



## Broadband 101

According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), **broadband**, or high-speed Internet access, allows users to connect to the Internet and Internet-related services at significantly higher speeds than those available through "dial-up" services. Broadband speeds vary significantly depending on the technology and level of service ordered.



### **Below are some helpful definitions to understand when talking about connectivity:**

*Bandwidth:* The amount of data that telecommunications and Internet networks could theoretically transmit at any given time.

*Download Speed:* The speed at which data is being sent from the Internet to your computer.

*Fixed Wireless Broadband Access:* The use of wireless devices/systems to connect two fixed locations, such as offices or homes. The connections occur through the air, rather than through fiber or coax, resulting in a less expensive alternative to a fiber connection.

*High-speed Internet Service:* Internet service of at least 100 megabits per second (Mbps) download and at least 10 Mbps upload.

*Internet Service Provider (ISP):* A company that provides users (individuals, businesses, or organizations) with access (a connection) to the Internet and related services.

*Location:* A geographic area smaller than a census tract.

*Served:* Any location where broadband service is available from a wireline or fixed wireless-based provider at advertised Internet download speeds of at least 100 Mbps.

*Throughput:* The amount of data that is transferred from a source (such as your computer) when accessing the Internet at any given time.

*Underserved:* Any location where the fastest available advertised Internet download speed offered by a wireline or fixed wireless-based provider is between 25 and 99 Mbps.

*Unserved:* Any location where the fastest available advertised Internet download speed offered by a wireline or fixed wireless provider is less than 25 Mbps.

*Upload Speed:* The speed at which your computer is sending data to the Internet.

*Wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity):* A technology that uses radio transmissions to enable electronic devices to connect to a wireless local area network.

## Broadband and Telehealth:

According to healthIT.gov, you need a minimum of 1.5 Mbps bandwidth to transmit audio and video data. As a rural health care organization, you may have difficulty connecting to or obtaining affordable and reliable broadband service, as there are gaps in access in rural communities.

A minimum of 1.5 Mbps for both upload and download speeds is needed to successfully display audio and video data for a telemedicine visit.

Broadband enables telemedicine and the delivery of critical health care services to remote and home-bound patients, results in cost savings, and allows individuals to take control of their health care needs by providing them with access to critical medical information and connection to providers from remote locations.

The full potential of telemedicine cannot be realized without the continued deployment and adoption of advanced broadband networks.

Helpful resources on Telehealth and Broadband:

- <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/telehealth/4/connectivity>

## Options to Support Rural Residents with Limited or Lack of Access to Devices and Services:

### Free Wi-Fi/Internet:

- SLIC Network Solutions has several locations offering free Wi-Fi: <https://www.slic.com/slic-free-wifi>;
- Charter Communications (Spectrum) and Comcast are giving households with K-12 and college students, and those who qualify as low-income, complimentary Wi-Fi for 60 days;
- Families who do not have the service will also receive free installation;
- Both companies are expanding Wi-Fi hotspots to the public within the company's available regions;
- Call **(844) 488-8395** (Charter) or **(855) 846-8376** (Comcast) to enroll;
- Individuals must call the company after 60 days, or they will be automatically billed.

### SafeLink Wireless (Please note that this service requires cell coverage):

- Eligibility requirements must be met, which are set by each state where the service is provided;
- To qualify for Lifeline, subscribers must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or participate in one of the following assistance programs:
  - Medicaid;
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Food Stamps;
  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
  - Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8);
  - Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit.
- Service is limited to one person per household;
- Call **1-800-SafeLink (723-3546)** for enrollment and plan changes support;
- Subscribers can use their own phones:
  - A SafeLink Keep Your Own Smartphone plan requires a compatible or unlocked smartphone. Most GSM smartphones are compatible;
  - Subscribers can get up to 350 minutes and 3GB of data, which includes voice minutes and unlimited texts and voicemail nationwide.

### For more information on broadband and the North Country region:

- [ADK Action's Broadband-for-All project](#)
- [FCC's Getting Broadband Q&A](#)
- [FirstLight's Network Map](#)
- [Development Authority of the North Country Internet Maps](#)
- [Broadband Glossary of Definitions](#)