# NEW JERSEY
## POPULATION: 8.87 MILLION
## COUNTIES: 21

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Phil Murphy addressed the disparity for students who did not have devices and Internet connections in their homes, unveiling a $115 million plan to get them connected.

Compared to other states, New Jersey has a high level of wireline connectivity, with nearly all residents having access to a fixed broadband connection at minimum speeds of 25/3 Mbps. At the same time, many residents still do not have a home broadband connection, which has only become more vital to life and prosperity in the last year.

The Commission evaluated 8.9 million people in New Jersey. Overall, it found that 8.7 million people (98.5%) had access to a fixed broadband connection at minimum speeds of 25/3 Mbps. When compared to the 2019 broadband deployment report, the FCC's most recent analysis shows a 0.6% decrease in overall connectivity among New Jersey residents.

In rural areas, the FCC evaluated 454,000 people and concluded that 464,000 (97.8%) had access to a fixed broadband at minimum speeds. This is a 0.1% decrease in connectivity since 2019. In urban areas, the agency found that 8.3 of 8.4 million people (98.6%) had fixed broadband access. Again, this reflects a decrease from the 2019 broadband deployment report, a 0.6% drop in urban connectivity.

In September 2020, New Jersey Future released its Broadband For All Report, which recommends that New Jersey develop a state broadband office and implement a broadband mapping initiative. As part of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's State Broadband Initiative, New Jersey collected data about broadband availability and

proposed taking the map a step further, though the program's funding lapsed in 2015.

In 2018, NJ Spotlight published an interactive map that shows Internet use and computer access from American Community Survey data. The map shows that:

> On average, 89% of New Jersey households had at least one computer — including desktops and laptops, tablets and smartphones — at home during the period. Many had more than one: 82% had a desktop or laptop, 74% had a smartphone and 57% had a tablet. About 355,000 households had none of those.

BroadbandNow's data show that New Jersey is one of the most connected states, with 98.1% terrestrial broadband access and 78.4% access to a wired plan that costs $60 or less a month. At the same time, Microsoft data for New Jersey from November 2019 show that around 2.6 million people, nearly 30% of the state's population, still do not use the Internet at broadband speeds. The 21.6% of residents cannot purchase a plan priced below $60 a month may be one reason for the disparity between access and adoption.

Early in the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Governor Phil Murphy addressed the disparity for students who did not have devices and Internet connections in their homes, unveiling a $115 million plan to get students connected, saying, *"The Department of Education estimates roughly*

*230,000 of our students were put at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers because of a lack of technology or a reliable Internet connectivity."*

Governor Murphy also took action to ensure that affordability was not the reason that people who were connected became disconnected, issuing an executive order that prohibited providers from disconnecting customers due to nonpayment until 30 days after the end of the public health emergency. That order was extended to November 15, 2020, after which time providers will be required to enroll customers with an existing account into a payment plan prior to disconnecting service.

**Additional Resource:**
Broadband for All: The Geography of Digital Equity in New Jersey