**Section 548.35 Program Specific Definitions**

"Capital Improvement" means a project with a purpose to physically expand or physically improve upon infrastructure necessary for internet service delivery.

"Economically Distressed Area" means a census tract which meets one of the following four tests:

Poverty rate of at least 20%; or

75% or more of the children in the area are eligible to participate in the federal free lunch or reduced-price meals program; or

At least 20% of the households in the area receive assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); or

Average unemployment rate that is more than 120% of the national unemployment average, for a period of at least two consecutive calendar years preceding the date of the application.

The Department maintains a map of areas that meet these qualifications on its website.

"Eligible Entities" means an incorporated business or partnership; a political subdivision; a nonprofit organization; a cooperative association; or a limited liability corporation organized for the purpose of expanding broadband access. Illinois public school districts are eligible to apply but may be encouraged to leverage other available federal or education-specific funding prior to an award.

"Middle Mile Infrastructure" means broadband construction that links a broadband service provider's core network infrastructure to last mile infrastructure.

"Program" means the Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program.

"Rebuild Illinois" means the Rebuild Illinois Projects Fund.

"Underserved Area" means an applicant designated project area of Illinois in which households, businesses, or community anchor institutions have wireline broadband access of at least 25/3 Mbps but less than 100/20 Mbps, reflected in broadband mapping utilized by DCEO for the Connect Illinois program.

"Unserved Area" means an applicant designated project area of Illinois in which households, businesses, or community anchor institutions lack access to wireline broadband service of at least 25/3 Mbps, reflected in broadband mapping utilized by the DCEO for the Connect Illinois program.

(Source: Added at 48 Ill. Reg. 7690, effective May 8, 2024)