

# White House Announces ConnectALL Initiative to Spur Broadband Deployment and Adoption

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The Administration continues to drive efforts to spur broadband deployment across the country and to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable broadband service. Yesterday afternoon, President Obama announced [ConnectALL](#), an effort aimed at connecting 20 million more Americans to broadband by 2020.

This announcement builds on the successes of ConnectED, the White House effort with the Department of Education and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which brings broadband access to 20 million K-12 classrooms and libraries, and ConnectHome, the White House effort with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which brings 28 communities together to ensure kids living in public housing have reliable access to get online and do their homework. ConnectALL integrates these efforts into a comprehensive approach to making broadband available and accessible to all Americans by:

## **Submitting Formal Recommendations to the FCC Proceeding on Modernizing Lifeline**

Under ConnectALL, the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunication & Information Administration (NTIA) submitted [formal recommendations](#), on the Administration's behalf, to the FCC on modernizing the Universal Service Lifeline program. NTIA recommended that the FCC maintain support for affordable voice service and create a process to periodically assess and calibrate the Lifeline subsidy, noting that \$9.25 may not be adequate to foster the zero-to-low cost options that will encourage the level of adoption required to bridge the digital divide. NTIA also argued that the FCC should further examine costs and benefits before imposing minimum service standards for broadband, stating that Lifeline consumers should have the ability to use their subsidy to purchase the broadband services that meet their needs.

## **Releasing a Study on the Economic Benefits of Broadband**

The Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) released a [new study](#) on the economic importance of broadband. Building on data from the Department of Commerce's 2014 American Community Survey and CEA's prior research, the study highlights the progress made in connecting Americans to broadband while noting a significant digital divide. The study finds while 75% of American households subscribe to an internet connection, under half of households in the bottom income quintile use the Internet at home compared to 95% of households in the top income quintile. The

study also highlights that broadband can improve labor market outcomes, increase economic growth, provide access to better health care and enhance civic participation. Addressing the digital divide will require a focus on affordability through policies that promote competition, access to devices and digital literacy.

### **Increasing Access to Digital Literacy Training and Devices**

The Corporation for National and Community Service and the Institute of Museum and Library Services are launching a Digital Literacy Pilot Project. AmeriCorps VISTA members will support libraries, museums and community organizations located in tribal and rural areas to build capacity and enhance existing digital literacy training.

To increase access to devices, the General Services Administration (GSA) is re-engineering its Computers for Learning Program, which provides surplus federal computer equipment to schools and libraries. GSA will expand Computers for Learning to more organizations providing digital literacy training for low-income Americans.

### **Empowering Communities to Accelerate Broadband Planning**

In yesterday's [blog post](#), I discussed NTIA's Community Connectivity Initiative, designed to help local communities accelerate local broadband planning efforts. The White House announcement highlights those organizations who are partnering with NTIA's BroadbandUSA to help develop and design the Community Connectivity Initiative:

American Library Association; Blandin Foundation; ConnectME Authority; EveryoneOn; ICMA, The International City/County Management Association; National Association of Counties; National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors; National Digital Inclusion Alliance; National League of Cities; New America's Open Technology Institute; Next Century Cities; NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association; Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband Coalition; and US Ignite

Additionally, the initial communities supporting the effort are:

Ammon, ID; Arvada, CO; Baltimore, MD; Bettendorf, IA; Boston, MA; Charlotte, NC; Greenbelt, MD ; Hopewell, VA.; Hot Springs, AK.; Hurst, TX; Kansas City, MO.; Kenmore, WA; Lenexa, KS.; Oak Harbor, WA; Putnam, CT; SeaTac, WA; Red Wing, MN; Sammamish, WA; and Seattle, WA.

This initiative is designed as a public-private partnership. Any private sector entities interested in [participating](#) should plan to attend the half-day workshop on March 22 in Seattle, Washington or alternatively, either of the webinars scheduled for March 24 and April 12.

We expect to see more activity from the Administration on the broadband front in the coming months and will continue to monitor these efforts.