

FCC Broadband Initiatives

The President and Congress gave the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) several jobs to complete in the effort to make broadband or high speed access to the Internet, available to all Americans. This effort is based on the belief that every American needs to have access to broadband to have the doors of economic and social opportunity open to them. The effort required the FCC to:

- Develop a forward-looking national broadband plan to ensure that all Americans have access to broadband capability.
- Contribute to efforts of the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture to award \$7.2 billion in grants, loans, and loan guarantees to hasten roll-out of the facilities needed to provide broadband and educate consumers to use this infrastructure.
- Collect and report far more detailed and comprehensive information on the status of broadband deployment, adoption, and use, including how broadband service in the US compares to broadband service in other countries.

National Broadband Plan

In February 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Congress directed the FCC to develop, by February 17, 2010, a plan that seeks to ensure that people of the United States have access to broadband capability. The FCC sought input on the development of this national broadband plan through a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) that asked questions about all aspects of broadband, including how to: 1) define broadband access and capability; 2) establish benchmarks to measure progress toward achieving deployment to all people living in the United States; 3) make broadband more affordable and useful; and 4) achieve specific policy goals such as consumer welfare, civic participation, public safety, community development, health care delivery, education and job creation and economic growth. View the NOI at https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-09-31A1.pdf.

Broadband Funding

The Act also allocated the \$7.2 billion mentioned above for improving broadband infrastructure and consumer education. More information about applying for broadband grants or loans can be found at www2.ntia.doc.gov.

Rural Broadband Report

In compliance with the requirements of the 2008 Farm Bill, on May 22, 2009, the Acting Chairman of the FCC delivered to Congress a report on a comprehensive rural broadband strategy. The report made several recommendations including: 1) enhancing coordination among and between federal, Tribal, state and community agencies, governments and organizations; 2) coordinating data collection and mapping efforts at the federal, Tribal and state levels; 3) supporting consumer education and training initiatives to stimulate and sustain broadband demand; and 4) identifying important policies and proceedings that support further broadband deployment such as universal service and network openness.

The Rural Broadband Report (https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-291012A1.pdf) was an important building block for the National Broadband Plan.

Broadband Data Improvement Act

In October 2008, Congress enacted the Broadband Data Improvement Act (BDIA) to improve the quantity and quality of data the FCC collects on the deployment and adoption of broadband services. The BDIA requires the FCC to compile a list of geographical areas not served by any provider of advanced telecommunications capability, and, if Census Bureau data is available, determine the population, population density and average per capita income of each unserved area. Additionally, the FCC must undertake a detailed international comparison of US broadband service capability to broadband service capability in 75 communities in at least 25 countries.

Section 706 Annual Report

The FCC must publish reports annually evaluating whether advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion.

Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

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