



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NEKCV Awarded Federal BEAD Funding to Expand High-Speed Internet Access**

*Community advocacy and legislative leadership make generational broadband investment possible*

**Saint Johnsbury, Vermont** — NEK Community Broadband (doing business as NEKCV, NEK Broadband and CVFiber) announced today that it has been awarded federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding, a milestone made possible through sustained community engagement and strong support from state and federal legislators.

The award will accelerate NEKCV's mission to deliver reliable, affordable, publicly owned high-speed internet to some of Vermont's most rural and least connected communities. BEAD funding will extend coverage to addresses along more than 1,400 miles of roadway, ultimately helping NEKCV reach 7,441 unserved and underserved addresses. Upon completion of the four-year BEAD project, NEKCV will have leveraged dozens of grant funding sources to achieve universal service for the 24,000 addresses without high-speed connectivity in its 72-town district.

“This is a generational opportunity to achieve universal broadband access,” said Christa Shute, NEKCV Executive Director. “We began laying the strategic groundwork for BEAD in 2021, when the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was passed. We are so grateful for the support of the Vermont Legislature, the Governor, our delegation, our strategic partners, the NEK Broadband / CVFiber merger, the work of VCUDA, and over 130 volunteers who serve on our board for the contributions they made to make this happen over the last four years.”

NEKCV also credited strong leadership from the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) and state and federal legislators for championing broadband expansion and ensuring that rural communities and communications union districts were well positioned to compete successfully for BEAD funding.

Residents across the Northeast Kingdom and Central Vermont played a vital role by sharing their experiences with limited or nonexistent broadband access and by supporting local and state efforts to prioritize connectivity as essential infrastructure. Their voices helped shape a compelling case for

investment that highlighted how improved connectivity will support education, healthcare, economic development, and quality of life.

“The impact of this award is nothing short of transformative, enabling universal service in the most neglected corners of Vermont. It will create local jobs, valuable public infrastructure, and sustainably support first-class internet service into the future,” said Nicolas Anzalone, NEKCV Executive Committee Chair.

With BEAD funding, NEKCV is now on track to deploy more than 3,000 miles of fiber-optic cable by 2029, delivering long-term broadband access and significant economic, educational, healthcare, and civic benefits. In preparation for the project, NEKCV has maximized grant funding by investing directly in its district—hiring predominantly in-district employees and supporting a workforce development training program that creates jobs and strengthens the local economy. The network will be fully owned and controlled by NEKCV, a municipal communications union district, ensuring that any profits from this public investment will be reinvested in the district for the public good.

### **About the BEAD Program**

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program is a \$42.45 billion federal investment authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to expand high-speed internet access nationwide. BEAD requires recipients to build to every location that previously had service below 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload and to finish the work within four years of the grant award. The program provides funding to all U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia to deploy or upgrade broadband infrastructure and ensure access to reliable, affordable, high-speed internet service. States were required to submit Initial and Final Proposals to NTIA describing how they will use BEAD funds to serve all eligible locations. More information can be found on the [VCBB's VT-BEAD webpage](#).

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**NEK Community Broadband (doing business as NEKCV, NEK Broadband and CVFiber)** is a communications union district (CUD) that is community-driven and working to ensure every resident across 72 towns in the Northeast and Central Vermont with utility service has access to high-speed internet with symmetrical speeds up to two gigabits per second. Affordable internet is central to creating greater economic prosperity and educational opportunities. The communications union district is committed to investing profits into the network, increasing affordability and supporting digital access and literacy. More info is available on the [NEKCV website](#).