



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

OFFICE OF BROADBAND
JB Pritzker, Governor

BROADBAND READY

As part of his historic \$45 billion Rebuild Illinois investment strategy, Governor J.B. Pritzker included \$420 million to expand access to high-speed broadband internet across the state. The resulting *Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program* is the largest state-based broadband matching grant program ever, leveraging the magnitude of funding needed for state-driven broadband ubiquity.

To help Illinoisans best access, adopt, and use broadband, the Illinois Office of Broadband introduced complementary programming to pair with its ongoing \$420 million capital broadband investment. Combined, this funding seeks to ensure affordable in-home broadband service, access to personal computers, digital literacy training, and ongoing technical support. Illinois is working alongside public and private partners through this initiative to drive economic development and increase quality of life for all Illinoisans.

The ***Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY) Grant Program*** seeks to provide a roadmap to eliminating the digital divide through regional collaboration for equitable advances in the areas of broadband access, adoption, and utilization. The program is part of the increasingly robust and comprehensive Connect Illinois Digital Equity Package, a holistic approach designed to help regions identify and address existing broadband equity gaps, as well as to leverage new resources for urgent broadband access and longer-term broadband competitiveness – with an eye to sustained broadband equity and inclusion.

The ***Broadband READY Grant Program*** supports a qualified regional entity – such as a community and economic development organization, regional planning council, or institution of higher education – in each region of the state. Grantees convene inclusive and regionally representative Broadband READY Teams to balance investment in urgent broadband access expansion with the strategic imperative to identify gaps, integrate resources, and track progress over time. READY Teams work with the Illinois Office of Broadband to produce actionable Broadband READY Reports, each consisting of a digital indicator dashboard, a current conditions summary, and a digital divide elimination plan.

The collaborative work includes aligning local and regional efforts by forging and strengthening partnerships, identifying scalable or replicable best practice initiatives, and establishing baseline metrics for tracking progress. The program engages key stakeholders toward shared goals in expanding broadband access, adoption, and utilization – key factors contributing to the digital divide, and the elimination thereof.

The initial Broadband READY cohort is underway, with a second cohort beginning soon. The program is a collaborative effort between the Illinois Office of Broadband and Illinois Innovation Network. For more information on the Illinois Connected Communities program, [visit the Illinois Office of Broadband Connect Illinois website](#).

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