

Connectivity: Public Service Department COVID-19 Emergency Response

Phase I: (Immediate) March – July

Webpage for COVID-19 Connectivity Assistance

Wifi Hot Spots Project

- **Temporary + immediate** connectivity aid. PSD Map: 733 sites. 18,200 views since publication, average of 537 views/day. VEM social media: 644 shares. Updated via crowd sourcing. Carrier offerings for free hot spots. Expansion via Microsoft/RTO wireless: 20 done, 15 to go, 10 this week. VELCO reviewing possible additions too.

FEMA: Emergency Communications Aid

- Multi-agency coordination initiative, including regional planning commissions and CUDS. Meeting this week w/VEM to determine FEMA availability.

Phase II (Short-term): March 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020

Cross-Agency Coordination re: CARES Act Funding

- Review underway re: what funding is available for broadband infrastructure

Survey Project to identify Vermonters in need of a connectivity solution

- Focus: remote education + telehealth. Challenges: affordability and technology literacy

Utility Call to Action

- Issued April 10th. Funding is a challenge. FEMA? CARES Act?
- Legislative support actions needed: 248a, PUC emergency siting power

Shove-ready Project Review

- Review all previous bids that did not receive Connectivity Fund grants; accelerate line-extensions

Emergency Broadband Plan Update

- Creating a broadband action plan re: short + long term effects of COVID-19 Emergency
- PSD planning informed by strategies employed in other states and the federal government (e.g. Nebraska, Massachusetts, FCC 903 and 904 auctions)
- Building on Electric Utility Feasibility Study submitted December 31, 2019
 - *Statewide map of per town cost of FTTP*
- Building on Vermont's existing statutory framework for CUDs and Connectivity Initiative
 - Reverse auction model; identifies where legislative action is needed

Phase III (Long-term): March – beyond December 30, 2020

- Pursue ARRA-style fed grant for Emergency Broadband Action Plan with Legislature + Fed. Delegation