Broadband for All

How California is Working to Close the Digital Divide



One out of five Californians lacks access to affordable, reliable broadband service, devices, and the skills to use them. **Broadband for All** is our state's overarching program to close the digital divide and foster digital equity in our communities.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Gavin Newsom directed the California Broadband Council to develop the Broadband for All Action Plan with the understanding that broadband access, affordability, adoption, and training are essential components of digital equity.

Broadband for All's goals are to ensure that all California residents have access to reliable affordable internet services, devices, and skills and training to access essential services and realize other social and economic benefits. Broadband for All consists of the Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative, Last-Mile grant programs, and coordinated broadband adoption efforts.



Middle-Mile:

The middle-mile is the physical infrastructure required to enable internet connectivity for homes, businesses and community institutions. It is made up of high-capacity fiber lines that carry large amounts of data at high speeds over long distances between local networks and global internet networks.

Last-Mile:

A last-mile connection is the final leg of a network that provides service to the home, business or community institution.

Broadband Adoption:

Broadband adoption is daily access to the Internet at speeds, quality and capacity necessary to accomplish common tasks, with the digital skills necessary to participate online, and on a personal device and secure, convenient network.

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Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI):

The Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI) is California's first step to creating an open-access middle-mile network that will build infrastructure to bring high-speed broadband service to all communities. It is a partnership of entities that facilitates the development of a statewide physical network of infrastructure that will enable unserved and underserved communities have affordable access to the global Internet.

Last-Mile Programs:

The California Public Utilities Commission is administering billions of dollars in last-mile grant programs to help local communities deploy broadband infrastructure to homes that lack reliable broadband access, including by connecting to the state's middle-mile broadband network, and support local broadband adoption efforts. Those include California Advanced Services Fund programs, Tribal and Local Agency Technical Assistance programs, the Federal Funding Account, and Loan Loss Reserve Fund.

Affordable Connectivity Program Mobilization:

The California Broadband Council, and state and local entities are working to increase affordability and adoption of home internet service by promoting low-cost internet plans and enrollment in the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps low-income households pay for internet service and connected devices like a laptop or tablet. These efforts have helped to connect over two million California households to affordable home internet service thus far.

Given the size of the California's population and digital equity needs, the state is working to bring hundreds of millions of federal dollars back to the state through the Digital Equity Act and Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) programs. But first the State must engage with stakeholders across the state to develop a Digital Equity Plan and BEAD Five-Year Action Plan.

State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP):

The Digital Equity Plan must identify digital equity barriers for covered populations and develop strategies and funding to overcome those that algin with key policy priorities for the state. The plan will make sure ALL Californians have the access they need to succeed in the digital age.

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program:

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program is a national program to expand reliable high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs. The California Public Utilities Commission will be implementing California's allotted funds under BEAD in accordance with federal rules through Rulemaking (R.) 23-02-016, and the Commission will submit a 5-Year Action Plan establishing California's broadband goals and priorities and incorporating public input to the federal government in August 2023. Learn more about BEAD at cpuc.ca.gov.

Learn more about the Infrastructure Investment and Job Act (IIJA) Broadband programs at BroadbandForAll.cdt.ca.gov.





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