Broadband Ready Communities (BRRC)

FAQ

Does Broadband Ready Community designation impact a municipality's ability to obtain grant funding?
No. However, you are strongly encouraged to join the program and proactively reduce barriers to expanding broadband infrastructure.

How will PBDA decide if a community is Broadband Ready?
You must apply to become a Broadband Ready Community. Details about requirements and how to apply are in the Broadband Ready Community (BBRC) program guidelines.

Once approved, PBDA will send you a designation letter and a logo to show your municipality's Broadband Ready status.

Should I reach out to neighboring municipalities, internet service providers, and my county?
Yes. We encourage collaborative efforts and engagement with all your local leaders and partners.

Who should I reach out to in my county about the BBRC program?
Depending on your county, your point of contact may be the Board of Commissioners, planning department, chief clerk's office, or another office. If you need help figuring out who to contact, please email PBDA at RA-DCBroadbandReady@pa.gov.

Can another government entity serve as my Municipal Broadband Champion?
Yes. You can use the resolutions provided in Appendix I & II of the BBRC Program guidelines to designate your county as your Municipal Broadband Champion.

Once designated, the Municipal Broadband Champion can conduct outreach on behalf of your community.

How do I reach out to internet service providers (ISPs) in my area?
You can use the FCC Broadband Map to find ISPs in your area based on one or more addresses in your municipality. PBDA has a list of contact information for ISPs at: Internet Service Provider Contact List. If you still cannot find contact information for ISPs in your area, please email PBDA at RA-DCBroadbandReady@pa.gov.

Will PBDA provide funding for asset inventories?
No. Having an asset inventory is optional. If you do not have enough time or capacity to create an asset inventory, you can participate in the BBRC program without one.

How do franchise agreements apply to broadband infrastructure?
Franchise agreements should not apply to broadband service in most cases. Consult with your legal counsel if you have concerns related to franchise agreements and broadband deployment.

Am I required to have an exemption in my street/pave cut ordinance for broadband infrastructure development?
No. But if you have a high number of unserved and underserved residents, we strongly encourage you to consider implementing an exemption until January 1, 2030 in your street/pave cut ordinance to expedite deployment of broadband infrastructure.

What is an exemption to a street/pave cut ordinance, and how is it helpful for deploying broadband infrastructure?
Some internet service providers (ISPs) bury fiber optic cable, just like gas or electric utilities sometimes bury their service lines. The exemption for street/pave cut ordinances 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 timely permitting review and reasonable fees?
To prepare for an influx of new permitting requests, you should evaluate your permitting process to check that your:
- policies are current and effective.
- processing timelines are efficient.
- fees and charges are reasonable.

Best practices for reviewing municipal permitting charges and fees can be found at: Establishing Government Charges and Fees (gfoa.org).

You can also get technical assistance from the Governor's Center for Local Government Services and the DCED Office of Community Planning.

Does the Broadband Ready Communities program apply to permitting on PennDOT roads?
BBRC is only focused on municipal right of way and owned assets. If you receive feedback related to state roads from your organization, partners, or internet service providers, PBDA will help relay that to PennDOT Connects.

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.

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 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).

Broadband Ready Community 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.

[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 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).

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.

[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 website.

Thanks, [SENDING MUNICIPALITY NAME]