



Department of  
**Economic &  
Community Development**

# Rural Broadband as a Driver for State Broadband Initiatives

Tennessee

# Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Act

## Investment:

- Grants: Any providers can apply for funds to offset the cost of deployment of broadband services to unserved areas.
- Tax Credits: Businesses may apply for a 6% franchise and excise tax credit on the purchase price of qualified broadband equipment used for deployment in economically distressed counties.

## Deregulation:

- Electric cooperatives may provide broadband internet and video services within their service area.

## Education:

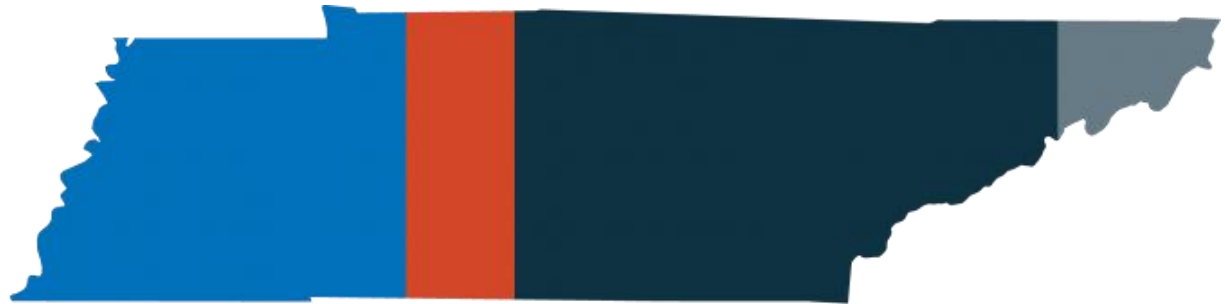
- A portion of grant funds may be awarded to libraries for digital literacy training.
- Rural Task Force Broadband Adoption Working Group.

# Broadband Accessibility Grant Program

- Funds to broadband providers to offset capital costs of deploying in unserved areas in TN.
- Program is provider-type neutral and technology neutral.
- FY18
  - \$10M available in funding for requests of \$66M
  - 9 projects awarded serving over 5200 locations
- FY19
  - \$15M available in funding for requests of \$62M
  - 13 projects awarded serving over 8300 locations

# Deregulation: Electric Cooperatives

**23** CO-OPS



**8** CURRENTLY SERVING  
OR CONSTRUCTING

**2** AWAITING  
RFPS

**10** STUDYING AND  
EVALUATING

# Education

Providers and communities alike must include adoption efforts in their overall broadband strategy to maximize broadband's economic impact.

## Digital Literacy Grants

- In partnership with the Tennessee State Libraries and Archives (TSLA), grants go to local libraries for digital literacy training and equipment

## Community Resources

- [tn.gov/broadband](http://tn.gov/broadband)
- Includes information on broadband resources, community planning, and adoption/digital inclusion

## Encourage Provider Participation

- Providers are awarded add'l points on infrastructure grants for adoption efforts in grant areas beyond marketing

# Broadband Ready Communities (BRC)

- Certification designated by TNECD for communities that pass an ordinance/policy supporting broadband deployment
- Designed to remove administrative local barriers to deploying broadband
- Draft policy available at [tn.gov/broadband](https://tn.gov/broadband)
- Providers receive add'l points on grant apps for BRC's

# Final Thoughts

- Different communities may need different solutions both in terms of technology and types of providers. States should be flexible on working with communities to find solutions to meet their unique needs.
- Good working relationships between states and providers are essential.
- Adoption of broadband must be part of the discussion.

# Questions?

Crystal Ivey

Broadband Director

TN Dept of Economic and Community Development

[Crystal.Ivey@tn.gov](mailto:Crystal.Ivey@tn.gov)

**[tn.gov/broadband](http://tn.gov/broadband)**