



**VERMONT**

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**VERMONT COMMUNITY BROADBAND BOARD**

**Presentation to the House Committee on Appropriations  
January 20, 2023**

Christine Hallquist, Executive Director

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[HTTPS://PUBLICSERVICE.VERMONT.GOV/VCBB](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb)

# Mission

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It is the purpose of the VCBB and Vermont Community Broadband Fund to support policies and programs designed to accelerate community efforts that advance the State's goal of achieving universal access to reliable, high-quality, affordable, and fixed broadband.

The VCBB was created to coordinate, facilitate, support, and accelerate the development and implementation of universal community broadband solutions.



# Public Accountability

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**First Meeting –  
August 2021**



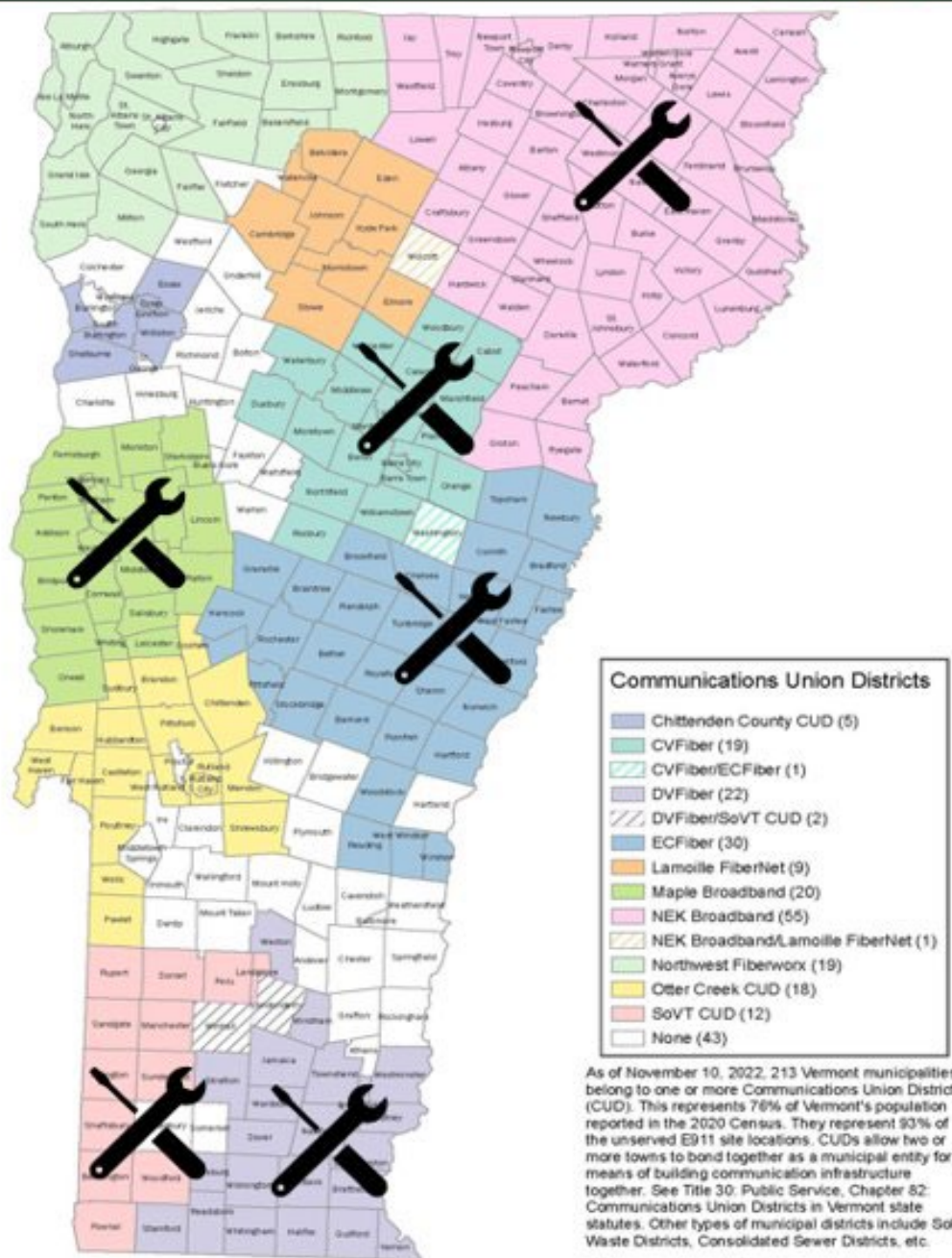
**43 Public Meetings  
4 hrs each**



**Average  
attendance 30  
participants**



**Minutes and  
Recordings Posted  
on Website**



As of November 10, 2022, 213 Vermont municipalities belong to one or more Communications Union Districts (CUD). This represents 76% of Vermont's population reported in the 2020 Census. They represent 93% of the unserved E911 site locations. CUDs allow two or more towns to bond together as a municipal entity for a means of building communication infrastructure together. See Title 30: Public Service, Chapter 82: Communications Union Districts in Vermont state statutes. Other types of municipal districts include Solid Waste Districts, Consolidated Sewer Districts, etc.

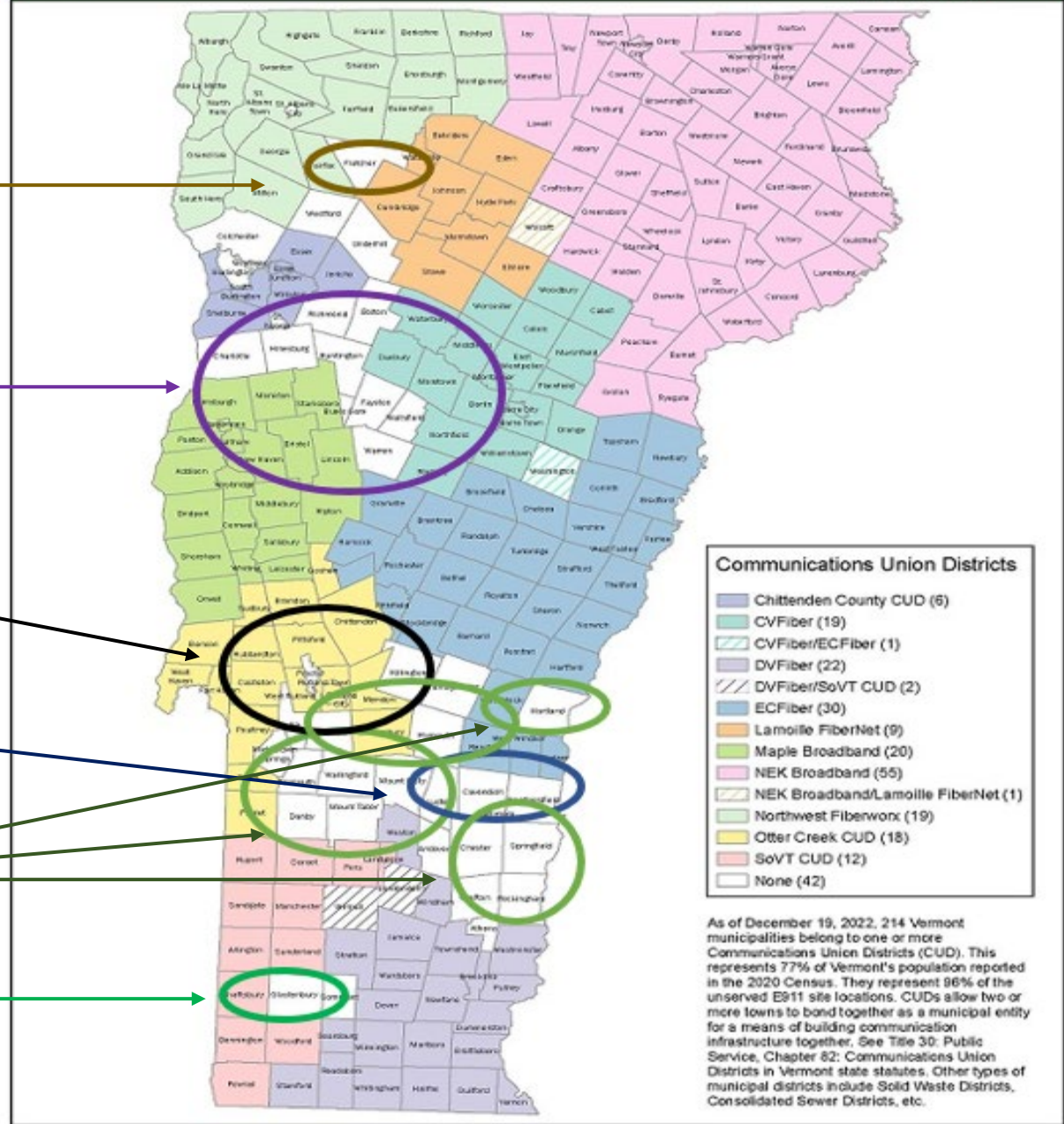
Progress meeting Vermont's goal of 100/100 mbps broadband service at every E-911 location:

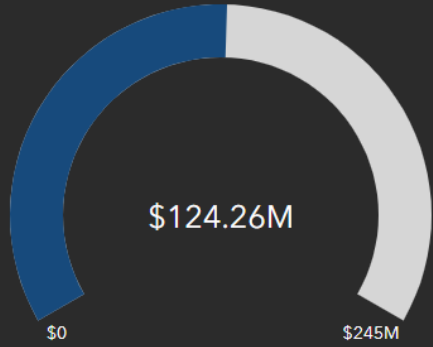
- 10 Districts
- 214 Member Towns
- 428 Volunteer Board Representatives & Alternates
- More than 76% of the state's population
- 93% of premises statewide without access to 25/3 are in a CUD

# Towns Without Communications Union District Membership

- ❑ Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) grant to MCFiber for Fletcher.
- ❑ Act 71 Construction Grant issued to build to remaining addresses in phased approach in WCVT towns.
- ❑ Towns served with fiber by Consolidated/Fidium or Vtel.
- ❑ TDS planning on building fiber to 90%+ addresses. Other areas may be served by ECFiber in the future.
- ❑ VTel reports serving all addresses within its territory with fiber.
- ❑ SoVT will serve with fiber via partnership with Fidium for Glastonbury.

## Communications Union Districts





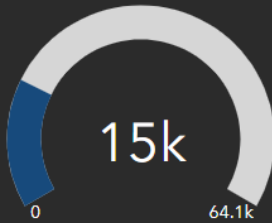
**Total Obligated Act 71 Grant Funding**

Last update: 1 minute ago



**Project Miles Funded**

Last update: 1 minute ago

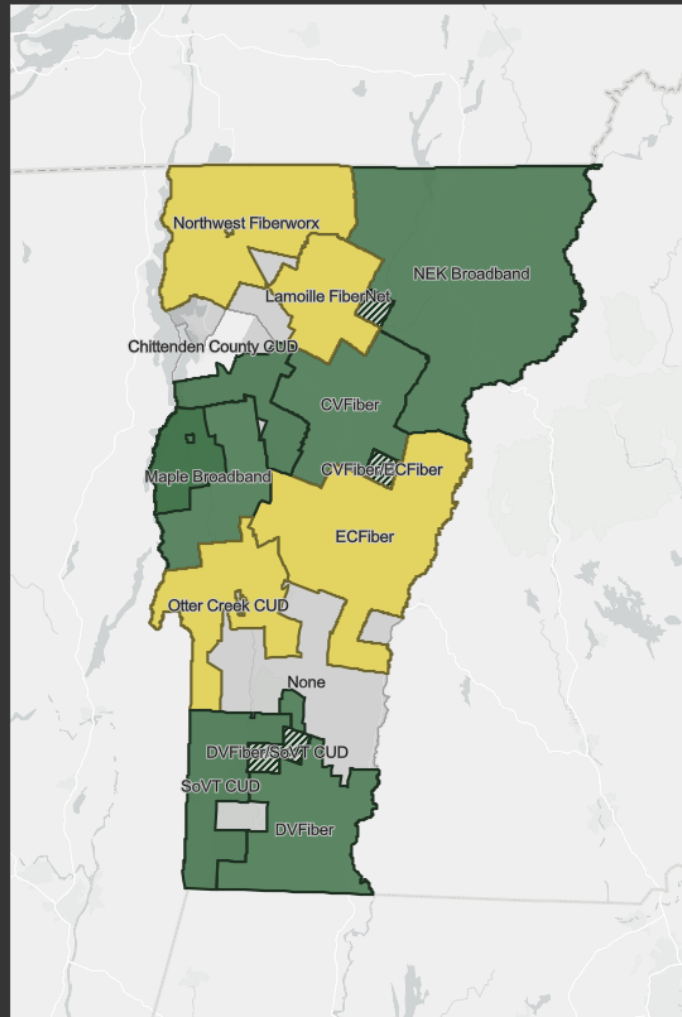


**Eligible Addresses Funded**

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Funding Progress

Funded Project Progress



VCGI, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NPS

Powered by Esri

**Act 71 Construction Grants to Date**

CVFiber  
\$12,289,273.00

DVFiber  
\$21,945,429.20

Maple Broadband  
\$8,686,000.00

NEK Broadband  
\$20,865,889.00

SoVT CUD  
\$9,009,085.00

WCVT - Maple Broadband  
\$9,104,486.00

WCVT - NonCUD Towns  
\$8,348,243.00

Last update: 1 minute ago

Construction

Pre-Construction

Materials

**\$90.25M**

Total Awarded for Construction Grants

**\$24.16M**

Total Awarded for Pre-Construction Grants

**\$9.85M**

Total Awarded for Pre-Project Materials

**\$31.02M**

Awarded Project Spending

- \$150 Million in ARPA
- \$95 Million in ARPA Capital
- ~\$100 Million + Infrastructure Bill/BEAD

As of January 2023:

<https://vcbb.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/75eb5dd3e4454c18a31ef25d97b3d3da>

# Funding Model

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Grant funding and donations provide initial funding (~ 60%).

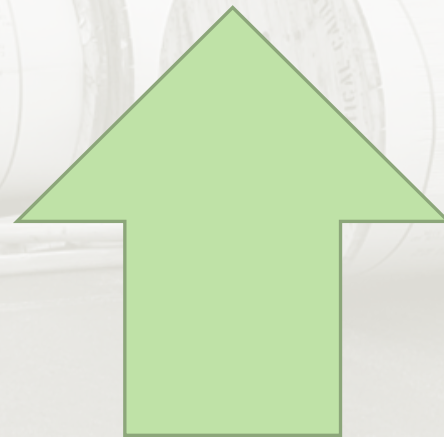
Rural Broadband is expensive, but on avg, statewide, every addl \$50M provided in grants reduces consumer rate by about \$10/mo.



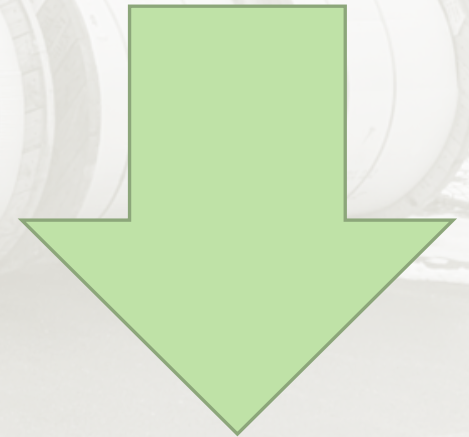
**Traditional Borrowing  
Consumer (loans, bonds)**



**= Higher  
Prices**



**Grants &  
Creative Finance**



**= Lower Prices for  
Consumers**

# Budget Adjustment Act

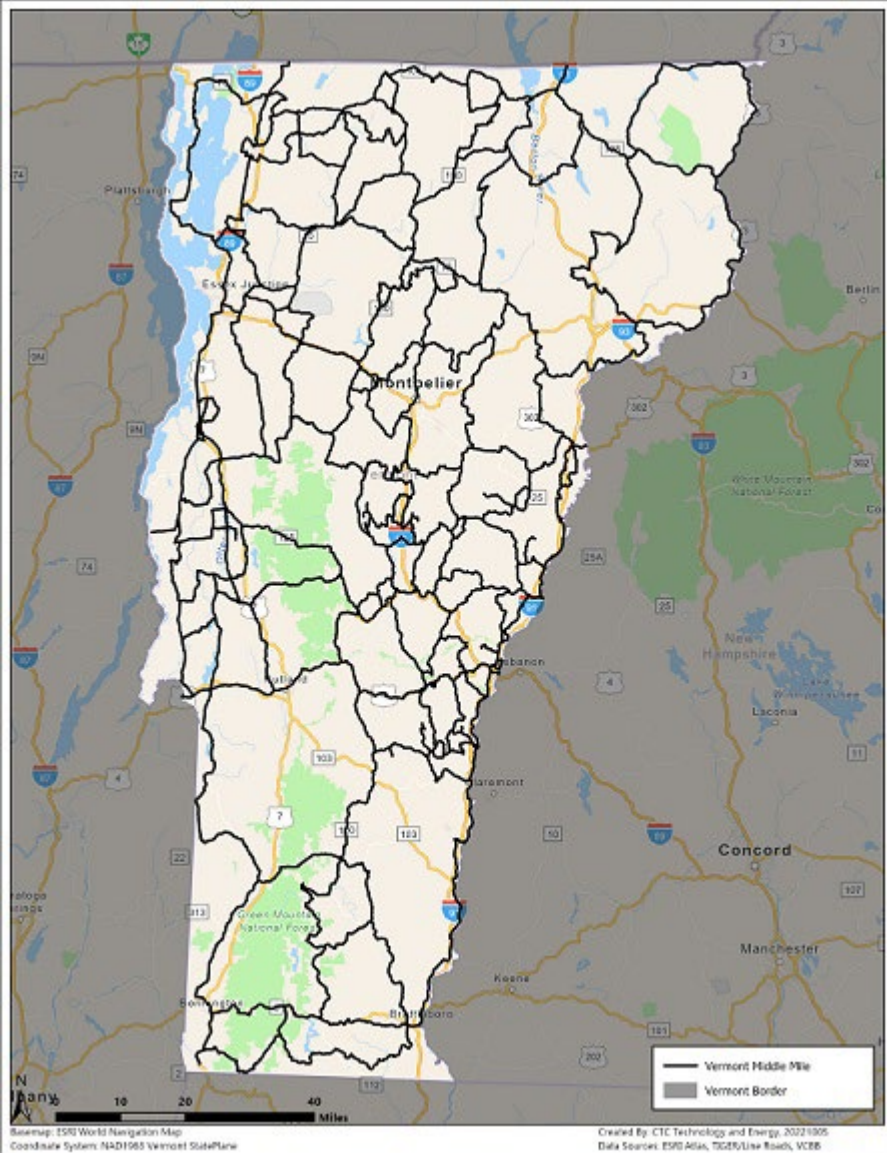
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**28) \$30,000,000 to the Public Service Department for the Vermont Community Broadband Board to be used to leverage federal dollars and programs, including the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) broadband grant (Middle Mile), to reduce the overall cost of universal broadband access as described in Act71(2021).**

*EXPLANATION: \$30M represents the State match toward the \$114,164,581 NTIA grant application submitted on 9/30/22. Anticipated federal receipts are \$67,445,239 with additional cash and in-kind match provided by all VT fiber-optic networks benefiting from the Middle Mile infrastructure (FirstLight, ECFiber and NEK Broadband). The match must be secured as the time of awarding which is expected in March. If the grant is not awarded, the funds will be used to leverage other federal dollars or programs to reduce the overall cost of universal broadband access as described in Act71(2021).*



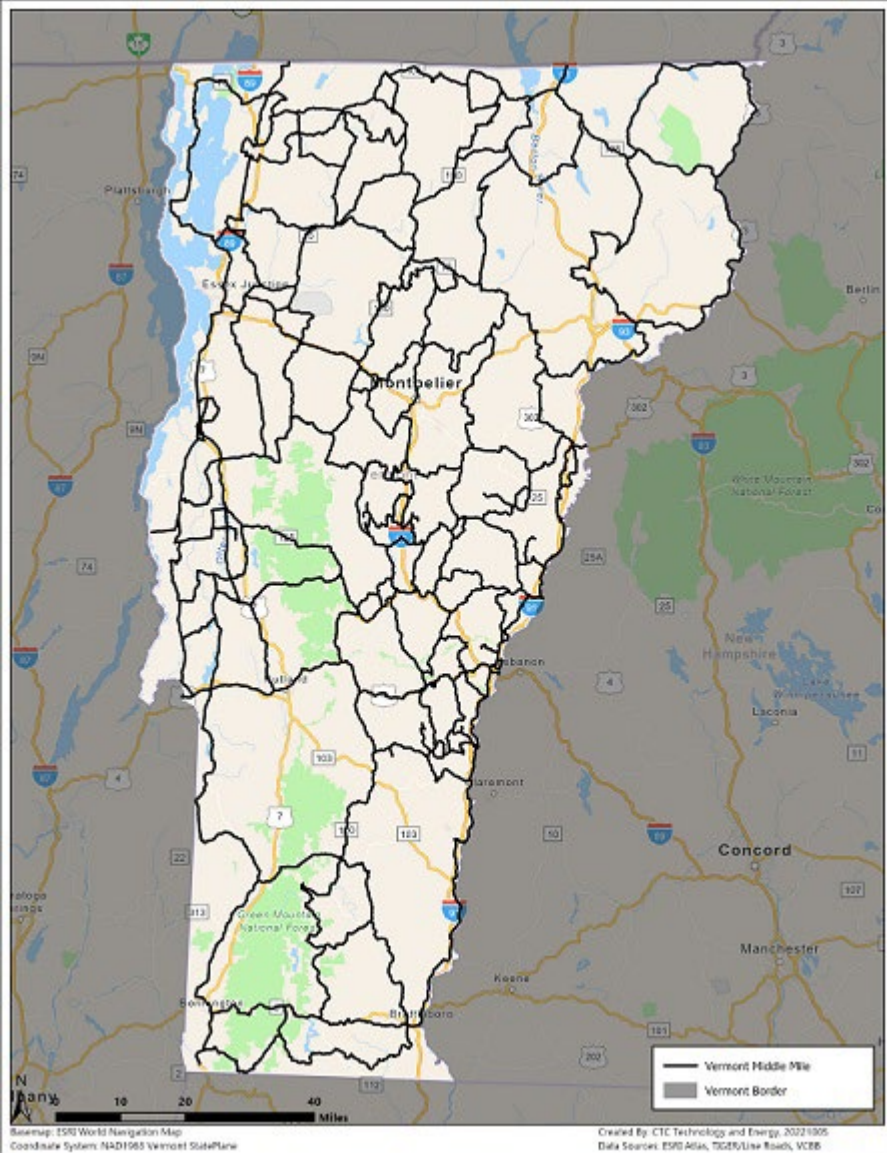
# Middle Mile Buildout



- Necessary infrastructure that accelerates deployment of last mile, reduces end cost to consumer.
  - Stretches ARPA funds
  - Reduces borrowing → Reduces financing costs → More affordable
  - Lowers bulk data costs
- Assures resiliency and redundancy of all networks.
  - Addresses public safety concerns around remote host isolation
  - Multiple interlinked connections within VT and across New England
  - Energy and Climate
  - Transportation
- Developed via discussions with CUDS and Private Telecoms
  - Public control via a Special Purpose Vehicle
  - Benefits all providers

*For illustrative purposes only*

# Middle Mile Application to NTIA



- \$114 Million federal grant to National Telecommunications and Information Association (NTIA) for Fiber-Optic Middle Mile Network
- Part of IJA's broadband programs
- \$30M cash match; \$16M in-kind match
- 1,663 miles total
  - 1,107 new miles
  - leverages previous state fiber
  - IRUs from telecoms and utilities
- This network must be built whether grant is received or not!

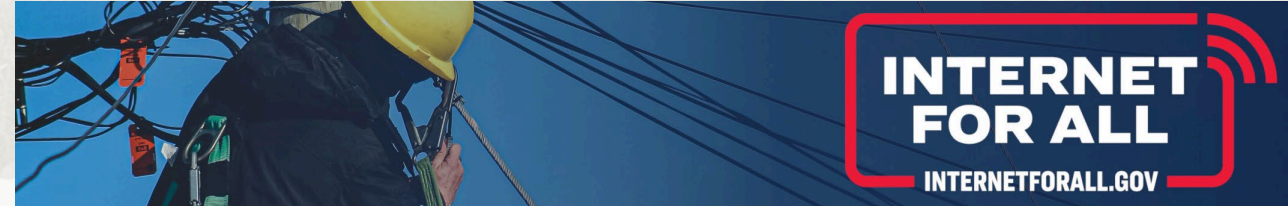
*For illustrative purposes only*

# Leverage Other Federal Programs

Grant funding to provide more initial funding

CUDs incur lower borrowing costs or borrow for less

Since CUDs are non-profit municipalities the capital savings are passed on to Vermonters



ReConnect Loan and Grant Program



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Grants &  
Creative Finance

=



Lower Prices for  
Consumers

# Vermont Community Broadband Board

- *Questions?*

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Communications Union Districts  
Contact info:  
<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/vermont-communications-union-districts>

