

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Illinois Broadband Adoption Fund Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions. As used in this Act:

7 "Broadband Internet" means lines or wireless channels that  
8 terminate at an end-user location and enable the end-user to  
9 receive a minimum service level of 25 megabits per second  
10 download speed and 3 megabits per second upload speed.

11 "Covered agencies" means those social service agencies  
12 receiving State or federal funds to assist persons eligible  
13 under the Illinois Broadband Adoption Program.

14 "Department" means the Department of Human Services.

15 "Fund" refers to the Illinois Broadband Adoption Fund.

16 "Provider" means a provider of broadband Internet in this  
17 State.

18 Section 10. Illinois Broadband Adoption Program. The  
19 Illinois Broadband Adoption Program is established for the  
20 purpose of expanding availability of broadband Internet  
21 connectivity throughout the State by:

22 (1) providing financial assistance to State residents

1 to whom broadband Internet service is available, but who  
2 may require assistance to adopt or maintain service due to  
3 economic hardship;

4 (2) promoting the adoption of home broadband Internet  
5 service by State residents; and

6 (3) supporting digital skills training for State  
7 residents.

8 Section 15. Illinois Broadband Adoption Fund.

9 (a) The Illinois Broadband Adoption Fund is established as  
10 a special fund within the State treasury for the purpose of  
11 providing financial assistance under this Act. The Department  
12 shall administer the fund.

13 (b) The fund consists of:

14 (1) money received through the federal American Rescue  
15 Plan and other vehicles designed to address and relieve  
16 economic hardship for State households;

17 (2) money appropriated by the General Assembly;

18 (3) money transferred to the fund under the Treasurer  
19 as Custodian of Funds Act; and

20 (4) donations, gifts, and money received from any  
21 other source, including transfers from other funds or  
22 accounts.

23 (c) The Treasurer shall invest the money in the fund not  
24 currently needed to meet the obligations of the fund in the  
25 same manner as other public funds may be invested.

1 Section 20. Application for financial assistance.

2 (a) The Department may determine qualifications for  
3 broadband Internet provider participation and enter into an  
4 agreement with each provider under which the provider agrees  
5 to accept vouchers distributed by the Department under this  
6 Act as a form of payment for the provider's broadband Internet  
7 service.

8 (b) In coordination with the covered agencies, the  
9 Department shall send information regarding the availability  
10 of financial assistance under this Act to each eligible family  
11 or person receiving the public assistance in Section (d). The  
12 information must include:

13 (1) the name and contact information of each provider  
14 who has entered into an agreement with the Department as  
15 described in subsection (a) whose broadband Internet  
16 service is available in their area; and

17 (2) instructions for applying to the Department for  
18 financial assistance under this Section.

19 (c) An individual who receives information under  
20 subsection (b) may apply for financial assistance under this  
21 Section in the manner specified by the Department. Upon  
22 receipt of an application, the Department shall determine:

23 (1) the applicant's eligibility for financial  
24 assistance;

25 (2) the amount of financial assistance for which the

1 applicant is eligible; and

2 (3) whether the applicant is eligible for a single  
3 payment or a recurring payment of financial assistance,  
4 based on the Department's assessment of the applicant's  
5 need.

6 (d) An applicant for financial assistance under this Act  
7 is automatically eligible for financial assistance under this  
8 Act if:

9 (1) the applicant is receiving, or the applicant's  
10 household includes, an individual who is receiving  
11 benefits under:

12 (A) the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families  
13 (TANF) program;

14 (B) the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
15 Program (SNAP); or

16 (C) the Medicaid program; or

17 (2) the applicant's household includes a child who is  
18 eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

19 (e) If the Department determines under subsection (c) that  
20 an individual is eligible for financial assistance, or that  
21 the individual is eligible for financial assistance under  
22 subsection (d), the Department may provide financial  
23 assistance to the individual or to the broadband Internet  
24 provider designated by the individual in the form of one or  
25 more vouchers, each in an amount of up to \$50, that can be used  
26 by the individual to pay one or more of the following expenses:

1           (1) fees charged by a broadband Internet provider for  
2           installation, activation, equipment purchase, Wi-Fi  
3           extenders, or other one-time expenses of providing  
4           broadband Internet service to the individual;

5           (2) monthly subscription fees charged by a broadband  
6           Internet provider for the provision of broadband Internet  
7           service to the individual household, including modem,  
8           router, or other service or equipment charges; and

9           (3) overdue amounts owed to provider, including  
10          administrative fees and penalties.

11          A voucher or similar designation of eligibility may be  
12          provided by the Department in printed or electronic form.

13          (f) A provider that receives a voucher under this Section  
14          from an individual household who subscribes to the provider's  
15          broadband Internet service shall deduct the amount of the  
16          voucher from the amount owed by the subscriber for the  
17          provider's provision of broadband Internet service to the  
18          individual household on a monthly basis.

19          (g) If the fund does not receive an ongoing appropriation  
20          from the General Assembly, the Department shall provide a  
21          90-day notice to participating households and broadband  
22          Internet providers that financial support will be  
23          discontinued.

24          Section 100. The Department of Commerce and Economic  
25          Opportunity Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois

1 is amended by adding Section 605-1055 as follows:

2 (20 ILCS 605/605-1055 new)

3 Sec. 605-1055. Illinois Innovation Voucher Program.

4 (a) The Department is authorized to establish the Illinois  
5 Innovation Voucher Program to be administered in accordance  
6 with this Section for the purpose of fostering research and  
7 development in key industry clusters leading to the creation  
8 of new products and services that can be marketed by Illinois  
9 businesses. Subject to appropriation, the Department may award  
10 innovation vouchers to eligible businesses to offset a portion  
11 of expenses incurred through a collaborative research  
12 engagement with an Illinois institution of higher education.

13 (b) Subject to appropriation, the Department may award  
14 matching funds in the form of innovation vouchers up to 75% of  
15 the cost of the research engagement not to exceed \$75,000. A  
16 business may receive only one innovation voucher under this  
17 Section per year.

18 (c) The Department, when administering the Program under  
19 this Section:

20 (1) must encourage participation among small and  
21 mid-sized businesses;

22 (2) must encourage participation in the Program in  
23 diverse geographic and economic areas, including urban,  
24 suburban, and rural areas of the State; and

25 (3) must encourage participation in the Program from

1 businesses that operate in key industries, as defined by  
2 the Department. These industries include, but are not  
3 limited to, the following: (i) agribusiness and agtech;  
4 (ii) energy; (iii) information technology; (iv) life  
5 sciences and healthcare; (v) manufacturing; and (vi)  
6 transportation and logistics.

7 (d) In order to be eligible for an innovation voucher  
8 under this Section, a business must satisfy all of the  
9 following conditions:

10 (1) the business must be an Illinois-based business.

11 For the purposes of this Section, "Illinois-based  
12 business" means a business that has its principal place of  
13 business in this State or that employs at least 100  
14 full-time employees, as defined under Section 5-5 of the  
15 Economic Development for a Growing Economy Tax Credit Act,  
16 in this State;

17 (2) the business must remain in this State for the  
18 duration of research engagement; and

19 (3) the partnering institution of higher education  
20 must be an Illinois-based institution of higher education  
21 and non-profit. For the purposes of this Section,  
22 "Illinois-based institution of higher education" means an  
23 institution of higher education that has its main physical  
24 campus in this State.

25 (e) The Department may adopt any rules necessary to  
26 administer the provisions of this Section.

1           Section 105. The State Finance Act is amended by adding  
2           Section 5.935 as follows:

3           (30 ILCS 105/5.935 new)

4           Sec. 5.935. The Illinois Broadband Adoption Fund.

5           Section 999. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
6           becoming law.