



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC KICKS-OFF ‘CONNECT AMERICA FUND’ WITH MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT: NEARLY 400,000 UNSERVED AMERICANS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN 37 STATES WILL GAIN ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET WITHIN THREE YEARS

Marks beginning of most significant public-private effort in history to connect 19 million unserved Americans to broadband by 2020

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission today announced that nearly 400,000 residents and small business owners in 37 states will gain access to high-speed Internet within three years, as a result of the first phase of the ‘Connect America Fund.’ About \$115 million of public funding will be coupled with tens of millions more in private investment to quickly expand broadband infrastructure to rural communities in every region of the nation. Many projects will begin immediately, and all projects must be completed within three years.

Nationally, nearly 19 million residents currently lack access to broadband. Without broadband, consumers and small business are cut off from the \$8 trillion global Internet economy, severely limiting opportunities for jobs and economic prosperity. This announcement marks the beginning of the most significant public-private effort in history to ensure that every American has access to broadband by the end of the decade.

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said, “I’m pleased to announce today that nearly 400,000 residents and businesses in rural communities who currently lack access to high-speed Internet will gain access within the next three years. Today’s action is just the beginning of our efforts to unleash the benefits of broadband for millions of homes and small businesses in unserved rural communities across the U.S. In today’s economy, broadband is a vital platform for innovation and opportunity, including jobs, education, and healthcare.”

ABOUT THE ‘CONNECT AMERICA FUND’

The ‘Connect America Fund’ aims to connect 7 million unserved rural Americans to broadband in six years, and puts the nation on a path to connect all 19 million unserved residents by 2020. The FCC launched this unprecedented broadband expansion last year when it reformed and modernized the Universal Service Fund, which connected rural America to the telephone network in the 20th century. The Commission created the ‘Connect America Fund’ to unleash the benefits of broadband for all Americans in the 21st century.

Key reforms allowed Connect America to expand support to both broadband and voice without increasing universal service fees on consumers and businesses. Reforms improve fiscal responsibility and accountability, and target funding more accurately and effectively. Without these reforms, millions of Americans had no path forward to gaining access to the job, education, healthcare, and public safety benefits of high-speed Internet. The FCC's reforms provide a clear path to rural America's broadband future, benefitting Americans no matter where they live.

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