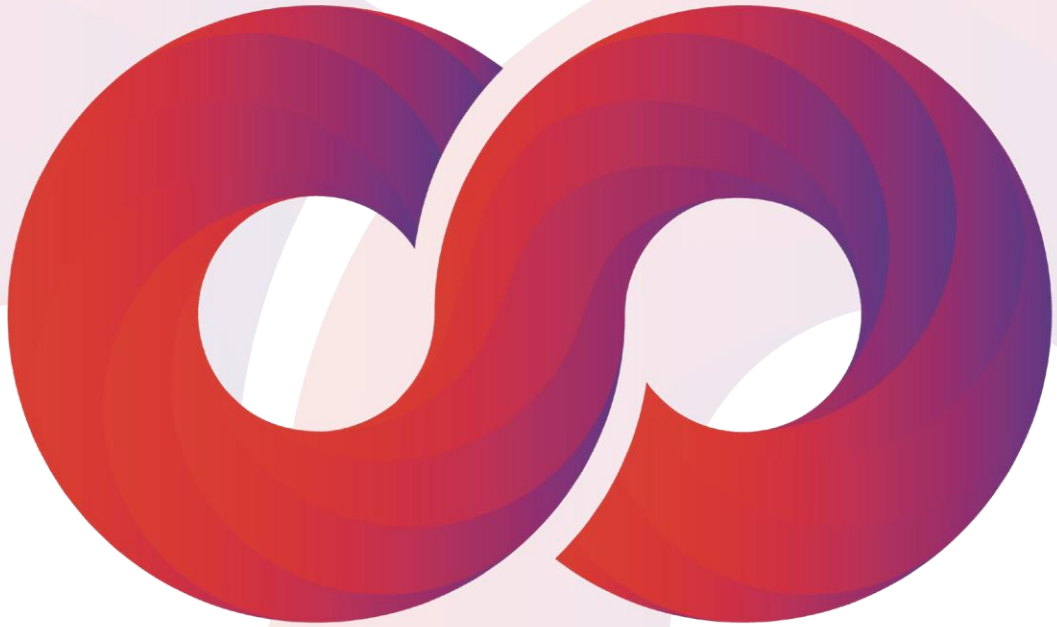

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The Problem

- 350,000 unserved locations (new estimate to be released soon)
- Primary problem is the economics of the infrastructure to serve these areas
- Impetus to solve the problem comes from many angles
  - Economic
  - Social/political
  - Moral
- Governor set bold goal of universal access by 2028
- **$124 million** has been awarded since 2017, connecting **140,895** homes, businesses, and community anchors to broadband.

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Economic Impact

- According to an Amazon/US Chamber of Commerce Study, increased connectivity will impact Virginia's rural economic growth tremendously. They estimate:
  - **$2.24 billion** increased annual sales
  - **$1.29 billion** annual value added
  - **9,415** added jobs
  - **$452.4** million in annual wages

- According to a 2019 USDA study, if broadband and precision agriculture tools were ubiquitous, the U.S. could realize economic benefits of 18 percent of total production. For Virginia, 18% would be equivalent to a **$16.3 billion increase in VA Agriculture and Forestry output**.

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The Plan

- Proceeding along three tracks:
  1. Direct grants to public private partnerships to “make the math work”
  2. Policy changes
  3. Local planning support

- All supported by over 130 members of Commonwealth Connect Coalition

facebook
VEA Virginia Education Association Teaching. Learning. Leading.
AT&T
Virginia Chamber The Voice of Business
Walmart
Microsoft
Virginia Sheriffs' Association VSA
VCTA Virginia Cable Telecommunications Association
Virginia REALTORS®
VACo Virginia Association of Counties
VML Virginia Municipal League
amazon
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State Grant Programs

- Department of Housing and Community Development - Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI)
- Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission – Regional Economic Development Program
- Community Development Block Grant Planning Grant (CDBG)
- Department of Housing and Community Development – GO Virginia (middle mile)
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

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Grant Programs: VATI

- Provide financial assistance to supplement construction costs to extend services to areas unserved by any broadband provider.
- “Unserved” is defined as having access to broadband speeds of 25Mbps per second download/3Mbps per second upload or less
- Applicant must be a unit of local government

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Grant Programs: VATI

- Technical Assistance from VATI staff available now
- FY22 funding of $50 million
- Timeline:
  - June 17 - VATI How to Apply Webinar
  - July 27 - Deadline for VATI Notice of Application
  - September 14 - VATI Application Deadline

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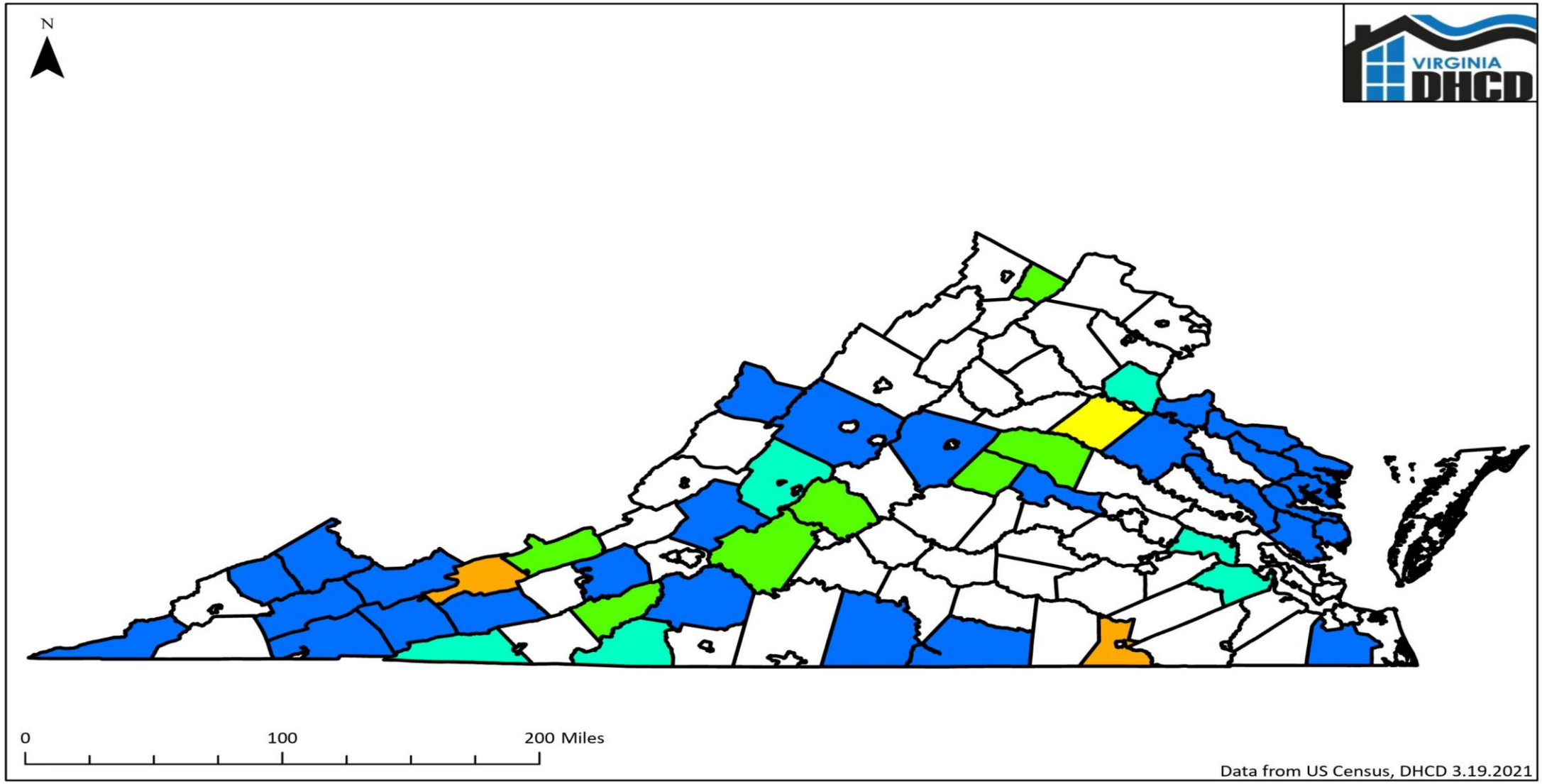
Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) Grant Awards 2017 - 2021

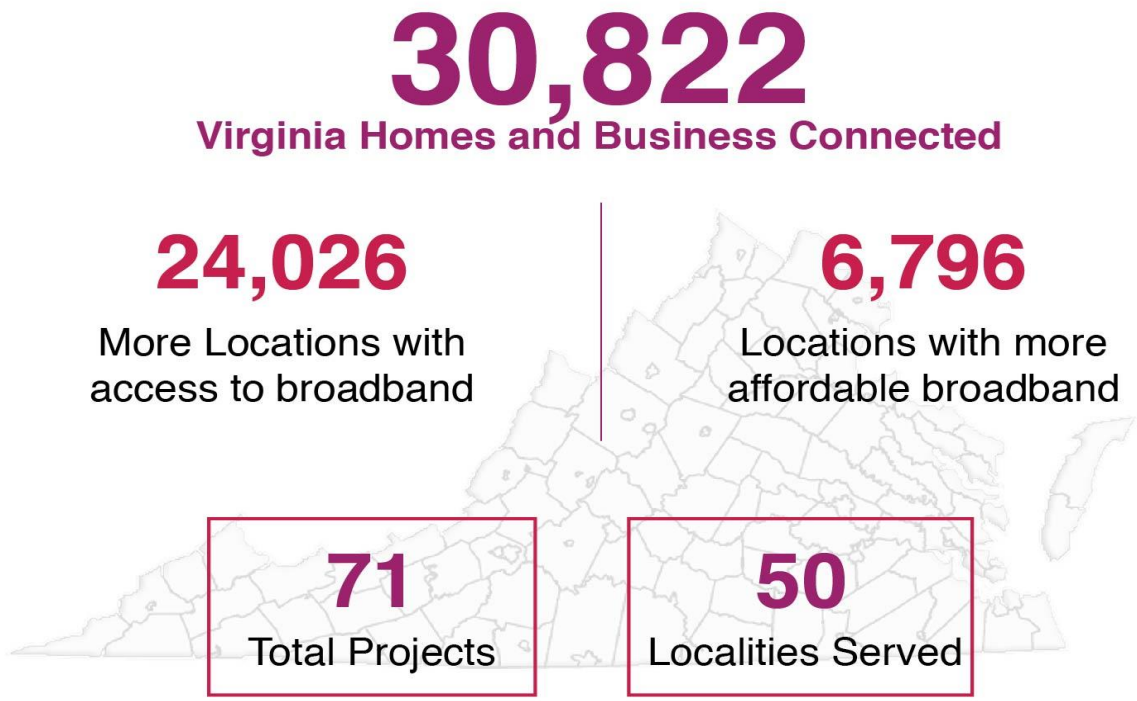


In some circumstances, localities have received awards for more than one year. The color for each reflects the most recent year for which an award was made. For details on localities that received awards for more than one year, please contact DHCD staff.

CARES Act Broadband Funding

- $30 million allocated for broadband connectivity in October 2020

- Shenandoah Valley Localities:
  - Page County - $2.1m (2 projects)
  - Augusta County - $900k (3 projects)
  - Rockbridge County - $770k



Projects by Type:

5 Affordability
33 Last Mile - Fiber
12 Last Mile - Fixed Wireless
11 Middle Mile
2 Mobile Hotspot
8 Public Wifi

Upcoming Federal Resources

- Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund
  - “To carry out critical capital projects directly enabling work, education, and health monitoring, including remote options, in response to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19”
  - VA is estimated to received $220 million
- Direct Funding to Virginia and Virginia Localities
  - $3.7 billion for Virginia, $2.8 billion for localities
- Emergency Broadband Benefit Program
  - $50/month subsidy for low-income households for the cost of broadband services for 6 months
  - Program launches at the end of April, not all providers are participating

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Broadband Legislation

SB 1413/HB 2304

- Makes permanent the utility leverage pilot program, permitting Dominion Energy and Appalachian Power to build and lease excess fiber (middle mile networks) to ISPs during grid modernization.

- Adding more middle-mile fiber throughout the state has increased competition and improved economics for ISPs.

- Program has facilitated universal broadband coverage in Grayson, Surry, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Richmond, and King George counties. At least a dozen additional universal projects are in the works.

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Local Planning Support

- DHCD's Office of Broadband has full time local assistance staff ready to help. Contact – vati@dhcd.Virginia.gov
- Comprehensive toolkit for local leaders – www.commonwealthconnect.virginia.gov
- Contains:
  - Step-by-step guide
  - Model Solicitation
  - Example Solicitations from Virginia localities
  - FAQs, Potential Pitfalls, and Benefits of Broadband

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Step-by-step Guide

Bringing Broadband to your Community

A Step-by-step Guide for Virginia's Local Leaders

Welcome! Since you've downloaded this document, you were able to find your way online, but there may be others in your community who aren't as fortunate. The Commonwealth of Virginia's broadband team wants to support your efforts to bring broadband connections to the residents of your community or region. We hope this document is comprehensive, but if you have any issues or questions – however small – please don't hesitate to reach out to us directly.

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LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING:

What am I looking at right now?

This is a step-by-step guide designed by the Commonwealth of Virginia's broadband team to explain why and how to get everyone in your community or region access to broadband, or high-speed internet. The guide is designed for local leaders, whether they be local elected, business or concerned citizens, who will work with local governments and internet service providers to bring universal access to broadband.

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Thank You!

Kyle Rosner – Deputy Broadband Advisor

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