A high-angle, top-down photograph of a meeting around a wooden table. A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt and a tan vest, is seated on the left, leaning over the table and writing on a laptop screen with a black pen. The laptop screen displays a blue slide titled "Discussion Outline". To her right, another person's hand is visible, holding a teal folder. Further right, a tablet displays a blue slide with the number "3500's". A small potted plant sits on the table. In the foreground, a notebook with handwritten notes and a diagram is open. The overall scene suggests a collaborative work environment.

AFFORDABLE BROADBAND LEGISLATION

**Vermont House Committee on Energy &
Digital Infrastructure Testimony
April 24, 2025**

Sean Gonsalves, Associate Director for
Communications, ILSR Community Broadband
Networks Initiative

NEIGHBORLY NETWORKS: VERMONT'S APPROACH to COMMUNITY BROADBAND

BY
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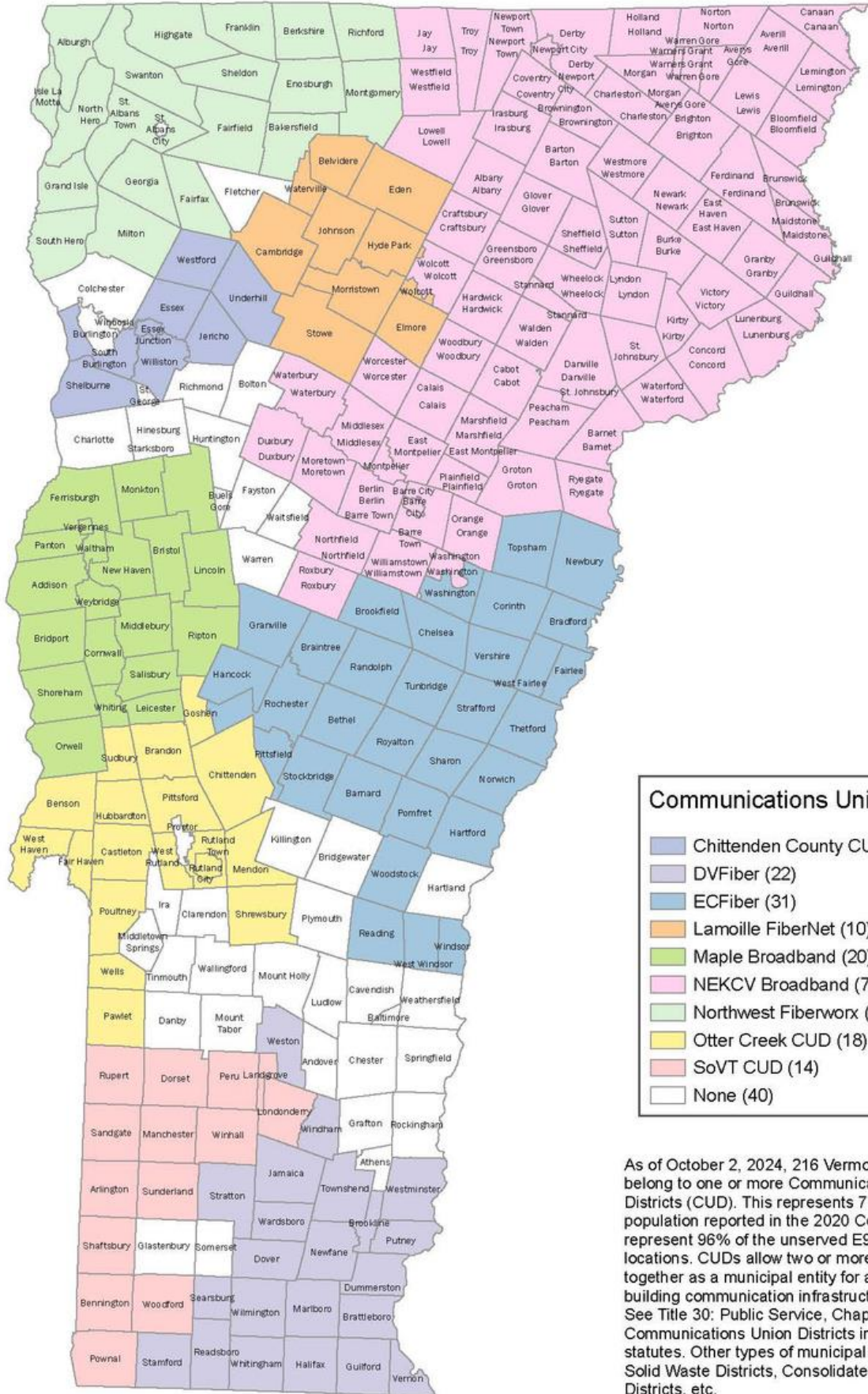
JUNE 2024



Country Career

Communications Union Districts

VERMONT
Vermont Community
Broadband Board
October 2, 2024



Communications Union Districts

- Chittenden County CUD (8)
- DVFiber (22)
- ECFiber (31)
- Lamoille FiberNet (10)
- Maple Broadband (20)
- NEKCV Broadband (76)
- Northwest Fiberworx (19)
- Otter Creek CUD (18)
- SoVT CUD (14)
- None (40)

As of October 2, 2024, 216 Vermont municipalities belong to one or more Communications Union Districts (CUD). This represents 77% of Vermont's population reported in the 2020 Census. They represent 96% 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.

If it's not affordable ...

... It's not accessible

STATESCOOP

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BROADBAND

23 million households lose internet discounts as federal program expires

As the Affordable Connectivity Program runs out of funding, some 23 million households are expected to lose out on discounts.

BY SKYLAR RISPENS • MAY 31, 2024



Digital Opportunity



40%

Low-cost legislation could provide relief for up to 40% of Vermont households

- **115,000 households** in Vermont were ACP eligible
- Nearly **26,000 Vermont households** were enrolled ACP when the program expired

New York Affordable Broadband Act (ABA)

Requires

Internet service providers (ISPs) with 20,000 or more subscribers to offer **25 Megabits per second** (Mbps) broadband service for **\$15/month** to **eligible low-income households**

Allows

Price increase once every two years with proper notice

Alternative

ISPs can offer 200 Mbps service for \$20/month w/no additional fees, taxes, or bundled services



Proposed Legislation

State-by-State

Status	Bill filed	Hearing	Passed
California	✓	April 30	?
Maryland	✓	Not yet	?
Massachusetts	✓	Not yet	?
Vermont	✓	April 24	?

Strengths



- **Targeted** legislation
- **Waiver exemption** for ISPs with less than 20,000 subscribers
- Carve-out for small providers to **boost competitive marketplace**

Weaknesses



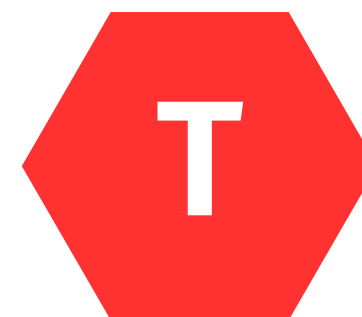
- **ISPs control** enrollment/verification process
- **Zero marketing**/public education
- **Application hard to find** on ISP websites
- Slow and difficult enrollment process

Opportunities



- **Goldilocks number** for ISP exemption?
- Subscribers or locations passed?
- Minimum Speed: **120/20 Mbps**

Threats



- Incumbent ISP **opposition campaign**
- **Running afoul of new FCC** “light touch” regulatory approach

NY Advocates Early Wish List

- **Centralized portal** for verification/enrollment
- Establish ability for eligible households to **apply online**
- **Reasonable time constraints** to ensure timely responses throughout the **application process**
- Requirement that ISPs **promote the offering**
- Establishment of an **appeals process**
 - If the appeal process was external and effective, a verification process internal to ISPs could work
 - **Without an external appeal process**, advocates say, **eligibility verification should not be left solely to ISPs**





Thank you!

[Fast, affordable Internet access for all](#)

Contact Us

[Reach out to us for inquiries
or comments.](#)



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