

Policymakers Must Ensure That Everyone Can Afford Broadband

Even if broadband is available, it is not always affordable. Broadband service in the United States is among the [most expensive in the world](#), and a [recent survey](#) of American households found the cost of broadband to be a significant barrier to subscribing. To ensure that broadband is affordable, Congress and the administration must:

- **Subsidize Broadband:** To ensure that broadband is affordable for the most economically vulnerable Americans, Congress or the FCC must provide at least a \$50 per month broadband subsidy to eligible households. This subsidy can be a standalone or an increased Lifeline subsidy. Offering a subsidy would also incentivize broadband deployment, because it would make low-income areas more profitable to serve.
- **Require Internet Service Providers To Offer an Affordable Option:** Another way to ensure that consumers can afford broadband is to require internet service providers to offer an affordable option for anyone who wants to take advantage of it, particularly if the provider is receiving broadband deployment funding. The price and standards of such an option can be determined by the FCC.
- **Collect Price Data:** We can't fix our nation's affordability problem without understanding it. The FCC must collect data about the cost of broadband, including equipment rentals and fees. Ancillary fees can [add an additional 75%](#) to the monthly cost of internet service, making the service cost-prohibitive for many people.
- **Subsidize Devices and Support Digital Literacy:** Twenty-one percent of non-broadband users cite the cost of a computer as [one of the reasons](#) they don't have broadband at home. Others don't have the [skills they need](#) to get online. Without either, consumers won't adopt broadband. We urge policymakers to promote device affordability (ideally through a subsidy for low-income consumers) and support digital literacy initiatives that give people the skills they need to get (and stay) online.
- **Remove Overbuilding Prohibitions:** The FCC currently refuses to give deployment funding to areas that already have broadband or received deployment funding through another project, considering it wasteful. However, [most Americans](#) have a maximum of two options for a broadband provider, and 35% have only *one* option. Studies show that prices for bundled packages that include high-speed internet connectivity are about \$25 higher per month than they should be due to lack of competition. Removing these "overbuilding" restrictions from future deployment funding would promote competition, therefore lowering costs for consumers.