



**NARC**

*Building Regional Communities*

*National Association of Regional Councils*

# BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

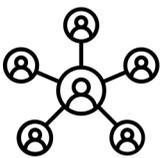
Issued: January 2023



## **Many Americans still lack access to fast and affordable internet.**

Despite significant progress expanding high-speed Internet access in the United States in recent years, further implementation of major reforms are needed before broadband is available to the approximately 19 million Americans who still lack access, according to the FCC's Eighth Broadband Progress Report.

While new technologies should be allowed to flourish, a balanced approach should be taken to ensure that the traditional local regulatory role is preserved, and universal access is promoted.



## **Regional Role in Broadband Accessibility**

As new and evolving technologies emerge, local governments play an important role as regulators, service providers, and consumers of these services. NARC supports the development of these new and emerging technologies where they advance better quality of life through economic development, public and homeland security matters, efficient access to information, transportation, job training, healthcare and social services, and improved local government services. While new technologies should be allowed to flourish, a balanced approach should ensure that the traditional local regulatory role is preserved and universal access is promoted.

# SUPPORT AFFORDABLE BROADBAND INITIATIVES

Congress should support affordable broadband efforts at the regional level in the following ways:



**Provide more funding and technical assistance to regional councils planning and deploying broadband** to support the delivery of telehealth services to rural and low-income residents. Support federal proposals that promote community broadband, encourage public-private partnerships that provide broadband access to underserved areas, and override state preemption that would prohibit local governments from providing community broadband services to their regions.



**Design and support federal proposals to increase high-speed broadband access, adoption, and affordability** in unserved and underserved regions. Create, maintain, and modernize programs aimed at providing broadband access to low-income households through the support of low-cost plans, such as the E-Rate and Lifeline programs.



**Protect local authority over their rights-of-way**, including issues such as preserving neighborhood character and aesthetic; public safety; undergrounding requirements; and fair compensation for private use of public assets. Allow local governments to charge reasonable fees for the use of publicly-owned land to build-out wireless infrastructure. Identify effective, collaborative solutions to providing high-speed Internet to unserved and underserved residents instead of pursuing a one-size-fits-all approach.



**Modernize broadband data collection and protect the privacy and security** of local government data. Simultaneously encourage the sharing of data between all levels of government where there are opportunities to enable data sharing. Support no-cost data sharing between local government and private entities to allow better public decision-making.

For additional information please contact Jessica Routzahn, NARC's program manager at [jessica@narc.org](mailto:jessica@narc.org).



**NARC**

*Building Regional Communities*

*National Association of Regional Councils*