

What Is Broadband?

Broadband, or high-speed internet, is internet with a minimum download speed of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) and a minimum upload speed of 3 Mbps—known as **25/3 Mbps speed**. There are 6 main types of broadband: broadband over power lines (BPL), cable modem, digital subscriber line (DSL), fiber, satellite, and wireless. **Fiber** is the fastest, with speeds up to 10,000 Mbps in some areas. **Cable** is the most used. Unlike most other types of infrastructure—such as roads, bridges, energy grids, water lines, and sewage systems—the nation's **digital infrastructure is largely corporate owned** and generates revenues from paying subscribers.

Who's Left Out

19 million households lack access to fixed broadband service at threshold speeds.¹

14% of US households (roughly **17 million**) don't have broadband of any kind.² Some estimate that number to be as high as **22.5%**, or **27.6 million** households.³

BY INCOME

Adults with household incomes below \$30,000 a year

1 in 4 don't own a smartphone⁴



4 in 10 don't have home broadband services⁴



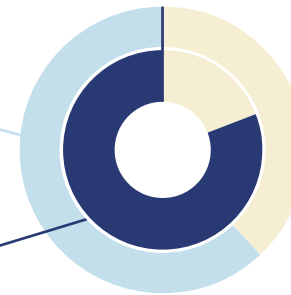
“Quality services should be available at just, reasonable, and affordable rates.”
Section 254 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996

BY ABILITY

Percentage of adults who own a desktop or laptop computer⁴

With a disability **62%**

Without a disability **81%**



Among smartphone owners, there is a gap of 16 percentage points between those with a disability and those without one (72% vs. 88%).

BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Percentage of adults who report having a broadband connection at home⁴

80% White*

71% Black

65% Hispanic

*Non-Hispanic white

BY POPULATION



About 1 in 4

people living in rural and tribal areas continue to lack access to fixed broadband.⁷ That means 4.6 million of these households don't have a broadband connection.⁸ Part of the reason: Private companies have little financial incentive to install infrastructure in areas with low population density and low adoption rates, and where terrain is expansive, rugged, or mountainous.

\$40 billion

The estimated price to wire 98% of rural America.⁹

A Broad Look at BROADBAND



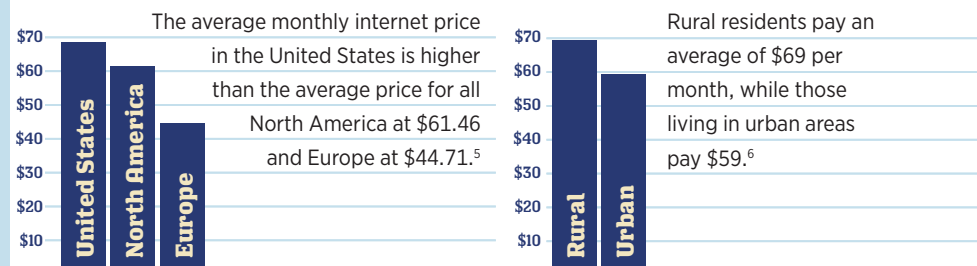
What high-speed internet access and affordability look like around the country

Why Access Is Important

During the pandemic, technology has been a lifeline: 9 in 10 Americans said the internet has been essential or important to them over the past two years. But for those who lack digital access, **inequality has widened**. Without the internet, people are more likely to miss out on the ability to work, find a job, bank, participate in telemedicine, and do schoolwork, not to mention maintain social connections with friends and family. Affordability and availability are key factors for why people lack access.

The Impact on Wallets—and Lives

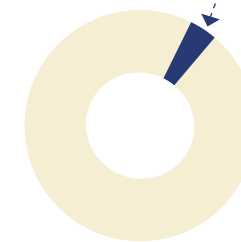
\$68.38/month



Potential Opportunities for Libraries

What households with annual incomes of \$50,000 or below trust “a lot”⁶

- 31%** local public libraries
- 20%** schools
- 14%** community nonprofits
- 8%** internet service providers



4% of low- and lower-middle income people without access to the internet have used a local public library's broadband or the library's Wi-Fi connection outdoors.⁶

90% of libraries offer digital skills training. These programs can help inform people about the benefits of the internet and educate them on how to use devices and sign up for broadband discounts and other affordability programs.¹⁰

Sources: 1. FCC; 2. US Census Bureau's American Community Survey; 3. Reviews.org; 4. Pew Research Center; 5. New America's *Cost of Connectivity 2020* report; 6. EveryoneOn's *Affordability and the Digital Divide* December 2021 report; 7. FCC's 2020 *Broadband Deployment Report*; 8. US Census Bureau data; 9. FCC's 2017 *Improving the Nation's Digital Infrastructure* policy report; 10. ALA/PLA Libraries Lead with Digital Skills initiative

Funding from the Feds

\$65 billion

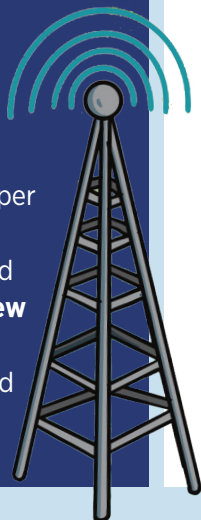
Amount allocated for expanding broadband access and subsidizing monthly internet fees for low-income households within the \$1.2 trillion **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act** (IIJA) signed into law by President Biden on November 15. The funding is estimated to expand access to 50%–75% of the 19 million Americans who lack high-speed internet.

\$2.75 billion

Funding for the **Digital Equity Act**—a provision within IIJA—which includes \$1.25 billion for the **Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program**. Through this program, eligible entities, such as libraries, will receive funds to promote digital inclusion and spur greater adoption of broadband among qualifying individuals.

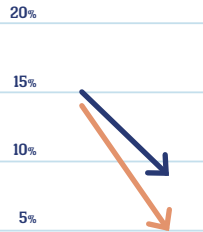
2015

Year the FCC defined broadband as a minimum download speed of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) and a minimum upload speed of 3 Mbps. There's a **new push** to redefine it as 100 Mbps both into and out of the home.



Closing the Gap

BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

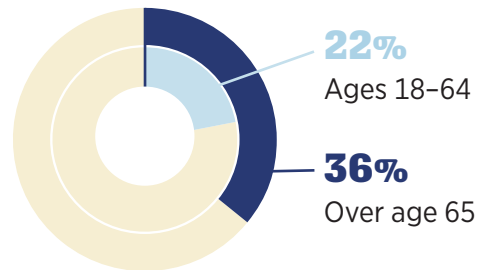


From 2019 to 2021, the percentage of Black and Hispanic adults who are offline has fallen significantly, from **15% to 9% among those who are Black**, and from **14% to 5% among those who are Hispanic**.¹

BY AGE

Percentage of adults with no broadband at home¹

Older adults have lower rates of adoption of high-speed internet and are taking less advantage of the benefits of discounts.



BY INCOME

7 million

Number of households whose annual incomes are \$50,000 or less that have signed up for free or discounted high-speed service plan offers since the pandemic began through programs like the \$3.2 billion federal Emergency Broadband Benefit program. Households with K–12 kids and very low-income households (annual income below \$15,000) are more likely to have signed up for these offers.²

Those who take advantage of free or discounted offers pay **\$27 per month**, on average, for high-speed internet.

\$27

\$62

Those whose income makes them eligible for these programs, but who say the programs are not easy to use, pay an average **monthly bill of \$62**.

Sources: 1. Pew; 2. EveryoneOn's *Affordability and the Digital Divide* December 2021 report