

# Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
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August 8, 2012

To: Wisconsin Telecommunications Stakeholders

Re: Wisconsin's Playbook for Broadband Progress

5-GF-188

Comments Due:

**Friday, August 31, 2012 – Noon**

This docket uses the Electronic Regulatory Filing system (ERF).

Address Comments To:

**Brian Rybarik, Division  
Administrator**

Public Service Commission  
P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707-7854

This is an invitation for public comments on Wisconsin's Playbook for Broadband Progress. The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) is tasked with developing a statewide broadband plan. This responsibility grows out of the broadband planning and mapping effort that the PSCW and the LinkWISCONSIN Alliance have undertaken with a grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). At the beginning of spring 2012, the PSCW and LinkWISCONSIN began the process to create a "Playbook" designed to identify opportunities to expand broadband investments, adoption and application statewide. PSCW Staff is seeking input and suggestions on the plays that are identified to keep Wisconsin moving forward on broadband related issues.

Based on efforts at a regional level over the past two years, the Playbook was developed to provide specific initiatives and actions that may encourage increased investment in broadband infrastructure and increased broadband utilization throughout the state of Wisconsin. The Playbook is developed with input from a variety of stakeholders, with direction provided by a Steering Committee of regional leaders. Based on discussions of the Steering Committee of regional leaders, and focus group meetings of various broadband providers and stakeholders, the Playbook was drafted by the PSCW Staff and LinkWISCONSIN contractors.

The plays in the Playbook are organized under three large themes

- **Leverage** existing government resources to incent private investment;
- Provide forums for public and private sector **partnerships and collaborations** to advance Wisconsin's broadband communications; and
- Promote **awareness** of shared opportunities among consumers, government leaders and providers.

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For more information on the State Broadband Plan process, see the LinkWISCONSIN web site at: <http://www.link.wisconsin.gov/lwi/default.aspx?page=56&bhcp=1>.

The Commission requests comments on the above issues. Party comments must be filed using the Electronic Regulatory Filing system (ERF). The ERF system can be accessed through the Public Service Commission's website at <http://psc.wi.gov>.

Members of the public may file comments using the ERF system or may file an original in person or by mail at Public Service Commission, 610 N. Whitney Way, P.O. Box 7854, Madison, WI 53707-7854. Additionally, comments may be filed by using the Public Comments button on the Commission's webpage at <http://psc.wi.gov>.

If you have questions, please contact me at [brian.rybarik@wisconsin.gov](mailto:brian.rybarik@wisconsin.gov) or State Broadband Director Tithi Chattopadhyay at [tithi.chattopadhyay@wisconsin.gov](mailto:tithi.chattopadhyay@wisconsin.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. J. Rybarik", with a stylized flourish at the end.

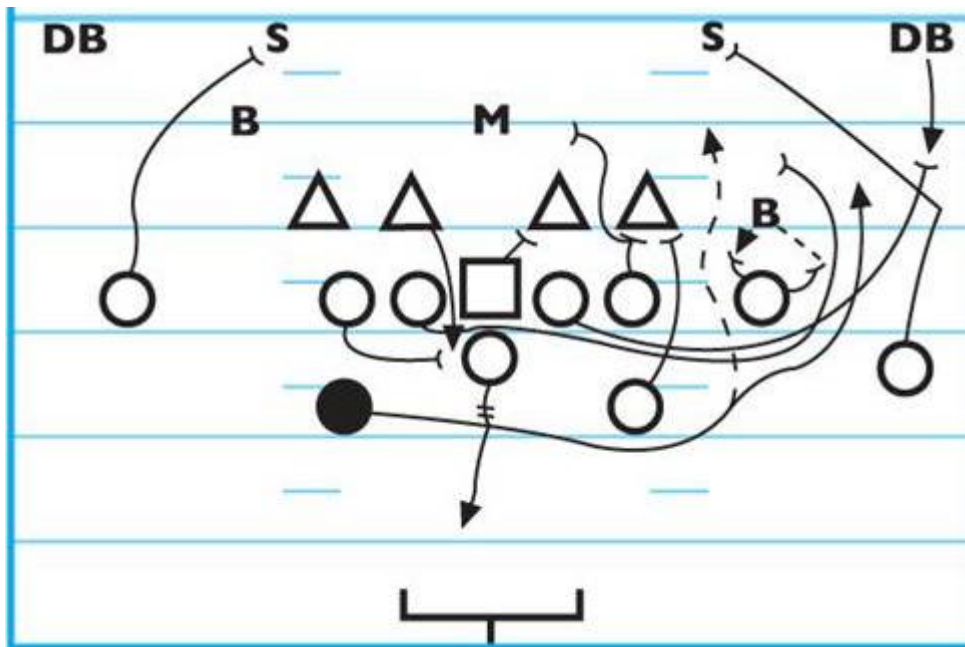
Brian J. Rybarik  
Administrator  
Telecommunications Division

TC:DL:00586036 5-GF-188 Correspondence cover letter.docx

Enclosure

# Wisconsin's Playbook for Broadband Progress

Draft August 8, 2012



## FORWARD

*Broadband is a quintessential modern communication media and among the most essential infrastructures of our time. This Playbook provides specific actionable initiatives (plays) to expand broadband availability, adoption and application throughout the state. The proposed initiatives included herein were compiled by proven approaches conveyed by Wisconsin's provider community, business, governmental and citizen leadership. The PSCW and LinkWISCONSIN express their appreciation to the hundreds of individuals who took time from their busy schedules to contribute the ideas that make up this Playbook.*

For additional information, visit: <http://www.link.wisconsin.gov>.

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## Background

*The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) manages a statewide broadband mapping and planning initiative launched in 2010. This federally funded initiative led to the creation of LinkWISCONSIN and formation of nine Regional Planning Teams. Each Regional Team met for over a year to identify a broadband development strategy most appropriate for their area of the State, culminating in the release of a Broadband Investment Plan for each region. Concurrently, Wisconsin's broadband provider community worked with the PSCW and LinkWISCONSIN to create a comprehensive information base and interactive maps to track progress in extending broadband services throughout the State.*

*This Playbook builds on the work over the past two years at the regional level to create a set of realistic action steps that can improve broadband availability and utilization throughout Wisconsin. The Playbook recognizes the extensive investments already made by Wisconsin's broadband provider community and emphasizes opportunities to incent additional investment to ensure every corner of the State not only has access to affordable, reliable and adequate broadband communications to meet today's needs, but also to serve the emerging communications markets of tomorrow.*

1 **BROADBAND AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO WISCONSIN'S QUALITY OF LIFE**  
2 **AND ECONOMIC VITALITY**

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4 Wisconsin's beautiful lakes, wooded acres, and  
5 expansive recreation assets are the envy of many.  
6 Agriculture and natural resource enterprises, as  
7 well as businesses and industries of all sizes, have  
8 flourished in rural Wisconsin for generations. The  
9 state's urban and suburban centers are recognized  
10 nationally as leading centers of education, research,  
11 industry, commerce, arts and culture. Through  
12 initiative, innovation, and vast investments in infrastructure (including broadband  
13 communications) Wisconsin has built a sound and resilient economy.



14  
15 While recognizing these strengths, members of all nine Wisconsin Regional  
16 Broadband Planning Teams note there remain gaps in critical broadband  
17 communications infrastructure as well as in utilization. Not only is the availability of  
18 high-speed Internet service essential to commerce and quality of life, but that  
19 service must be of the speed and quality required for today's multiple uses ranging  
20 from finding information on the Web, to videoconferencing, to sending and  
21 receiving large amounts of data. Wisconsinites will be thwarted in their efforts to  
22 continue improving their lives, families, businesses and communities if they do not  
23 have access to adequate and affordable broadband communications.

24  
25 Access to broadband equals access to opportunity for both commerce and  
26 individuals. With broadband, people can search for jobs, start new innovative  
27 businesses, gain new skills, connect with critical health services, enjoy  
28 entertainment, network with others and much more. Businesses can innovate,  
29 recruit the best possible employees, connect with partners and reach markets not  
30 otherwise accessible. Businesses also find broadband increasingly essential for filing  
31 forms, obtaining approvals and licenses, as well as submitting responses to business  
32 opportunities on-line. The services we count on, ranging from health care to public

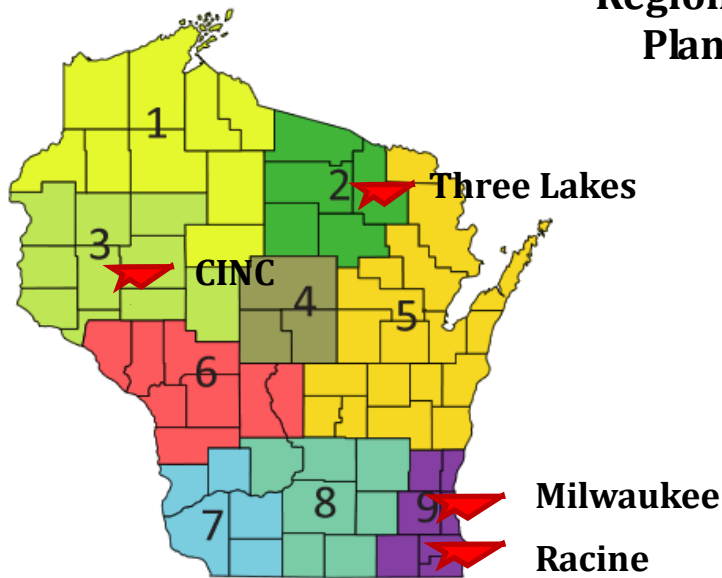


22 safety to education, can be delivered more  
efficiently and be available anywhere with a  
broadband connection. Increasingly, broadband  
is a basic need just for family members  
remaining in contact with one another. In short,  
the availability of sufficient and affordable  
broadband service is critical to economic vitality  
and quality of life for all Wisconsin families,  
businesses and communities.

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44 **Example Projects**

## Regional Broadband Planning Teams



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63 Because of broadband's importance, leaders from across the state are stepping up to  
64 the challenge of ensuring that high-speed service is available, adopted and applied  
65 to promote economic development and quality of life. For example the community  
66 of Three Lakes in Wisconsin's Northwoods proactively brought together providers

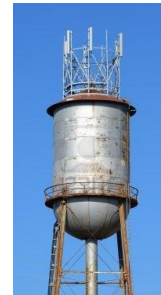


67 and community members desiring additional  
68 broadband service. Governmental and private  
69 sector leaders conducted meetings to inform  
70 the community of the benefits of broadband;  
71 mapped areas where there were unmet  
72 demands; and sought out providers willing to  
73 make the needed investments. As a result,  
74 nearly 90% of the Three Lakes Area residents  
75 spread across 90 square miles can now choose  
76 from up to five broadband providers.

77  
78 What has since become known as the Three Lakes model has spread, and is now  
79 being introduced to the five-county Grow North Regional Economic Development  
80 Corporation area in the Northwoods. With multi-county leadership – including  
81 providers, business, government and higher education – the communities have  
82 surveyed seasonal home-owners in the region to assess both current gaps in  
83 coverage and the economic benefits of expanded coverage. Results from this survey  
84 conclude that, on average, seasonal residents would stay in the Northwoods an  
85 additional 4 to 6 weeks per year if broadband were available. Six percent indicated  
86 they would permanently relocate. This would mean more people in local stores,  
87 stronger property values, and greater incentive for entrepreneurs to start new  
88 businesses in or migrate to existing ones to the Northwoods.

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Also motivated by the importance of broadband for economic opportunity and quality of life, Racine County leadership implemented an innovative public and private partnership to fill gaps in service. Specifically, the County decided to partner with Evergent, an Internet Service Provider (ISP), to provide fixed wireless access to subscribers in areas that did not have a broadband service option. Evergent rents space on water towers and other tall assets owned by the County (and by towns in the County). Racine County is one of a growing group of counties and municipalities across the state that are pursuing methods of giving private providers access to these assets to expand broadband options and coverage in these communities.



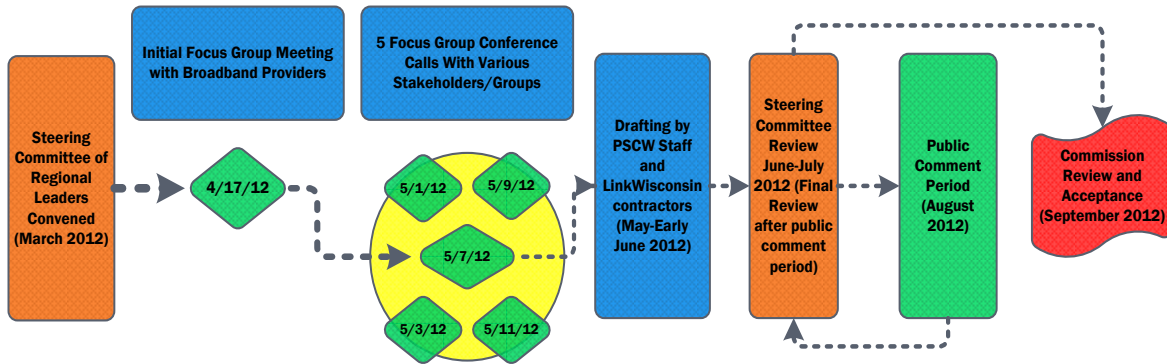
The Chippewa Valley has a long history of grass roots collaboration for promoting the sharing of applications, infrastructure and equipment for the benefit of all communities in the region. The initiative, called the Chippewa Valley Internetworking Consortium (CINC) is built on a simple principle of sharing information and resources on communication needs, initiatives and assets to encourage joint efforts among education, local government, health care, public safety and others within the area. This initiative, now passing its 12-year milestone, has resulted in reduced cost of services and innovations ranging from medical imaging applications to management of school budgets.

The City of Milwaukee’s “Connecting Milwaukee Communities” project opened a new public computer center and upgraded eight centers across the City. As a part of this project, the City intends to distribute approximately 270 new workstations and train as many as 10,000 city residents. To meet the needs of the city’s diverse population, the City is partnering with the Milwaukee Public Library, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, and the United Community Center – Olga Village to provide training classes in both English and Spanish at various sites. Along with these and other partners, the City is teaching classes and providing



one-on-one computer help enabling its diverse residents to improve their lives by gaining new skills and meeting needs to improve their quality of life.

In developing this Playbook, the PSCW (through the LinkWISCONSIN initiative) sought and accepted significant input from a variety of sources, including the broadband provider sector, education, health care, business, government and others. The process for developing the playbook is depicted here:



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## 135 LESSONS LEARNED AND DIRECTION FOR WISCONSIN'S PLAYBOOK FOR 136 BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

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138 The following strategies are representative of the innovation and best practices  
139 Wisconsinites have used to encourage broadband availability, adoption and  
140 application. While the specific focus and type of communities illustrated by each  
141 example are different, there are important commonalities that cut across each  
142 success story. These include:

143

- 144 • **Partnerships and collaboration:** Inclusive leadership that incorporates  
145 shared benefits, mutual goals and participation by citizens, business,  
146 government, private providers, education, health care and others.
- 147
- 148 • **Leveraging:** Each successful example leverages existing resources ranging  
149 from water towers to local broadband providers to governmental advocacy  
150 connecting training opportunities to libraries.
- 151
- 152 • **Awareness:** Broadband is a means, not an end. Success stories highlight  
153 what broadband can do. Awareness education plays a key role in bringing  
154 consumers, government leaders and private providers together around the  
155 unique opportunities in their local area.
- 156
- 157 • **Actionable ideas:** Each success story illustrates an incremental approach  
158 that addresses a particular need (better coverage in rural areas, sharing of  
159 digital applications, expanded adoption for low-income residents, etc.). Each  
160 initiative is targeted, specific and achievable within resources that are  
161 available.
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- 163 • **Consensus:** Closely related to targeting actionable ideas is the pursuit of  
164 consensus. Wisconsin communities are able to make important  
165 advancements most effectively when leaders focus on points of agreement  
166 for future progress.



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- **Community:** Ability to engender and sustain support for efforts often hinges on leaders being mindful that “a rising tide lifts all boats.” Successful initiatives are designed and portrayed in terms of the community’s shared benefits.

Beginning in the spring of 2012, the PSCW and LinkWISCONSIN began a process to create a “Playbook” to expand broadband availability, adoption and application statewide that is rooted in lessons learned from innovative local success stories such as those illustrated above. As an initial step, a Steering Committee was assembled including representatives from all nine Wisconsin Regions and from diverse backgrounds (e.g. local government, business, health care, education, health care, regional planning). The Steering Committee is charged with providing the overall direction and guidance to the Public Service Commission in the development of the State Playbook.

A series of six focus groups were implemented during the months of April and May. These focus groups included broadband providers as well as additional stakeholders from throughout the state representing the interests of educators, regional planning, businesses, government at all levels, medical service providers and others, as well as broadband providers and users. Participants in these focus groups were asked to provide ideas on actions that are realistic opportunities for Wisconsin to advance broadband availability, adoption and/or application. Ideas developed in these sessions form the foundation for the plays included in this Playbook. Those ideas were considered within the context of statewide broadband data that has been developed by LinkWISCONSIN over the past two years. This data includes information on broadband service availability at the census block level, consumer survey information, demographic data and “regional broadband investment plans” developed for each of nine regions of the state.

The purpose of this Playbook is to highlight specific replicable initiatives and actions that 1) are realistic and possible within available resources; 2) have enough consensus to be successfully implemented; and 3) are consistent with the needs of Wisconsin. The audience for the state Playbook is Wisconsin leadership, whose actions or coordination is important to advancing state broadband initiatives. This includes legislators, the Governor’s office, educators, private providers, industry, business leaders, state agencies, regional planning organizations, municipal and county leadership, trade associations, consumer interests and others. This document provides actionable ideas that can be implemented successfully in Wisconsin to improve broadband availability, adoption or application.

Mirroring lessons learned from local Wisconsin success stories, potential plays are organized under three larger themes:

- **Leverage** existing government resources to incent private investment;

- 212 • Provide Forums for Public and Private Sector Partnerships and
- 213 Collaborations to Advance Wisconsin’s Broadband Communications; and
- 214 • Promote **awareness** of shared opportunities among consumers, government
- 215 leaders and providers.

216  
 217 In all cases, plays included in the Playbook meet the standard of **actionable ideas**  
 218 that share a broad **consensus** within the **community** of stakeholders as expressed  
 219 through focus groups and other public comment opportunities.

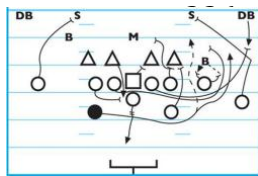
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222 **PLAYS THAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR WISCONSIN**

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224 ➤ **Leverage Existing Government Resources to Incent Private Investment**

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This Playbook offers directions on broadband infrastructure needs and how to pursue the common interests of private and public stakeholders for broadband progress. As with other forms of infrastructure, the public sector has provided varying roles in broadband infrastructure development. There is a

231 debate over the appropriate role of government in broadband infrastructure  
 232 ownership and operation. Is there a role for government if private enterprise does  
 233 not act to close current broadband availability gaps? Should government always  
 234 leave broadband ownership and operation to the private sector? It is beyond the  
 235 scope of this Playbook to address questions like these other than to acknowledge  
 236 they are part of the dynamics for broadband progress.

237

238 In contrast to the differing perspectives on the direct involvement of government  
 239 for broadband infrastructure investment, there is wide agreement among  
 240 stakeholders on an important facilitating role for government that is consistent with  
 241 private investment. These include but are not limited to the following plays:

242 ***Play 1. Convene government leaders and other stakeholders as appropriate to:***

- 243 • Document barriers that prevent the efficient leasing of available space on
- 244 government owned towers (state, county, municipal) to private providers.
- 245 • Develop workable options to streamline the process of accessing public assets
- 246 for broadband build-out:
- 247 √ Identify and highlight best practice models.
- 248 √ Identify possible legislation or practice changes to standardize terms and
- 249 conditions across jurisdictions.
- 250 √ Coordinate with state agencies (for example the Department of
- 251 Transportation or Department of Natural Resources) on right-of-way
- 252 issues.
- 253 √ Review appropriateness of model legislation from other states.

254           √ Develop education and awareness outreach to government decision  
255           leaders.

- 256   • Recommend legislative action or agency rule changes that may be needed to  
257   reduce time and cost of private provider access to towers, right-of-way and  
258   other government resources that can improve broadband access.

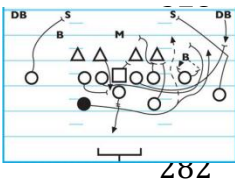
259   ***Play 2. Create a public database resource to include information on:***

- 260   • Tall assets owned by government that could be used by private providers.
- 261   • Model legislation from other states.
- 262   • Government best practices in supporting broadband access.
- 263   • Model ordinances to facilitate sharing of “tall assets” and other government  
264   owned resources.
- 265   • Typical terms, conditions, requirements and fees for access to public facilities  
266   providing a baseline for both municipal authorities and providers.

267   ***Play 3. Explore targeted tax incentives to encourage greater broadband***  
268   ***availability, adoption and/or use such as:***

- 269   • Tax incentives for broadband-related telecom equipment and facilities deployed  
270   in areas without current broadband service.
- 271   • Business tax incentive program for implementation of qualified telecommuting  
272   or home agent initiatives in targeted areas.
- 273   • Personal tax credits for broadband expenses incurred in working or running a  
274   business from home.

275   ➤ **Provide Forums for Public and Private Sector Partnerships and**  
276   **Collaborations to Advance Wisconsin’s Broadband Communications**  
277



283   Wisconsin has numerous on-going and innovative initiatives that  
284   advance broadband availability, adoption and use. These include  
285   the on-going private provider investments deployed throughout  
286   the state. Beyond these provider investments, there are a  
287   growing number of regional and locally led initiatives that  
288   engage stakeholders on broadband issues supportive of expanded private  
289   investment. LinkWISCONSIN and the PSCW facilitated the creation of localized  
290   Broadband Investment Plans led by local teams in nine different regions of the state.  
291   As they are being introduced to these regional plans, more individual counties and  
292   municipalities are considering or are already implementing specific initiatives to  
293   incent additional broadband investment and utilization.

290   There are also sector-specific broadband initiatives taking place at the same time.  
291   For example, Wisconsin’s public safety community is preparing to expand public  
292   and private partnerships that better leverage broadband to meet public safety  
293   needs. Lands End is an example of a growing number of Wisconsin business

294 innovators that are gaining a competitive edge by proactively connecting to their  
295 workforce in home offices. BadgerNet and WiscNet are expanding broadband access  
296 to schools and libraries. Marshfield Clinic is a recognized national leader connecting  
297 health care institutions throughout Central and Northern Wisconsin. These are just  
298 a few major examples of the types of activity which can happen, and need to happen,  
299 across the state.

300

301 Coordination is essential to reduce wasteful duplication, improve synergies and  
302 speed innovation through a sharing of best practices to advance broadband. State  
303 leadership can play an important role convening stakeholders representing multiple  
304 perspectives and from all regions of the state to speak with “one-voice” on  
305 broadband issues. The new State Broadband Director position established by the  
306 PSCW is an opportunity to provide more focused state coordination of these diverse  
307 initiatives.

308

309 Examples of specific actions (or plays) that can be implemented to encourage  
310 coordination include:

311 ***Play 4. Transform the LinkWISCONSIN/PSCW initiative to include a statewide***  
312 ***advisory committee representative of key stakeholders to:***

- 313 • Prioritize potential state initiatives.
- 314 • Coordinate advocacy where feasible.
- 315 • Coordinate state applications for funding.

316 ***Play 5. Implement annual regional/state summits to bring diverse stakeholders***  
317 ***together to:***

- 318 • Assess and communicate best practices.
- 319 • Establish consensus on statewide needs.
- 320 • Promote opportunities for collaboration where appropriate.

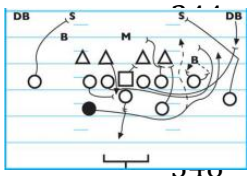
321 ***Play 6. Create and maintain a statewide broadband information web-portal:***

- 322 • Assess options for ownership and sustainable operation of web-portal.
- 323 • Identify and leverage existing on-line web resources (higher education, federal,  
324 state agencies, etc.) to avoid duplication of effort.
- 325 • Assemble and keep updated relevant content.
- 326 • Serve as a clearinghouse to connect information on unmet needs with providers  
327 and service options.
- 328 • Provide a resource for businesses and individuals seeking to relocate to the state  
329 or within Wisconsin.

330 ***Play 7. Convene governmental and private sector stakeholders to advocate***  
331 ***collaboratively on issues such as, but not limited to:***

- 332 • Coordinated statewide access to federal D-Block spectrum<sup>1</sup> to advance public
- 333 safety and provide an additional resource to fill Wisconsin’s broadband gaps.
- 334 • Maximizing Wisconsin’s use of available federal universal service<sup>2</sup> resources
- 335 where appropriate and desired—especially to assure affordable broadband
- 336 access for disabled individuals and low-income households.
- 337 • Expanded business access to adequate and affordable broadband.
- 338 • Finding and exploiting opportunities to expand public computer and broadband
- 339 access at libraries, schools and other identified public computer centers.
- 340 • Assuring robust broadband public safety networks and services.

341 ➤ **Promote Awareness of Shared Opportunities among Consumers,**  
342 **Government Leaders and Providers**  
343



Information is power. Consumers do not always have the skills to access broadband, and may not understand how broadband can benefit them. Government leaders may not perceive that they have a role to play in encouraging additional broadband investment or the importance of their constituents’ adoption

349 and use of broadband. Private providers are not always aware of unmet demands  
350 that could become business opportunities. To correct these deficiencies, several  
351 important plays focus on awareness education and information sharing that can  
352 lead to more broadband investment and utilization, which will benefit of Wisconsin.  
353

354 ***Play 8. Promote the inclusion of broadband infrastructure within local economic***  
355 ***development, comprehensive and capital improvements planning:***

- 356 • Communicate success stories and best practices.
- 357 • Encourage engagement in broadband planning by regional planning
- 358 commissions, local economic development councils, county/municipal
- 359 government, and other existing leadership.
- 360 • Develop a guidebook for incorporating broadband adoption into comprehensive
- 361 planning for local governments
- 362 • Seek creative use of existing funding programs, such as the Tax Incremental
- 363 Financing (TIF) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs,
- 364 directed to localized broadband planning needs.
- 365 • Explore opportunities to leverage county and municipal resources.

366 ***Play 9. Communicate available broadband options to consumers:***

- 367 • Maintain accurate public database/map of providers available by location at as
- 368 granular a level as possible.

- 369 • Identify the broadband options available to consumers, and the strengths and  
370 capabilities of the various options. Conduct outreach and education to help  
371 business, residential and other providers understand their options.

372 ***Play 10. Document and communicate unmet market opportunities to potential***  
373 ***providers of service:***

- 374 • Provide local and regional teams with a survey resource to document unmet  
375 residential, business and other demands.  
376 • Facilitate partnerships with higher education to manage, analyze and organize  
377 data on unmet consumer demand.  
378 • Communicate unmet demands to providers with market incentive to address  
379 those needs.

380 ***Play 11. Facilitate partnerships to deliver broadband awareness/adoption***  
381 ***education to government officials and consumers:***

- 382 • Encourage pursuit and use of public and private grant monies to leverage the  
383 demand-enhancing opportunities of digital awareness and competency.  
384 • Coordinate and leverage existing assets and programs, such as:
- 385 √ Higher education (e.g. University of Wisconsin Extension).
  - 386 √ Private providers (e.g. Connect to Compete or CenturyLink's Internet  
387 Basics<sup>3</sup>).
  - 388 √ Libraries and community partners (e.g. Connecting Milwaukee  
389 Communities).
  - 390

391 **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC INPUT**

392

393 The plays described herein are the result of input from the hundreds of individuals  
394 who participated on Broadband Planning Teams, community meetings and focus  
395 groups, as well as the guidance of the Steering Committee and others. The success of  
396 the Playbook depends on shaping a set of plays that carry the endorsement of the  
397 widest possible spectrum of Wisconsin citizen, business, private, non-profit, and  
398 governmental leadership. That process is not finished. We encourage each  
399 individual who reads this DRAFT Playbook to submit comments at:

400 <http://psc.wi.gov> using the Electronic Regulatory Filing System and docket number  
401 5-GF-188, by using the Public Comments button on the PSCW’s webpage, by  
402 contacting the PSCW by email at [PSCBroadbandComments@psc.wisconsin.gov](mailto:PSCBroadbandComments@psc.wisconsin.gov) or by  
403 paper mail at:

404

405 Broadband Playbook Comments c/o Telecommunications Division  
406 Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
407 P.O. Box 7854  
408 Madison, WI 53707-7854

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<sup>1</sup> “D-block,” refers to a 10-megahertz band in the 700-megahertz radio spectrum that could serve as the backbone of a nationwide public safety and smart grid system (electrical grid that gathers and acts on information to improve the efficiency, reliability, economics, and sustainability of the production and distribution of electricity). Congress has passed a law that allows utilities to partner with public safety providers in using the D-block spectrum, and directs \$7 billion in federal backing to state and local agencies that will be looking for funds to buy the radios and build and deploy the networks.

<sup>2</sup> In October 2011, the Federal Communications Commission created two new universal service funds – a Connect America Fund and a Mobility Fund – to support landline and wireless broadband deployment in unserved areas.

<sup>3</sup> These programs provide discounted broadband service to low income households.