

§9204-A. Duties of authority

1. Establish criteria defining unserved and underserved areas. The authority, by rule adopted pursuant to section 9205, subsection 3, shall establish criteria to define unserved and underserved areas with respect to broadband service. Criteria established by the authority to define unserved and underserved areas must include the percentage of households with access to broadband service within a municipality or other appropriate geographic area. The authority shall use these criteria to determine those areas of the State that are unserved or underserved.

[PL 2015, c. 284, §7 (NEW).]

2. Promote use of broadband service. The authority shall promote use of broadband service by identifying and sharing best practices that encourage use of broadband service, eliminating barriers to use of broadband service and facilitating and supporting public-private partnerships to increase use of broadband service.

[PL 2015, c. 284, §7 (NEW).]

3. Support local and regional broadband planning. The authority shall provide technical and planning support and approve financial assistance to communities in the State that include unserved and underserved areas to identify the need for broadband infrastructure and services and develop and implement plans to meet those needs.

[PL 2019, c. 343, Pt. QQ, §3 (AMD).]

4. Support broadband investment. The authority shall expand the availability of broadband service to residential and small business customers in unserved or underserved areas by identifying, developing and providing funding for broadband investments in unserved and underserved communities. Such investments may include infrastructure that is used by a single provider or by multiple providers.

[PL 2015, c. 284, §7 (NEW).]

5. Facilitate state support of deployment of broadband infrastructure. The authority shall review, recommend and facilitate changes in laws, rules, programs and policies of the State and its agencies to further deployment of broadband infrastructure to all unserved and underserved areas of the State. The authority shall assist in identifying opportunities to use broadband infrastructure to achieve the state policies and goals as set out in section 9202-A and support coordination between communications providers and state and local governmental entities on initiatives where broadband infrastructure could be advanced.

[PL 2019, c. 343, Pt. QQ, §4 (AMD).]

6. Collect and disseminate information. The authority shall collect, aggregate, coordinate and disseminate information regarding the availability of and need for advanced communications technology infrastructure in the State and opportunities for funding for broadband infrastructure and education.

[PL 2015, c. 284, §7 (NEW).]

6-A. Notice of construction. The authority shall disseminate information about a proposed underground facility that it receives in accordance with section 2503, subsection 2 in a manner that is accessible to all parties that may be interested in installing a broadband conduit in the area of the proposed underground facility.

[PL 2017, c. 344, §2 (NEW).]

7. Administer funds. The authority shall administer the ConnectMaine Fund as established pursuant to section 9211 and the Municipal Gigabit Broadband Network Access Fund established pursuant to section 9211-A.

[PL 2021, c. 362, §1 (AMD).]

8. Limitations on activities of the authority. Except as provided in section 9211-A, the authority may not develop, acquire, fund, coordinate or otherwise undertake any project or make any grant, direct investment or loan under this chapter unless the authority determines that without the authority's action the installation of adequate advanced communications technology infrastructure in an unserved or underserved area would not occur within the same time period. When providing grants, direct investment or loans for broadband infrastructure investments, the authority shall give preference to those investments that provide the greatest relative improvement to existing broadband service in an unserved or underserved area. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the authority may not provide any wireline, wireless, satellite, voice, data or video service at retail or wholesale. [PL 2021, c. 362, §2 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2015, c. 284, §7 (NEW). PL 2017, c. 344, §2 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 343, Pt. QQ, §§3, 4 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 625, §8 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 362, §§1, 2 (AMD).

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