



WESTMORELAND

BROADBAND

Broadband connects people, industries, customers, and families and plays a critical role in economic growth and productivity. The Westmoreland Broadband Data Collection & Feasibility Study is an integral part of developing future broadband infrastructure improvements and identifying funding opportunities for the County.

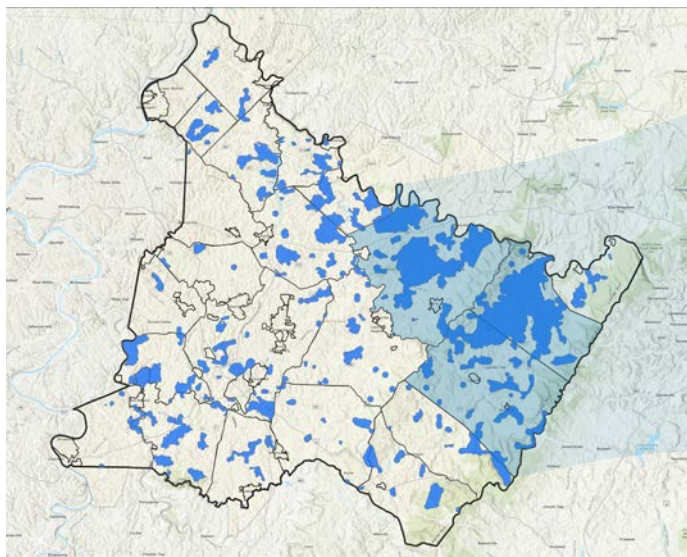
Westmoreland Broadband Goals

Five goals were identified during the planning process and through feedback received during taskforce meetings, stakeholder workshops, and the public survey. Having clear goals and objectives provides the County with the tools it needs to advance broadband progress and garner stakeholder support in the implementation of the following goals:



Connectivity Opportunity Areas

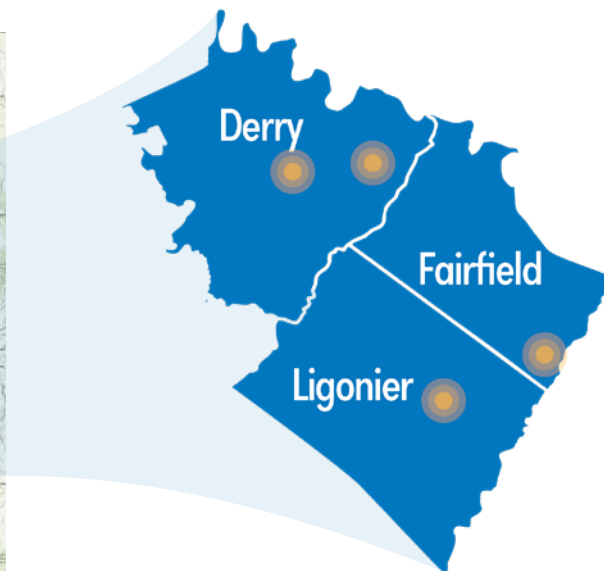
New service areas or Connectivity Opportunity Areas (COAs) represent areas with little to no broadband access. More than 3,500 locations were identified as unserved or having poor connectivity. This data, which cross-references sociodemographic factors and planned expansion projects, will allow Westmoreland County to direct investments to unserved areas.



New service areas, or Connectivity Opportunity Areas (COAs), show gaps in service.

Early Action Projects

With so many unserved locations to cover, bringing fiber to all requires strategic planning to fund and construct. Four Early Action projects were identified through a detailed evaluation process to prioritize the areas with the greatest need. Variables such as income statistics, the number of homes, businesses, and Community Anchor Institutions were all assessed to identify more than 400 unserved locations.



Early Action areas identified in yellow as unserved were prioritized based on a detailed evaluation of fieldwork and survey responses determining a high need for service in these areas.





Connecting Westmoreland County

Broadband access is a necessity to participate in modern society. Westmoreland County targeted broadband as an essential investment in 2021 and established a Broadband Taskforce to identify and spearhead dedicated efforts to expand broadband access within the county. The Westmoreland Broadband Program was developed to identify Internet gap areas and to work with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to begin deploying infrastructure to reach communities in need of broadband. Much of this feasibility study is built on the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's regional roadmap to advance connectivity solutions.

The Data Collection & Feasibility Study Results

The Broadband Data Collection & Feasibility Study was informed by key data collection and planning efforts to develop action steps for bridging the County's digital divide. The planning process included interactive meetings and workshops focused on developing a shared vision, clear broadband goals, and strategies for expansion. Extensive fieldwork was conducted at more than 3,700 locations throughout the county to verify broadband connection speeds and solicit feedback via an Internet Survey and Speed Test, which garnered an unprecedented response from more than 2,500 residents and business owners. Fieldwork was also performed in suspected low-access areas to determine how many unserved areas there are in the county and where they were located.

Next Steps

-  Oversee a Local ISP Challenge Process
-  Issue Request for Proposals for Early Action Areas and COAs
-  Evaluate the Potential of a Broadband Utility Connection Fund
-  Develop a Digital Navigator Program

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HIGHLIGHTS



3,778

FIELD WORK LOCATIONS



2,504

SURVEYS COLLECTED



5

 STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

KEY TERMS

Broadband

High-speed Internet access that is faster than traditional dial-up access.

Unserved

Does not have access to Internet service with at least 25/3 (25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload) speed.

Underserved

Internet access is available but does not meet a minimum 100/20 (100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload) speed threshold.

Digital Equity

A condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy (definition per the National Digital Inclusion Alliance).

Connectivity Opportunity Areas (COAs)

Locations that are top priorities for access to new service due to little to no access to mobile and fixed broadband service at speeds below 25/3.

Early Action Projects

Locations unserved and prioritized based on a detailed evaluation of the fieldwork and survey responses.

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