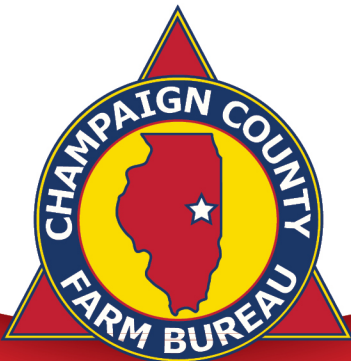


Broadband in Champaign County

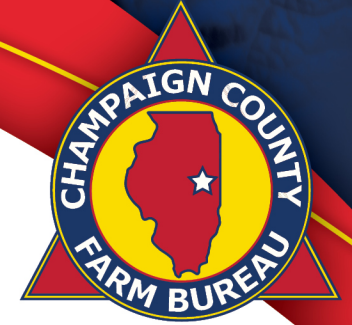


Background

- The CCFB was founded in 1912
- Grassroots, membership driven organization
- Over 10,000 members strong
- Information, education, advocacy

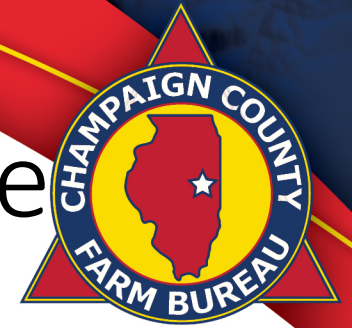


Why Broadband?



- It's what our members need and want
 - Started diving deep into the issue in early 2020
- Pandemic exacerbated an existing problem
- Remote schooling, telehealth, work from home, and even vaccine appointment scheduling were incredibly difficult without reliable broadband





Impacts of broadband access on agriculture

- Farming is more technology dependent than ever before
- Precision agriculture technologies and other management techniques possible with access to broadband¹:
 - 40% less fuel use
 - 20-50% less water use
- USDA estimates gross economic benefits from broadband to be¹:
 - 4% of total value of row crop market
 - 7% of total value of livestock production
 - 19% of total specialty crops

¹United States Dept. of Agriculture. "A Case for Rural Broadband. Insights on Rural Broadband Infrastructure and Next Generation Precision Agriculture Technologies." April 2019.

CCFB Initiatives

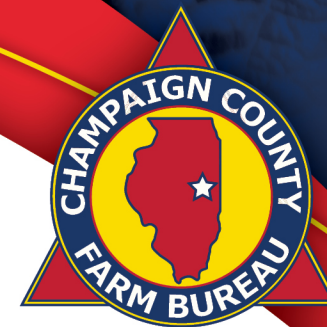
- Survey of our members living in Champaign County, but outside the Champaign and Urbana zip codes
- Engaged with rural school districts to promote the survey with their families
- >1,500 responses
- Engaging with providers on potential projects in rural areas and how the CCFB could coordinate and help support providers' attempts to secure grant funding for such projects
 - CCFB is both provider and technology neutral, we'll work with any provider that is willing to improve broadband access for our community
 - CCFB does ask providers to agree to provisions to mitigate potential impacts of construction on private property



Big Picture

- 2 overarching themes: Access & Affordability
- People want and don't have access to high speed, reliable internet
- How do you build out infrastructure without price points becoming unbearably high?

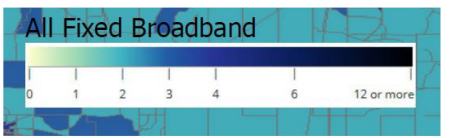
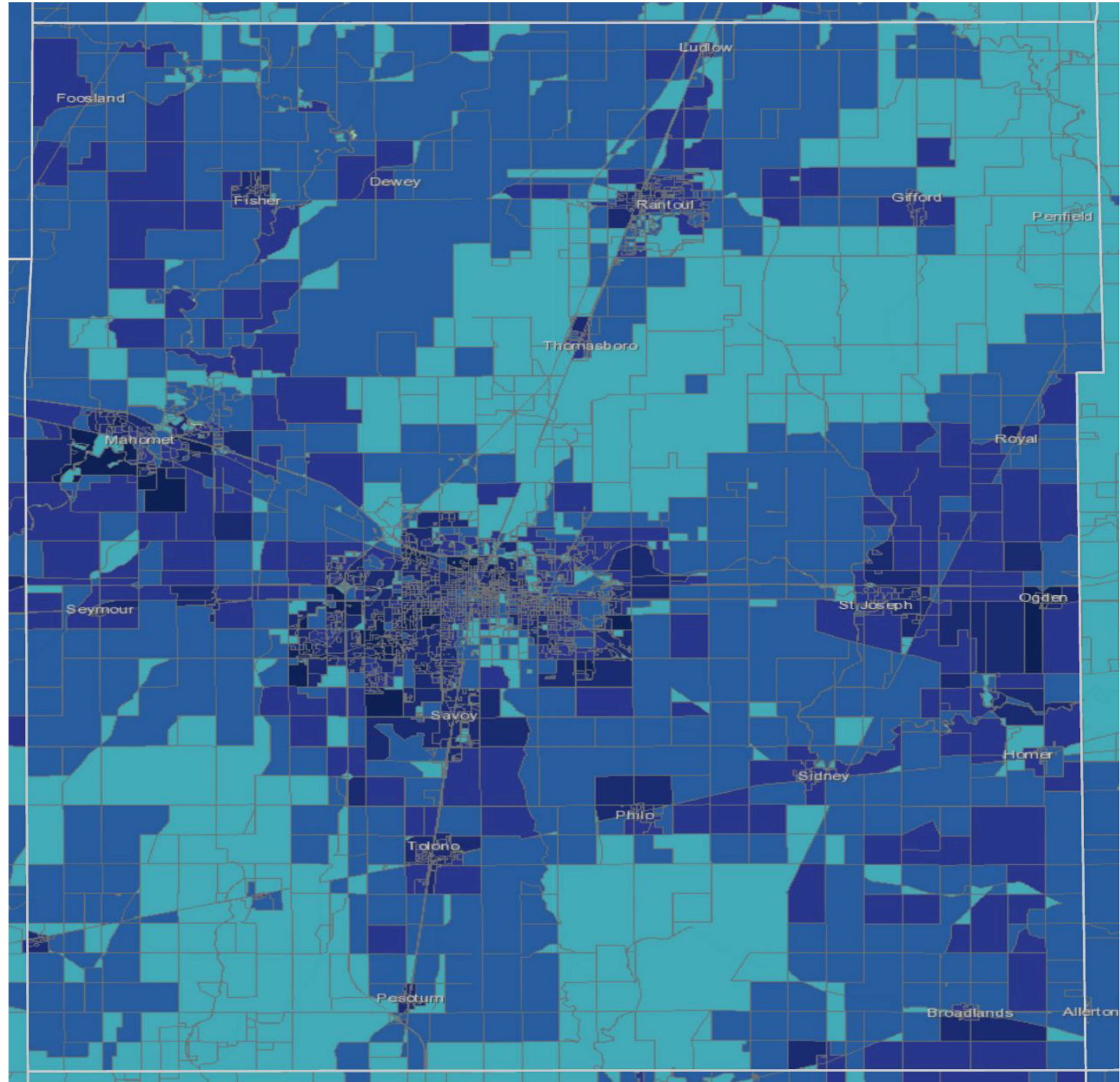




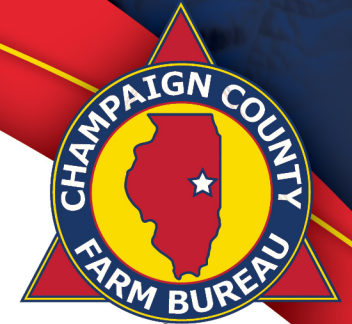
Access

- Over 47% of our respondents were unserved or underserved
- It's estimated that there are 2,345 households in Champaign County without access to a 25/3 connection¹
- 9,678 households with no 25/3 wired connection¹
- FCC estimates \$4,084 to connect a household to 25/3 broadband
- ~\$9,576,980 to connect every household to a 25/3 connection
- ~\$39,524,952 to connect every household in Champaign County to a wired 25/3 broadband connection

¹Horrigan, J, Whitacre, B, and Rhinesmith, C. "Universal Broadband in Illinois: Studying the Costs of Providing Free and Affordable Service for All Residents". December 2020



Affordability



- Among non-broadband users, 45% say a reason why they do not have broadband at home is that the monthly cost of a home broadband subscription is too expensive¹
- Efforts must be made to ensure affordable access to available broadband connections
 - Providers such as Comcast & ATT have created low or no cost programs for students during remote schooling
- “Chicago Connected” partnership between private philanthropy, Chicago city government, and Chicago Public Schools to connect CPS students.
 - Provided free high speed internet to ~64,000 CPS students
 - Just announced that this program will provide high-speed internet to CPS students attending City Colleges as well.
- Emergency Broadband Benefit Program
 - \$3.2 Billion to help with affordability issue.
 - \$50/household/month for internet costs + one time device purchase grant
- Another aspect of affordability is the ability to afford non-cell phone devices to connect to the internet and know how to use those devices
 - The CCFB provides classes to our members to aid them in understanding how to use smartphones, tablets, and computers

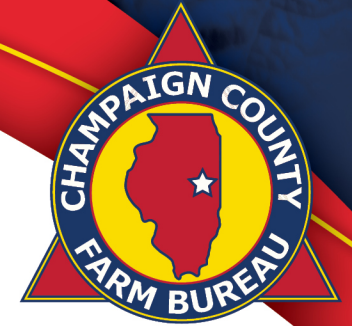
¹Perrin, Andrew. “Mobile Technology and Home Broadband” Pew Research Center. June 2021.

ARPA

- Broadband is clearly stated as an authorized use of ARPA funds.
 - Projects must start at 100/20 and be scalable to 100/100.
 - Connect IL grants also require 100 symmetrical
- One-time funding windfall will help provide a one-time funding boost to help jump-start private broadband infrastructure investment
- Treasury is “encouraging” that funds be used for infrastructure and last mile connections



Our Recommendations



- Champaign Co. is uniquely positioned to capitalize on current funding opportunities to support broadband access and affordability
- We support development of a county broadband roadmap to improve both access and affordability to broadband in Champaign County
- Our preferred model would be a public-private grant program utilizing \$15 million in ARPA funds to jump-start investment in broadband infrastructure
 - Modeled after the Connect IL grant programs
 - Encourage incorporation of either a grant system or a funding system that would also incentivize providers to develop programs and pricing structures that would aid low-income households in being able to afford broadband
- Development of a 3rd party broadband navigator that would coordinate broadband investment in Champaign Co. based upon the finalized roadmap.
 - Aid in grant applications
 - Maintain relationships with providers, public entities, private organizations, and local government
 - Ensure that broadband coverage is truly county-wide through coordination of grant applications

Broadband in Champaign County

