

Cool & Connected

Planning Assistance for Broadband and Sustainable Community Development

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Google search: EPA Cool & Connected

<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/cool-connected-announcement-federal-planning-assistance-broadband-and-sustainable>

The Cool & Connected planning assistance program is
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What We'll Cover

- What is Cool & Connected
- How broadband can contribute to downtown & neighborhood revitalization
- What Cool & Connected partner communities will receive
- How to apply
- Timeline
- Questions

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What is Cool & Connected

- Cool & Connected will provide planning assistance.
- This is not a grant program.
- But...we've seen that communities with a good plan and buy-in are more likely to attract public and private investment.

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What is Cool & Connected

- We will help people come up with strategies and action plans to leverage broadband to revitalize downtowns & neighborhoods.
- We want to foster community development – especially in small towns and rural communities.
- We want to help communities focus development in existing neighborhoods and make them walkable, connected and economically vibrant.
- Focusing development on traditional main streets and existing neighborhoods is good for the natural environment, good for people, and good for local economies.

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How broadband can contribute to downtown & neighborhood revitalization

- America is re-centering. This is a good thing.
- Assets and amenities matter.
- Local foods & breweries, music & arts, trails & recreational opportunities can make a difference in where people choose to live and invest. This applies to small towns and not-so-small towns.
- Broadband is both infrastructure and amenity.

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How broadband can contribute to downtown & neighborhood revitalization

- This is a pilot program. We don't yet have the answers.
- We want to hear ideas from communities interested in leveraging broadband for the purpose of revitalizing main streets or existing neighborhoods.
- This means taking advantage of broadband service that is already in place, will soon be in place, or can be put in place using resources already in hand.

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How broadband can contribute to downtown & neighborhood revitalization

Some possibilities:

- Using broadband service to attract new types of businesses to main streets or existing rural communities.
- Combining internet service with other local amenities to attract new investors, visitors, and residents.
- Developing or marketing downtown Wifi zones.
- Extending broadband service beyond anchor institutions in ways that promote main street development.
- Selecting centrally located anchor institutions or community facilities that will receive broadband service.

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What Cool & Connected partner communities will receive

- A team of people with expertise in community development and broadband will help partner communities.
- Team members will include contractors and federal staff.
- We will conduct analysis, help communities convene stakeholders, and help create or expand useful partnerships.
- A focal point of the planning assistance is a public workshop and stakeholder gathering in the community.
- We'll help the community create or refine a strategy, and will draft a detailed action plan on what needs to get done, and how to do it.

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What Cool & Connected partner communities will receive

- Cool & Connected will be modeled on Local Foods, Local Places.
- Local Foods, Local Places helps communities leverage local foods to spur downtown or neighborhood revitalization.
- Info on Local Foods, Local Places, including community action plans, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places>.

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How to Apply

- To apply, submit a two-page letter of interest.
- Tell us your needs and challenges related to your town's main street or other existing neighborhood, and how a planning process might help.
- Tell us what initial ideas you might have for using broadband to foster smart development.
- You don't have to have all the answers. The planning process will help you figure out your strategy and plan for leveraging broadband to create a great place to live and work.

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How to Apply

- You are encouraged to indicate partners that can be expected to participate in a planning process, such as local internet service providers, local officials, business associations, or local schools or colleges.
- Any community representative is welcome to submit a letter of interest.
- Special consideration will be given to small towns and rural communities that face economic challenges.
- Special consideration will be given to communities in places where USDA has provided loans or grants in support of broadband or other internet-related services.

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How to Apply

- Submit your letter of interest to Ed Fendley at fendley.ed@epa.gov by Wednesday, February 24, 2016.
- Please include "Cool & Connected" and the name of your community in your email subject line.

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Timeline

- February 24: Deadline for letters of interest
- March or April: USDA & EPA select partner communities
- Spring, summer, and fall: Work with partner communities
- Pilot round concludes by the end of 2016
- Potential for another round of community partners, building on the pilot round

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