

State of Vermont Broadband Policy Agenda

Expanding access to broadband internet access services is an important concern to many Vermonters. Currently, at least 6% of Vermonters lack access to basic broadband and a full 26% lack broadband meeting the FCC's definition of broadband. Only 13% of Vermont's business and residential addresses have broadband meeting the state's 2024 goal of 100/100 Mbps. On behalf of the Administration, the Department of Public Service and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development are proposing several measures designed to increase broadband penetration. These measures include:

1. Ensuring more broadband infrastructure is built by reducing the permitting delays by making the 248a wireless tower process permanent.
2. Helping towns identify viable broadband solutions by increasing the availability of planning and technical assistance funding to communities the ThinkVermont Innovation Grant program.
3. Increasing the speed by which the Public Service Department can give immediate assistance to providers building to unserved addresses by increasing the Connectivity Fund.
4. Allowing towns to play a more active role in broadband solutions by allowing them to use general obligation bonds to finance telecommunications infrastructure.
5. Expanding access to capital for new broadband providers providing state-of-the-art solutions to unserved and underserved addresses by creating a new Broadband Expansion Loan Program at VEDA.
6. Improving access to utility poles for broadband providers by streamlining the state's pole attachment rules.