

High-Performance Broadband For Everyone

In the next decade, everyone in America should be able to use High-Performance Broadband: fixed-broadband service delivered over networks that are fit for the future. To do that, America must overcome three distinct digital divides by:

Closing the Geographic Divide. In urban and rural areas and on tribal lands, millions of people in the U.S. have no access to robust broadband networks. Places without High-Performance Broadband are falling further and further behind. *We cannot let where we live determine our ability to connect.*

Harnessing Competition. At a minimum, more than 35% of people in this country live in areas where there is only one broadband provider offering download speeds of 100 Mbps (and these measurements from the FCC need to be improved). And many, many more have only two choices. Without competition, consumers, especially rural and lower-income people, are threatened with artificially-high prices, lower-quality service, and little innovation. *We cannot let lack of choice harm consumers.*

Boosting Affordability and Adoption. For too many people, the cost of broadband is too high, and the digital skills needed to use broadband effectively are lacking. The result: people are disconnected from the opportunity to continue their education, gain new job skills, and find good jobs. *We cannot allow lack of affordability and digital skills deprive people of opportunity.*

What's Needed? A New National Broadband Agenda

The purpose of [Broadband for America's Future: A Vision for the 2020s](#) is to collect, combine, and contribute to a national broadband agenda for the next decade, enlisting the voices of broadband leaders in an ongoing discussion on how public policy can close the digital divide and extend digital opportunity everywhere.

Leaders at all levels of government should ensure that everyone is able to use High-Performance Broadband in the next decade by embracing the following building blocks of policy:

- **Deployment.** Federal money should help build future-proof networks in places where people don't have robust broadband choices, focusing on the deployment of networks with 100/100 Mbps symmetrical speeds that can meet future demand in the 2020s, while employing interim measures to ensure that broadband reaches all in the short-term. Government should ensure that middle-mile facilities they fund are open to any broadband provider and that affordable services are among the broadband offerings.
- **Competition.** Policymakers should encourage broadband competition to help lower prices, improve services, and spur innovation. Right now, restrictive laws in 19 states are hindering communities from helping their people. The laws should be revisited, reversed, and repealed.
- **Affordability & Adoption.** Everyone in America should be able to afford a robust broadband connection and have the skills necessary to use it. Current research suggests that low-income people can only afford to pay \$10-15 per month for broadband, and local governments and community institutions have demonstrated that digital-skills training is important.

- **Community Anchor Institutions.** High-Performance Broadband connections empower community anchor institutions to fulfill their missions, reach their users wherever they are, and serve as launching pads for communitywide access. The federal government should expand its support to community institutions, like schools and libraries. As of 2018, 60 percent or more of community anchor institutions in the United States lacked robust and scalable connections that High-Performance Broadband networks can provide.

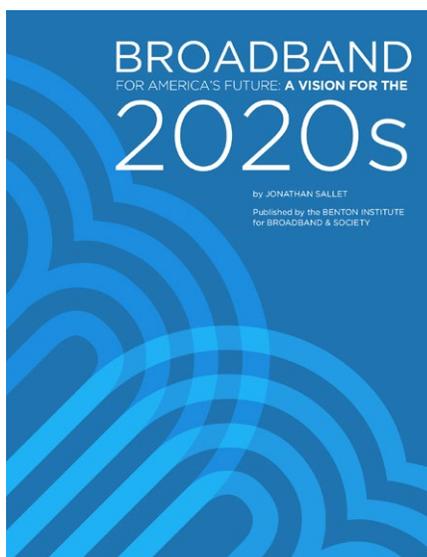
Community leadership is key because local governments and anchor institutions are closest to local needs and have earned Americans' confidence and trust. Forty-four states have broadband offices, task forces, or legislative committees responsible for facilitating broadband connectivity and twenty have state broadband strategies. More than 190 communities offer municipal services to their key community institutions and business districts, another 110 offer citywide fiber to the home, and many others have experimented with different forms of public-private collaboration.

Putting It All Together

A stronger, more just America will be built when society ensures that High-Performance Broadband is widely available and affordable, and that everyone has the opportunity to use it to achieve their personal and professional goals.

The challenge is not to improve the lot of some people in America; it is to offer everyone the ability to connect in order to empower them and everyone else. Broadband will not solve every problem, but we cannot solve our biggest challenges – including in agriculture, climate change, education, health care, and the economy—without broadband.

High-Performance Broadband can give everyone in this country the tools they need to fulfill their potential. But the importance of broadband extends further to the very fabric of American democracy—building stronger communities.



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