



Vermont Community Broadband

Presented to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns

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ACT 71 – Role of Vermont Community Broadband Board

“Universal Service” - Connect every underserved Vermonter to 100 Mbps symmetrical broadband.

Provide resources to communications union districts in the form of administrative and technical support;

Provide grants for the preconstruction and construction costs of broadband projects for eligible providers;

Facilitate partnerships between communications union districts and their potential partners;

Address workforce and material shortages

\$150 Million in State Fiscal Recovery ARPA funds for 2021; \$100 Million in 2022. Possible additional funds from the Infrastructure Bill

Identify State, federal, nonprofit, and private broadband funding opportunities

Vermont Community Broadband Board

Board appointed; August 9 Kick-off

- Laura Sibia
- Dan Nelson
- Holly Groschner
- Brian Otley
- Patty Richards (Chair)

Executive Director and Rural Broadband Technical Assistant

Up to Five additional positions to be hired

Meeting Every Other Monday from 12-4

Meeting Notices, Minutes and Recordings
<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb>

What we have done so far

Stakeholder Engagement

- Communications Union Districts (CUDs)
- Towns and Regional Planning Commissions
- Telecom Providers

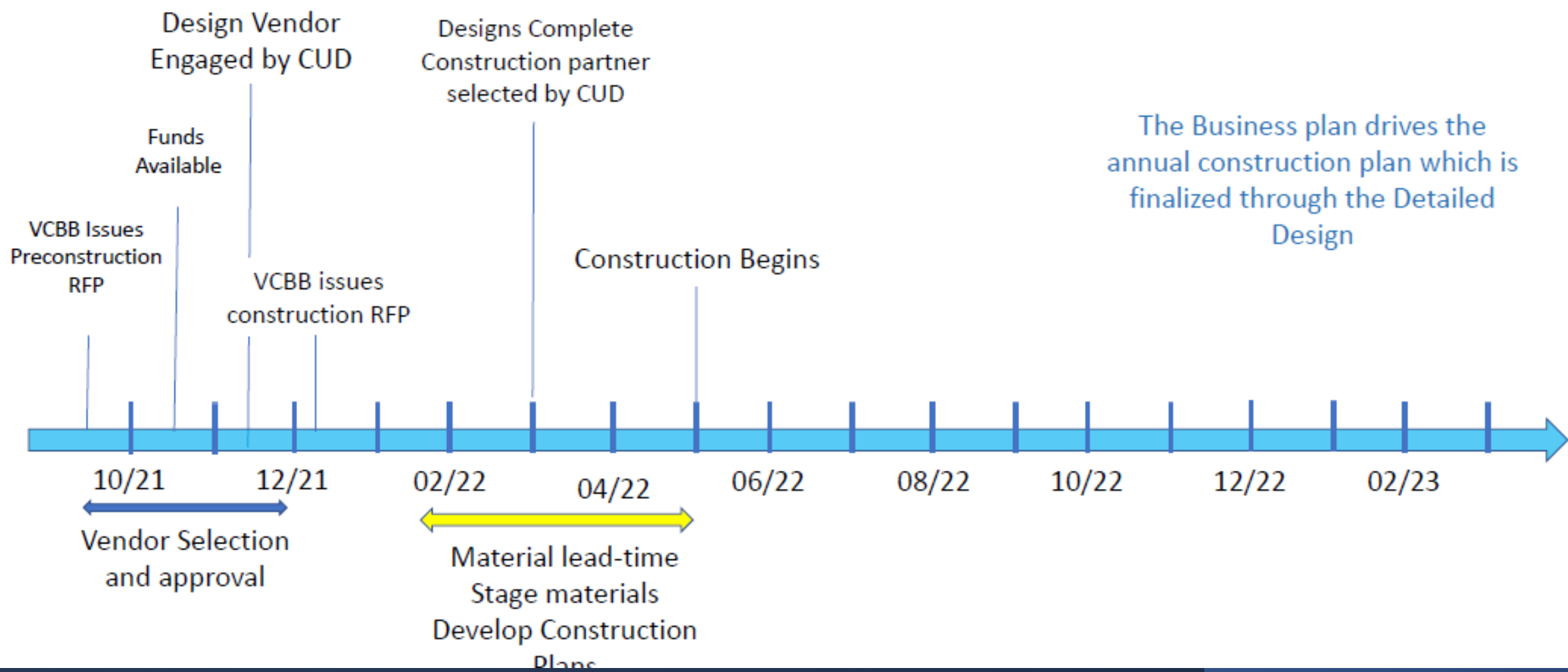
Identified Priorities

- Assessing the “maturity” of each CUDs
- Funding for Preconstruction (Engineering, Make-Ready, Capacity)
- Design Standards
- Barriers to Construction in 2022 – Material and Labor Shortages
- Policy Formulation

Funding

- Issuing grants for preconstruction
- Preparing to issue grants for construction in December 2021
- Creative solutions to ensure Construction in 2022

Draft time-line (general) CUD fiber design and Construction



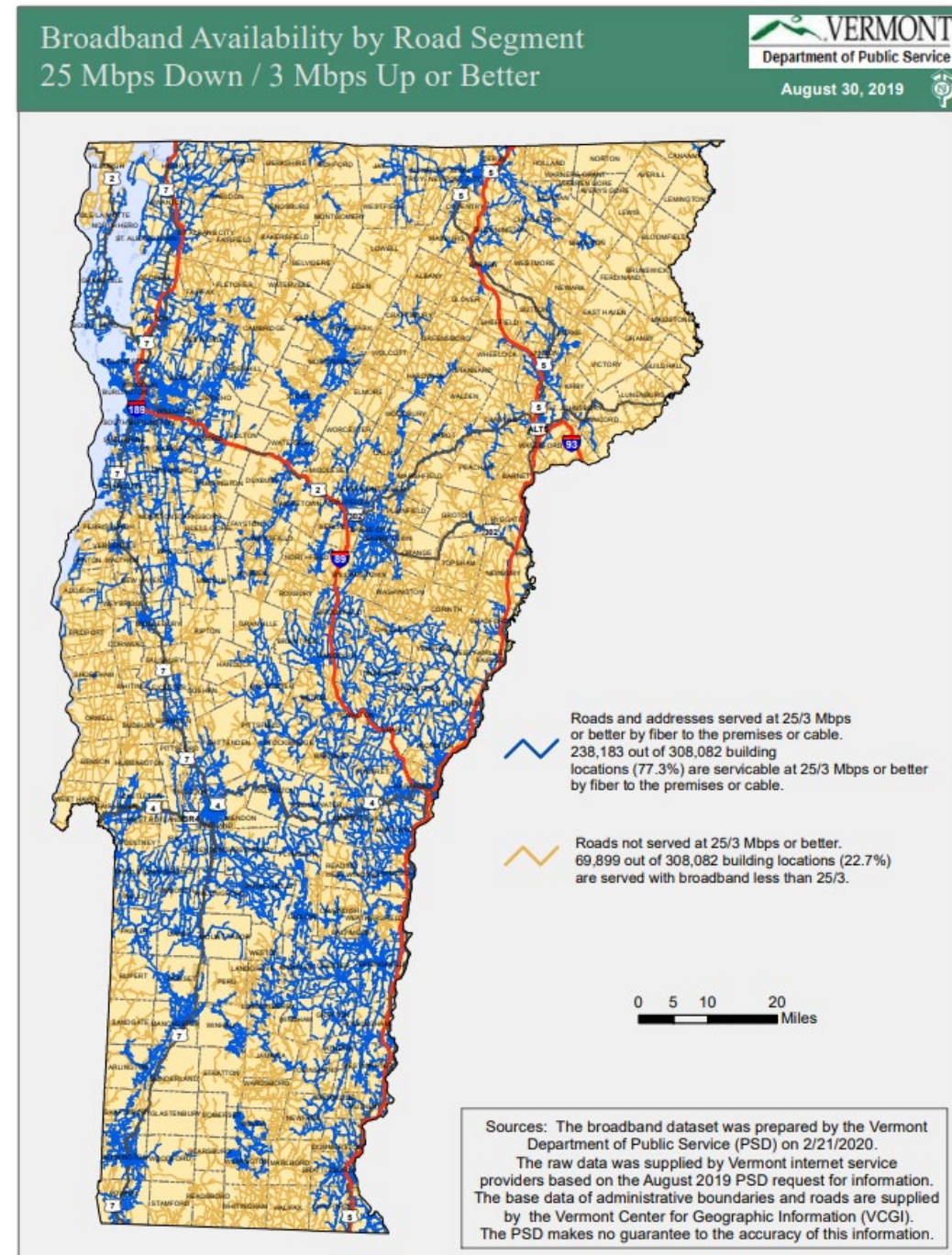
As of 2019, 68,899 E911 locations in Vermont were underserved.

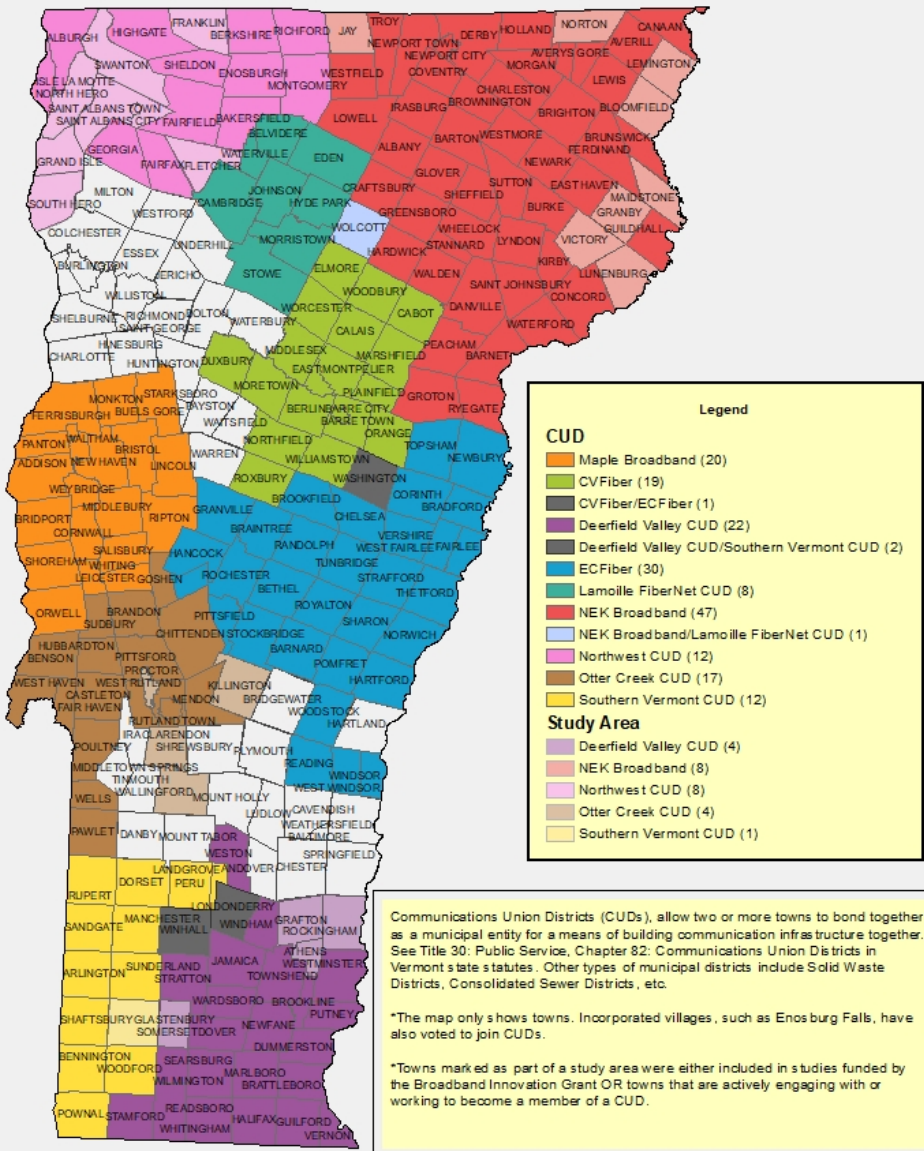
Underserved service is available at less than 25/3 Mbps. (dial-up or DSL).

Since 2019

- RDOF addresses*
17,083 “with a plan”
- 2020 Connectivity Initiative –
2,408 Wired Addresses
- 2020 Line Extension Program
441 Wired Addresses

Updated Data – Late October 2021





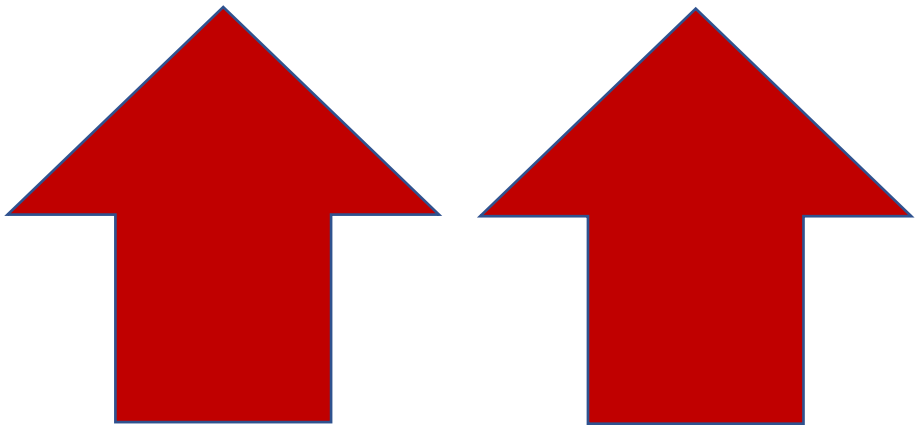
Overview: Communications Union Districts

Summer 2021

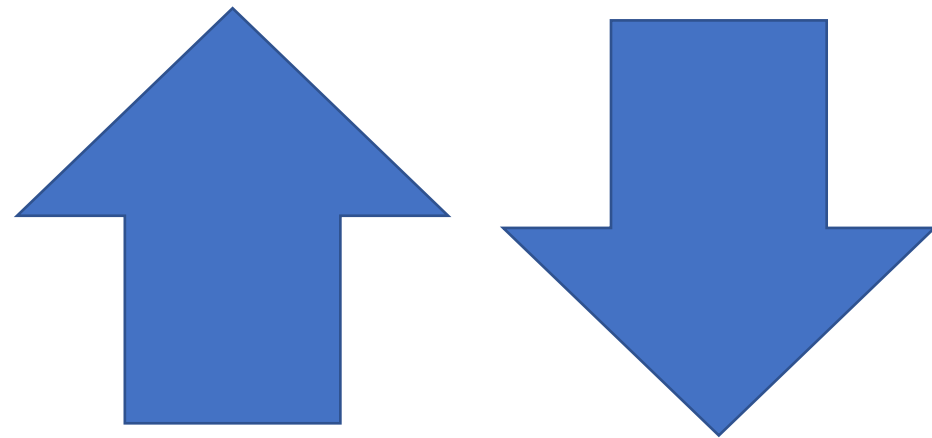
- 9 Districts
- 197 Member Towns
- 398 Volunteer Board Reps & Alternates
- More than half the state's population
- 90% of premise statewide without access to 100/100 Mbps broadband

Basic Model

- Grant Funding and Donations Provide Initial Funding
- CUDs build and owns infrastructure. Operator provides the service
- CUDs access the Revenue Bond Market to complete the build-out of their district
- “Rinse and Repeat” - Revenue bonds pay for additional build-out



More Bonding = Higher Consumer Prices



More Grants = More Affordable Broadband Access

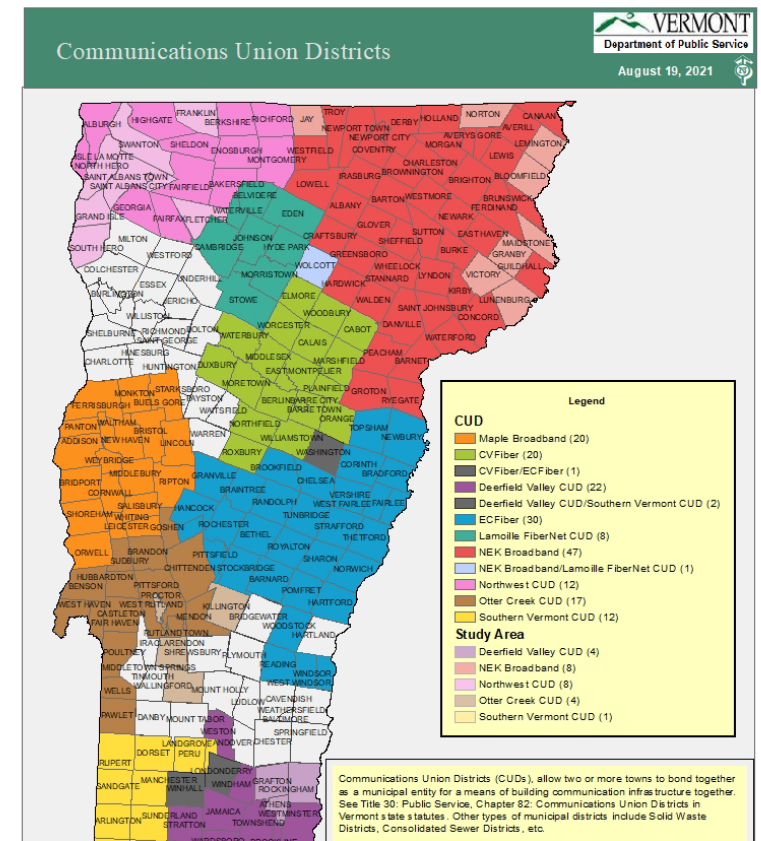


Local Funding is a Piece of the Puzzle



How to help – CUD Members

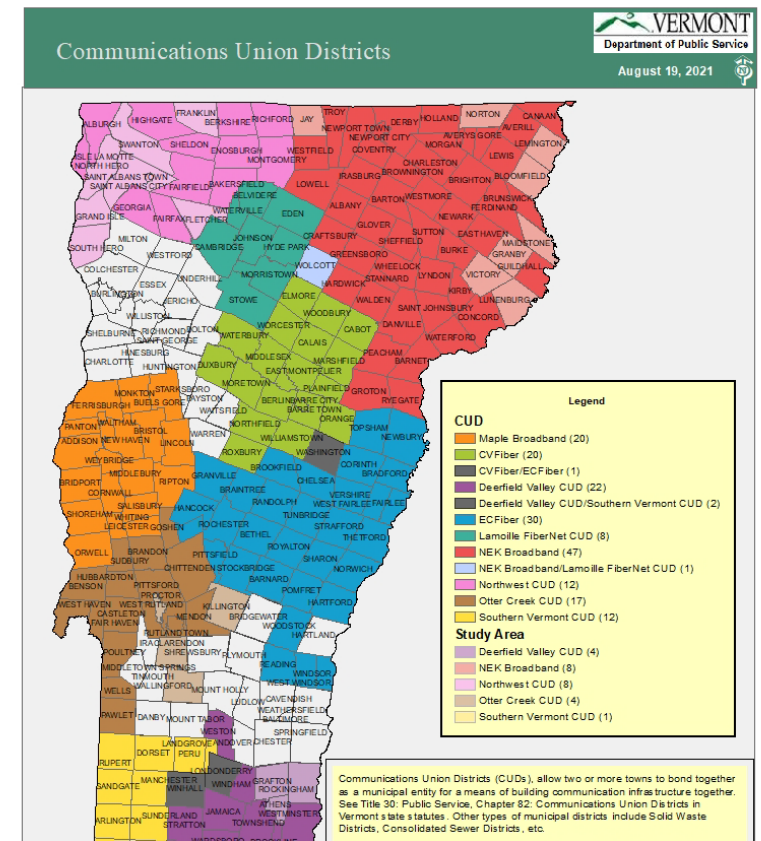
- Connect with your Communications Union District or if there is none the Regional Planning Commission
 - Prevents “Cherry Picking” – Demand Universal Service
 - Promotes Public Infrastructure that can be leveraged
 - Ensures Community Input
 - Focus on “Future Proof” Technologies



How it could work

Leverage the local funds to fund a full build out to your community

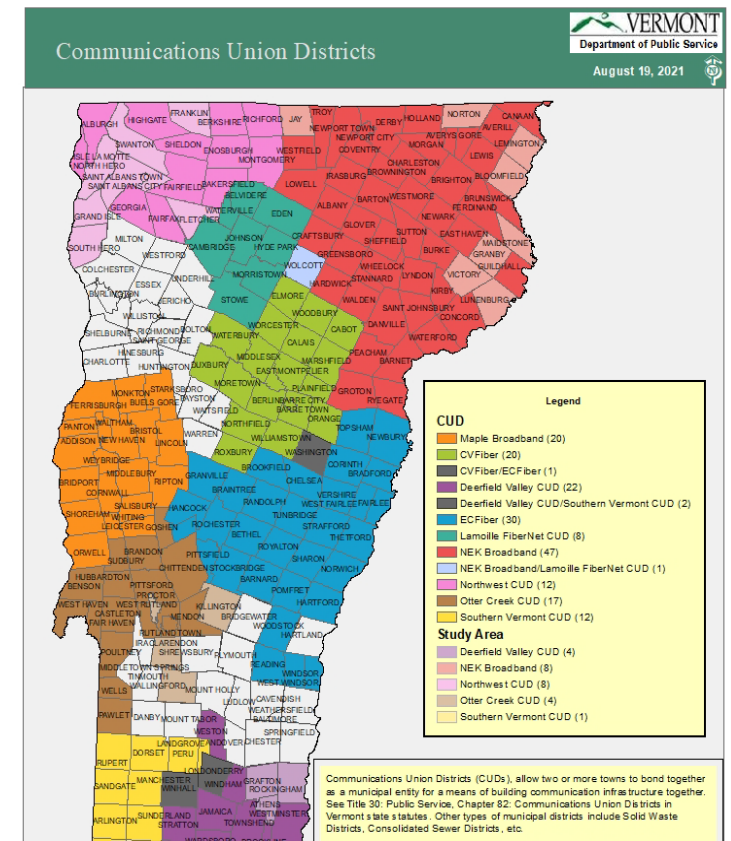
- Provide the Communications Union District with a letter committing funds for a build-out of addresses in your community.
- Letters are filed with the Construction Grant Program that opens in December 2021.
- Funds are made available to the CUD contingent on being awarded a grant



How it could work

Provide Upfront Down Payment

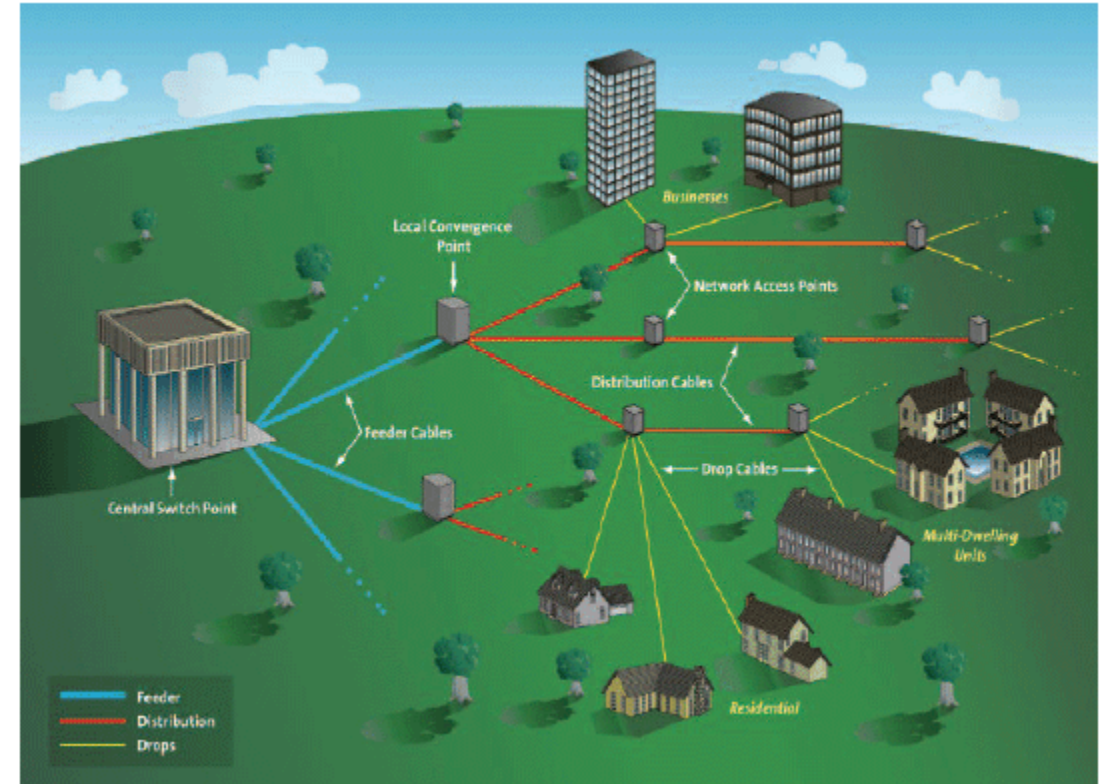
- Provide the CUD upfront (now) with 25% of the amount to assist with preconstruction and to address material shortages if they can provide a timeline for providing service.
- Allows for more flexibility outside of the VCBB Grant Process
- Exchange for reduced cost municipal service



How it could work

Cover the cost of the Drops to Homes and Business

- CUD provides estimate costs of all drops (aerial and underground) to homes and businesses in the community
- Provide the Communications Union District with a letter committing funds for all Road to Home/Business Connections in the community.
- Letters are filed with the Construction Grant Program that opens in December 2022.
- Funds are made available to when construction begins in the community



How it could work

Cover the cost of fiber to all “anchor institutions”

- By connecting schools, municipal buildings, shelters, health care etc. a web of fiber is created that the CUD could build off throughout the community starting with those institutions and the underserved.
- Provide the Communications Union District with a letter committing funds for all Road to Home/Business Connections in the community.
- Letters filed with the Construction Grant Program that opens in December 2022.



How to help – Non CUD Towns

- If the town borders a CUD, reach out <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/vermont-communications-union-districts>
- Issue an RFP for 100/100 service to all underserved addresses (Universal Service) in the town – telephone providers & ISPs
- Require a private match and/or s commitment to privately build out or upgrade addresses served at 25/3 (not ARPA eligible) to 100/100
- Public ownership – Create an asset
- Require a public process to ensure accountability and service quality
- “Build Once” - Focus on “Future Proof” Technologies
- Contact the VCBB – We can help

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Questions?
Ideas? Next
Steps?