

Promoting Broadband Deployment and Adoption

Broadband is an essential component of modern life, and is used for work, education, civil engagement, and entertainment. Broadband adoption is a measure of the number of households that subscribe to broadband service, own the devices necessary for its use, and possess the digital literacy skills needed to meaningfully engage in a broad range of online activities. Although broadband is critical, our nation has a large digital divide, leaving those on the wrong side of it struggling to connect. Currently, more than [42 million](#) Americans don't have the ability to purchase broadband, and almost half of the country can't access the internet at broadband speeds (currently defined as 25/3 Mbps). According to the FCC's 2019 Broadband Deployment Report, in 2017, [26%](#) of those in rural areas lacked access to fixed broadband. [Fewer than half](#) of the households on rural tribal lands have access to fixed broadband. Moreover, only 66% of African Americans and 61% of Hispanics [report](#) having broadband at home. Many of these same households also [lack a computer](#) through which to access the internet.

Broadband Is Unaffordable for Many Americans

Even if broadband is *available* it is not always *affordable* and, consequently, it is not adopted.

- The price American consumers pay for broadband is [among the most expensive](#) in the world.
- A recent survey of American households found the cost of broadband to be among the [top reasons](#) for not subscribing to broadband services.
- Studies show that [\\$10 per month](#) is the most that low-income Americans can afford to pay for broadband. However, a recent study shows that only [six internet plans](#) (of the 290 studied) meet this \$10 benchmark at any speed.
- In addition, ancillary fees (like modem rental fees) can add an [additional 75%](#) to the cost of monthly internet service.

Digital Equity is Essential for Broadband Adoption

Even if broadband is available and affordable, individuals and families can't connect without equipment and digital literacy.

- Twenty-one percent of non-broadband users cite the [cost of a computer](#) as one of the reasons they do not have broadband at home.
- Many American workers [lack digital skills](#) they need to successfully navigate digital devices.
- The [Digital Equity Act](#) would provide funding to states to implement digital equity plans, and to other stakeholders to support digital equity projects.

Policymakers should address **all** barriers to broadband adoption, which include affordability, availability, and quality of service as well as digital literacy.