



# BROADBAND PROGRAM

## Connect Beaver County Broadband Program Verizon Fiber-Optic Network Municipal Fact Sheet Beaver County, PA July 28, 2023

The Beaver County Commissioners through the Connect Beaver County Broadband Program announced last month that the County has selected internet service provider Verizon to deploy high-speed fiber-optic broadband service to hundreds of Beaver County locations by the end of 2026. You are receiving this informational email because your municipality may include residents who are slated to receive new internet service. We would like to be proactive and assist you, beginning with this fact sheet, in managing questions and expectations about the upcoming project.

Please distribute this fact sheet to any municipality employees or other stakeholders that may need to field inquiries.

If you have additional questions, please visit [ConnectBeaverCounty.com](https://connectbeavercounty.com) or contact [feedback@connectbeavercounty.com](mailto:feedback@connectbeavercounty.com).

### About the Program

Beaver County is advancing its Connect Beaver County Broadband Program and will bring high-speed Internet availability to county residents currently without access to service. The program's 2021 Broadband Data Collection & Feasibility Study identified 24 municipalities within the County that lacked complete access to high-speed or reliable Internet under the federal minimum as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Several municipalities were previously identified as Early Action Projects with progress already underway with other providers.

### Frequently Asked Questions to Municipalities

The following questions may be asked of municipal officials, with suggested responses. Please reach out to [feedback@connectbeavercounty.com](mailto:feedback@connectbeavercounty.com) for assistance in responding to other inquiries.



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## ***Where is the funding for this project coming from?***

The Beaver County Commissioners have approved the use of up to \$20 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to bring high-speed Internet to the communities in Beaver County currently without access to service. This ensures that residents will not have to pay expensive out-of-pocket construction expenses to get high-speed Internet delivered to their homes, assuming it is even available. More than \$11.9 million has been set aside for this portion of the project and Verizon will more than match the County's investment with another \$12.2 million.

## ***What municipalities have locations slated to receive broadband upgrades?***

Municipalities with locations slated to receive service include Big Beaver Borough, Brighton Township, Center Township, Chippewa Township, Darlington Township, Daugherty Township, Eastvale Borough, Frankfort Springs Borough, Franklin Township, Greene Township, Hanover Township, Hopewell Township, Independence Township, Industry Borough, Marion Township, Midland Borough, New Sewickley Township, North Sewickley Township, Ohioville Borough, Patterson Township, Potter Township, Raccoon Township, Shippingport Borough, South Beaver Township.

## ***Why is this work taking place in our municipality?***

Over 1,800 locations around Beaver County will be connected through this program. Some municipalities have 300+ locations that need broadband access, and others have just a few. All locations were selected based on the 2021 Data Collection & Feasibility Study

## ***Which areas of our municipality/borough will be covered by this work?***

The Connect Beaver County Broadband Program aims to cover unserved locations throughout the County. Many of these locations will be in rural or remote areas. To view an interactive map, please navigate to [www.connectbeavercounty.com/about-the-program](http://www.connectbeavercounty.com/about-the-program) to view locations that will be connected as part of this program.

## ***How can residents and businesses stay informed about the Connect Beaver County Broadband Program's latest developments?***

We understand it is important to keep the community well-informed. We encourage residents to sign up for our email list, which can be found on our website. Subscribers will be updated on construction and other ongoing work throughout the life of the project.



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## ***How will the residents of my municipality benefit from this program?***

The Connect Beaver County Broadband Program brings numerous benefits to your community. Fast and reliable broadband is essential today for a thriving economy. Broadband will help residents access telehealth appointments, secure employment opportunities, work from home, access educational materials, stay connected with friends and family, and so much more.

## ***Will there be any costs to residents or businesses for broadband connectivity?***

Residents or business owners receiving new access to service will not be charged for the new Verizon infrastructure. The County has invested \$11.9 million into this phase of the project in addition to a \$12.2 million match from Verizon to ensure residents do not have to come out-of-pocket for the **availability** of high-speed Internet at their home or business. However, it will be incumbent on the resident to pay for ongoing internet service. Once fiber is deployed, it will be up to the resident or business owner to decide if they would like to subscribe to broadband service. Service plans from Verizon will vary and competitive prices will vary depending on the selected service speed.

## ***Who is the point of contact for the project? Whom can I contact with questions?***

The Beaver County Office of Planning and Redevelopment has been managing the project on behalf of the Beaver County Commissioners. If you have a question, please use the designated Connect Beaver County Broadband Program email, [feedback@connectbeavercounty.com](mailto:feedback@connectbeavercounty.com) where we will ensure your questions get answered. Once the broadband infrastructure is in place, residents will be working directly with Verizon for a chosen plan of service.

## ***What can our municipality do to help expedite the process for our residents?***

Verizon will need time to design and construct a state-of-the-art fiber-optic network for each part of Beaver County receiving new service. Part of the work, and a common cause for delays, involves permitting. Broadband networks are often built along public land that runs alongside roads and railways or private land and facilities. Networks are either buried, aerial, or both. These deployments require many kinds of permits from owners and authorities. Verizon will be applying for these permits, but if you are called upon to lend assistance, it would be in the interest of time to act or respond promptly.

Municipalities can also be of assistance by confirming maps identifying right-of-way access are up to date.

## ***What is the projected timeline for the broadband project implementation?***

Verizon is committed to connecting as many residents and businesses as possible by 2024 with very remote locations potentially requiring additional time for access.

***Will this program be subject to Cable Franchise Fees that are currently collected by municipalities under existing law?***

No. Broadband service is not classified as a cable service by the FCC and is not subject to a franchise fee by the Local Franchise Authority (municipality). The federal government allows municipalities to collect fees up to 5% on cable services through franchise fees, which are only applicable to what the FCC determines to be "Cable Services."

## Resident Frequently Asked Questions

***Will my location be included as part of this project?***

To find out if your location is part of the program, please navigate to the interactive map on the About the Program page of the project website, [www.connectbeavercounty.com](http://www.connectbeavercounty.com). Type your address in the box and follow the instructions to determine if your location is included as part of the Connect Beaver County Broadband Program.

***What are Connectivity Opportunity Areas?***

The 2021 Beaver County Broadband Data Collection & Feasibility Study identified locations that are unserved and underserved with poor mobile and fixed broadband service speeds. Visit the About the Program page to see the Beaver County Broadband Connectivity Opportunity Areas identified on the map.

***What is the difference between unserved and underserved?***

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) currently defines high-speed Internet as 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload, which is inadequate for today's digital needs. For the purposes of this program, underserved and unserved are defined as follows:

**Unserved** - Locations with no access to wired internet service at speeds that meet the FCC threshold of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, meaning the Internet connection is slow and unreliable or nonexistent.

**Underserved** - Locations where Internet service is at or above the FCC threshold but with no access to wired broadband service at speeds 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload, this can lead to slow or unreliable service.



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## ***How soon will service be available in my area?***

The Connect Beaver County Broadband Program has not yet designated an official groundbreaking date. Before that happens, Verizon must design a fiber-optic network and a schedule for the project. All work will be completed no later than December 2026. We encourage residents to visit [www.ConnectBeaverCounty.com](http://www.ConnectBeaverCounty.com) and sign up on our email list to receive more up-to-date information.

## ***What if my area is not identified for new service?***

The County has identified Connectivity Opportunity Areas in 24 municipalities. The Project Team is working with the providers to establish a specific timeline for expanding service into those areas that have been identified as unserved and underserved. If your location is not included in the Opportunity Area map and your area is currently unserved, please contact Connect Beaver County for more information.

## ***What type of network is Verizon installing?***

Verizon will be installing, operating, and maintaining a state-of-the-art Passive Optical Network (PON) which is a fiber-optic network. The word “passive” in the name denotes the fact that none of the equipment in the outside plant (OSP) is powered. This results in a more reliable network that is not dependent on commercial power at intermediate points in its design.

The PON network uses passive glass splitters (akin to prisms) that enable multiple customer addresses to be served over a single feeder fiber, which is an efficient way to deploy fiber networks. Verizon will deploy either Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) or Next Generation Passive Optical Network (NG-PON) equipment as part of its plan. County residents will benefit from this PON technology, which will allow Verizon to meet customers’ future bandwidth demands.

## ***What speeds will Verizon be delivering to newly serviced homes?***

The new Verizon network will enable minimum speeds of 300Mbps download/300Mbps upload and maximum speeds of 1Gig download/1Gig upload. This will allow residents to access and enjoy all modern uses including streaming video for education or entertainment, working from home, connecting to telehealth, maintaining social connections, and so much more.

## ***How much will broadband service cost with Verizon?***

The County took steps to ensure that any contract awardee would offer rates for connection in line with current market rates. Verizon offers consistent pricing across its FiOS footprint whether in rural or urban areas. Additionally, Verizon participates in the Affordable Care Program and offers military



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and teacher discounts. Verizon will contact residents and business owners with pricing and service options shortly before broadband connection is available. Residents can also check pricing and add their contact information to be notified of availability at <https://www.verizon.com/home/internet/fios-fastest-internet>.