

# Gov. Evers: Announces release of 2023 Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access annual report

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced the release of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access' third annual report. Building upon findings from the previous two reports, the 2023 report provides an update on efforts under Gov. Evers and the Evers Administration to expand access, adoption, and affordability of high-speed internet across the state. The third annual report makes recommendations for the state to continue building on this progress and prepare to capitalize on increased federal investments through the 'Internet for All' initiative under President Joe Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

"For three years, the Task Force on Broadband Access has played an important role in the state's ongoing efforts to bridge Wisconsin's digital divide, and together, we have found ways to improve internet access, affordability, and adoption in our state," said Gov. Evers. "The recommendations in this report will continue to help guide our work as we work to deliver reliable, high-speed internet to every part of Wisconsin."

Since 2019, Gov. Evers has allocated more than \$345 million in state and federal funds to expand high-speed internet, including the largest state investment in state history, ensuring that more than 395,000 homes and businesses will have new or improved service. Even still, more work remains as, according to the 2023 report, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) estimates there are more than 246,000 locations that are unserved in the state and more than 217,000 that are underserved.

Earlier this year, Gov. Evers [announced](#), as part of his 2023-25 biennial budget

proposal, a historic investment of \$750 million for the [Broadband Expansion Grant Program](#) to build upon his administration's previous record-setting investments in expanding broadband across the state. Unfortunately, Republican members of the Joint Finance Committee not only voted against adopting the governor's historic proposal but voted to provide \$0 state dollars for broadband expansion, citing forthcoming federal investments in broadband expansion allocated for Wisconsin. While federal funding through the BIL will help bolster the state's efforts to connect more Wisconsin homes and businesses to new or improved high-speed internet, state investment in broadband expansion is necessary to close the digital divide, and with a historic state surplus available to make such investments, it should be made a priority.

The 2023 report provides several recommendations to ensure the state continues building upon Gov. Evers' and the Evers Administration's progress expanding access to reliable, high-speed internet, including:

- Recognize and emphasize the importance of other sources of funding beyond the BIL. Advocate for increasing those funding sources to complement the BIL. Continue to find ways to braid BIL funds with funds from other sources such as local, state, private, philanthropic, and other federal programs;
- Support local communities through technical assistance efforts and ensure their involvement and participation in the rollout of federal funds;
- Ensure a sufficient and trained telecommunications workforce for internet service providers, contractors, and subcontractors to construct, operate, and maintain current and new broadband infrastructure;
- Improve mapping and data efforts by supporting local communities in their efforts to pursue, collect, and make meaning of local data; and
- Continue outreach and promotion of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to reach the highest possible levels of participation in Wisconsin.

"Public participation has been—and always will be—vital to our work of connecting all in Wisconsin to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband," said Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) Chairperson Rebecca Cameron Valcq. "The recommendations in this and previous reports present a path forward as we work to meet the challenges of connecting all in Wisconsin to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband internet."

Gov. Evers [created](#) the Task Force on Broadband Access through [Executive Order #80](#) in July 2020 to advise the governor and state legislature on broadband actions,

policies, and strategies to successfully expand high-speed internet in Wisconsin. Since its inception, the Task Force has brought together a diverse group of members with experience in this field to learn from outside experts, hear from the public, and identify forward-looking broadband policies and initiatives that aim to close the digital divide in the state.

The 2023 report can be found [here](#).

More information about the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access, as well as the 2021 report and the 2022 report, can be found on the PSC website [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).