



Vermont Community Broadband

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb>

Presented to the Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee

Christine Hallquist

Vermont Community Broadband Board

Executive Director

Christine.Hallquist@vermont.gov

802-636-7853

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VCBB Status

August 9 Kick-off; Thirteen meetings (Meeting at least bi-weekly for now)

Met with most of Vermont's telecom providers

- VCBB goal is to enhance partnerships and maximize the optimization and utilization of existing infrastructure, knowledge, human resources and capital \$\$

Issued \$21 million in Pre-construction grants to 7 of 9 CUDs to fund detailed design, make-ready applications and capacity building

200 of Vermont's 251 towns are members of CUDs; Towns are continuing to join

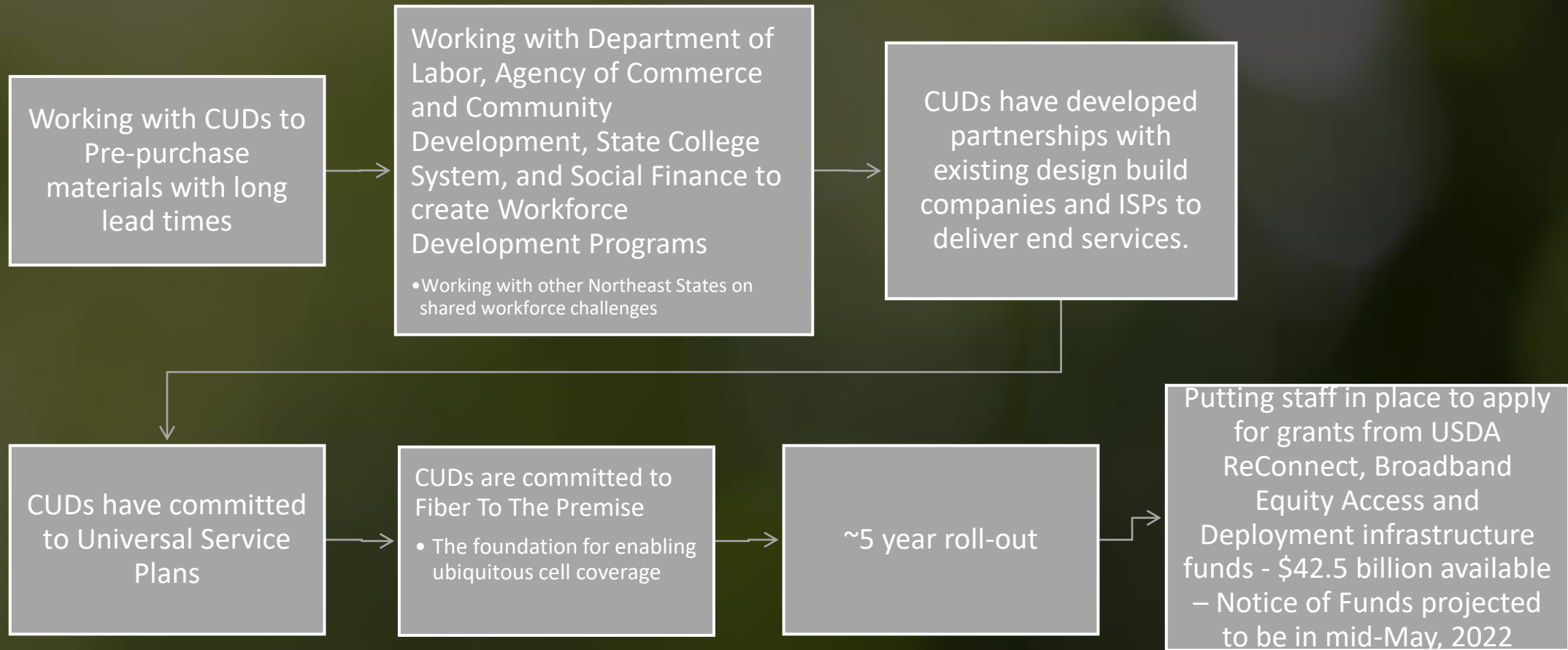
- Over 400 volunteers across the state working to make this a success

Vermont Communications Union District Association in place to represent the CUDs with one voice

Created design standards and finalizing construction RFP

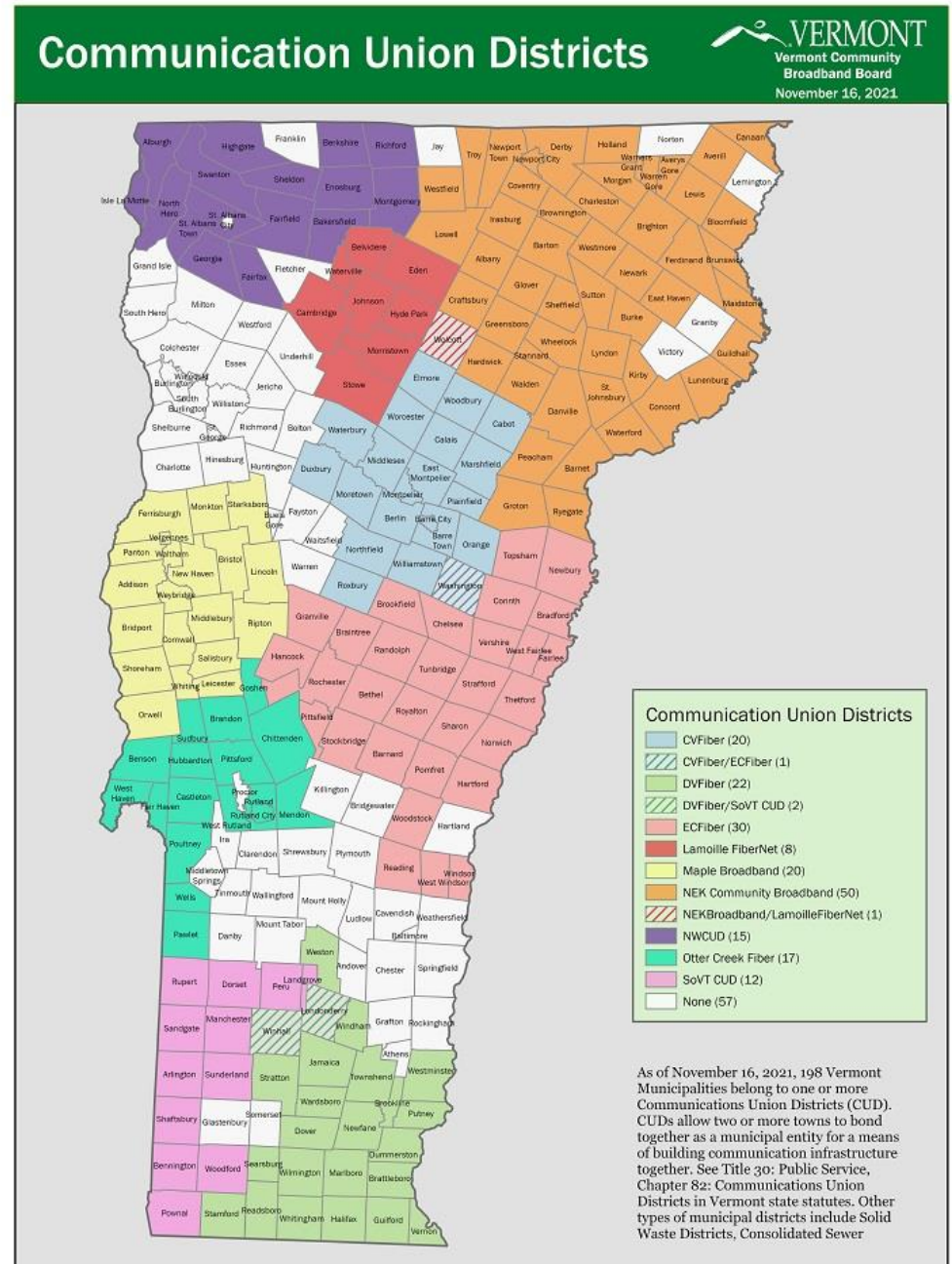
- RFP to be issued in mid-December; grant applications accepted in mid-January; construction begins in the summer

VCBB status (continued)



Overview: Communications Union Districts

- **Fall 2021**
 - **9 Districts**
 - **198 Member Towns**
 - **396 Volunteer Board Reps & Alternates**
 - **More than half the state's population**
 - **90% of premise statewide without access to 100/100 Mbps broadband**

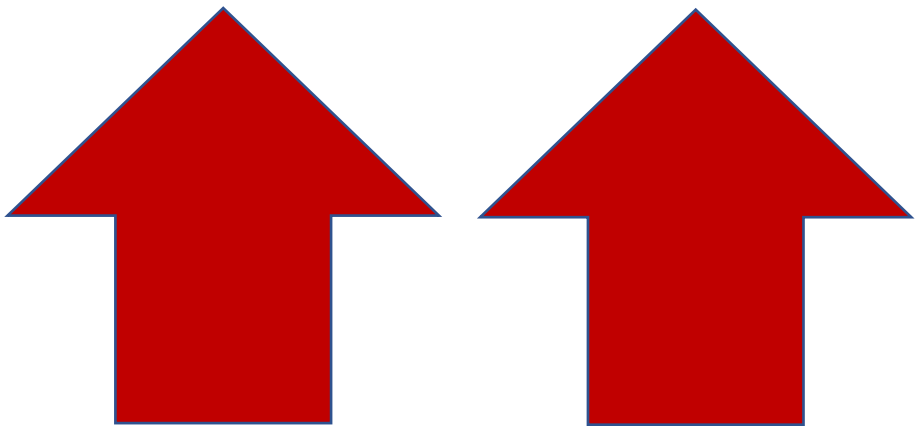


Some of the Struggles

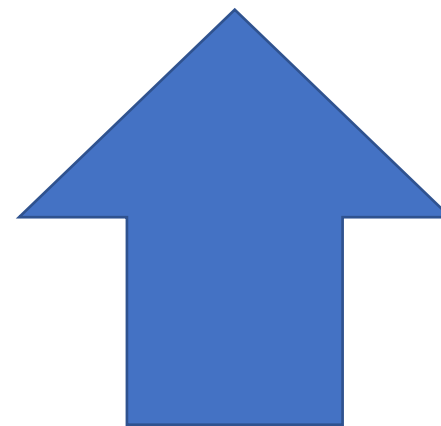
- VCBB started up over a year after the CUDs were established
 - Board had to jump on a moving train – no time for Board policy development or training
 - Understaffed, Hiring process takes time
 - Most of the Board come from Electric Utilities
 - Struggling with lack of clarity and lack of formal budget
 - Great network experience, Board understands resiliency, Good Management Practices, Project Management and construction
- Obtaining consensus with the 9 CUDs
- Need the funds to not just get every underserved addressed connected, but to ensure affordability
- Vermonters are impatient!

Basic Model

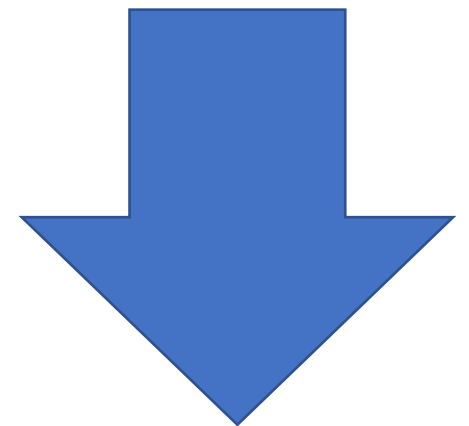
- Grant funding and donations provide initial funding
- CUDs build and own infrastructure. Operator provides the service
- CUDs access the Revenue Bond Market to complete the build-out of their district
- Revenue bonds pay for additional build-out



**Borrowing
(loans, bonds) = Higher Consumer
Prices**



Grants =



**Lowers Prices for
Consumers**

What has worked

- Placing the VCBB under an existing agency for administrative purposes – clearly defining the independence
- Board is highly experienced
- Broadband Technical Specialist was already in place for a year and highly respected, transferred to VCBB
- Excellent legislation
- Leadership from the Governor – Broadband a top priority
 - Alignment across agencies
- Communications –
 - Weekly CUD association meetings with VCBB present
 - Weekly VCBB updates to Governor, CUDs, and Board
 - Public interest – extensive media coverage
 - Bi-weekly (and more) Board meetings



Questions??
Concerns??