Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA)
Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program
Five-Year Action Plan

Arizona Local Government Survey

June 2023

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

The Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) is developing Arizona's BEAD Five-Year Action Plan that will serve as a roadmap to make reliable and affordable broadband, computing devices, and digital skills training available to all Arizona households.

Your answers to the following questions are critical and will be combined with others to identify current efforts and challenges toward improving internet access across the state.

We do not use or share any data collected for any marketing purposes. We do not sell any information collected through these surveys. No personally identifiable information, individual provider survey responses, or information that could be used to identify a local government entity and its survey responses are shared with any entity outside the scope of this effort. No names, addresses, or respondent demographic information are shared with any outside entity without the express consent of the organization or individual who completes the survey.

This survey should take less than 25 minutes to complete.

1. Local Government Info

1) What is the name of your local government organization?

_____

2) Please provide information for a point of contact in your organization who can speak to the contents of this survey.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address 2:   _____

City/town: _____

County: _____

ZIP code: _____

Email address: _____

Phone: _____

Website: _____

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3) Is your organization a local government in the State of Arizona? *

( ) Yes

( ) No

4) How severe is the need for better broadband service in the area where you operate or have jurisdiction? Select the statement that best describes your situation.

( ) Broadband service is excellent throughout the area.

( ) Broadband service is excellent in most of the area, but there are some minor coverage gaps.

( ) Broadband service is adequate through most of the area, but there is room for improvement in speed and performance.

( ) Our area is very poorly served with broadband.

( ) Unsure

5) Please visit the FCC National Broadband Map (https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home) and search for your area.

a. Did you find the map user-friendly? Were you able to use it to learn about reported broadband coverage in your area? Select the most applicable answer.

   ( ) Yes, user friendly, and I learned about reported broadband coverage in my area.

   ( ) No, not user friendly, but I was able to learn about reported broadband coverage in my area.

   ( ) No, the map isn't user friendly, and I didn't figure out how to research reported broadband coverage in my area.

   ( ) N/A

b. B. *(If successful in researching broadband coverage using map)* How well served is your area with broadband coverage, according to the FCC map?

   ( ) Fully served

   ( ) Mostly well served

   ( ) Partially served

   ( ) Poorly served

c. Based on your review of the FCC National Broadband Map, in comparison with what you know about local coverage from personal experience, how accurate do you think the map is? If it's inaccurate, does it tend to overstate or understate coverage in your area? Select the statement that best describes your conclusions.

   ( ) The map looks pretty accurate and confirms my expectations.

   ( ) The map surprised me in some ways but may be accurate.

   ( ) The map looks inaccurate and understates the quality of broadband service in the area.

   ( ) The map looks inaccurate and mildly overstates the quality of broadband service in the area.

   ( ) The map looks inaccurate and greatly overstates the quality of broadband service in the area.

6) To the best of your knowledge, has your organization ever collected data to challenge federal determinations about broadband coverage in your area?

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Don't know

7) Before today, has your organization made any plans to challenge federal determinations about broadband coverage in your area?

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Don't know

8) Over the course of the next year, state governments will be administering "challenge processes" through which areas that are currently determined by federal agencies to have broadband coverage can assemble contrary evidence to reverse that determination. In your opinion, how likely is it that your organization will participate in the challenge process in your state?

( ) Very likely

( ) Somewhat likely

( ) Somewhat unlikely

( ) Not at all likely

9) What roles, if any, does your organization play in deployment of high-speed internet in the State of Arizona? Select all that apply:

( ) Direct provision of internet service to our residents

( ) Applicant or grantee for broadband funding programs

( ) Running workforce development programs that train telecommunications workers

( ) Discovering, raising awareness of, and advocating solutions for community broadband needs

( ) Administering permits for construction of broadband facilities

( ) Management of rights-of-way in which broadband facilities are deployed

( ) Ownership of utility poles used by wireline broadband providers for service distribution

( ) Ownership of towers and other vertical assets used by wireless broadband providers for service distribution

( ) Assistance to customers to help them afford broadband

( ) Advising the state on how to implement the federal broadband programs authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

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2. Barriers

10) The broadband deployment system has a light regulatory framework; however, some aspects of this framework could impact the success of the BEAD program. Some possible obstacles and barriers include:

- *Pole attachments.* This refers to the cables, wires, and other equipment that are attached to utility poles to provide service.
- *State and local taxes* include real property and personal property taxes paid by ISPs on their deployed equipment.
- *Local Government/Municipal participation.* This refers to the regulations that prevent the full participation of local governments and other entities in the broadband ecosystem.
- *Arizona Utility Notification Center (Arizona 811) capacity.* This is the readiness and capability of Arizona 811 to meet the anticipated right-of-way marking requests for future fiber deployment.
- *Facilities relocation* is the process by which Internet Service Providers must move their facilities during construction projects in the right-of-way.
- *Lack of open access backhaul options* can occur when backbone and middle mile fiber for backhaul are either unavailable or owned and operated on a proprietary and exclusive basis.
- *Franchise fees and in-kind contributions for high-cost areas.* Franchise fees and the value of any "in-kind" obligations imposed by the franchising authority on Internet Service Providers.

Which, if any, of these barriers are relevant in your area? What other legislative and regulatory barriers are you aware of in the area under your jurisdiction? Does your organization have any plans to mitigate these barriers?

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11) With respect to permitting, what types of government permits/approvals do you think are barriers to deployment of high-speed internet in the State of Arizona? Select all that apply:

[ ] Municipal (rights-of-way)

[ ] County (rights-of-way)

[ ] Location, inventory and/or access to existing assets (towers, conduits, fiber, light poles, etc.)

[ ] Arizona Department of Transportation

[ ] Army Corps of Engineers (waterway crossings)

[ ] Railroad

[ ] Tribal areas

[ ] National forest land

[ ] National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Environmental Assessments)

[ ] Arizona State Historic Preservation Office

[ ] Federal Aviation Administration
[-] N/A

12) High-speed internet deployment in Arizona requires permits from multiple authorities. The requirements and processes for obtaining permits vary among the authorities. Some possible permitting obstacles and barriers are listed below:

- *Federal permitting.* Arizona has several federally managed lands that require permits from federal agents for deployment of infrastructure. These agencies include the National Forest Service, the National Park Service, and others.
- *State permitting.* Infrastructure expansion typically requires state environmental, cultural, and historical permits, as well as right-of-way permits for building within a state-managed right-of-way.
- *Local permitting.* Deployment also requires a variety of permits from local and county entities including city/village/township rights-of-way, country rights-of-way, county drains, railroad crossings, and zoning.

Which, if any, of these permitting barriers are relevant for your area? What other permitting barriers are there? What ideas do you have to overcome any of these barriers?

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13) Labor and workforce shortages can create significant barriers to high-speed internet deployment by limiting the availability of skilled workers for construction, installation, maintenance, and customer support. These shortages can cause delays and increase costs for providers, as well as reliability of service for customers. Some possible workforce obstacles include:

- *Skilled labor shortage.* The deployment of infrastructure requires a skilled workforce, including engineers, construction workers, and technicians.
- *Worker safety.* If workers are unable or unwilling to work due to safety concerns, it may slow down the deployment of high-speed internet infrastructure.
- *Competition with other projects.* There may be competition for workers between high-speed internet infrastructure projects and other large infrastructure projects happening in the state - in particular, energy or other utility-related projects.
- *Training needs.* If there are not enough workers with the necessary skills to deploy high-speed internet infrastructure, there may be a need for additional training programs. This could add time and cost to the deployment process.
- *Seasonal labor availability.* In Arizona, weather patterns and topographical/geographical challenges may impact the ability to deploy infrastructure through the year. Contracted firms and labor often seek opportunities in warmer climates during the winter months, seeking continuity of employment and revenue.

Which, if any, of these workforce barriers are relevant for your area? What other workforce barriers are there? What ideas do you have to overcome any of these barriers?

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14) High-speed internet infrastructure deployment requires significant planning, coordination, and execution. When there is a lack of capacity or expertise in local leadership, it can hinder the progress of deployment. Some possible barriers include:

- *Limited local resources.* Local governments, community organizations, and other entities often invest in internet infrastructure projects, often through public-private partnerships or by providing matching funds for a specific project. If these sources of funding are insufficient, it can be challenging to secure any additional necessary funds for deployment.
- *Limited demand for service*. Network deployment requires a sufficient level of demand for service to justify the investment and ongoing maintenance costs. One of the primary factors that influence demand for service is the number of residents and businesses in the area. In areas with a small population, it may be difficult to justify the investment needed for infrastructure deployment.

Which, if any, of these local capacity barriers are relevant for your area? What other local capacity barriers are there? What ideas do you have to overcome any of these barriers?

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15) Without effective communication, government agencies, service providers, local communities, and other stakeholders may not be able to coordinate their efforts effectively. This can cause duplication of efforts, delays, and inefficiencies in deployment, as well as misinformation and local resistance to deployment efforts. Some possible knowledge and communications barriers include:

- *Lack of information/communication*. Accurate and timely data is critical to effective planning and deployment. Without access to comprehensive and up-to-date information about existing infrastructure, demand for high-speed internet, and other relevant factors, it may be difficult to plan projects and deploy infrastructure effectively.
- *Local resistance.* In some cases, community members may be resistant to internet deployment projects due to concerns about privacy, security, or property rights. Without effective community engagement that addresses these concerns, local opposition can stall or even halt the deployment process.
- *Misinformation* can create significant challenges which must be addressed by providing accurate and clear information about the benefits, costs, and safety of high-speed internet infrastructure deployment.
- *Lack of topical knowledge or general awareness.* Many people are not aware of the benefits of high-speed internet and may not understand how it can improve their lives and enhance their community. In addition, there is a lack of knowledge among the public regarding basic technical aspects of high-speed internet availability. This lack of understanding can lead to resistance or apathy toward infrastructure expansion efforts.
- *Lack of community engagement.* Community engagement is essential to ensure that newly deployed infrastructure will meet the needs of residents and businesses. Without input from the community, projects may not reflect the specific needs and challenges of the area which can lead to a suboptimal outcome and cause lower rates of adoption.

Which, if any, of these knowledge and communication barriers are relevant in your area? What other knowledge and communications barriers are there? What ideas do you have for overcoming any of these possible barriers?

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16) Which of the following do you think are constraints or barriers to increasing the impact of Internet Service Providers' efforts to expand broadband? Select all that apply:

[ ] Lack of staff or organizational capacity/support

[ ] Lack of awareness and engagement in communities we serve

[ ] Lack of funding availability

[ ] Difficulty accessing funding

[ ] Competitive pricing from other providers

[ ] Debt collections due to subscribers defaulting on payments

[ ] Language barriers

[ ] Other - Please specify: _____

[ ] Unsure or N/A

17) The NTIA permits but does not require states to use "local coordination" as a criterion in the selection rubric for choosing which ISPs will be subsidized to deploy to unserved and underserved areas. Do you think Arizona should encourage ISPs to coordinate with local governments, and award extra points in a rubric to ISPs that can provide evidence of local government support in the areas they're targeting?

( ) Yes

( ) No

18) *(If "No" to 17)* Why don't you think Arizona should reward ISPs that give evidence of local support?

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19) *(If "Yes" to 17)* What kinds of evidence should Arizona look for to indicate local support? (*Check all that apply*)

( ) Letters of support from local elected officials

( ) Letters of support from local organizations

( ) Local matching funds

( ) Letters of support from local residents

( ) Other (specify)

20) What factors would you look to in deciding whether to support an ISP in applying for BEAD funds? *(Check up to three)*

( ) Technology, preference for fiber

( ) Technology, preference for wireless

( ) Good name recognition in the community

( ) Lack of complaints about their conduct locally

( ) Strong national reputation

( ) Track record of strong customer service

( ) Plans for local job creation

( ) Affordable prices

( ) Transparent pricing practices

( ) Promise of rapid completion of deployment

( ) Locally headquartered

( ) Tried and true technology

( ) Cutting edge technology

( ) Other (specify)

21) Would you expect multiple ISPs to bid for federal subsidies to serve your area?

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Unsure

22) Do you have any specific ISPs in mind that you would be likely to endorse for deploying to your area using BEAD subsidies?

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Unsure

23) Does your organization engage in digital skills promotion or training? That is, do you help people learn to use computers and the internet?

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Unsure

24) Does your organization engage in digital skills promotion or training? That is, do you help people learn to use computers and the internet?

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Unsure

25) *(If "Yes" to 24)* **What does your organization do to promote digital skills?**

_____

_____

_____

26) Does your organization help people get signed up for home internet subscriptions?

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Unsure

27) *(If "Yes" to 26)* **What does your organization do to help people get signed up for home internet subscriptions?**

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28) As you plan for future investments, what do you see as the most significant barriers to expanding and sustaining broadband service throughout Arizona?

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3. General

29) In general, does your organization have any advice you would like to provide to the Arizona Commerce Authority as it plans and implements the BEAD Program?

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Thank You!

Thank you for taking this survey. Your response is important and helpful to our effort to help close the Digital Divide for all Arizona households.