

Broadband Basics: The Importance of Broadband in a Rural Community



Understanding Broadband, its Importance, and How to Get It: The Importance of Broadband in Small and Rural Communities

Why bring broadband to your community? Broadband represents opportunity through education, entertainment, healthcare services, and critical economic opportunity with access to jobs, employees, customers, and partners. Communities without reliable broadband connections cannot access the benefits of these opportunities and critical services. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reported that as of 2019, 22.3% of rural Americans did not have access to broadband (defined by the FCC as 25 Mbps Download and 3 Mbps upload).

The Digital Divide

Broadband inequality has become known as the “Digital Divide,” and it is a serious concern for millions of Americans. A study published by Stanford University states that this divide “refers to the growing gap between the underprivileged members of society, especially the poor, rural, elderly, and handicapped portion of the population who do not have access to computers or the internet; and the wealthy, middle-class, and young Americans living in urban and suburban areas who have access.” (<https://cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/cs181/projects/digital-divide/start.html>) Barriers to access can be lack of availability, lack of affordable broadband, lack of understanding to safely navigate the internet, and lack of access to a digital device.



Retaining Families, History, & Talent in Small & Rural Communities

- Broadband creates educational and economic opportunities that give people hope, keep them from moving away to look for a better life, prevent “brain drain”, keep families together, and keep the community intact.
- Broadband allows people to receive a better education and specialized training, participate in the gig economy and remote work, and obtain more meaningful work, better compensation, and better benefits without leaving the area.
- Broadband brings a range of services from telemedicine and online healthcare to professional services such as accounting or payroll, online software, and other business support systems.



Attracting New Residents & Investment in Small & Rural Communities

- Broadband allows urban families to relocate and enjoy the benefits of rural life without losing all urban conveniences.
- Broadband entices businesses to establish or expand operations in rural areas to take advantage of the local workforce.
- Broadband allows diversification of the economy with people drawing on local and far away employment.
- Multiple studies have shown that high-speed internet access positively affects home values.



Increasing the Value of Businesses in Small & Rural Communities

- Broadband allows small businesses relying on foot traffic to have access to more customers and provides additional employment opportunities for rural residents.
- Broadband enables the use of online applications and services such as cloud computing, online collaboration, video conferencing, email marketing, and applications services such as accounting, CRM, ERP, office productivity tools, and more.
- Making broadband access available allows the local businesses to expand their potential customer base for goods and services through online sales.



Contact Us

For more information on the benefits of bringing broadband to your community, funding opportunities to cover the investment, and the range of services GrantWorks offers, please contact:

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