



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, July 20, 2023

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Governor Shapiro Visits Northern Cambria Senior Center to Highlight Administration's Plans to Expand High-Speed, Affordable Internet Access to Communities Across the Commonwealth

With \$1.16 billion in federal funding, the Shapiro Administration has a plan of action to expand broadband access across the Commonwealth and create economic opportunity for unserved and underserved Pennsylvania communities



Northern Cambria, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA) Executive Director **Brandon Carson** visited the Northern Cambria Senior Center in Cambria County to highlight the Shapiro Administration's plans to expand broadband access across the Commonwealth using more than \$1.16 billion in funding through the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. As part of President Biden's "Internet for All" initiative, Governor Shapiro [announced](#) the Commonwealth will receive \$1.16 billion through the federal BEAD Program to expand broadband infrastructure for communities lacking reliable, affordable, high-speed internet access.

In Cambria County, more than 5,700 locations are currently unserved or underserved, and Pennsylvania seniors are 14 percentage points less likely to have broadband compared to other Pennsylvanians. Across Pennsylvania, 276,000 households do not have access to the internet while another 52,000 do not have reliable access. The Shapiro Administration is working to expand broadband access for seniors so they can age with dignity – and to connect Pennsylvanians across the Commonwealth to the affordable, high-speed internet that will help them go to school, start and grow businesses, and access telemedicine no matter where they live.

"Broadband access isn't a rural or urban issue – it's a Pennsylvania issue that impacts every community and every resident's health, education, and economic opportunity," said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. "In our Commonwealth, seniors are more likely to not have broadband access than the general population, and a majority of Cambria County residents is underserved when it comes to access to the internet. My Administration has

secured the funding, assembled a team, and created a plan to change this and to connect students with their teachers, seniors with their doctors, and families and businesses with the resources they need to thrive."

The \$1.16 billion in BEAD funding to the Commonwealth will be administered by the [PBDA](#) – an independent, bipartisan agency created by law in December 2021. The PBDA is in the process of creating a five-year action plan that will expand broadband access across Pennsylvania.

"Pennsylvanians have become increasingly reliant on broadband for their work, education, and health – and expanding access is more important than ever," said **Brandon Carson, Executive Director of the PBDA**. "With this \$1.16 billion federal investment, the Shapiro Administration will continue its work to strengthen communities across the Commonwealth by connecting areas that are unserved and underserved to close the digital divide and to create real opportunity for every Pennsylvanian in the digital age."

The PBDA worked with Penn State Extension to identify more than 50,000 locations in Pennsylvania that lack access to high-speed internet but weren't included in the federal government's initial map. The Federal Communications Commission has upheld 32,000 of those submitted, making those locations eligible for federal BEAD funding and helping to ensure Pennsylvania received its share of the BEAD funding.

The PBDA is now working to complete a five-year action plan for Pennsylvania's BEAD allocation, which will set the vision for the implementation of these funds. Following the NTIA's approval of the plan, the Commonwealth is expected to receive the BEAD funding in late 2023 or early 2024, and the PBDA plans to begin awarding subgrants to approved, eligible applicants in 2024.

Pennsylvanians are [encouraged to participate](#) in the community engagement events hosted by the PBDA taking place around the Commonwealth throughout the summer. The PBDA wants to hear from as many Pennsylvanians as possible through feedback collected from these events and through an online survey to help shape Pennsylvania's five-year BEAD action plan. The PBDA has already hosted [community engagement events](#) in 16 counties across the Commonwealth and will host seven more events this summer in McKean, Berks, Carbon, Venango, and Dauphin counties.

Additionally, there will be a public comment period opening for the five-year BEAD action plan, which will run from July 26 through August 8. More details on how the public can add their feedback will be available shortly.

To date, Pennsylvania has received more than \$1.5 billion in federal funding allocations for its broadband efforts. In addition to the BEAD funding, Pennsylvania also received \$279 million in funding through the Capital Projects Fund and \$6.6 million in federal planning funds in 2022.

Visit the PBDA's [website](#) to learn more about its work to close the digital divide in the Commonwealth.

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