



ALLEGAN COUNTY  
BROADBAND ACTION WORKGROUP



MARCH 2022



# Who are we?

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The Broadband Action Workgroup (BAW), established by the Allegan County Board of Commissioners, holds regular meetings on the first and third Thursday of each month.



# What are our goals?

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Upon verification of eligibility through the ARPA funds or identification/allocation of alternative funds, hire a directly employed or contracted project lead (and possibly team) to lead the project and deliver results for Board approved Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Timebased (S.M.A.R.T,) goals.

Consider partners, technical professionals, and other stakeholders to serve as an advisory resource to the project team.

Gather necessary and relevant data to form S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Consider plans, proposals, legislative initiatives, and other resources to establish and implement plans for increased accessibility.

# Timeline

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## September 2021

Steve Shults, GM/CEO of Bloomingdale Communications, met with the workgroup

Steve Sedore, Director of Operations for Allegan County, presented on County history in this area.

## October 2021

Merit presented to the workgroup

Holland Board of Public Works presented their municipal broadband project to the workgroup

## November 2021

Workgroup understood a need to hire a project manager

## December 2021

Mandy Cooper, Lakeshore Advantage, presented on economic trends to the rest of the workgroup

Existing ARPA correspondence was reviewed and interview committee was formed

Bob Stewart, Frontier Communications State Director, presented to the workgroup

# Timeline (cont.)

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## January 2022

The project manager interview process picked up steam and the committee met regularly

A communication from the workgroup was drafted (and sent 2/2/22) to all local government units to gauge interest

## February 2022

Scoring sheet and procedure for review were approved by the workgroup.

Jill Dunham was hired as the Project Manager

Resolution was passed calling for the funding of MIHI (Michigan High Speed Internet Office)

## March 2022

Great Lakes Energy presented to the workgroup

Steve Schuls, Bloomingdale Communications, returned to the workgroup

# Next steps:

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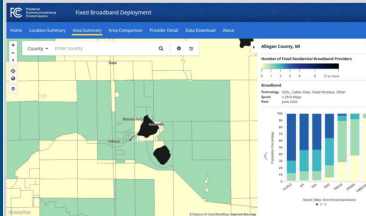
- Identifying the need and prioritizing areas
- Scoring matrix review
- Recommending fundable projects

# Where is the interest?

Significant need has been communicated in Pullman (Lee Township); Green Lake (Leighton Township); as well as Monterrey Township and northern portions of the county.

WHY DOES ONE OF THE MOST UNDERSERVED AREAS IN ALLEGAN COUNTY (PULLMAN) REMAIN UNDERSERVED?

IT IS MISREPRESENTED AS SERVICED.



Fixed Broadband Deployment

Allegan County, MI

Number of Fixed Residential Broadband Providers

Service Area	Number of Providers
Area 1	1
Area 2	1
Area 3	1
Area 4	1
Area 5	1
Area 6	1
Area 7	1
Area 8	1
Area 9	1
Area 10	1
Area 11	1
Area 12	1
Area 13	1
Area 14	1
Area 15	1
Area 16	1
Area 17	1
Area 18	1
Area 19	1
Area 20	1
Area 21	1
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Area 38	1
Area 39	1
Area 40	1
Area 41	1
Area 42	1
Area 43	1
Area 44	1
Area 45	1
Area 46	1
Area 47	1
Area 48	1
Area 49	1
Area 50	1

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ATTORNEY GENERAL

NEWS ABOUT CONSUMER PROTECTION INITIATIVES RESOURCES CONTACT

**AG Nessel Joins FTC Lawsuit Against Frontier Communications for Misrepresenting Internet Speeds**

Contact: Lenore Mulvaney 517-689-2165 lenore.mulvaney@ag.state.mi.us

May 19, 2021

**LANSING** Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has signed on to a lawsuit initiated by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) against internet service provider Frontier Communications, alleging that the company did not provide internet consumers with internet service at the speeds it promised them, and charged much of them for more expensive and higher speed service than the company actually provided.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

ABOUT THE FTC NEWS & EVENTS ENFORCEMENT POLICY TIPS & ADVICE

Home • News & Events • Press Releases • FTC Sues Frontier Communications for Misrepresenting Internet Speeds

**FTC Sues Frontier Communications for Misrepresenting Internet Speeds**

May 19, 2021

**Company failed to deliver DSL Internet speeds for which consumers paid and were promised**

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It is the intent of the workgroup to recommend funding of projects that advance broadband access and affordability in Allegan County. We see our role as reviewing and supporting funding requests before final approval by the Board of Commissioners.

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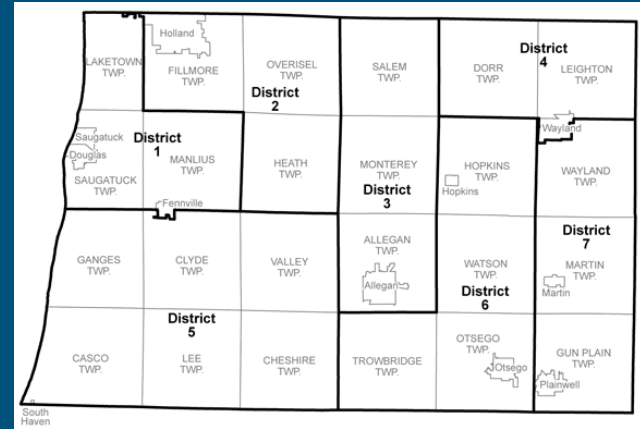
# Jill Dunham

Broadband Project Manager



# Understanding the need

- Contact made with all Townships
  - Meeting will be held with Supervisors on March 22
- Met individually with providers:  
Comcast; Spectrum; Great Lakes Energy; Midwest Energy; AcenTek; Michwave



# Where do we go from here?

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- Exploring options for surveys
- Prioritizing the investment(s) of ARPA funds

## Scoring Sheet for Allegan County American Rescue Plan Act Grants

**Name of Applicant**

**Review Criteria**

<b>ARPA Funding Requirements</b>	<b>Qualifies for Funding:</b>		<b>Does Not meet Expenditure Qualifications:</b>
	meets or exceeds 100 Mbps symmetrical service	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If does not meet expenditure qualifications, you may stop review here.
	Provide service upon completion	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Incorporates federal low-income subsidy programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>ARPA Priorities</b>	last-mile service	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	service owned, operated, or affiliated with local governments	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	communities currently lacking reliable 100/20 Mbps wireline	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	lack of affordable access to broadband service	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
<b>State and Broadband Funding Alignment</b>	Lack Sufficient Access to Broadband 100/25 (USDA, RDOF)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	Be in a rural area (USDA, RDOF)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	Are was not previously funded or overlap with other funding service areas (USDA Reconnect)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
<b>Department of Commerce - Digital Equity Act</b>	High poverty (USDA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
	low-income households, aging populations, incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, racial and ethnic minorities, and rural inhabitants	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
<b>Other Funding</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

**If requestor is a local govt. unit, is it contributing significant funding as well as other resources to the success of project (Total of 5 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded**

Local unit contibuting <50% ARPA	Local unit contibuting <50% ARPA funds but contibuting equivilant or greater funds for other sources.	Local unit contibuting >90% ARPA or other funds to project.	Local unit contibuting >90% ARPA or other funds to project and has significant local resources participating in project completion
(0-4)	(5-9)	(10-14)	(15-20)

**Overall Project (Total of 5 Points Possible): Total Points Awarded**

Project poorly constructed and there would be little potential and/or community support	Project somewhat described but without enough detail to gauge impact or impact deemed low	Project well described with a complete picture and good community collaboration	Cleverly developed project with high potential for success; a novel proposal
0	(1-2)	(3-4)	(5)

**Demonstrates a critical, identified need in the community: (Total of 10 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded**

Project goals are unclear or inappropriate; objectives not offered or not specific, measurable, acheivable, realistic & time based, not related to the goals/objectives of ARPA	Project goals are clear; questionable objectives are offered that are weak orlack specificity or measures; Somewhat related to the goals/objectives of ARPA	Project goals are well framed and adequate; objectives are adequate to the task but could perhaps be strengthened; Clearly related to the goals/objectives of ARPA	Project goals are exceptionally well crafted; objectives are rich and do much in helping the project define success; Will definitely help reach the goals/objectives of ARPA RFP
(0-2)	(3-5)	(6-8)	(9-10)

**Project Plan demonstrates a long-term investment in the community (Total of 20 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded**

Proposed steps are not offered or are not appropriate; Person/s responsible for different tasks are not stated or unclear; Time for completing steps not well established or may not be feasible	Proposed steps seem misguided or could be significantly improved; Person/s responsible for completing tasks are somewhat appropriate but could be improved, time for completing steps is offered but could be improved significantly	Proposed steps are adequate as presented; Person/s responsible for completing steps are adequate for the proposed effort; Time for completing steps seen as well founded and very achievable	Proposed steps are polished and well thought out; Person/s responsible for completing steps are well suited for the effort; Time for completing tasks is correctly assessed and confident this applicant can deliver on the planned work
(0-4)	(5-9)	(10-14)	(15-20)

**Demonstrates an impact that extends beyond the boards of the local unit (Total of 5 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded**

Appropriate partners or stakeholders are not involved, or no partners are identified	Some appropriate partners or stakeholders appear to be missing	The partners and stakeholders identified are adequate and their roles are clearly stated	The partners and stakeholders identified are fitting and will strengthen the project; and a letter of support provided that clearly indicates the partners role
0	(1-2)	(3-4)	(5)

**Demonstrates a funding need that is beyond the ability of the local unit to fund solely through its allocation of ARPA funds as well as other resources (Total of 5 Points Possible) Total Points Awarded**

Budget is very poorly constructed; disconnected from project	Budget marginally constructed, appropriately connected to the project with some exceptions	Budget matches well with scope or work as offered and is appropriate to the work	Budget is well crafted and in synergy with project plan
0	(1-2)	(3-4)	(5)

**Demonstrates a long-term strategy to maximize impact and supports a strong and equitable recovery from the pandemic and economic downturn. (Applicant will receive extra points) Total Points Awarded**

Purpose of grant was not	The purpose of the grants
0	(2)

**Total Number of Points**

**Recommendations for Award Amount or other considerations:**

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**A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE FUNDING AND STAFFING OF  
THE MICHIGAN HIGH SPEED INTERNET OFFICE**

**WHEREAS** Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist, State Senator Aric Nesbitt, and State Representative Mary Whiteford have gone on the record that high speed broadband is a top infrastructure priority.

**WHEREAS** in Allegan County alone almost 34 percent of households do not have access to broadband at their homes.

**WHEREAS** the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the dire and immediate need for affordable, reliable high speed broadband internet access at homes and businesses.

**WHEREAS** the digital divide is exacerbating the homework gap and learning inequity for students without broadband access at home.

**WHEREAS** educators are burdened with having to develop instruction for students both with and without high speed broadband at home.

**WHEREAS** lack of broadband access stifles entrepreneurship and attraction of both businesses and talent.

**WHEREAS** lack of broadband access negatively impacts economic development, property values, personal prosperity, education, health and safety and overall quality of life.

**WHEREAS** farmers rely on high speed broadband to monitor their crops, maintain their essential and costly equipment as well as tracking commodity prices, promoting agri-tourism and selling their products.

**WHEREAS** communities without broadband experience higher rates of lost lives, injury, and crime, and residents in these communities have difficulty leveraging capabilities like TeleHealth, online banking, virtual meetings, working remotely and distance learning.

**WHEREAS** broadband access can combat the isolation experienced by our seniors and those living alone by enabling them to stay connected to family and friends.

**WHEREAS** the Allegan County Board of Commissioners established the Broadband Action Workgroup in 2021 with the goal to feasibly close the digital divide and provide recommendations on the spending of funds.

**WHEREAS** a stated goal of the Broadband Action Workgroup is to consider plans, proposals, legislative initiatives, and other resources to establish and implement plans for increased accessibility.

**RECOGNIZING** that Governor Gretchen Whitmer established the Michigan Office of High Speed Internet on June 2, 2021 to coordinate and advance state efforts on expanding internet access.

**RECOGNIZING** the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was signed into law by President Joe Biden on November 15, 2021 and has received bipartisan support including from Congressman Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph).

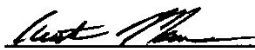
**RECOGNIZING** that Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed Executive Directive 2021-12 on November 29, 2021 readying state departments and agencies in response to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

**BE IT RESOLVED** the Allegan County Broadband Action Workgroup supports funding and full-time staff for the Michigan High Speed Internet Office.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Allegan County Broadband Action Workgroup urges members of the State Legislature and Executive Office of the Governor to promptly reach an agreement to fund the Michigan High Speed Internet Office and appropriate federal funding to counties to expand broadband.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor Gretchen Whitmer; Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist; State Senator Aric Nesbitt; State Representative Mary Whiteford; State Representative Steven Johnson; the Allegan County Board of Commissioners; and the Michigan Association of Counties.

Adopted: 2/17/22 Voice Vote Yes: 8 Absent: 0 Aye: 3



Austin Marsman, Chairperson  
Allegan County Broadband Action Workgroup