



National Lieutenant Governors Association

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ROBUST BROADBAND INTERNET AVAILABILITY, ADOPTION, AND USE PROGRAMS

1 **WHEREAS**, in this era of COVID-19 response and recovery, the nation experienced dramatic shifts to
2 and unprecedented use of tele-health, tele-education, e-commerce, and more, and

3 **WHEREAS**, the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) believes that widespread efforts
4 to promote broadband availability, adoption, and use improve the nation's long-term competitiveness in
5 a global market, and help to achieve broader improvements in the quality of American life, and

6 **WHEREAS**, according to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), 99% of Americans in urban
7 areas have access to high-speed fixed service, while not quite 80% of rural Americans have access, and
8 just 76% for residents on tribal landsⁱ, and

9 **WHEREAS**, about 17 million Americans are unable to reap the benefits of the digital ageⁱⁱ, and

10 **WHEREAS**, Americans that do not have broadband at home are disproportionately lower-income
11 households, racial and ethnic minorities, veterans, seniors, rural residents and people with disabilities;
12 86% of all Hispanics do not subscribe to broadband at home, while 82% of African Americans do not;
13 only 70% of Americans with less than a high school diploma subscribe to broadband at home, and the
14 adoption rate for those with annual household incomes less than \$35,000 is only 68%ⁱⁱⁱ, and

15 **WHEREAS**, data from the U.S. Census Bureau and National Telecommunications and Information
16 Administration shows that 60% of non-adopters cite lack of need or interest as the main reason that they
17 do not subscribe to broadband at home; and 19% cite cost of service or equipment as the main reason^{iv},
18 and

19 **WHEREAS**, while a complex mix of lack of digital skills, cost, and inaccessible hardware and software
20 often work together to limit adoption, and

21 **WHEREAS**, there are a number of broadband availability and adoption initiatives, and

22 **WHEREAS**, in 2019, the FCC launched the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund directing up to \$20.4
23 billion to expand broadband in unserved rural areas, representing the biggest single step ever by the FCC
24 toward closing the rural digital divide, and

25 **WHEREAS**, while the federal government has provided important financing for Internet adoption
26 efforts, state and local governments are often in the best position to identify barriers and circumstances
27 unique to their communities, and



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30 **WHEREAS**, a number of public-private partnerships have been designed to close the digital divide in
31 communities across the country, and

32 **WHEREAS**, programs include Comcast's Internet Essentials program, the nation's largest and most
33 comprehensive broadband adoption program for low-income Americans - connecting millions of people
34 to the internet since 2011, and expanding significantly in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and

35 **WHEREAS**, creating the conditions necessary to promote broadband availability and adoption requires
36 multi-stakeholder initiatives from the federal, state and local governments, non-profits and philanthropic
37 organizations and the private industry.

38 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the NLGA recommends that state and territorial
39 governments promote the availability and adoption of broadband through outreach and education, as
40 well as policies directed toward people not connected to the internet for financial, socioeconomic, or
41 digital literacy reasons.

42 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the NLGA calls upon all levels of governments to work cooperatively
43 with the private sector, nonprofits, and academia to develop robust broadband availability, adoption, and
44 use programs.

ADOPTED, this day, the 29th of July, 2020.

Sponsors: Lt. Governor Pamela Evette (R – South Carolina), Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist (D – Michigan), Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long (D – Delaware), Lt. Governor Kate Marshall (D – Nevada), Lt. Governor Randy McNally (R – Tennessee), Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford (R – Maryland)

ⁱ <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov>

ⁱⁱ <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov>

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<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=broadband&lastDisplayedRow=25&table=S2802&tid=ACSST1Y2018.S2802&hidePreview=true>; and

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B28004&lastDisplayedRow=24&table=B28004&tid=ACSST1Y2018.B28004&vintage=2018&hidePreview=true>

^{iv} <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/data/digital-nation-data-explorer>