunity zones, workforce development programs, and K-12 learning.
- Encourage industry-academia collaboration in research and development to foster innovative broadband technologies and solutions that can increase the efficiency and quality of broadband services.
- Improve digital literacy throughout the state to increase the demand for broadband services and make the state more attractive to investors and companies.
 - Connect entrepreneurs to internet service providers for collaboration.

Performance Metrics:

- Amount of funding invested to support Nebraska’s digital economy.
- Number of companies who become established in Nebraska or relocate to Nebraska to take advantage of Nebraska’s digital economy.

Goal 4: Develop robust collaboration across Nebraskan communities through strategic planning of broadband and digital equity to ensure that all unserved and underserved communities are connected.

Community resiliency is the ability to use available resources over the long-term to respond to needs. This can happen if there are systems in place to connect individuals and groups and allow them to coalesce to meet collective needs. Broadband is essential to enabling that interconnection. The Broadband Office will develop a model that encourages and empowers stakeholders to convene around shared goals and values to find solutions that will reduce the existence of the digital divide.

Strategy 4.1

Develop regular forums by which broadband policy and decision making can be promulgated and feedback for such policy and decision making can be provided.

Activities:

- Establish regular community and industry forums to collect feedback to inform grant making and report on the status of the Plan. Such forums include:

- Annual Broadband Summit for local government, agriculture, economic development, business, education, internet provider, and public safety leaders
- Monthly stakeholder meetings.
- Monthly webinars to be posted on the Broadband Office website
- Conduct annual assessments on the state of broadband, risks to the broadband industry, and updates on strategies that include communications, industry capabilities and recovery initiatives.
- Conduct yearly Broadband Office-led listening tour to solicit feedback from communities and industry stakeholders.
- Conduct high level capacity and technical training with locally and regionally identified local government, agriculture, economic development, healthcare, education, and public safety leaders.

Performance Metrics:

- Number of community and industry stakeholder meetings hosted.
- Hold Broadband Summit.
- Develop mechanisms to identify local and regional leaders who can work with the Broadband Office.
- Number of training opportunities created and held to develop capacity and technical training with locally and regionally identified local government, agriculture, economic development, healthcare, education, and public safety leaders.

Strategy 4.2

Utilize robust collaboration to create local engagement by proactively developing local leadership capacity so that transparent informed local policy making can assist in providing broadband access to all Nebraskans.

Activities:

- Empower local organizations to work with ISP providers to develop broadband plans.
- Develop a program for recognized Municipalities and Counties that are “Broadband Ready” to achieve the following in coordination with local organizations:
 - Identify a local champion to help them work with local governments, agriculture leaders, business leaders, educational leaders, economic development leaders and public safety leaders.
 - Form local teams to engage the local and regional entities that influence broadband deployment decisions, including regulatory agencies, business leaders with broadband needs, and educational institutions.
 - Develop local capacity and technical needs assessments.

Performance Metrics:

- Number of training opportunities offered.
- Number of “local champions” engaged.

Goal 5: Ensure the long-term sustainability of deployed infrastructure necessary to preserve access by all Nebraskans to affordable and reliable communications services provided by broadband capable networks.

Spurred on by the attention during the COVID pandemic regarding the need for broadband infrastructure to provide universal access to broadband services for remote access to work and education, state and federal governments have made an unprecedented investment in capital construction costs for deployment of such infrastructure. Starting with the America Rescue Plan Act, and continuing with the Infrastructure and Jobs Act, and U.S. Department of Treasury Capital Projects Funds, significant federal support has been dedicated to this endeavor. The State of Nebraska has also dedicated state General Funds towards capital construction of broadband networks in recent years. With this investment in new and upgraded networks as well as the continuation of existing networks, it is reasonable to expect unprecedented costs for operating, maintaining, and upgrading these networks.²

Strategy 5.1

Encourage Federal and Nebraska policymakers to modernize the FUSF and NUSF.

Activities:

- Encourage the Commission to continue to reassess the utility of the NUSF program
- Encourage for the Commission to address issues related to the stability and efficacy of the NUSF.
- Monitor broadband buildout to assess the impact on the level of NUSF contributions.
- Examine how information/broadband services align with the goals and policies of the NUSF.

Performance Metrics:

- The Commission’s continued use of the NUSF program to bolster its universal service goal
- Successful alignment of information/broadband services with the goals and polices of the NUSF

Strategy 5.2

Determine alignment of FUSF support programs (i.e., A-CAM and “Legacy” programs) with Nebraska broadband policies, including NUSF.

² 47 U.S.C. § 254(e) provides that FUSF shall be used “only for the provision, maintenance and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended.” Neb. Rev. Stat. § 86-317 states that the purpose of the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund Act “is to authorize the commission to establish a funding mechanism which supplements federal universal service support mechanisms.” Consistent with federal requirements, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 86-324(1) specifies that NUSF support shall be used “only for the provision, maintenance and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended.” *Neb. Rev. Stat.* §86-323 states the overall purpose of the NUSF, authorizes the Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) to administer the program, and further states that it is the policy of the State that the “distribution of universal service funds should encourage the continued development and maintenance of telecommunications infrastructure.”

Activities:

- Determine where shortfalls exist in the provision of support for ongoing expenses, maintenance, and upgrading costs for the network, utilizing updated cost model data.

Performance Metrics:

- If any shortfalls are discovered, timely support is provided to address them.

Strategy 5.3

Ensure that long-term commitments are satisfied under state administered broadband deployment grant programs other than FUSF and NUSF programs.

Activities:

- Ensure any state-administered broadband deployment grant programs include service commitment periods (NBBP requires 15 years).
- Assess technical, financial, and managerial capabilities of state-administered broadband grant program applicants to manage a network long-term.
- Establish/enhance/retain accountability standards for state-administered broadband deployment grant programs.
 - Accountability for support received
 - Accountability for meeting deployment obligations
- Establish/enhance enforcement protocols.
 - Mechanisms for enforcement in the event deployment obligations are not met
 - Mechanisms for enforcement in the event support is not used for its intended purpose

Performance Metrics:

- State-administered broadband deployment grant programs include service commitment periods
- Accountability measures are developed and enhanced for state-administered broadband deployment grant programs

Performance and Evaluation Recommendations

Benchmarking the success of the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan is important to assess what is working or needs improvement. Included are various metrics associated with each goal. The list below includes existing and new metrics for consideration. The next step of the Plan will be to coordinate stakeholders to finalize the metrics (outcome and lead measures).

Goal One

- Increase in broadband access (minimum 100/20) for rural households from 86.7% to 100% of households served.
- Number of households served with minimum speed standard of reliable 100 Mbps symmetrical upload and download (unless geographically, topography, or excessive cost then 100/20 and scalable to 100/20).
- Number of homes on tribal lands being connected to broadband speeds of 100/20 mbps.
- Number of speed tests confirmed.
- Percent increase in confirmed reported service speeds.
- Number of unserved and underserved connected to high-speed internet.

Goal Two

- Number of residents participating in the statewide Digital Equity Plan.
- Number of digital literacy programs, navigators, and partnerships.

Goal Three

- Number of individuals who have successfully participated in an industry focused workforce development program.
- Number of job placements in industry focused positions.
- Percent of local government units engaged
- Number of Broadband service providers that receive upgraded broadband equipment.
- Number of rural service providers that receive upgraded broadband equipment.

Goal Four

- Number of community and industry stakeholder meetings hosted.
- Number of CAIs connected to high-speed internet.

Goal Five

- The Commission's continued use of the NUSF program to bolster its universal service goal
- Successful alignment of information/broadband services with the goals and policies of the NUSF
- If any shortfalls are discovered, timely support is provided to address them.
- State-administered broadband deployment grant programs include service commitment periods
- Accountability measures are developed and enhanced for state-administered broadband deployment grant programs

Conclusion

The Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan's goals and actions serve as a specific implementation plan for the Broadband Office. The plan includes short and long-term goals and actions that rely on funding. Therefore, the time frame for completion of goals and actions depends on available funding and is not included at this time. Implementation of the goals and actions will ensure that the state connects 100% of households to high-speed internet by 2027.