



While broadband access is widespread in urban areas, residents reported that their rural networks have insufficient coverage, capacity, and speed for basic health and safety, let alone quality of life.

The urban-rural digital divide in South Dakota has real economic, educational, and quality of life consequences for residents.

Governor Kristi Noem recognizes this problem and has requested that the legislature make [\\$5 million dollars available](#) for rural broadband expansion in 2019 and then again in 2020, which was approved both years and led to a partnership called [Connect South Dakota](#).

Explaining the emphasis for Connect South Dakota, Governor Noem said:

I've heard it said that 65 percent of children in elementary school today will work in jobs that don't even exist yet. These jobs will undoubtedly require access to technology, particularly the Internet. But today, widespread broadband access in South Dakota isn't as widespread as we may think. In fact, about 88,000 South Dakotans lack high-speed Internet access. These people cannot launch an online business or take advanced classes that require extensive uploading or downloading. Producers in these areas may not be able to use cutting-edge technology that requires online components.

The FCC surveyed 885,000 residents and found that 840,000 (95%) had access to fixed broadband connections at minimum 25/3 Mbps speeds. Rural areas continue to lag behind urban parts of the state. The FCC concluded that nearly all urban residents (99.7%) have access to a fixed connection at minimum speeds,

while just under nine out of every ten residents (89.3%) in rural areas have access to a fixed connection at minimum speeds.

At the state level, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission's [broadband maps](#) rely on the FCC's data. At the same time, better maps may be on the way as South Dakota's [2019 State Broadband Plan](#) discusses work between the state and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration on an updated National Broadband Availability Map.

Additional Resource:

[Why the fastest Internet in South Dakota is in a town of 294 people](#)