

Broadband Leaders Publish Permitting Success Strategies for ISPs and Local Governments

Industry experts guide collaboration to achieve successful deployment of broadband connectivity

WASHINGTON, D.C.—(September 4, 2024)—Today, a group of leading broadband organizations published a strategic paper titled “[Permitting Success: Closing the Digital Divide Through Local Broadband Permitting](#).” The paper will help local governments and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) navigate broadband network construction challenges and maximize investments in broadband connectivity for all Americans.

The [Benton Institute for Broadband & Society](#), in partnership with the [Georgetown Law Institute for Technology Law & Policy](#), the [American Association for Public Broadband](#), [Fiber Broadband Association](#), [Brightspeed](#), and [GFiber](#), wrote the Permitting Success paper.

The paper publishes at a critical moment when broadband infrastructure funding is at an all-time high due to the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program—the single largest broadband program in U.S. history. This historic level of funding creates an opportunity to bring high-speed internet access to every community in America and close the digital divide.

Historic levels of funding will accelerate broadband network construction, putting enormous pressure on local governments responsible for permitting infrastructure construction within municipal boundaries. These processes take time and resources, and not every government is equipped for the coming wave of construction. This is especially true in rural areas, where municipal resources are lowest and BEAD activity will be highest.

Effective and efficient permitting processes are critical for ISPs and local governments to successfully deploy broadband networks that will give every American community modern connectivity. The Permitting Success paper includes case studies; strategic checklists for ISPs, local governments, and state and federal agencies; and outlines three main categories for permitting success:

- Fostering partnerships between the permit seeker and the permitting authority
- Maximizing resources available to the permitting authority
- Ensuring transparency and consistency in the permitting process

The paper’s findings were identified during a collaborative national summit on local permitting processes convened by Georgetown Law Institute for Technology Law & Policy, which was attended by more than 30 permitting leaders representing local, state, and federal governments; ISPs; civil society organizations; philanthropies; and other key stakeholders. The paper will be explored during an episode of FBA’s *Fiber for Breakfast* on September 25, at 10:00am EDT. [Register here to watch the episode live](#).

Supporting Quotes:

Drew Garner, Director of Policy Engagement, Benton Institute for Broadband & Society:

“Broadband is fundamental to modern life. Yet, for millions of Americans, broadband is unavailable. To correct this, the U.S. has launched a historic effort to bring broadband to every household in the country. But such extensive broadband construction will require extensive construction permitting, and

construction permitting often happens at the local level. Thus, the historic effort to close the digital divide will ultimately flow through the permitting offices of our local governments. This paper is intended to help those offices and their applicants operate at maximum efficiency.”

Natalie Roisman, Executive Director, Georgetown Law Institute for Technology Law & Policy:

“The Georgetown Law Institute for Technology Law & Policy seeks to be a convener for conversations that are necessary, challenging, and will move the needle on urgent technology policy issues. We were pleased to host the permitting summit that sought input from a wide range of expert private and public sector perspectives, culminating in this thoughtful paper, and hope this process will get us closer to the critical goal of broadband for every American.”

Gigi Sohn, American Association for Public Broadband Executive Director:

“The permitting paper being released today was made possible by a unique collaboration among representatives from across the broadband ecosystem—local, state and federal government officials, civil society, philanthropy and diverse segments of the industry. While there was not always unanimity on every finding, there was complete agreement that everyone benefits when all US households are connected to robust, affordable high-speed broadband. The result is a common sense guide that seeks to ensure that everyone in that ecosystem contributes to a successful local permitting process.”

Fiber Broadband Association President and CEO Gary Bolton:

“There is tremendous opportunity ahead to connect every American to reliable, high-speed broadband and to the economic benefits that come with high-quality connectivity. But every player across the broadband ecosystem needs to develop their best strategy to ensure network construction is safe and efficient and broadband deployment is effective and successful. The Fiber Broadband Association offers a growing library of research and resources to help the industry develop successful strategies for fiber broadband deployment, and we believe this paper is a valuable addition that will help ensure these networks are built right the first time.”

Brightspeed: Tom Dailey, senior vice president, Public Policy, Government Affairs and Regulatory, Brightspeed

“Brightspeed is actively building our state-of-the-art fiber network across 17 states mostly in rural and suburban communities, and positive and timely engagement with permitting authorities is critical. This is especially true when permitting requirements vary from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. By creating more streamlined, consistent and transparent permitting processes, we can ultimately reach more homes and businesses more efficiently. We very much appreciate the opportunity to engage with the many permissions and policy professionals who contributed their time, energy and most of all their expertise to developing this paper, which will facilitate the successful deployment of broadband networks across the nation.”

GFiber: Darrel Hegar, Head of Market Operations, GFiber

“Everyone deserves access to high-quality broadband internet. Communities and providers must work together to speed up network construction and service delivery. The policies and procedures laid out in this paper provide a clear roadmap for how we can make real, tangible progress to bringing the promise of next-generation internet to reality for all Americans.”

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About the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society

The Benton Institute for Broadband & Society's primary mission is to bring open, affordable, high-capacity and competitive broadband to all people in the U.S. to ensure a thriving democracy. For over 40 years Benton has provided information and analysis about communications policy, including universal service. In recent years, Benton's activities strengthened local, state, and national leadership by providing the timely information, rigorous evidence, practical guidance, and advocacy support needed to articulate and implement a broadband for all agenda. Benton has long advocated for universal, affordable telecommunications access for everyone living in the United States.

Georgetown Law Institute for Technology Law & Policy

The Institute for Technology Law and Policy is a hub at the Georgetown University Law Center for policymakers, academics, advocates, and technologists to study and discuss the most pressing issues in technology law and policy. With the leading academic program for law and technology in the U.S., the Tech Institute supports faculty research initiatives and trains the next generation of tech lawyers and policymakers through an unmatched combination of up-to-the-minute curriculum, world-class faculty, and impactful experiential and career development opportunities. In addition, the Tech Institute convenes public and private discussions on urgent and cutting-edge policy issues, conducts workshops for government staff, and works to identify and create opportunities for technology to improve access to justice.

About the American Association for Public Broadband

The American Association for Public Broadband proudly represents community-owned broadband networks and co-ops that are fueling the nation's economic future through reliable high-speed internet access. With more than 650+ networks across 33 states, public—or municipal broadband—is answering America's call for reliable, affordable, and accessible internet for all.

About the Fiber Broadband Association

The Fiber Broadband Association is the largest and only trade association that represents the complete fiber ecosystem of service providers, manufacturers, industry experts, and deployment specialists dedicated to the advancement of fiber broadband deployment and the pursuit of a world where communications are limitless, advancing quality of life and digital equity anywhere and everywhere. The Fiber Broadband Association helps providers, communities, and policymakers make informed decisions about how, where, and why to build better fiber broadband networks. Since 2001, these companies, organizations, and members have worked with communities and consumers in mind to build the critical infrastructure that provides the economic and societal benefits that only fiber can deliver. The Fiber Broadband Association is part of the Fibre Council Global Alliance, which is a platform of six global FTTH Councils in North America, LATAM, Europe, MEA, APAC, and South Africa. Learn more at fiberbroadband.org or [subscribe to FBA's Fiber Forward Weekly newsletter here](#).

About Brightspeed

Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., and with assets and associated operations in 20 states, Brightspeed provides broadband and telecommunications services through a network platform capable of serving more than 6.5 million homes and businesses. Our 4,000 employees are committed to building a future where more communities benefit from a more connected life, deploying a state-of-the-art fiber network and a customer experience that makes being connected as simple as it should be. For more information, please visit www.brightspeed.com.

About GFiber

GFiber delivers fast, reliable, fairly-priced and open fiber internet service, prioritizing customer service and speed. GFiber started in 2010 as a Google-driven experiment to catalyze the gigabit internet ecosystem, and has since pioneered the gigabit and multigig internet future. For more than a decade, GFiber has maintained its \$70/1 Gig base internet plan without any rate increases, and remains committed to bringing the best internet experience to customers in nearly 20 states with plans to further expand. GFiber was awarded PC Mag Readers' Choice Awards for Best Overall and Fiber ISP in 2024, Best Fiber Internet Provider by Forbes in 2024 and Best Fiber Provider for Gig Internet by CNET in 2024, in addition to top recognitions from J.D. Power, HighSpeedInternet.com and many more. You can find more information, check availability in your area and compare plans at www.fiber.google.com.

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