

The State of New York recognizes broadband as vital a resource as running water and electricity to New York's communities, citing that it is critical to the future of the state's economy, education, and safety.

# NEW YORK

POPULATION: 19.30 MILLION  
COUNTIES: 62

At first glance, it might not seem that New York has the same connectivity struggles as less densely populated states. In 2016, New York ranked number one in the nation for broadband activity and investment. While higher population density reduces deployment costs and New York is very densely populated, Microsoft's data show that around 9 million people living in New York, almost half of all residents, do not use the Internet at broadband speeds and the Citizens' Committee for Children in New York estimates that 471,839 households do not have any Internet access at all.

The FCC evaluated 19.5 million people statewide and found that 19.2 million (98.7%) had access to a fixed broadband connection at minimum 25/3 Mbps speeds. It concluded that 2.2 of 2.4 million people (94.3%) have fixed access to broadband. The agency also evaluated 17.1 million urban residents and concluded that 17 million (99.3%) had access to a fixed connection at minimum speeds. Notably, in urban areas, connectivity has dropped by 0.6% since the 2019 broadband deployment report was released.

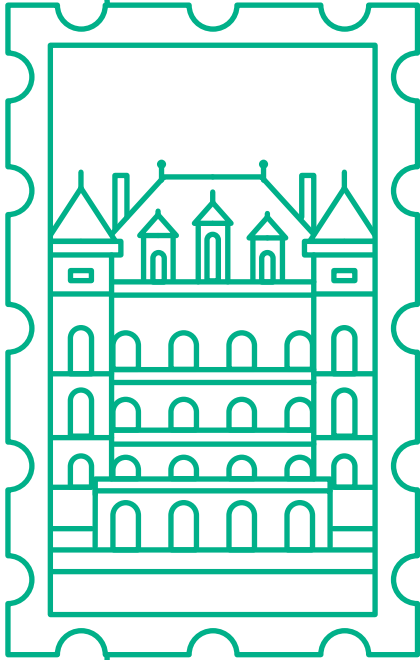
It is widely known that the FCC's data overstates broadband access and does not account for how many residents cannot afford or are not equipped to adopt. Additionally, residents in New York have explained that even when the FCC's data show that they have access, providers are charging thousands of dollars to hire a consultant to chart out pole locations. The cost is \$10,000 for 40 miles (or about \$250 a mile) and consultants generally require a minimum of 40 miles to do the work. Charting pole locations is the first of

many steps to connectivity for people living in rural New York since providers then determine whether it is feasible to connect to the locations.

This means that rural residents who the FCC says have access may actually need to pay thousands of dollars only to either be told that they cannot be connected or to pay full price for the service they ultimately receive. If states or the federal government collected location information from pole owners, they could make that information available and drastically reduce introductory costs for consumers and providers to connect rural areas.

At the local level, leaders are seeking information from residents about broadband access in the state. The Lewis County Legislature and Development Authority of North County are partnering to conduct an Internet use survey. Lewis County's Economic Development Office reaches out to local businesses to talk to them about the survey and help people fill out their surveys via phone or send hard copies of surveys to the people who need them.

At the state level, New York makes maps available to supplement the information available through the FCC. New York participates in the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's National Broadband Map program. New York's Broadband Availability Map uses Form 477 data from December 2016 as a basis. Columbia County Broadband Project makes broadband maps public that show availability in each municipality in the County. The maps rely in part on New York's state data and note that



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availability may have changed since 2016. Armstrong partners with the New NY Broadband Project and Governor Cuomo's Office to expand broadband, and their planning includes [a map of areas pending and under construction](#).

The New York legislature [passed a bill](#) that would expand state broadband information through a study conducted through the New York State Public Service Commission, but the bill [remained unsigned](#) by Governor Cuomo at the end of 2020. Senators from across political lines agreed that improving broadband mapping is imperative to connecting all residents with broadband. Republican Senator George Borrello [said](#):

*Broadband is a critically important issue right now, particularly in rural upstate New York. I'm glad that there is finally something being done to address what has only been considered a fiasco when it comes to the broadband access projects that are being delayed and cancelled across the state.*

Democrats agreed, with bill co-sponsor Senator Tim Kennedy saying:

*With more New Yorkers working from home, and more students learning remotely than ever before, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored what we've known for years: Internet access isn't a luxury - it's a necessity. Unfortunately, broadband equity still doesn't exist. This legislation seeks to remedy that by requiring the PSC to thoroughly examine the gaps in affordability and accessibility that persist, and work alongside the public and services*

*providers to prioritize access and identify sustainable, long-term solutions. It's imperative that this legislation, which has passed both the Senate and Assembly, is signed into law immediately.*

#### Additional Resources:

- [Broadband Survey Maps Upstate New York Broadband Future](#)
- [New York State Broadband Office will not answer WGRZ questions](#)
- [EXCLUSIVE: FCC Commissioner discusses broadband issues in New York State](#)
- [Rural areas in NYS are in need of broadband amid the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [The Affordable Broadband Portal helps New Yorkers find the affordable programs in their area](#)