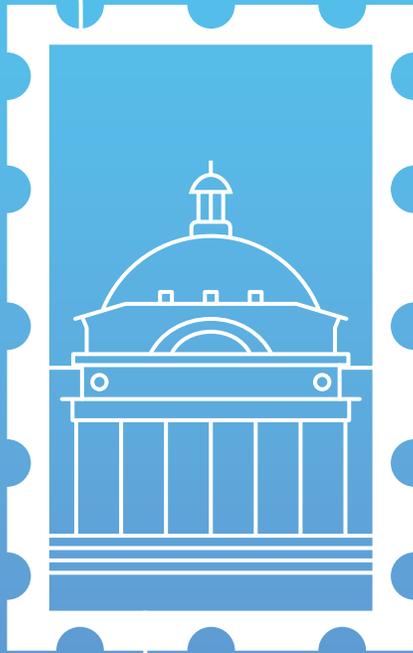


PUERTO RICO

POPULATION: 3.19 MILLION
78 MUNICIPIOS LED BY ELECTED MAYORS



Puerto Rico's first broadband strategic plan set the ambitious goal of making Gigabit speed Internet available to 70% of Puerto Rico households by 2020.

The Commission evaluated 3.2 million Puerto Rico residents and found 99.9% had access to a fixed broadband at minimum 25/3 Mbps speeds. As with many other parts of the U.S., rural Puerto Ricans are less connected than urban residents. Of 207,000 rural residents, the agency concluded that 205,000 people (98.8%) have fixed access to broadband. In urban areas, the FCC evaluated 3 million people and found that all of them had access to a fixed connection at minimum speeds.

In 2015, the Puerto Rico Broadband Task Force, a public-private partnership of broadband stakeholders released its [Gigabit Island Plan](#). The plan was funded through National Telecommunications and Information Administration grants supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and builds on progress made by the Task Force since Puerto Rico's first [Broadband Strategic Plan](#) was published in 2012. The plan set the ambitious goal of making Gigabit speed Internet, generally provided by fiber-to-the-home, available to 70% of Puerto Rico households by 2020.

Continuing and improving broadband mapping in Puerto Rico was among the recommendations included in the plan. [Connect Puerto Rico](#), in conjunction with the Puerto Rico Telecommunications Regulatory Board and Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce, have been working together to expand broadband access and adoption. Connected Nation was contracted by the Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics to work through [Connect PR and provided granular broadband availability maps](#) until 2019, but those maps are no longer available. The last available data are from 2014 and [the latest updates on the progress](#) toward the goals outlined in

the Gigabit Island Plan were made in 2018. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that [68.6% of residents have access](#) to a home computer and that 60.4% have a home broadband subscription.

The lack of available data is only one part of the problem in Puerto Rico. Following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, critical broadband infrastructure was destroyed which [has not been rebuilt](#), leaving many residents without access to the Internet. In one class of 22 students, only just over half have access to home Internet during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The FCC's [Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund](#) provides one opportunity to improve infrastructure on the island. For Stage 2 of the program, the FCC "*allocated more than \$504.7 million over ten years in fixed broadband support.*"

On January 2, 2021, Pedro Pierluisi took office as Governor of Puerto Rico. Among several other goals for his administration, Governor Pierluisi [has discussed the importance of science and technology education and expanding broadband infrastructure](#).

In August, 2020, Tony Delgado, entrepreneur and Disrupt Magazine's Founder, [announced a plan](#) for island-wide free public WiFi inspired by New York's LinkNYC program during a Tedx talk. In Delgado's words, "*WiFi should be a human right.*" He spoke from personal experience about the importance of broadband access in helping Puerto Rican residents seek education, investment, and employment opportunities without leaving home. The challenges that come with not having Internet access are only exacerbated by the pandemic, and Delgado emphasized that "*If you are not able to make money online during this pandemic, you are in serious trouble.*"