

Opportunities to improve broadband availability and internet connectivity are coming to Michigan through recent federal climate investments. Even in areas of Michigan that have broadband access, digital equity is limited due to affordability issues. Too many Michiganders need home internet service, which limits their educational and employment opportunities, access to healthcare services, and access to timely information about emergencies and climate disasters.

Fewer people have internet access in Detroit than anywhere else in the country. Nearly 43% of Detroit households and an estimated 70% of Detroit school children lack home internet access.¹ Elsewhere in Michigan, about a third of all households lack internet access due to broadband availability or affordability.²

The Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act, in particular, has created new funding opportunities to improve broadband access and internet connectivity.

Internet Affordability

- The **Affordable Connectivity Program** offered subsidies of up to \$30 per month for Michigan households, and \$75 for households located in Tribal areas, to make internet service more affordable. An estimated 1.6 million households across Michigan were eligible, and as of October 2023, about 80,000 households had enrolled in the program. Unfortunately, funding for this program ended on June 1, 2024 and has yet to be renewed by Congress. Extending funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program could make a significant difference for those households lacking affordable internet services.³

Broadband Availability

- In 2023, Michigan was awarded **nearly \$1.6 billion through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program**. The grant funding is expected to dramatically expand access to affordable high-speed internet to an estimated 230,000 eligible underserved households across the state. Planning for the statewide distribution of these funds is now underway, with anticipated rollout in mid-2025. Funds may be used to provide digital literacy education and training, to support

remote learning and healthcare service access, to offer job training and technology support, and to subsidize internet subscriptions in underserved areas. Genesee County, home to Flint, has formed a Broadband Task Force to take advantage of this opportunity.⁴

- The Peninsula Fiber Network was awarded **\$61 million through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act’s Middle Mile Grant Program** to improve internet connectivity

¹ University of Michigan Urban Laboratory, “Mapping Detroit’s Digital Divide.” See also City of Detroit, “Digital Equity Neighborhood Demographic Data Map,” accessed October 31, 2024.

² Isabel Soisson, “What Michigan Has Gotten Out Of Biden’s Infrastructure Law (So Far),” *The Gander*, April 5, 2023.

³ Isabel Soisson, “What Michigan Has Gotten Out Of Biden’s Infrastructure Law (So Far),” *The Gander*, April 5, 2023; Isabel Soisson, “Two years in, here’s what Biden’s infrastructure law has done for Michigan,” *The Gander*, November 15, 2023; Federal Communications Commission, “FCC Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Has Ended For Now,” accessed October 31, 2024.

⁴ Executive Office of the Governor, “Gov. Whitmer Announces More than 200,000 Michiganders will Gain Access to High-Speed Internet Under Historic Funding from Biden Administration,” June 26, 2023; U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, “Internet for All: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Version 6.0, Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program”; accessed October 31, 2024; Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, “Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program”; accessed October 31, 2024; Ron Fonger “Genesee County task force will push to expand access to high-speed broadband,” *MLive*, June 2, 2023; Genesee County, “NextGenesee Broadband Initiative,” accessed October 31, 2024; Dana Afana, “White House officials discuss ‘Internet for All’ funding to close Detroit digital divide,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 30, 2024; Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, “BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 2 Informational Webinar,” September 13, 2024.



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and affordability in underserved areas of the state. One of the projects to be developed with these funds is an overland fiber route providing access to rural communities located between Port Huron and Flint.⁵

⁵ Executive Office of the Governor, ["Gov. Whitmer Announces Michigan Wins Funding to Build 525 Miles of High-Speed Internet, Lowering Costs for Michiganders," June 16, 2023.](#)

