



PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

Connecting Communities BC

Request to Participate, Peace River Regional
District

April 7, 2022

diverse. vast. abundant.

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Background

On March 8, 2020, the Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Citizens' Services, and the Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development, announced an historic partnership to invest up to \$830 million to improve access to high-speed Broadband Internet in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities throughout British Columbia.

Under this plan, both levels of government will contribute up to \$415 million for total combined funding of \$830 million to connect the entire province of British Columbia, accelerating British Columbia's connectivity plan with a new provincial target of 100% B.C. communities connected by 2027.

This agreement will provide coverage to approximately 115,000 households in British Columbia still underserved, which breaks down to 347 rural communities and 115 Indigenous communities.

Request to Participate

As such, the Ministry of Citizens' Services is requesting interested parties to provide information that will assist the Province in planning future connectivity funding programs to provide high-speed connectivity to remaining underserved households in British Columbia.

The Request to Participate (RTP) process is an opportunity for the Province to obtain regional and market information, validate cost assumptions and gauge potential market interest in providing connectivity services to underserved regions of the Province. Information gathered by the Province may be used as input to future connectivity program design to maximize network expansion to ensure all regions receive benefits from provincially funded connectivity programs.

The RTP process aims to present the Province's current understanding of the underserved households and have Respondents provide feedback and insight into what type of technology would be viable in which areas to help the Province meet its connectivity goals.

The Province is requesting participation in this RTP process from Internet service providers (ISPs), cellular providers, local governments, First Nation communities and other levels of government with experience in providing connectivity solutions.

The Peace River Regional District will be submitting a response to the Request to Participate, and is seeking feedback from residents and communities located within its zone from **April 7, 2022 to April 22, 2022**. The feedback consists of completing the Cira Internet Speed Test and a Connecting Communities survey for residents and businesses/industries. The survey

intends to capture the needs and challenges of Peace region residents and businesses concerning internet and cellular service.

Quick facts

- This agreement will provide coverage to approximately 115,000 households in British Columbia that are still underserved.
- Canada's Connectivity Strategy aims to provide all Canadians with access to Internet speeds of at least 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download / 10 Mbps upload.
- The Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) is a \$2.75 billion investment by the Government of Canada designed to help connect 98% of Canadians to high-speed Internet by 2026 and achieve the national target of 100% connectivity by 2030. Only the hardest to reach households may take until 2030.
- Since 2015, the Government of Canada has announced more than \$135 million in funding for 38 projects to bring improved speeds to more than 35,000 households in British Columbia.
- The UBF is part of a suite of federal investments to improve high-speed Internet. Find out more on the High-speed Internet for all of Canada page.
- Connecting Communities BC is part of the StrongerBC Economic Plan to move British Columbia forward by tackling the challenges of today while growing an economy that works for everyone. Budget 2022 significantly accelerates B.C.'s commitment to close the digital divide, helping communities access new diversified economic opportunities.

How to participate

To ensure that the Peace region is represented in the next steps of the Connecting Communities BC plan, the PRRD is asking residents and businesses to participate in the following before April 22, 2022:

1. Take the [CIRA Internet Speed Test](#)
2. Complete the Connected Communities survey:
 - For [residents](#)
 - For [businesses/industries](#)

About CIRA and privacy

The Peace River Regional District has contracted [CIRA](#) to build an internet performance-testing site to measure real internet speeds in the region. The CIRA Internet Performance Test (IPT) is a quick and easy test of your Internet connection. The CIRA Internet Performance Test (IPT) is comprised of test servers located throughout Canada at various Internet Exchange Points (IXPs).

IXPs are critical hubs on the Canadian Internet and important in the efficient and fast transfer of data securely within our borders. When residents and business take the CIRA internet test, it helps identify the areas where internet speeds are lacking, and is used to access grant funding dollars for the region.

The data you create from each test will be anonymously aggregated with all the other performance tests done throughout Canada. The data is sent back and forth to an M-Lab server. Together, these results help researchers understand and build a better internet for Canada. This data does include your IP address along with the results of your test. All the data is made publicly available in order for researchers to access this information to perform analysis.

The IPT does not collect personal information on M-Lab servers such as your Internet traffic, your emails or Web searches.