

# Broadband Planning Committees (BPCs)

The first step toward establishing the future of broadband in your community.

## HOW DO YOU CERTIFY YOUR BPC FOR TAP?

In preparation for forthcoming state and federal funds, the Broadband Development Office (BDO) is establishing the Technical Assistance Program (TAP). This program aims to augment the capacity of local governments and communities by providing technical assistance with broadband planning and consulting services, free of charge.

Applications to TAP may only be submitted by a committee leader of a certified BPC. Committees can become certified by completing the Broadband Planning Committee Certification Form. The form must be submitted to the BDO before being able to submit an application to TAP.

For more information about TAP or how to register a BPC, visit [comptroller.texas.gov/programs/broadband/tap/](https://comptroller.texas.gov/programs/broadband/tap/).

## WHAT IS A BPC?

A BPC is a group of community members who organize to address gaps in the availability and usability of broadband, as well as to connect the identifiable goals and needs of the area with available resources and expertise. BPCs should aim to engage with public and private partners to facilitate the long-term sustainability of a community's broadband planning and development.

## HOW DO YOU START A BPC?

Establishing a BPC begins with a community organizing to identify the relevant community stakeholders and committee leaders. A BPC should reflect the community it serves to the fullest extent possible. **At a minimum, BPCs should contain:**

- At least two members.
- At least one county-elected office holder of the local area.
- At least one elected member of a local governing body (City Council or County Commissioners Court).
- A majority of committee leaders who live in the area they serve.

## WHO SHOULD JOIN A BPC?

BPCs should reflect the people and businesses they serve. To the extent possible, membership should include:

- Private citizens.
- Nonprofit organizations.
- Utilities and internet service providers.
- Education representatives.
- Government officials.
- Business community members.



## UPCOMING MILESTONES

### May 2024

- Open Registration for Broadband Planning Committees
- Open Application Window for Technical Assistance Program



TEXAS BROADBAND  
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

# **Technical Assistance Program (TAP):** *What services does TAP provide?*





## **Broadband Planning and Consulting Services**

The BDO has contracted Cobb, Fendley and Associates to provide broadband planning and consulting services for TAP. These services are awarded at the county-level to augment local governments and communities' capacities to better prepare for local opportunities, including forthcoming state and federal funds.

Those admitted into the program will be provided the opportunity to choose from the services detailed in this slide show, based on which services a county identifies as necessary to meet local needs.

TAP services are provided at no cost to those awarded. Awardees of this program will neither receive funds from this program due to their participation, nor will they be guaranteed any state or federal grant funds as a result. Services provided to awardees from TAP will be paid for directly by the program to the CobbFendley team.



# Stakeholder Identification and Outreach

## **Answers the Question:**

*How do I identify and engage with the appropriate groups so anyone in my community has the opportunity to participate in the benefits of local broadband expansion?*

## **What is Stakeholder Identification and Outreach:**

This service entails performing a deep analytical dive into a county's demographics to identify its unique needs and characteristics. It offers outreach services through the organizing and executing of stakeholder outreach events and strategies that provide inclusive opportunities for potential stakeholders. This service is considered foundational in the broadband expansion process.





## Asset Mapping

### Answers the Questions:

*What kind of broadband infrastructure is currently available in my county? Where is the infrastructure located?*

### What is Asset Mapping:

This provides mapping services by locating identifiable broadband assets within the county. This collection of data begins with integrating data that may have been previously collected in local studies, followed by adding layers of available data identified by engaging with local strategic partners like regional Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and public institutions. An Asset Map locates any relevant and identifiable broadband infrastructure that may be a valuable resource in developing and executing a community's broadband goals.



# Gap Analysis and Community Needs Identification

**Answers the Question:**

*Which areas and local groups in my county are lacking sufficient broadband solutions to meet our unique needs?*

**What is Gap Analysis and Community Needs Identification:**

This service provides an analytical approach to measuring the gaps between a county's existing infrastructure and local broadband goals. This includes identifying solutions for addressing issues with broadband access, as well as identifying current public policy standards and practices that can be implemented to promote local investment in broadband expansion.





# Public Private Partnership (P3) Identification and Analysis

## Answers the Question:

*Is there anyone my county could partner with to potentially maximize my county's ability to reach its broadband goals?*

## What is P3 Identification and Analysis:

This service identifies potential opportunities for local public jurisdictions to establish formal partnerships with private providers. This includes evaluating all applicable business models that suit local broadband goals, identifying the potential risks involved and facilitating *Requests for Proposals* for partnering opportunities.



# Workforce Development Strategy

## **Answers the Question:**

*How can my county better position itself to meet the labor demand of building and operating broadband networks, preferably in a way that also expands new job markets in my local area?*

## **What is Workforce Development Strategy:**

This service identifies and engages with organizations that support the local development of broadband workforce solutions. It includes the development of strategies that aim to leverage workforce development opportunities with existing local resources and expertise.





# Digital Opportunity Strategy and Needs Identification

## Answers the Questions:

*What are some other barriers in my county to using the internet aside from availability? How can my county reduce these barriers?*

## What is Digital Opportunity Strategy and Needs Identification:

This service looks beyond the accessibility of broadband by working to identify a county's gaps in the usability of the county's broadband services (i.e., the skills and technology necessary to operate them). It leverages stakeholder outreach and engagement as well as data collection methods to pinpoint a county's needs. Additionally, this service will identify actionable items that can be taken within the county in pursuit of achieving its broadband goals.



# Network Design Assessment

## **Answers the Questions:**

*What network solutions are available to my county? What are the differences between those options?*

## **What is Network Design Assessment:**

Also known as a High-Level Design, this service provides solutions that serve commercial, residential and public facilities where they are most needed, where gaps are identifiable and in a way that aligns with local broadband goals. This includes developing high-level network designs that provide different idealized county solutions and providing continued guidance throughout the network development process.





# Technical Assistance Program (TAP)



## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Texas Broadband Development Office (BDO) has established the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to augment the capacities of local governments and communities to prepare for forthcoming state and federal funds, as well as to identify localized opportunities. TAP will provide contracted broadband planning and consulting specialists to work locally with program participants, and will empower communities that otherwise lack the necessary resources to overcome their local digital divides.

To provide technical assistance, the BDO has contracted the Cobb, Fendley and Associates team to deliver a portfolio of services to local communities based on the individual goals and needs of program participants and the areas they represent. Services include:

- Stakeholder identification and outreach.
- Asset mapping.
- Gap analysis and community needs identification.
- Public-private partnership identification and analysis
- Workforce development strategy
- Digital opportunities strategy and needs identification.
- Network design assessments.

## ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Eligible participants in TAP include all Texas counties that lack the necessary capacity for broadband planning. Only a limited number of counties will be able to participate in TAP, with no more than one application being chosen on behalf of any selected county.

Eligible applicants for TAP are the committee leaders of a county Broadband Planning Committee (BPC), as recognized by the committee's certification through the BDO.

Participation in TAP will not be considered for BPCs that have not completed the necessary certification process.

BPCs that participate in TAP must be willing to do so by providing support in the following ways:

- Facilitating as a local point-of-contact.
- Selecting which services are needed for planning.
- Facilitating community outreach through localized public communication channels.
- Supporting the Cobb Fendley team's execution of services.
- Approving the county's drafted County Broadband Plan.
- Attending a presentation to the BDO of the county's plan.
- Reporting the products of TAP to your local communities.

## CERTIFYING A BPC

To apply to TAP, a committee must have already been certified with the BDO based on specific criteria identified in the Broadband Planning Committee Certification Form. The form must be submitted to the BDO before the TAP application period begins.

At a minimum, a committee must consist of the following membership:

- At least two members.
- At least one elected member of a local governing body (City Council or County Commissioners Court).
- At least one appointed committee leader.
- A majority of committee leaders who live in the county they serve.



## UPCOMING MILESTONES

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## CONTACT INFO

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