



Broadband and Digital Equity Plan Updates

**Special Committee on
Broadband**

Digital Equity Team

May 3rd, 2024

Presentation Agenda



- Introduction of Digital Equity Team
- Summary of Plan Strategies
- Timeline & Update of Strategies

Digital Equity Team!



- Keay Crandall, Digital Equity Manager
- Rachel Hawkins, Digital Equity Coordinator
- Broadband and Digital Equity Email Address: Broadband@lakecountyiil.gov

Plan Strategy 6-1 Hire Digital Equity Staff - Completed ✓

Summary of Strategies



- 1-1 Support BEAD Process
- 2-1 Implement a Dig Once Policy
- 3-1 Pilot Public Wi-Fi Hotspots
- 4-1 Device Distribution Campaign
- 4-2 ACP Outreach & Enrollment Campaign
- 5-1 Expand Digital Navigators
- 5-2 Coordinate Digital Literacy Programming
- 6-1 Hire a Digital Equity Manager and Broadband Coordinator
- 6-2 Create a County-led Broadband Digital Equity Coalition
- 6-3 Launch a Digital Equity Resource Website
- 7-1 Establish a Digital Equity Fund

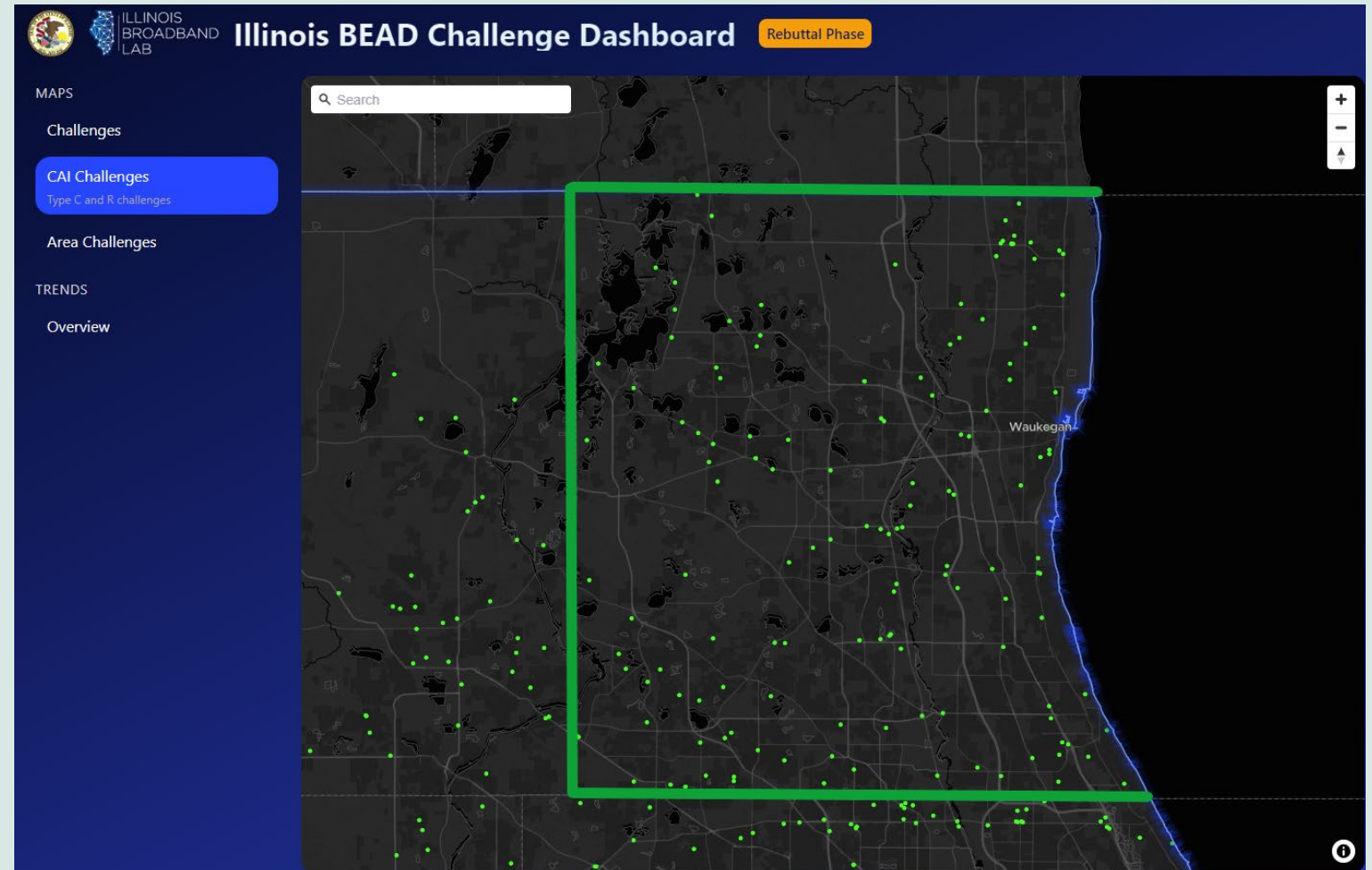
BEAD Challenge



February 2024

Plan Strategy 1-1 Support the BEAD Process – *In Progress*

- Communications sent to residents on how to challenge
- Portal created for residents to submit challenges
- Challenge period concluded in March 2024



Affordable Connectivity Program



April 2024

Plan Strategy 4-2 ACP Outreach and Enrollment Campaign – *Program Ending*

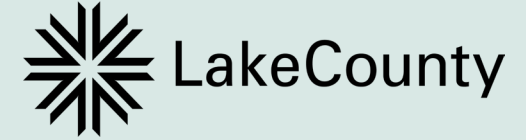
- Congress has not approved additional funds for ACP by the deadline of April 30th, 2024
- The last fully funded month of the program was April 2024
- Lake County Residents will receive a partial credit of \$14 towards their internet service bill if they are still participating in the program in May 2024

Availability & Access



- Strategy 2-1 Implement Dig Once Policy
 - Working with departments to evaluate best course for strategy
 - Attended LCDOT Utility and Coordination Council Meeting 04/24/24
- Strategy 3-1 Pilot Public Wi-Fi Hotspots
 - Developing competitive RFP process to deploy public Wi-Fi Hotspots

Adoption & Affordability



- Strategy 4-1 Device Distribution Campaign
 - Identifying partners for Device Distribution and Device Donation Campaigns
- Strategy 5-1 Expand Digital Navigators
 - Developing competitive RFP process to deploy county-wide Digital Navigator Program
 - RFP release date estimated to be Spring 2024
- Strategy 5-2 Coordinate Digital Literacy Programming
 - Discovered several digital literacy education opportunities to deploy in across the county

- Strategy 6-2 Create a County-led Broadband and Digital Equity Coalition
 - Lake County Digital Equity Coalition interest form is now hosted on the Digital Growth Initiative webpage
 - [Digital Growth Initiative | Lake County, IL \(lakecountyil.gov\)](https://lakecountyil.gov)
 - Fostering relationships with key stakeholders and organizations
- Strategy 6-3 Launch a Digital Equity Resource Website
 - Collecting existing resources and determining needs
 - Building interactive maps which will identify digital equity resources across the county
- Strategy 7-1 Establish a Digital Equity Fund
 - Ascertaining need and potential funding sources

Strategy Implementation Timeline



| Strategy | Q2 2024 | Q3 2024 | Q4 2024 | Q1 2025 | Q2 2025 | Q3 2025 | Q4 2025 |
|---|---|---|--|---|---------|---------|---------|
| 1-1 Support BEAD Process | Support rebuttal phase | Convene with Illinois Office of Broadband to stay up to date on BEAD process. | Funding from State will be allocated by the end of 2024. | Implementation will begin in unserved and underserved communities, ongoing through December 2026. | | | |
| 2-1 Implement Dig Once Policy | Coordinating efforts with LCDOT and Permitting. | | Develop white paper with Dig Once Policy considerations. | Support LCDOT and Permitting to encourage best practices outlined in white paper. Prepare for 1/1/26 implementation of state Dig Once Policy. | | | |
| 3-1 Pilot Public Wi-Fi Hotspots | RFP release | RFP applications due. | Ongoing Public Wi-Fi Hotspot implementation | | | | |
| 4-1 Device Distribution Campaign | Working to determine potential partners in obtaining devices. | Collaborate with identified partners in obtaining devices. | | | | | |
| | Host first device distribution event. | Identify and plan device distribution events with community organizations ongoing through December 2026. | | | | | |
| | Launch device donation campaign. | Quarterly donation drive campaigns to collect, recycle, and refurbish devices to be redistributed to Lake County residents ongoing through December 2026. Align with Digital Inclusion Week in October. | | | | | |
| 4-2 ACP Outreach and Enrollment Campaign | Add affordable internet plan information to County website. | Determine other community supports necessary as residents are moved off ACP. | | | | | |
| 5-1 Expand Digital Navigators | RFP release | RFP applications due. | Provide training and support to Digital Navigators and organizations hosting Digital Navigators. | | | | |
| | | Digital Navigator Program Launch | | | | | |

Strategy Implementation Timeline



| Strategy | Q2 2024 | Q3 2024 | Q4 2024 | Q1 2025 | Q2 2025 | Q3 2025 | Q4 2025 |
|---|---|--|--|--|---------|---------|---------|
| 5-2 Coordinating Digital Literacy Programming | Identifying potential programs and seeking feedback from Coalition members on community needs for Digital Literacy Programming. | | Finalize funding considerations. | Work with community organizations to implement Digital Literacy Programming. | | | |
| 6-1 Hire Digital Equity Staff | Staff Hired | | | | | | |
| 6-2 Create a Digital Equity Coalition | Creation of Coalition Interest Form | Host monthly Coalition meetings to convene members and carry out plan strategies. | | | | | |
| | First Coalition Meeting | | | | | | |
| 6-3 Launch a Digital Equity Resource Website | Initial website updates and content planning. Coalition Interest form posted. | Update website with Coalition members, meeting recordings, and other essential materials | Coordinate with GIS to build layered maps identifying digital resources. | Ongoing updates to website including Coalition materials and updates related to other plan strategies. | | | |
| | Resources for affordable internet. | | | | | | |
| 7-1 Establish a Digital Equity Fund | Ascertaining need, potential funding sources, and reallocation options. | | Final considerations of Digital Equity fund use in 2024. | Convene Digital Equity Coalition members to determine sustainable funding practices and ongoing supports for Broadband and Digital Equity work in Lake County. | | | |

Next Steps



- Support the BEAD Process – *In Progress*
 - Supporting State Broadband Office and local organizations participating in the challenge and rebuttal processes
 - BEAD funding will be allocated to ISPs by end of 2024
- Release of Competitive RFP Processes – *In Progress*
 - Digital Navigator Program
 - Public Wi-Fi Hotspot Pilot
- Forming Lake County Digital Equity Coalition – *In Progress*
 - Interested organizations should fill out interest form
 - Meeting with key stakeholders to determine goals and direction



Questions