



# Broadband Ready Communities (BRRC)

## FAQ

### **Does Broadband Ready Community designation impact a municipalities ability to obtain grant funding?**

Broadband Ready Community designation will not impact a municipalities ability to obtain grant funding through PBDA or other agencies. The Broadband Ready Community designation is not a requirement to participate in the BEAD program but is an opportunity for municipalities to proactively identify and reduce barriers to deploying broadband infrastructure within their community.

### **How will PBDA determine Broadband Ready Community designation?**

Each situation with a municipality will vary, and applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. PBDA will be providing significant flexibility for the municipality in our review process to obtain the designation. The goal of the program is to ensure an attainable baseline for all municipalities to achieve Broadband Ready Designation.

### **Can I send emails to reach out to neighboring municipalities, internet service providers, and my county?**

Yes. PBDA encourages your municipality to reach out to their neighboring municipal entities to promote collaboration and interest in the program, partnership, etc.

### **Can another governmental entity serve as my Municipal Broadband Champion?**

Yes. PBDA recommends that municipalities partner with organizations such as but not limited to their county, a local council of governments (COG), economic development organization, or county associations to serve as Municipal Broadband Champion. Links to sample resolutions necessary for both the county and municipality to authorize this partnership are found on the [BRRC page](#). Please note that even if your county is not serving as Municipal Broadband Champion, you are required to notify them that you are participating in the BBRC program.

### **Who should I reach out to in my county about the BBRC program?**

The point of contact in your county will vary depending on the county. It may be the Board of Commissioners, planning department, the chief clerk's office, or another office depending on the county. If you are unable to determine who your county point of contact is, please reach out to us at [RA-DCBroadbandReady@pa.gov](mailto:RA-DCBroadbandReady@pa.gov)

### **An outside entity is designated as the Municipal Broadband Champion. Can they provide outreach on behalf of the communities they are designated for?**

Yes. An outside entity such as a county, council of governments, etc. may provide outreach on behalf of its communities.

### **How do I reach out to internet service providers in my area?**

PBDA recommends a municipality use the FCC Broadband Map: [broadbandmap.fcc.gov/location-summary](https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/location-summary) to find providers in their area. This can be done by typing in an address or addresses in your municipality and viewing the available internet service providers seen on the map. PBDA has a list of contact information for internet service providers found at: [Internet Service Provider Contact List - PA Department of Community & Economic Development](#)

**It is not required that a municipality contact all providers shown on the FCC map.** If a municipality cannot find the contact information for a provider and it is not available on our list, PBDA recommends reaching out to us directly at [RA-DCBroadbandReady@pa.gov](mailto:RA-DCBroadbandReady@pa.gov)

### **What does public advertisement of the Program mean?**

Municipalities must demonstrate that they publicly advertised the program for two (2) weeks, presented the Program during a public meeting, and ensure they have offered constituents the opportunity to provide comment. The two (2) week advertisement requirement may consist of activities including physical postings at a municipal building, online postings, or inclusion in a newsletter. **It does not require an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation.**

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### **Will PBDA provide funding for optional asset inventories?**

PBDA will not provide funding for municipalities to conduct optional asset inventories. PBDA recognizes that the availability of asset inventories may be limited due to capacity and timeline limitations and has designated this component as optional as a result.

### **How do franchise agreements apply to broadband infrastructure deployment?**

Franchise agreements should not apply to broadband service in most cases. A municipality with concerns related to franchise agreements and broadband deployment should consult with their solicitor.

### **Am I required to have an exemption in my street/pave cut ordinance for broadband infrastructure development to attain designation as a Broadband Ready Community?**

PBDA will review applications on a case-by-case basis. PBDA recommends municipalities with high amounts of underserved and unserved residents implement an exemption until January 1, 2030 in their street/pave cut ordinance to ensure expedited deployment of broadband infrastructure.

### **What is the applicability of the exemption to a street/pave cut ordinance and why is PBDA promoting one?**

Some internet service providers may choose to deploy fiber optic cable through buried deployment similar to an underground utility like gas or electricity. The waiver for street-cut ordinance(s) only applies to the moratorium preventing cuts on a road within a timeline such as five years. It does not modify other requirements within the ordinance, especially those that outline the required quality of restoration. While street cuts to a freshly paved road are never an ideal scenario, broadband internet access for underserved and unserved locations is a vital generational investment.

Where applicable, PBDA recommends waiver language implemented until 2030 as the requirement for the \$1.16 billion in BEAD funds mandates a subgrantee deploy service within four years of signing a contract with the PBDA.

### **How do I ensure I have taken appropriate steps to ensure timely permitting review and reasonable fees?**

Municipalities should evaluate their permit approval processes to ensure efficient processing timelines and to confirm that policies are current and effective. Best practices on reviewing municipal permitting charges and fees can be found at: [Establishing Government Charges and Fees \(gfoa.org\)](https://gfoa.org)

PBDA does not anticipate changes to timelines. The permitting and fees questions are asked to ensure awareness of permitting processes before facing an influx of permitting requests. Additionally, PBDA is asking this question to encourage a review of the schedule of fees for relevant permits. This review is intended to avoid situations where municipalities may incur a net loss(es) per permit request so that they do not incur a loss should an ISP request a significant number of permits for a deployment project.

PBDA also recommends reaching out to the Governor's Center for Local Government Services and Office of Planning within DCED for additional technical assistance by visiting: [dced.pa.gov/local-government](https://dced.pa.gov/local-government)

### **Does the Broadband Ready Communities program apply to permitting on PennDOT roads?**

Awareness of PennDOT permitting is critical, and thus the state has developed an awareness and Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) modification process. These efforts, however, are not part of the BBRC program. BBRC is solely focused on municipal right of way and owned assets. PBDA has been in contact with PennDOT Connects as part of this process and will pass on any feedback related to state roads received by partners, participating entities, and ISPs along to them.

### **What is meant by proportional bonding?**

PBDA has received feedback from Internet Service Providers that some municipalities have required bonding that is not proportional to the impact/cost to repair impacts. For example, some municipalities are requiring bonds cover the full project cost, even for smaller-scale activities such as a \$50,000 street cut. Proportional bonding means that the amount of the bond should match the scale or impact of the work being done.



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**Do you have any language that can be used to spread awareness and conduct outreach on this program?**

Yes. Please find examples below:

### Neighboring Municipality

Dear [Neighboring Municipality],

[SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME] is reaching out to you as part of the requirements to achieve Broadband Ready designation from the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA).

Broadband Ready designation promotes public-private partnerships with internet service providers and allows [SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME] to verify that they have completed steps to expedite broadband rollout in their municipality. Municipalities designated as Broadband Ready will also be promoted on a map on the PBDA website.

In addition to reaching out to our neighboring municipalities, [SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME] is also reaching out to [COUNTY NAME] and local internet service providers as part of the program.

For more information on the [Broadband Ready Communities designation](#), visit the [broadband.pa.gov](http://broadband.pa.gov) website.

Thanks,

[SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME]

### County

Dear [COUNTY/COUNTY OFFICE],

[SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME] is reaching out to you as part of the requirements to achieve Broadband Ready Community designation from the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA).

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[SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME] is also reaching out to our neighboring municipalities and local internet service providers as part of the program.

For more information on the [Broadband Ready Communities designation](#), visit the [broadband.pa.gov](http://broadband.pa.gov) website.

Thanks,

[SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME]

### Internet Service Providers

Dear [Internet Service Provider Name],

[SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME] is reaching out to you as part of the requirements to achieve Broadband Ready designation from the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA).

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[SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME] is also reaching out to [COUNTY NAME] and our neighboring municipalities as part of the program.

For more information on the [Broadband Ready Communities designation](#), visit the [broadband.pa.gov](http://broadband.pa.gov) website.

Thanks,

[SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME]

