

INDIANA BROADBAND MAY NEWSLETTER

State of Indiana sent this bulletin at 05/12/2021 10:00 AM EDT



FEDERAL UPDATES ON BROADBAND

In the federal sector, the IBO has been following programs and grant opportunities that can help Hoosier families along with their access to connectivity and broadband resources.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program
EBB is a Federal Communications Commission's Program aimed at helping families and households struggling to afford internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic. This benefit connects eligible households to jobs, critical healthcare services, virtual classrooms and so much more.

As of May 12, 2021, eligible households will be able to enroll in the program to receive a monthly discount off the cost of broadband service from an approved provider. Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting getemergencybroadband.org.

To learn more about the EBB Program visit, fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit.

Funding for Broadband Expansion

In the recently passed federal stimulus package, \$350 billion was allocated to state, local and tribal governments, with States and the District of Columbia receiving \$195.3 billion and counties and cities receiving \$130 billion.

The legislation included stipulations for how this funding could be used, which included an allowance for making necessary investments in broadband infrastructure. Additionally, the package allotted more than \$9.9 billion to the Homeowner Assistance Fund, which can also be used for broadband internet access service.

Bipartisan legislation, originally introduced in October of last year, would distribute \$10 billion to states to build out broadband infrastructure in unserved areas, including a \$1 billion set-aside for high-cost areas.

Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and John Cornyn (R-TX) said, "The bipartisan Eliminate the Digital Divide Act will create a clear process to distribute funds directly to states based on their proportion of unserved areas, establish guidelines for the program and require the FCC to create an online platform for consumers to learn more about and determine if they are eligible to receive internet subsidies."

The IBO will continue to stay well informed on these programs and provide readers with the most up-to-date and accurate information available.

BROADBAND IS... LEARNING



Access to reliable internet became a concern this year, more than ever before. With students and educators working from home, e-learning became a priority in many states, including Indiana.

Success Story

An Indiana success story for e-learning is from Terre Haute in Vigo County. The Terre Haute Board of Public Works and Safety approved a measure to add 40 WiFi fiber optic spots throughout the city for use by students in the Vigo County School Corporation.

Dr. Rob Haworth, Superintendent of the Vigo County School Corporation, told the board that the school corporation received more than \$1.39 million in 2020 from the Indiana Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) to equip buses and establish community WiFi access spots. The grant pays for WiFi service for two years.

The City of Terre Haute will add 40 sites. The county currently has 44, making 84 sites total in the city and county.

There are also an additional 90 sites that connect to 30 Vigo County school buildings. In total, 281 sites will be accessible when the project is complete.

To learn more about the efforts in Vigo County, click [here](#).

Tower Project in Randolph County

IBO is celebrating Randolph County in its acquisition of grant dollars from the GEER program.

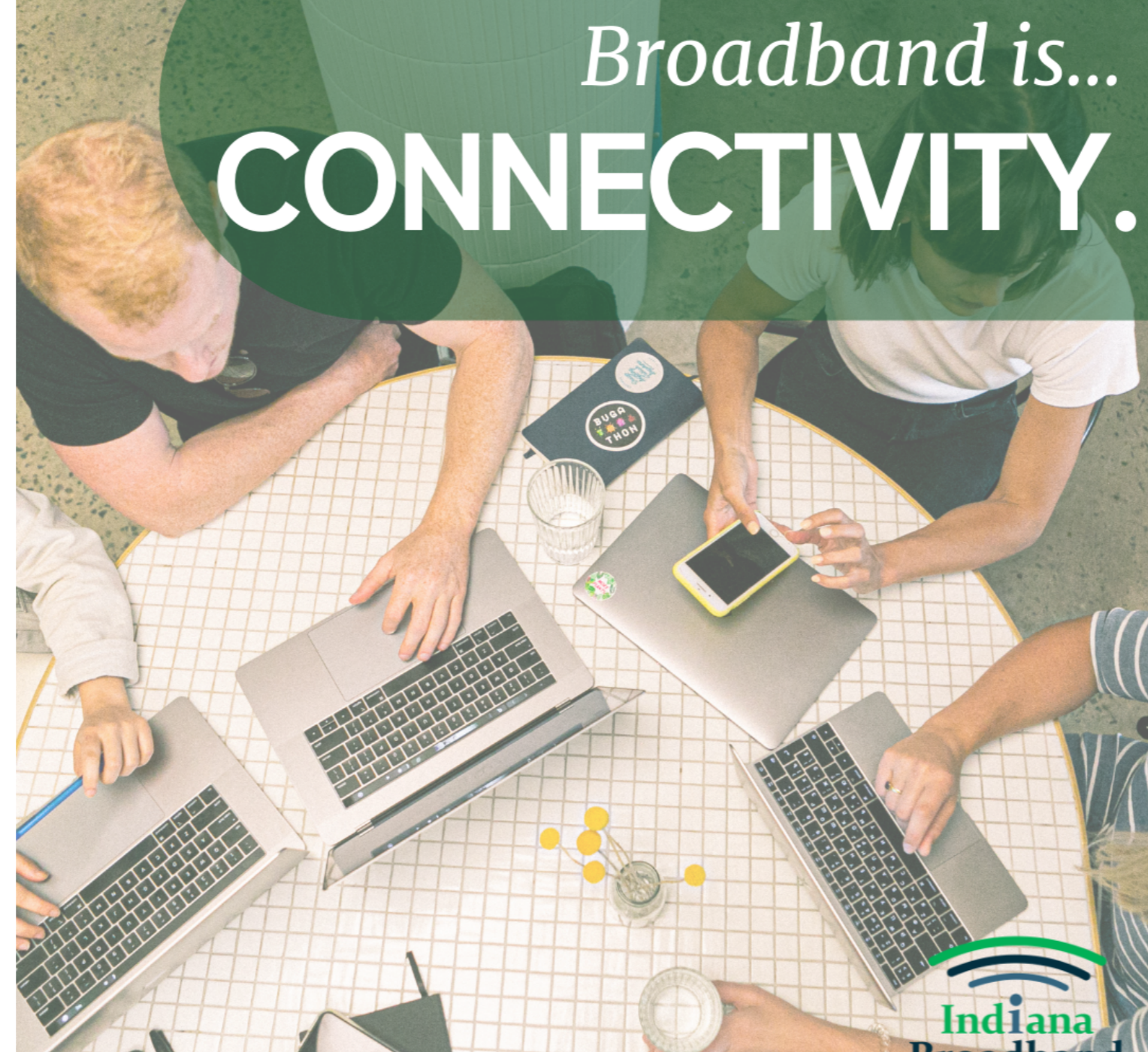
The Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis received \$4.8 million in two grants from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund. One grant worth \$3.3 million will fund devices and broadband in nine service centers and 23 school districts in rural areas across the State of Indiana. The second grant allots \$1.5 million for professional development to improve educators' capacity to provide engaging and effective online instruction.

CELL will partner with the Central Indiana Education Service Center during the next two years to disburse the funds and arrange for training. In addition to providing broadband for rural areas that frequently lack high-speed internet access, the \$3.3 million grant will be used to connect families to WiFi hotspots as well as to buy equipment such as laptops for students and teachers.

To read more, click [here](#).

Stay tuned for more education updates over the summer and send in your success stories to be featured.

BROADBAND IS... CONNECTIVITY



Free WiFi Map

The IBO has created a map that highlights free WiFi locations across the state of Indiana. Source locations include public schools, public libraries, internet service providers, high education institutes and other public locations.

To be included on the map, submit your location to INbroadband@ig.in.gov.

Visit the map using this [link](#).

Steps to Success

Is your community broadband ready? The Indiana Broadband Office is creating a top 10 list of best practices, the Broadband Playbook for Success. This playbook will outline steps your community can take to expand broadband connectivity and affordability in your area.

Step 1 of the Playbook is the establishment of a Broadband Working Group (Taskforce).

Participants for this taskforce may include the following:

- school system superintendents, principals, tech officers;
- economic development officials;
- county commissioners, clerks, councils;
- city/town leadership, mayor's office, clerk, treasurer, town planner, utilities dept.;
- community foundations;
- public library officials;
- business leaders;
- hospitals/healthcare;
- banks/investment institutions, other anchor institutions, and/or
- agriculture community leadership.

Stay tuned for more information on becoming broadband ready!

Harrison County

The Chamber of Commerce of Harrison County and Harrison County Community Foundation issued a request for proposals for the development of broadband readiness and infrastructure deployment plan.

This Request for Proposals is for development of a Broadband Readiness and Infrastructure Deployment Plan for Harrison County, Indiana. The Chamber of Commerce and Community Foundation understand the importance of providing robust broadband infrastructure in both their economic development and community development efforts.

It became clear, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that although significant progress has been made over the last 15 years, additional high-speed internet infrastructure is needed. The ability to provide access to affordable broadband internet ensures that our schools, students and businesses have the tools necessary to not only survive, but to thrive during these uncertain times.

The Broadband Plan is intended to define minimum broadband internet, survey current broadband services available, determine best technology infrastructure, identify specific actions and projects that the community may utilize to best promote the deployment of broadband infrastructure to address the lack of service in many parts of Harrison County.

In addition, the plan will set forth the steps needed to become an Indiana Broadband Ready Certified Community, identify potential new and creative funding mechanisms and identify new partners that can help drive Harrison County, Indiana to be the best community to live, work, play and visit.

The complete request for proposals may be viewed [here](#).

Communities can submit their RFPs to the Indiana Broadband Office to be highlighted on our website and through other digital platforms.

BROADBAND READY COMMUNITIES

The Indiana Broadband Office's Broadband Ready Communities Program is a tool used to encourage the development of better broadband in Indiana. IBO works to certify local communities as Broadband Ready, with more than five communities receiving designations this year.


Communities must go through a process to prove their eligibility for this distinguished program. Certification means that a community is taking steps to further develop broadband and are dedicated to bettering their residents' connectivity.

To learn more about being a Broadband Ready Community, visit [here](#).

Warren County


Our most recent Broadband Ready Community is Warren County. To read more, click [here](#).

NEWS IN BROADBAND




CONGRATULATIONS RANDOLPH COUNTY

[Read More](#)



FREE WIFI MAP

[Read More](#)



CONGRATULATIONS HARRISON COUNTY

[Read More](#)

We want to hear from you! Please send broadband-related news regarding your community or organization to the Indiana Broadband Office at INbroadband@ig.in.gov, and we'll share on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or in this newsletter!



Visit Us Online at IN.GOV/INDIANABROADBAND

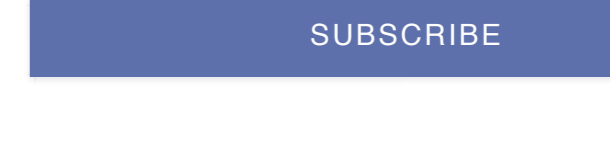
Subscribe to updates from State of Indiana

Email Address

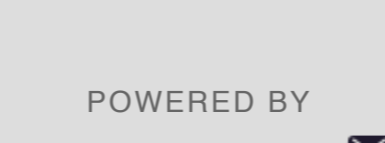
e.g. name@example.com

SUBSCRIBE

Share Bulletin



POWERED BY



[Privacy Policy](#) | [Cookie Statement](#) | [Help](#)