

PLANNING A STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

A GUIDE FOR STATES AND LOCALITIES

This is the first document in a two-part series on stakeholder engagement for States and Localities as they prepare for upcoming Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) broadband programs. Both documents contain suggestions for engagement; Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will detail requirements for local coordination.

Overview

There are 3 questions to address as you develop your engagement strategy

1 Who will you engage?

2 What processes and relationships currently exist?

3 How will you get the work done?

1 Who will you engage?

Consider ways to engage a large and diverse group of stakeholders, including individuals, groups, and/or organizations **involved in, impacted by or interested in** your broadband efforts, regardless of sector

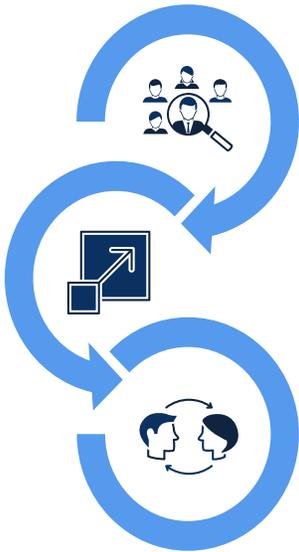
Public service		Private sector	Community-serving	
Federal government	Local agencies (Counties, cities, and other political subdivisions)	Broadband service providers (e.g. private providers, municipal providers, electric co-ops)	Nonprofit organizations	Community anchor institutions (e.g., libraries, academic institutions, healthcare Institutions)
Elected officials	State agencies (e.g., housing, transportation, and public works)	Economic development orgs and/or chambers of commerce	Faith-based organizations	Community-based organizations
Tribal governments	Public utilities commissions	Local businesses	Community activists, residents, and other community leaders	Coalitions or associations of any stakeholders

2 What processes and relationships currently exist?

 <p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are existing partners engaged? (e.g., how often do you reach out, on which topics, using what mechanisms) Who currently oversees engagement? 	 <p>Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are current stakeholders, representative of all broadband-impacted groups (e.g., geographically, demographically, served status, covered populations)? 	 <p>Capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What skills, expertise, and resources do existing partners have? Which stakeholders have previously been involved with broadband efforts? How? 	 <p>Broadband Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the anticipated degree of impact of your plans on each group of stakeholders? Which groups are most likely to have the largest impact on your plan's success? 	 <p>Previous success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have stakeholders been previously mobilized on a different topic? What worked well? What might get in the way of effective collaborations?
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Evaluate your current processes—what needs to change for the success of your IIJA programs?

3 How will you get the work done?



ESTABLISH ENGAGEMENT ROLES

Will engagement become part of someone’s existing responsibilities or a new role?

- As you assign responsibility, keep in mind that someone on your staff with a strong engagement track-record may be upskilled on broadband

Note that inter-agency or inter-department coordination might be needed as you engage with stakeholders: How will you track and/or coordinate engagement internally?

MANAGE CAPACITY

Increasing stakeholder engagement will likely require an escalation of time and resource commitments—but needs will vary depending on the type of engagement

- How will you balance stakeholder engagement with other priorities?
- How will you ensure all voices are heard?

TRACK IMPACT

What would successful engagement look like? Create quantitative and qualitative metrics that measure stakeholder engagement progress towards that goal.

As you develop your strategy, consider tailoring your approach for key stakeholder group



COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- ✓ **Invest early:** Building strong relationships may be time- and resource-intensive. Engage early and often on impactful topics
- ✓ **Commit to transparency:** Offer clear guidance on how to give input, consider periodic public reports, and make data available
- ✓ **Create a feedback loop:** Proactively communicate changes, solicit input, incorporate feedback, and continue to provide options for commentary
- ✓ **Prioritize activities:** Both high-touch and low-touch tactics may be appropriate at different times. Ensure your approach is practical and varied
- ✓ **Recognize the link between broadband and other goals:** Learn how broadband relates to other goals and community concerns. Stress that connectivity is foundational to meeting other needs



PROVIDERS

- ✓ **Understand their perspective:** Success will require provider buy-in and aligned interests. Develop an understanding of provider's business and needs
- ✓ **Find the right stakeholder to engage:** Identify who has the right influence. Consider leveraging an umbrella org (like an industry association) to facilitate communications
- ✓ **Simplify the process:** Providers will appreciate efforts to remove roadblocks and standardize processes (e.g., streamlined permitting, transparent rights of-way)

This document contains suggestions for engagement; the NOFO will detail requirements for local coordination.

Want to learn more?

To stay up to date on the latest available information, including Notices of Funding Opportunity when released, visit our website.



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