



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**2022 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative Input Sessions**

**April 27, 2021**

**May 4, 2021**

**Partners for Better Communities**

# Agenda

Welcome	Evan Feinman, Governor's Chief Broadband Advisor
Purpose of Session	Erik C. Johnston, Director-DHCD
Overview of FY2022 Proposed Changes to VATI Guidelines and Criteria	Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D., Director Office of Broadband Chandler Vaughan, Policy Analyst, Office of Broadband Ammar Al Omari, PMP., Broadband & Telecomm. Project Mgr.
Questions and Answers	Caroline Luxhoj, PMP., Broadband & Telecomm. Project Mgr
Next Steps	Tammy Breski, Broadband & Telecomm. Project Mgr.

- Assist communities with Broadband Planning efforts
- Provide technical assistance to stakeholders on accessing Tribal and Federal Broadband programs
- Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI)
  - Technical Assistance (pre and post application)
  - Grants Management
- Oversight of the State Broadband Map

Provide financial assistance to supplement construction costs by internet service providers to extend services to areas that are presently unserved by any broadband provider.

\$49.7 million in state funding for FY2022 VATI

- \$73 million has been awarded to 47 projects in 44 localities
- 78,035 Virginia residents, businesses and community anchor institutions have access to broadband.

# FY 2022 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative Draft Guidelines and Criteria

- **April 16** – Draft Guidelines Released for Opening of Public Comment Period
- **April 27, 10am-12pm & May 4, 10am-12pm** – Public Input Sessions on Draft Guidelines
- **May 17** – Deadline for submission of Public Comments
- **June 4** – DHCD releases Final Guidelines for the FY2022 VATI Round

- In FY 2022, VATI will implement a one-year pilot program in which public broadband authorities may apply directly for VATI funds without investment from the private sector.
  - Awards shall not exceed 10 percent of total available VATI funds in FY2022.
  - Applications submitted without a private sector co-applicant will be evaluated alongside other applications.



- For a **wireline project**, a proposed project area is considered eligible if 10 percent or fewer of serviceable units have access to service with no additional special construction costs from any provider as of the date of the application.
- For a **wireless project**, a proposed area is considered eligible if 25 percent or fewer of serviceable units have access to service with no additional special construction costs from any provider as of the date of the application.

Areas with service by satellite providers are not considered served under VATI definitions. Therefore, Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) areas preliminarily awarded to satellite internet service providers will not be considered as overlap and are allowed be included in VATI applications.

- To accelerate broadband access in RDOF awarded areas, passings in those areas may be included in the VATI application.
  - The auction winner and the VATI co-applicant are the same.
  - All RDOF passings included in a VATI application that is awarded funding must be provided access to broadband service within the VATI contractual period.
  - Each RDOF passing included in a VATI application will be awarded  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the scoring value of one VATI passing.

*If RDOF areas are included in a VATI application, that application must achieve functionally **universal coverage** in the county, or counties, in the application.*

- Any RDOF passings for which VATI funds accelerate construction must lead to an **equal number of passings** being completed ahead of RDOF milestones for completion percentage.

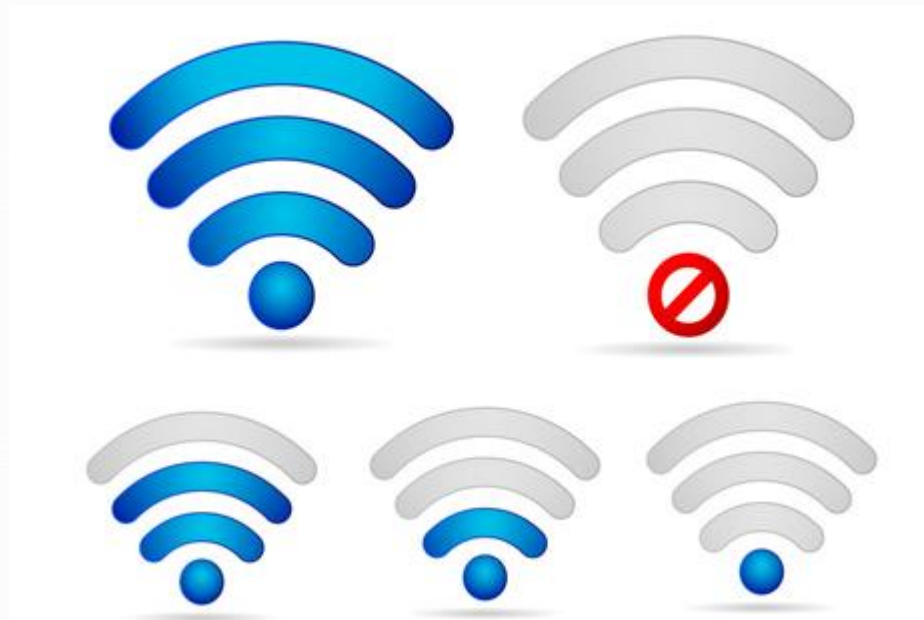
### **Example Scenario**

If an internet service provider(ISP) won 1000 RDOF locations, and had to complete 400 of those by year 3, if 200 RDOF passings are accelerated due to VATI funding, the awarded ISP must have completed 600 passings by year three, barring any agreed contract extensions related to extenuating circumstances.

- Applicants are required to submit point and polygon shapefile(s) of the proposed project area as defined in the guidelines.
  - Wireless co-applicants are required to include shapefiles of heat maps indicating projected received signal strength indicator (RSSI) measures in the project area.

**Note:** *Point and polygon shapefiles submitted with VATI applications are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and will not be provided FOIA exemption. RSSI measures in the project area(s) are eligible for Freedom of Information Act exemption.*

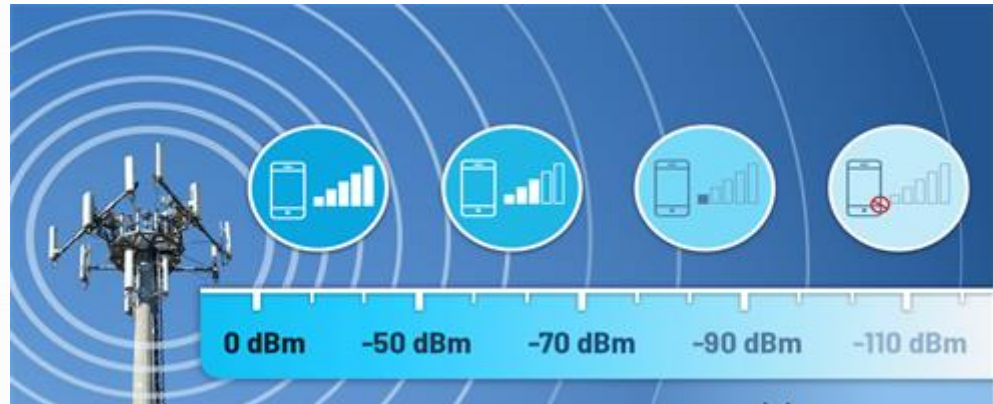
- RSSI: Received Signal Strength Indicator is a measure of power level that a wireless client device is receiving from an access point or router.



Ex: WiFi Signal from strong to weak

# Received Signal Strength Indicator

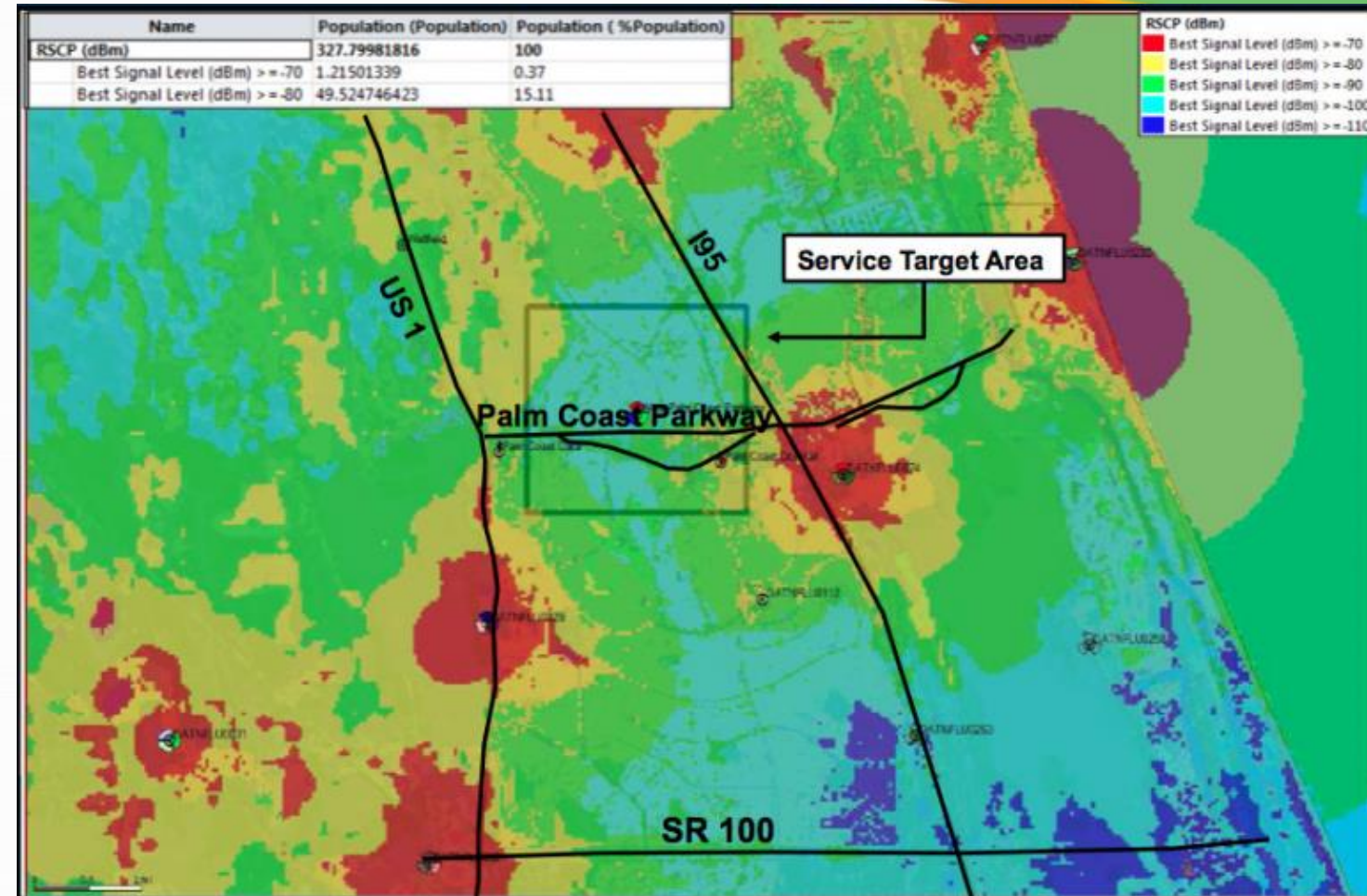
- As the signal travels away from the transmitter (Antenna):
  - The signal becomes weaker
  - And the wireless data rates become slower, leading to a lower overall data throughput.



Signal levels around the tower

# Received Signal Strength Indicator

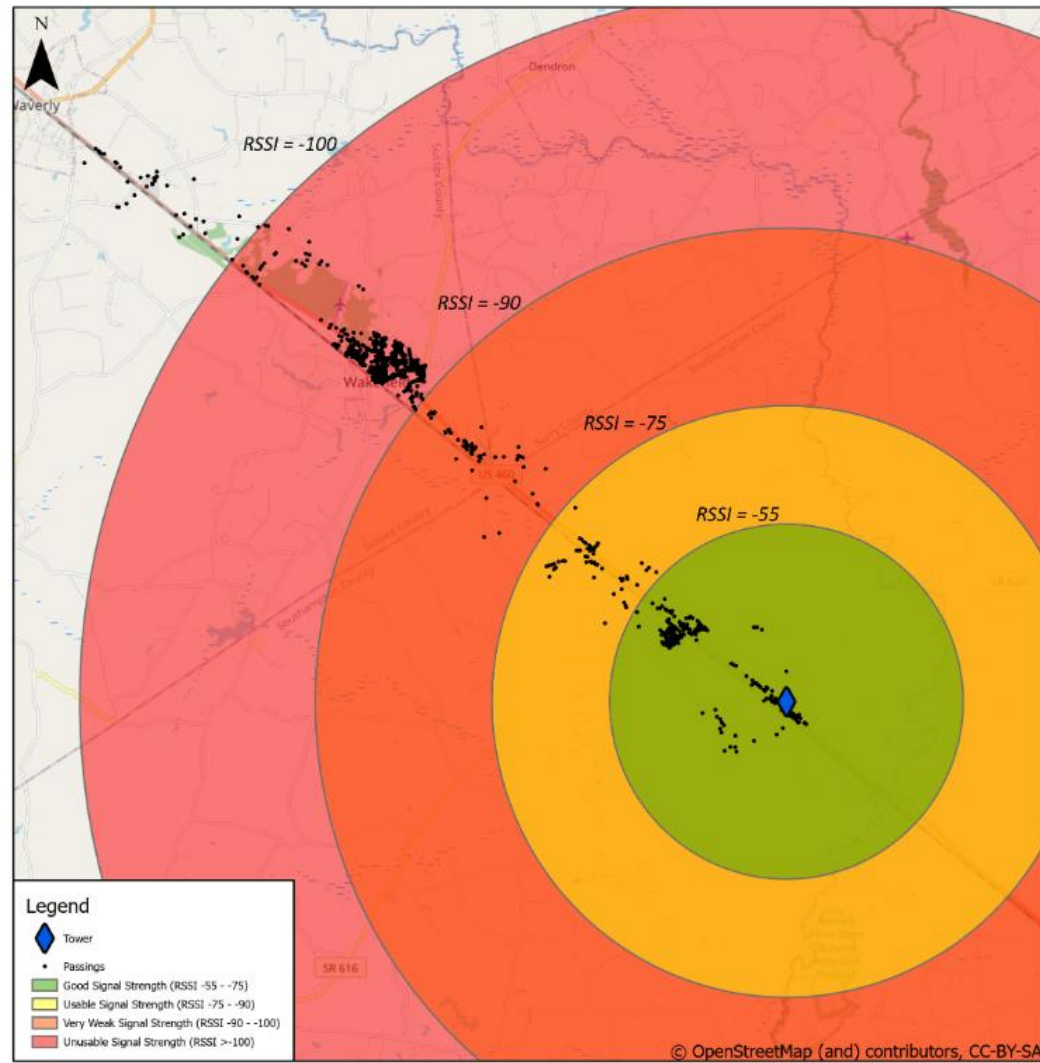
- RSSI is measured in decibels per Milliwatt (dBm) usually ranging from 0 to -120.
- The closer the value to 0 the stronger the signal will be. -55 dBm is considered the best practical signal.



Ex:RSSI Distribution Prediction



Sample RSSI (Signal Strength) Map with Passings



- Levels of -90 dBm and below usually considered unusable signal.
- Indoor best practices for mixed use networks usually see RSSI values of -75 to -80 and for session based networks (Video Conferencing, WiFi calling, etc) - 60 to -65

- Challengers must provide point and polygon shapefile(s) as defined in the guidelines.
  - *Wireless challengers will be required to submit shapefiles of heat maps indicating received signal strength indicator (RSSI) measures in the challenged area.*
- Wireless projects will be allowed to exceed the 25% overlap allowance of existing networks, provided the wireless signal strength, measured in received signal strength indicator (RSSI), is less than -90 in those areas.

*It is the determination of DHCD that RSSI measures below -90 are unable to reliably deliver broadband.*

**Note:** *Point and polygon shapefiles, including shapefiles of heat maps indicating RSSI measures submitted by challengers are eligible for FOIA exemption.*

**Point Shapefiles** – shapefiles that show each proposed passing in the application area as a singular mapped point, in the application or challenged area containing attribute data showing the addresses of each point.

**Polygon Shapefiles** - shapefiles delineating the general project area(s).

**RSSI** - Received Signal Strength Indicator, or RSSI, is a measure of power level that a wireless client device is receiving from an access point or router.

## Proposed Change – Evaluation Criteria

Category	2021 Points	2022 Points
Project Description and Need	120	85
Project Readiness	60	40
Budget and Cost Appropriateness	70	135
Commonwealth Priorities	50	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>

# FY 2022 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative Draft Guidelines and Criteria

## Question and Answer Session

# Next Steps & Contact

- **May 17** – Public Comment Period on Draft Guidelines Closes
- **June 4** – DHCD releases Final Guidelines for the FY2022 VATI Round
- **June 17, 2- 4pm** – VATI How-to-Apply Webinar
- **June 17** – Applications Open
- **TODAY thru September 13 – VATI Technical Assistance and Project Development Sessions**
- **July 27** – Notice of Applications Due
- **August 3** – DHCD Posts Notices of Application on VATI website
- **September 14** – Applications Due
- **September 21** – DHCD Posts Applications on VATI Website
- **October 21** – Challenges Due
- **October 28** – DHCD Notifies Challenged Applicants
- **November 18** – Deadline for Challenge Rebuttals
- **December 3** – DHCD Notifies All Parties of Challenge Determination
- **Late December** – Anticipated Announcement of Awards

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