



NEWS FROM  
**ULSTER COUNTY**  
County Executive Jen Metzger

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## **Federal Approval Clears Way for Countywide Fiber-Optic Broadband Buildout in Ulster County**

### **NTIA and New York State Announce Final BEAD Awards; All 1,293 Unserved Ulster County Locations to Receive Fiber Broadband**

**KINGSTON, NY** - County Executive Jen Metzger and Jenny Lee, Chair of the Citizens Commission for Digital Inclusion, today announced that New York State, following [approval](#) from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), has formally launched implementation of the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, securing funding to bring state-of-the-art fiber-optic broadband service to all 1,293 unserved locations in Ulster County.

Under the BEAD program, the federal government awards funding to states, which then partner with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to complete broadband expansion. As part of the [statewide awards announced by Governor Kathy Hochul](#), Verizon — Ulster County's BEAD-participating ISP — will receive \$56.1 million in BEAD funding statewide. Of that amount, \$17.3 million is allocated to Ulster County. Verizon will contribute an additional \$41.7 million of its own investment, bringing the County's total broadband buildout to \$59 million. By percentages, 29% of the Countywide project comes from federal funds and 71% comes directly from Verizon. Of the 14 counties receiving Verizon-related BEAD funds, Ulster's share amounts to 31% of the total — more than any other recipient.

“Reliable broadband is a basic necessity for education, work, health, public safety, and everyday life, and we will now be getting the service we need in the most underserved areas of Ulster County,” **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** “With New York State moving

forward on BEAD implementation, federal funding paired with Verizon’s substantial investment will ensure that every one of our 1,293 unserved locations finally receives fiber-optic service. This outcome is especially meaningful because many counties across the country were not able to secure fiber and must rely on fixed wireless and satellite service instead. Thanks to the strong groundwork laid by Jenny Lee, the Citizens Commission for Digital Inclusion, and the partnership of New York State and Verizon, Ulster County residents will have the fast, reliable internet access they need for today’s world.”

In 2022, Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher formed the Citizens Commission, which played a central role in advocating for the County’s broadband needs. “We fought hard to ensure that every unserved household and business would receive true fiber broadband — not a satellite workaround — and the state announcement confirms that we achieved that goal,” **said Comptroller Gallagher**. “Every one of our 1,293 unserved locations will be connected with the gold-standard in broadband infrastructure. I am so pleased the Commission was able to work with New York State and Verizon to bring this to fruition.”

**Jenny Lee, Chair of the Citizens Commission**, as well as a sculptor, professor at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and volunteer firefighter in Claryville, highlighted the long-term value of the investment: “Ulster County’s BEAD award is a transformational investment, moving beyond individual connection with the Commission’s recommendation of the company as the unified ISP for the County. With its \$41.7 million investment, Verizon has put real skin in the game — it assures a future-proof fiber network solution that enhances economic opportunity, education, and quality of life for all residents.”

Other Commission members also applauded the award. “The BEAD funding could not have been realized without the visionary leadership of County Executive Jen Metzger and County Comptroller March Gallagher,” **said Town of Olive Supervisor and Commission member Jim Sofranko**. He also credited Commission Chair Jenny Lee “for navigating the challenging funding process” involved in pursuing the \$59 million investment. “This is a big win for expanding Ulster County’s infrastructure that serves our residents, businesses, and emergency services,” he said.

**Shandaken Deputy Supervisor Robert Drake**, also a Commission member, emphasized the broad impact: “Fiber internet is critical to employment, telehealth, emergency communications and more. This broadband rollout will benefit the residents of Ulster County for decades.”

**Phoenicia Library Director and Commission member Liz Potter** reflected on the

significance for residents: “The dream we’ve held for the last 20 years is becoming a reality. Every citizen needs easy access to the technology woven into every aspect of life in the 21st Century.”

Next steps include New York State finalizing contracts with sub-grantee Internet Service Providers, completing environmental review, and proceeding with the disbursement of BEAD funds to build out service.

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