Wisconsin Rural Partners Presentation

Data and Maps
May 19th, 2021

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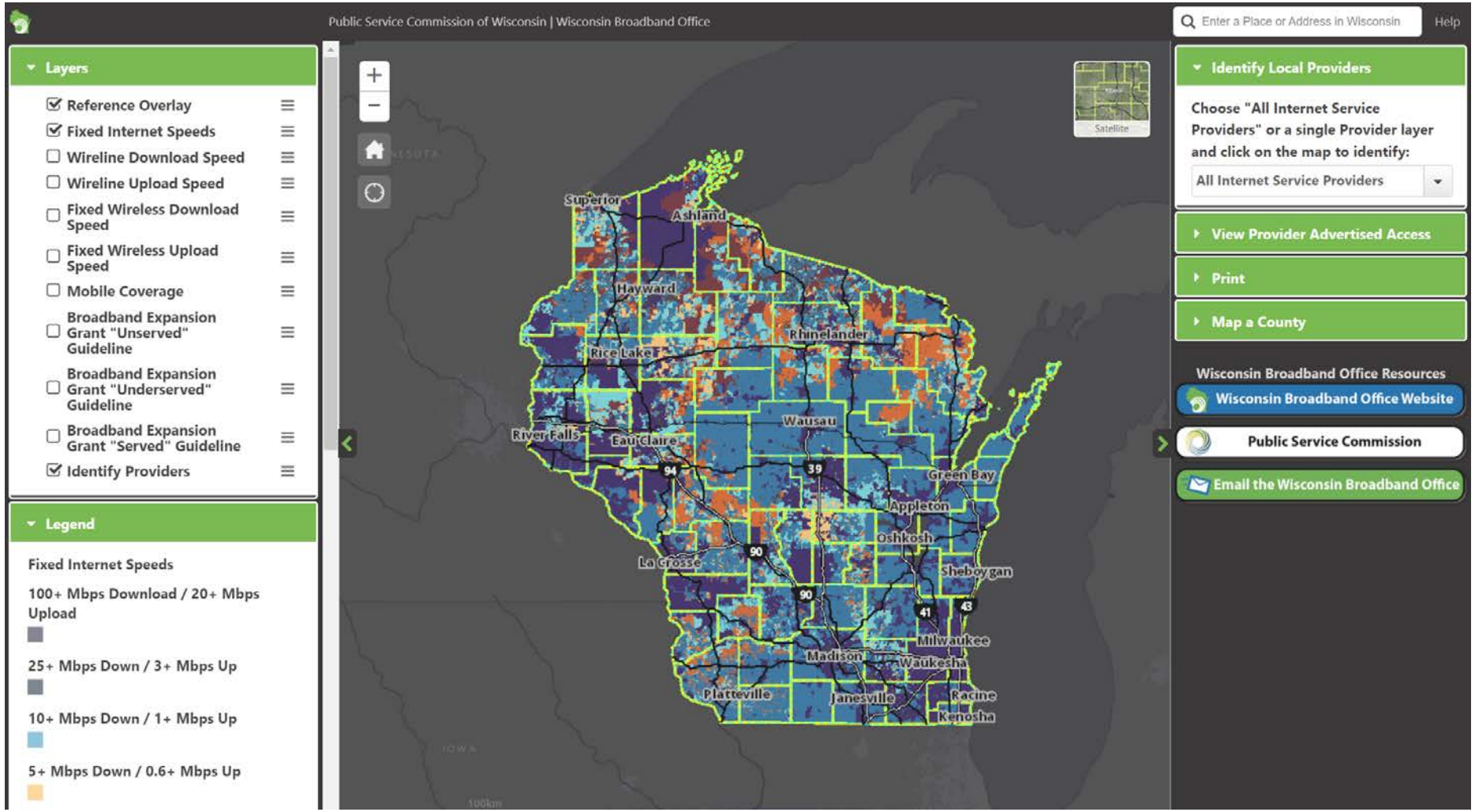
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Broadband Office

Wisconsin Broadband Map

- The Wisconsin Broadband Map is a public-facing tool that allows users to find internet service providers that may offer service in areas of the state
- What data goes into it?
  - FCC Form 477 (June 30, 2020)
  - Voluntary submissions from providers (December 31, 2020)
- Where are it's shortcomings?
  - Census block mapping
  - State discussions to improve mapping

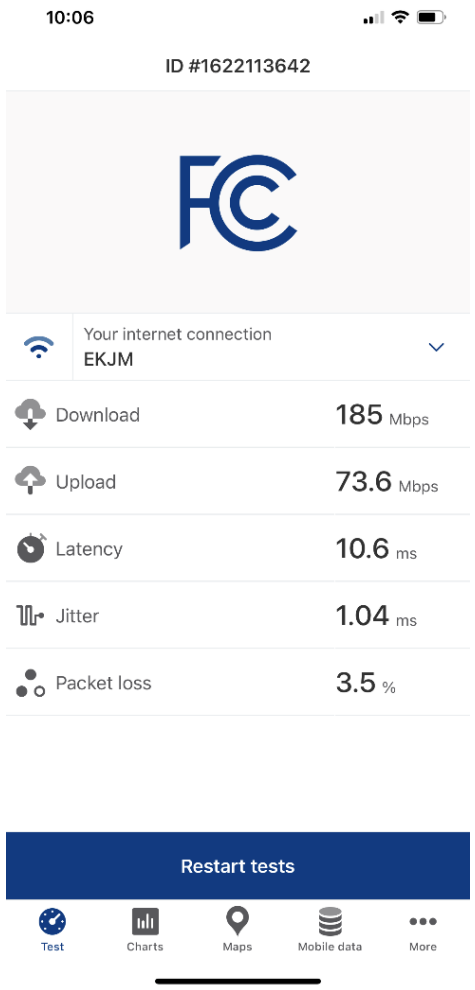


https://maps.psc.wi.gov/apps/WisconsinBroadbandMap/

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Updates

- Improved Broadband Mapping
  - Broadband DATA Act
  - Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric
  - Crowdsourcing
- Share Your Broadband Experience form
- FCC Speed Test App
  - Test the performance of your mobile and in-home broadband networks
  - App provides the results to the FCC to inform their Measuring Broadband America Program

FCC Speed Test Screenshot



Other Data Sources

- FCC Form 477
- American Community Survey Data
  - Computer and internet use
- Local efforts including surveys, canvassing, consultants
- Other PSC Maps: https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/BroadbandMaps.aspx
- Department of Public Instruction

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Funding/Grant Resources
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Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

- American Rescue Plan Act, Department of Treasury
  - Directed Treasury to implement many billions to help state, local, and tribal governments to respond to the pandemic
- State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
  - Range of potential uses but broadband is explicit
  - "…make necessary investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure."
  - Necessary investments are designed to provide an adequate minimum level of service and that are unlikely to be made using private sources of funds
  - Recently released Interim Final Rule

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

- Treasury treats users as being unserved or underserved if they lack access to a wireline connection capable of reliably delivering at least minimum speeds of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload
- Eligible projects are expected to reliably deliver 100/100 Mbps service
- In instances where 100/100 is not practicable (geography, topography, or excessive costs), projects are expected to reliably deliver 100/20 Mbps service and be scalable to 100/100 Mbps
- Encourages recipients to prioritize support for broadband networks owned, operated by, or affiliated with local governments, non-profits, and co-operatives—providers with less pressure to turn profits and with a commitment to serving entire communities

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

- Fiscal Recovery Funds must be obligated (not spent) by December 31, 2024
- Projects are expected to be completed by December 31, 2026
- Beyond or in addition to infrastructure, funds can also support “internet access or digital literacy assistance” for households that have experienced "a negative economic impact from the pandemic.“
- Affordability and helping people develop the skills they need to use broadband internet access service
- Seeking public input on interim final rule

Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund

- American Rescue Plan Act, Department of Treasury
- For “capital projects directly enabling work, education, and health monitoring, including remote options, in response to the public health emergency”
- Allows for investment in broadband, devices, and equipment
- All projects must demonstrate that they meet the critical connectivity needs highlighted and amplified by the pandemic
- More guidance to be issued

Emergency Broadband Benefit Overview

- Launched on May 12th, 2021
- This benefit program is funded with $3.2 billion through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021
- The program offers temporary discounts of up to $50 per month ($75 on Tribal Land) off of eligible household's internet access bills
- Low-income households may also get discounts on a laptop, desktop, or tablet computer
- Consumers can work with a participating provider
- Enroll online: www.getemergencybroadband.org
- Paper application

Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF)

- Federal Communications Commission's next 'wave' of infrastructure funding
- $20.4 billion dollar program aimed at bringing high speed fixed broadband service to rural homes and small businesses that lack it
- In phase 1, Wisconsin was able to drawn down over $370 million in winning bids to 240,000 locations
- Winning bidders have until end of year 3 to reach 40%, 20% additional every year beyond that
- More information:
  - https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904
  - https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/rdof-phase-i-dec-2020/

Other Funding To Consider

- Board of Commissioners of Public Lands State Trust Fund Loan Program
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
  - ReConnect Loan and Grant Program
  - Community Connect Program
  - Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program
  - Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee
  - Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans and Guarantee Program
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

State Funding

Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 18, 2021

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Gov. Evers Announces $100 Million Investment in First Round of Federal Funding for Broadband Access

Applications for largest single round of broadband investment in state history available on June 1, 2021

State Funding

- Initial batch of federal funds to be dedicated to high-speed broadband
- Funding awarded by PSC based on a model similar to Broadband Expansion Grant Program
- Eligible broadband projects are expected to follow Treasury guidance
- Application materials issued on June 1, 2021
- Applications due on July 27, 2021