



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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## **Governor Shapiro and DCED Secretary Siger Visit Union City Senior Center to Share Administration's Plans to Expand Broadband to Communities Across the Commonwealth**

*The Shapiro Administration has a plan of action to expand broadband access to unserved and underserved Pennsylvania communities with \$1.16 billion in federal funding.*



**Union City, PA** – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and Department of Community and Economic Development **Secretary Rick Siger** visited the Union City Senior Center in Erie 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.

Across Pennsylvania, 276,000 households do not have access to the internet while another 52,000 do not have reliable access. In Erie and Warren counties, more than 5,000 locations and 7,500 locations are currently unserved or underserved, respectively.

"Pennsylvania seniors deserve to age with dignity – and an important part of that process is expanding their access to reliable and affordable broadband to ensure that they can connect to the online resources they need to live healthy lives," said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. "Erie and Warren counties are not alone in this struggle, and my Administration has a plan to put Pennsylvania at the forefront of expanding broadband access and lowering costs for communities just like this one – all across the Commonwealth. "

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.

"Connecting Pennsylvanians to high-speed, reliable internet access is critical for bringing our economy and infrastructure into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially for unserved and underserved communities" said **Secretary Rick Siger**. "The Shapiro Administration has worked hard to secure this federal funding to connect Pennsylvania communities who need access the most – and under Governor Shapiro's leadership, we will address the longstanding connectivity issues to bring reliable internet at high speeds and affordable prices to every corner of our Commonwealth."

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, including 6,711 households in Warren County – more than any other county in Pennsylvania – and 175 households in Erie County, making those locations eligible for federal BEAD funding and helping to ensure our Commonwealth received its share of this 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.

The PBDA has hosted [community engagement events](#) in 18 counties across the Commonwealth this summer and will host two more events in Venango and Dauphin counties to hear feedback. Pennsylvanians are also encouraged to submit input through an [online survey](#). 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. Feedback will be gathered to help focus Pennsylvania's five-year action plan. The new online survey will be available on the [PBDA website](#) tomorrow morning.

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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