

## 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.

## 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.

## Who's Left Out

# 19 million

households lack access to fixed broadband service at threshold speeds.<sup>1</sup>

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

### BY INCOME

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

**1 in 4**

don't own a smartphone<sup>4</sup>



**4 in 10**

don't have home broadband services<sup>4</sup>



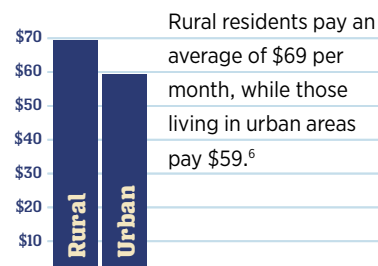
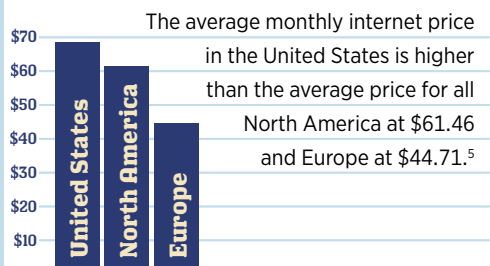
# A Broad Look at BROADBAND

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



## The Impact on Wallets—and Lives

# \$68.38/month

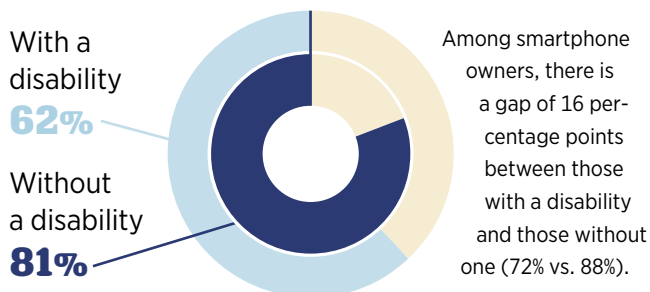


“Quality services should be available at just, reasonable, and affordable rates.”

## Section 254 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996

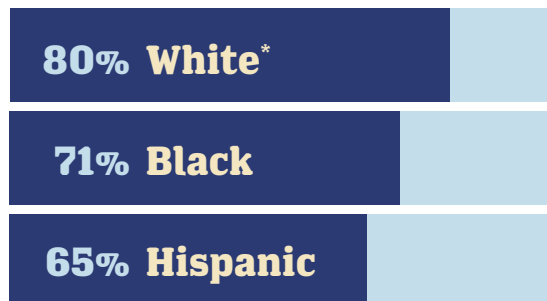
### BY ABILITY

#### Percentage of adults who own a desktop or laptop computer<sup>4</sup>



### BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

#### Percentage of adults who report having a broadband connection at home<sup>4</sup>



\*Non-Hispanic white

### BY POPULATION



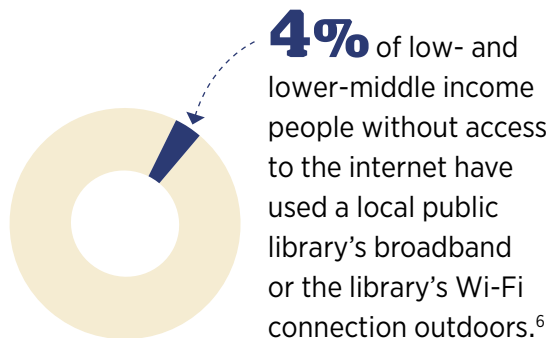
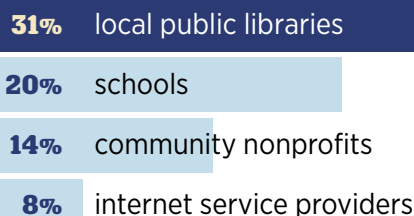
**About 1 in 4** people living in rural and tribal areas continue to lack access to fixed broadband.<sup>7</sup> That means 4.6 million of these households don't have a broadband connection.<sup>8</sup> Part of the reason: Private companies have little financial incentive to install infrastructure in 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.<sup>9</sup>

## Potential Opportunities for Libraries

#### What households with annual incomes of \$50,000 or below trust “a lot”<sup>6</sup>



**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.<sup>10</sup>

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

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