

# **Broadband For All Funding Plan**

## **Closing the Digital Divide...Once and For All**

The Digital Divide is not a new problem, but it has taken on a new urgency during the pandemic. Access to education, to healthcare, to government services, to entrepreneurship, and to society at large have all be fully available to those Californians with broadband, but partially withheld from those without. And the accelerated shift to living online has made those without access and the issues they face even more invisible than before.

The best time to make a serious, concentrated effort to end the inequities caused by the Digital Divide was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.

Those among us who are children or grandparents, your colleagues with disabilities, your friends of all races and ethnicities, speaking all different languages, your neighbors on tribal lands, your fellow Californians in rural areas—these are the ones who have been disproportionately left out of modern life and its opportunities as the Digital Divide has widened.

**Expanding broadband access is the ideal use of one-time funds.** The most appropriate uses of one-time funds are one-time costs for programs that will both improve lives and increase the size of the economic recovery. Using one-time funds to expand broadband access will pay immediate dividends to the people and businesses who directly benefit and subsequent benefits to the government and the state's economy as a whole.

**Expanding broadband quickly and widely is foundational to the state's economic recovery and continued success.** The more households and businesses that are not able to participate in the recovery, the slower and more piecemeal that recovery will be.

**A one-time \$8 billion investment** will allow California to build future-proof broadband infrastructure to unserved premises in the state and provide equipment, training, language access, and other services to those who need them.

- ✓ **\$2.2 billion** to build out California's middle mile network with open access fiber.<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ **\$4.6 billion** for 100/10 Mbps fiber optics to locations without it.<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ **\$1.2 billion** for programs to increase adoption, including devices, digital skills training, and language access.

California, home to Silicon Valley but also to the largest number of unconnected households of any state in the U.S., can once again be a leader in digital access. The benefit of each new connection is not marginal, it is exponential. Imagine the synergies possible if every Californian is connected to education, commerce, healthcare, and each other.

Our goal of universal service is finally within reach. It's time to make a serious effort to close the Digital Divide... once and for all.

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<sup>1</sup> [California State Broadband Cost Model](#) – Dec. 2020