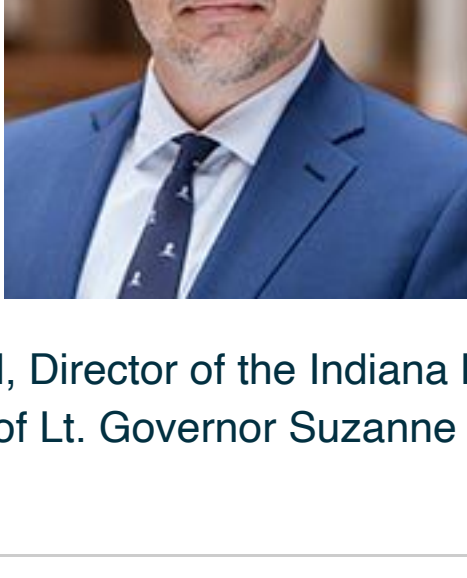


INDIANA BROADBAND JULY NEWSLETTER

State of Indiana sent this bulletin at 07/14/2021 10:00 AM EDT



FROM THE DESK OF...



Scott Rudd, Director of the Indiana Broadband Office of Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch

As Indiana continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, IBO urges individuals and communities to take advantage of the resources available. This is an opportune time for communities to pursue the vast federal and state programs that have become available over the last year and a half.

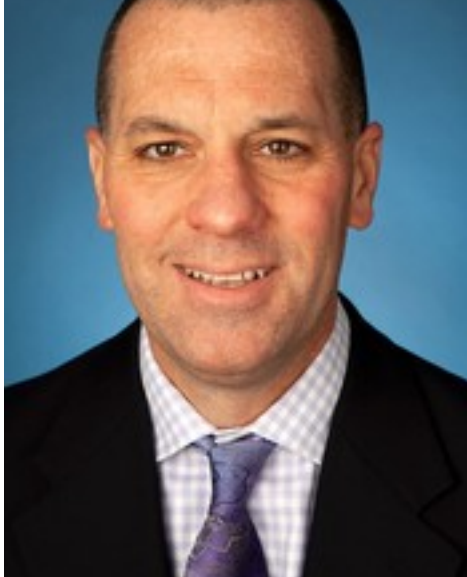
The Office of Community and Rural Affairs has recently updated the webpages for Broadband Funding Opportunities. The Next Level Connections Broadband Grant Round 3 draft documents can be found [here](#). The documents include the revised application, instructions, processes and eligibility requirements.

OCRA will collect comments regarding the NLC Round 3 draft applications and process via a survey found [here](#). Additionally, comments may be submitted to NLC@OCRA.in.gov. All comments must be submitted by July 12, 2021 at 5 p.m.

Indiana will invest \$270 million toward improving broadband access and adoption in Indiana. The Next Level Connections Broadband Grant Program is designed to provide funds for the deployment of broadband infrastructure to provide eligible broadband service to unserved end users, which include households, businesses and community anchor institutions, such as schools and health clinics, across Indiana.

Broadband has become not only an essential tool, but an important part of quality of life. IBO believes that broadband is the vehicle that moves information at high speeds and allows every corner of the state to be digitally connected. We hope to provide opportunities and assistance to communities across the state and ensure connectivity to all.

PANEL FOR PURDUE UNIVERSITY AND THE FUTURE OF TECH COMMISSION



Indiana Broadband Office Project Manager, Earnie Holtrey, joined representatives from local, regional and state organizations as a panelist for Purdue University and the Future of Tech Commission.

Purdue University and the Future of Tech Commission joined together to hold a virtual town hall forum as part of the Commission's national effort to gather input from government leaders, experts and the public across the country that will inform a set of recommendations on sustainable, inclusive and bi-partisan tech policies to be presented to the White House.

The town hall focused on federal and state policies and public-private partnerships that will support digital access for all, with a focus on rural access to broadband, applying digital solutions to sustainable agriculture practices and improving economic opportunity to those in the changing workplace.

During this conversation, Earnie stated, "A pattern is emerging that shows the rural Indiana communities that are engaged in public-private partnerships lead the pack in completing projects."

Partnerships and opportunities are increasingly available across the State of Indiana and IBO will continue to provide the most up-to-date and accurate information to our audience.

To watch the town hall, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRHhmrvyD7ag>.

INDIANA SPEED TEST



Indiana Farm Bureau formed the Indiana Broadband Strategic Partnership (IBSP) to help bring reliable broadband to the most unserved and underserved communities across the state. To help with this initiative, the IBSP also includes Cook Medical Group, Duke Energy Foundation, Indiana Association of Realtors, Radius Indiana and the Regional Opportunity Initiative.

This partnership will promote the *Indiana Speed Test*, a crowd-sourced internet speed test.

From this web site we can collect data about your broadband speed and create a map for your community that will help your community in efforts to get grants and other support to improve broadband for your community. We need your help, Indiana!

To participate in the test, click [here](#).

STEPS TO SUCCESS

Playbook for 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.

Every other Friday, IBO shares another step of our Playbook for Success on social media. This playbook will outline steps communities can take to expand broadband connectivity and affordability.

This month we will be highlighting Steps 4-6.

STEPS TO SUCCESS.

Step Four

Engage with Providers to Encourage Investment.

To do this communities should:

- Ask what can we, as community leadership, do to help.
- Become familiar with state and federal funding opportunities by means of press releases, newsletters, social media, etc.
- Seek to understand where provider currently has assets and ask where they are looking to expand.

Step Five

Compile Listing of Economic Development Incentives Available to Broadband Providers.

- Tax exemptions such as those outlined in Senate Enrolled Act No. 560 (Infrastructure Development Zone) make it appealing for broadband providers to invest in an area by offering exemptions to business and personal property taxes on broadband investment.

Step Six

Increase the Adoption Rate in Your Community.

- Adoption rate refers to the ratio of those who subscribe to broadband out of those who have access. Increasing the adoption rate will make an area more attractive to providers and investors.
- Use of Purdue Partnership/Digital Inclusion Planning ([Purdue Center for Regional Development](#))
- Provide adoption assistance for families of free and reduced lunch students
- [Emergency Broadband Benefit \(EBB\)](#)
- Digital literacy programs for community members
- Repurpose laptops, computers and devices

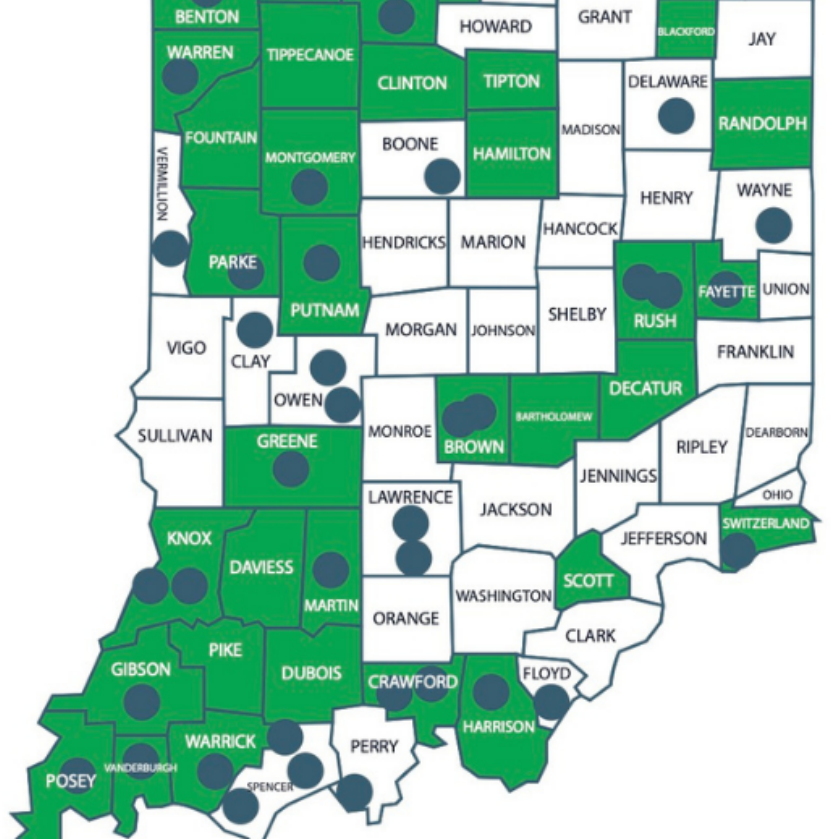
BROADBAND READY COMMUNITIES

The Indiana Broadband Office's Broadband Ready Communities Program is a tool used to encourage the development of better broadband in Indiana. We work to certify local communities as Broadband Ready. More than five communities have received designations this year. There are currently more than 45 counties that are broadband ready.

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](#).

Below is a map that details the communities that have already received their designation. Green indicates a Broadband Ready Community while blue indicates a location in which there is a Broadband Ready Task Force in place.



LT. GOV. SUZANNE CROUCH AND ISDA ANNOUNCE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.



Working and learning from home became more important than ever over the last year. Looking towards the future, we are excited that these opportunities will continue to be available to support Indiana's rural agricultural communities.

Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) announced that 20 remote work learning scholarships are being provided across nine agriculture organizations in partnership with the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD). Scholarships fully cover the cost for participants to complete PCRD's Remote Work Certificate Program.

"I am excited to announce these opportunities for rural Hoosiers to develop critical skills," Crouch said. "This comes at a great time as Indiana further invests in expanding broadband infrastructure."

To learn more about these scholarships, click [here](#).

NEWS IN BROADBAND

COMCAST ADDS MORE FIBER TO NORTHERN AND NORTHWESTERN INDIANA

[Read More.](#)

OCRA OPENS ROUND THREE OF NEXT LEVEL CONNECTIONS

[Read More.](#)

JENNINGS COUNTY ADOPTS IDZ

JENNINGS COUNTY ADOPTS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ZONE ORDINANCE

[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!



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