

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Regarding the Western Maryland Broadband Project Survey

1. What is this project's goal?
2. What is broadband?
3. When will I see more broadband options available to my business?
4. Why is there a survey?
5. Why do you need to know specific information about my business?
6. What happens to the information I submit?
7. How do I get a copy of the survey?
8. How do I get a copy of the Lt. Governor's letter?
9. Is there a press release?
10. When is the survey due?
11. How do I send in the survey?
12. Who can fill out the survey?
13. Some of the terms used on the survey are confusing. Please explain them.
14. How can I get other questions answered?

### **1. What is this project's goal?**

The goal of this project is to improve economic opportunities for Western Maryland's businesses and citizens. TEDCO's *eReadiness Maryland* study has determined that Western Maryland's private sector lags behind other areas of the state in broadband usage, and we are committed to finding practical, economical solutions to move the region forward. We believe that the identification, development, and implementation of multiple broadband Internet access solutions will provide the citizens of Western Maryland with opportunities to grow their businesses, reduce costs, develop competitive advantages, and compete with businesses in other areas.

### **2. What is broadband?**

The Federal Communications Commission definition of 2000 is 200Kbps in at least one direction. In 2001, National Telecommunications Information Administration sponsored discussions with the industry to see what definition might be acceptable and received a wide variety of responses. The "rural" definition and related issues are still poorly defined there, but, will be defined as programs such as those from the Department of Agriculture are released.

For the purposes of this study, when the term broadband is used, we are referring to high-speed Internet access services – access to the Internet at speeds greater than dial-up modem. For most Western Maryland businesses, high-speed Internet access has only been available through expensive, dedicated, point-to-point T-1 lines to an internet service provider. Our study plans to identify multiple solutions to provide competitive broadband options to all of Western Maryland's business community.

### **3. When will I see more broadband options available to my business?**

This project will take approximately 4-5 months to complete. At the conclusion of this project, we plan to have a strategy to implement broadband services across the region. This strategy may consist of several solutions, each with their own timeframe for implementation. Some solutions may come 'on-line' and available around the same time the project concludes. Other solutions may require additional funding sources that will need to be developed and approved. Overall, the availability of broadband solutions should significantly increase over the next 12-24 months.

#### **4. Why is there a survey?**

A key cornerstone of this project is the development of business cases to deploy broadband solutions. Without specific knowledge of the demand drivers in the local economy, we cannot develop tight business cases for prospective partners to implement solutions. In short, without knowing what people will buy, we cannot convince vendors to commit their resources to implement solutions.

#### **5. Why do you need to know specific information about my business?**

There are many possible solutions and vendors to provide broadband access for our region. Our consulting partner is working very closely with local and state resources as well as these vendors to develop business cases. At the beginning of this project, it is impossible to know all potential solutions, so we need to collect specific data on a variety of topics to ensure we have the proper information to develop these customized business cases. The information you provide on the survey will be instrumental in helping us to build these business cases for telecommunications infrastructure deployment and new services.

#### **6. What happens to the information I submit?**

The information you submit will be kept in strict confidence. Your personally identifiable information will ONLY be used if we have questions regarding your answers, and need to contact you for clarification. Your business location is used to aggregate demand within a region and area. Your survey responses will never be posted or available through any public means. The responses you submit will only be published as part of a whole. The University of Baltimore's Jacob France Institute, who is tabulating and analyzing the survey results, will keep these results in its own secure systems for the length of this project, and will not send these results in other than a summary form to any other entity outside the Project Team. The Project Team has confidentiality Agreements with TEDCO and the Tri-County Council that protect your information.

#### **7. How do I get a copy of the survey?**

The survey is available here. You will need the free Adobe Acrobat Reader to view and print this survey, which is available here.

## **8. How do I get a copy of the Lt. Governor's letter?**

The Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, along with many local and state officials, fully support this project and are excited about the solutions that will result from this effort. The Lt. Governor wrote a letter that is included with each survey. An electronic copy of this letter is available by [clicking on this link](#). You will need the free Adobe Acrobat viewer to read it, which is available [here](#).

## **9. Is there a press release?**

Yes, a press release has been sent to all media outlets and local Chambers of Commerce in the tri-county area. It can be viewed with Adobe Acrobat reader by [clicking here](#).

## **10. When is the survey due?**

Surveys **MUST** be returned by **May 16, 2003** in order for them to be included in the data analysis.

## **11. How do I send in the survey?**

Please return the completed survey in the postage paid envelope that was enclosed when it was mailed to your business. If you downloaded your copy of the survey, you can mail it to:

University of Baltimore  
Jacob France Institute  
1420 N. Charles Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-5779  
ATTN: Western Maryland Survey Enclosed

**or you may fax it to 410-837-5814.**

## **12. Who can fill out the survey?**

If you represent a business with locations in Western Maryland's three counties (Washington, Garrett, and Allegany), you are encouraged to respond to this survey. All other businesses are excluded, as the focus of this project is on entities established within these three counties. Your facility can be a corporate headquarters or branch location – the location of the corporate headquarters is not critical, just the physical location of your facility.

## **13. Some of the terms used on the survey are confusing. Please explain them.**

The following list contains many of the terms used in the survey, and a brief explanation of the terms:

AllCoNet - A non-profit network deployed across several parts of Allegany County to serve public sector data communications and Internet access requirements.

Broadband - The term is defined differently by many groups. The FCC continues to use its definition adopted in 2000 as more than 200 Kbps in at least one direction. Others refer to communications lines or services at T1 rates (1.544 Mbps) and above. The speed threshold of broadband is subjective and can be above or below T1. For this study and associated survey, broadband refers to high-speed Internet access services.

Cable Modem Service - A service from the local cable company that provides high-speed Internet access over existing cable lines primarily to small offices or home offices. Speeds can vary by offeror, but, can be severely limited since an individual customer shares that bandwidth with the others in the neighborhood sharing the same cable facility.

Dedicated Internet Access (e.g., T1, ISDN) - A direct connection, using a nailed-up point-to-point circuit (often provided by the phone company) to the Internet. Provides a high-speed connection to the Internet.

Dial-up Access - connecting to the Internet via a standard modem and telephone line to an Internet Service Provider (such as AOL, Earthlink, etc.).

Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) - A service from local phone companies or other competitors that provides high-speed Internet access over standard phone wires primarily to small offices or home offices. Bandwidth varies by offerors and have been limited by distance from a local phone company switching center called a central office.

Direct Satellite Internet Access - A service, similar to DSL, that is provided over a satellite dish (similar to DirecTV or DISH network). These services usually offer higher bandwidth to the user, but, limited bandwidth from the user.

Distance Learning (Web-based classes) - The use of the Internet to facilitate education, through on-line classes.

eCommerce (transactions and payments) - Purchasing and/or selling goods and/or services electronically, usually over the Internet.

High-speed Internet access - connections to the internet with data transfer rates/speeds greater than those available from a standard 56 Kbps dial-up modem. Traditionally includes services like DSL, Cable Modems, T1 lines, etc.

Internal Company Email - Indicates use of an email program to communicate with other employees within your company.

Internet access - access to the global Internet for web access, email, file transfer, and any other public IP applications

Internet Audio Broadcasts - Listening to the radio or other audio programming that is delivered via an Internet connection (versus traditional broadcast audio) and often accessed from a web site. Can include both broadcast stations and internal uses, such as training and distance learning.

Internet Email (Corporate System) - Indicates an internal corporate email program that can pass messages to people outside your company through the Internet.

Internet Email (Individual ISP Accounts) - This term refers to the use of accounts at providers like America Online and Earthlink for email communications.

Internet-based Private Networking (VPN) - Virtual Private Networks - connecting multiple locations together, using the Internet as a backbone, with security and encryption software to emulate a private connection. Most often used to connect remote sites and/or users to a corporate site, without requiring a private network connection at each remote location.

Internet-based Video Broadcasts - Transmission and/or receipt of video and audio across the Internet

Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) – A service that allows for higher data transmission speeds and is capable of handling at least two services over one line simultaneously (ex. – voice and fax, or voice and data/Internet).

Private Corporate WAN (e.g., frame relay) - a private network, connecting remote offices to the corporate headquarters, used to transmit information on a secure network, most often not connected to the Internet (although Internet access can be provided over a private corporate network).

Private Satellite Network (VSAT) - The use of a private satellite network to connect remote locations to a central site or main computer network.

Telecommute - (also Teleworking) a term that simply put means working from home or a local office, with most of the capabilities of the office, such as phone and data communications support. For the purposes of this study, we are concentrating on the ability for remote/home users to connect to their work resources through the Internet.

Telemedicine Applications - The use of the Internet to transmit video and other content between patients, medical professionals, and specialists to monitor a patient's condition or perform services.

Video Conferencing Lines (ISDN BRI and/or PRI) - Phone company lines specifically designed to carry video (and data) traffic between sites.

Voice Calls Over the Internet (VOIP) - Using a data connection over the Internet to send and/or receive voice calls.

Web Chat Customer Support - Using the web to facilitate communications between customers and a customer service department, in real-time.

Wide Area Communications Services - For the purposes of this study, communications, other than voice, with other entities outside of your office location. This includes data and video services.

#### **14. How can I get other questions answered?**

If you have any questions that are not addressed in this list of FAQs, please send an email to [survey@marylandtedco.org](mailto:survey@marylandtedco.org). You may also contact TLA Associates' Project Manager, Mr. Michael Beach, at (703) 450-8438. For questions regarding TEDCO, please contact Mr. David Houle at (410) 715-4168, and for questions regarding the Tri-County Council of Western Maryland, contact Mr. Guy Winterberg at (301) 777-2158.