



**REGIONAL
OPPORTUNITY
INITIATIVES**

 **INDIANA
UPLANDS** | PROUD PARTNER



Digital Towns Grant

Spring 2023

WHY IS DIGITAL INCLUSION ESSENTIAL?

The 2021 Indiana State of Renewal report notes that Indiana's broadband adoption rate of 65% is in the fourth quintile of all states and that gaps in broadband connectivity are holding the state back.

Ten of 11 counties in the Indiana Uplands identified broadband access as a significant issue in their 2019 Quality of Life & Workforce Attraction Plans.



Connecting the Region

State of Indiana Next Level Connections program has invested \$21,047,192 into connectivity in the Uplands

- Round I -- Brown, Lawrence, Monroe & Washington
- Round II -- Brown, Crawford, Dubois, Lawrence, Monroe, Orange, Owen, & Washington
- Round III -- Brown, Crawford, Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Lawrence, & Owen



DEFINITIONS

- **Digital Inclusion** – activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to use of information and communication technologies. Digital inclusion requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional, and structural barriers to access and use of technology.
- **Digital Literacy** – the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.



THE JOURNEY

- Engaged the Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) to study and evaluate the region's digital infrastructure, device availability, and digital literacy.
- Creation of the County Digital Advisory Teams. Each county has a CDAT that includes members from economic development, Community Foundations, schools, libraries, industry.
- PCRD developed a survey tool disseminated throughout the region. ROI developed a toolbox to help with dissemination.
- PCRD collected data from a variety of sources including ACS, FCC, M-Labs, Microsoft, Indiana School GEER grant applications to complement the survey data to create a complete picture of the state of digital inclusion in the region. This data was provided to the CDATs for review.
- CDATs held public input sessions to review data and determine community priorities.
- CDATs have written their county level plans to be incorporated in the regional plan.
- Regional Digital Advisory Team (RDAT) was created to define the regional strategy.



REGIONAL DIGITAL INCLUSION DATA



Both regional and county-level data is available on ROI's website at <https://regionalopportunityinc.org/digital-inclusion-2/>



Digital Towns:
a geographic and information space that adopts and integrates information and communication technologies in all aspects of town life.



Key Themes:

- **Digital Citizens** – helping households connect to the internet, access devices and grow competence in usage of digital technologies to engage in internet services, e-commerce, educational opportunities, digital public services, and healthcare services
- **Digital Public Services** – supporting collaborations between local units of government, nonprofits, and/or health care services to provide access to online information and/or services, and telehealth access points
- **Digital Business** – partnering with businesses and entrepreneurs to maximize opportunities in the digital economy



Proposals

- **Digital Citizen: Increasing Access and Digital Literacy**

Examples: Public wi-fi spaces, device loaner/ownership programs, digital literacy classes, telehealth access points, digital skill building workshops to build workforce capabilities.

- **Digital Public Service: Engaging the Uplands Citizens**

Examples: Developing systems for live-streaming and archiving public meetings, assisting nonprofits in the adoption and utilization of digital technologies, expansion of online services for the public

- **Expanding the Uplands Digital Economy**

Examples: Development/build out of e-commerce websites for Uplands businesses, IT entrepreneurial support programming, assistance with Precision Ag opportunities, events such as “hack-a-thons”



BUSINESSES' EMPLOYEE SEARCH

ABOUT

NEWS

GRANT PORTAL

CAREERS IN THE UPLANDS



REGIONAL
OPPORTUNITY
INITIATIVES



READI 

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE 

QUALITY OF PLACE 

THE UPLANDS 



Apply on the ROI Grant Portal at www.regionalopportunityinc.org

Required Information

- Name of applicant organization
- Name and title of contact person
- Contact information
- Business type and Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Project/program description
- Timeline for project/program
- Total project/program costs (budget breakdown)
- Amount of funding requested
- Strategy impact
- Regional impact
- Proposed outcomes
- Program sustainability (if applicable)



Match Requirement

- Digital Towns grants require a 10% match
- Match can be either cash or in-kind contributions
- Cash match can include personnel expenses
- In-kind match can include donation of professional services
- Indirect/overhead expenses ***do not*** qualify as a match



Funding Available

- Applicants can apply for a grant in an any amount between \$5,000 - \$50,000
- Projects with a regional scope, serving all 11 counties of the Uplands, can apply for up to \$100,000

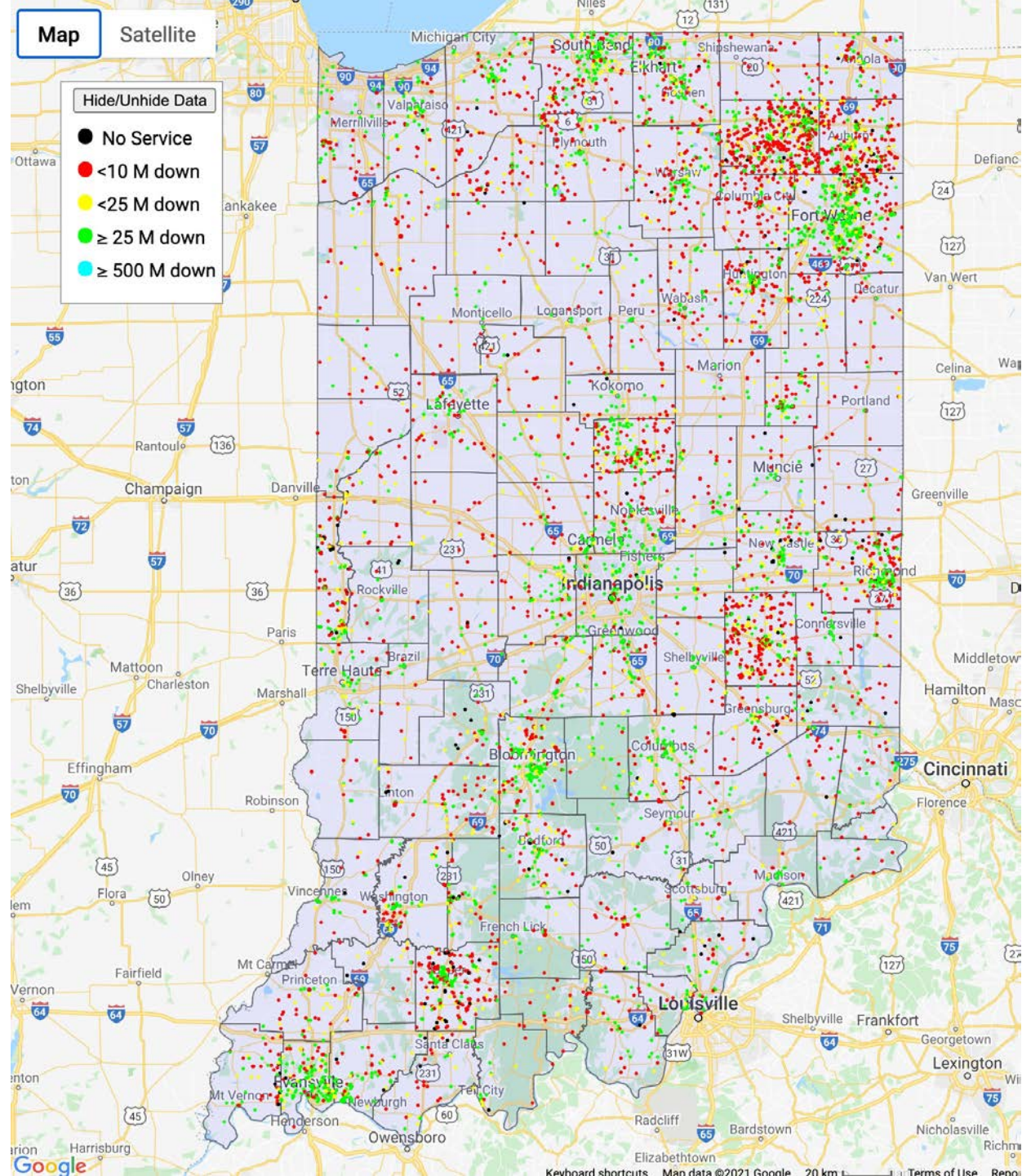


Application Due Date

May 23, 2023



INTERNET SPEED TEST





lisaabbott@regionalopportunityinc.org



www.regionalopportunityinc.org



(812) 287-8116 (844-316-7668 toll-free)



[regional-opportunity-initiatives-inc.](https://www.linkedin.com/company/regional-opportunity-initiatives-inc.)



[@ROIIndiana](https://twitter.com/ROIIndiana)



[roiindiana](https://www.facebook.com/roiindiana)



INDIANA
UPLANDS