

# AT&T, Comcast, Verizon lead 20 ISPs in nationwide low-income broadband initiative

Article

**The news:** Nearly two dozen internet providers led by **AT&T, Comcast, and Verizon** have agreed to offer high-speed internet to millions of underserved households as part of

bipartisan infrastructure law, [per](#) The Wall Street Journal.

**How it works:** Senior administration officials said a group of **20 service providers covering 80% of the US population** agreed to either increase internet speeds or cut prices to better serve eligible households.

White House officials [announced](#) Monday that the \$30-per-month subsidy for at least 100 megabits per second is now available to low-income households to access high-speed internet.

- About **11.5 million households have signed up for the monthly subsidy**, according to the Federal Communications Commission, which oversees the subsidies.
- White House officials determined that there are about **48 million eligible households**, which the [administration is attempting to enroll](#) in the program.
- Other nationwide ISPs participating include **Cox Communications, Charter Communications, and Frontier Communications**.

**What's next?** Multiple bipartisan broadband initiatives are [taking shape](#), and while some of them are [contingent on the release of funds](#), constant government pressure and a mix of national ISPs and rural providers can go a long way in improving broadband connectivity in underserved areas.

- [Most of the broadband funds](#) will be awarded to states and territories for fiber-optic-cable projects, but the law also allows **\$14 billion** in subsidies called the **Affordable Connectivity Program** to lower internet costs and improve access to broadband.
- The plan is part of a **\$65 billion** program to build up the country's broadband network through the roughly **\$1 trillion** infrastructure law approved by Congress in 2021.
- The FCC's **Rural Digital Opportunity Fund** is a separate **\$1.2 billion** [initiative](#) aimed at expanding broadband access in 32 states.

**Key benefits:** Affordable broadband could go a long way toward unlocking work and education opportunities for remote and underserved communities.

- More people can now consider remote work, as well as access high-definition streaming services. In context, **45% of full-time employees were working partly or fully remotely in September**, and nine in 10 remote workers wanted to maintain remote work arrangements, [per](#) Gallup.

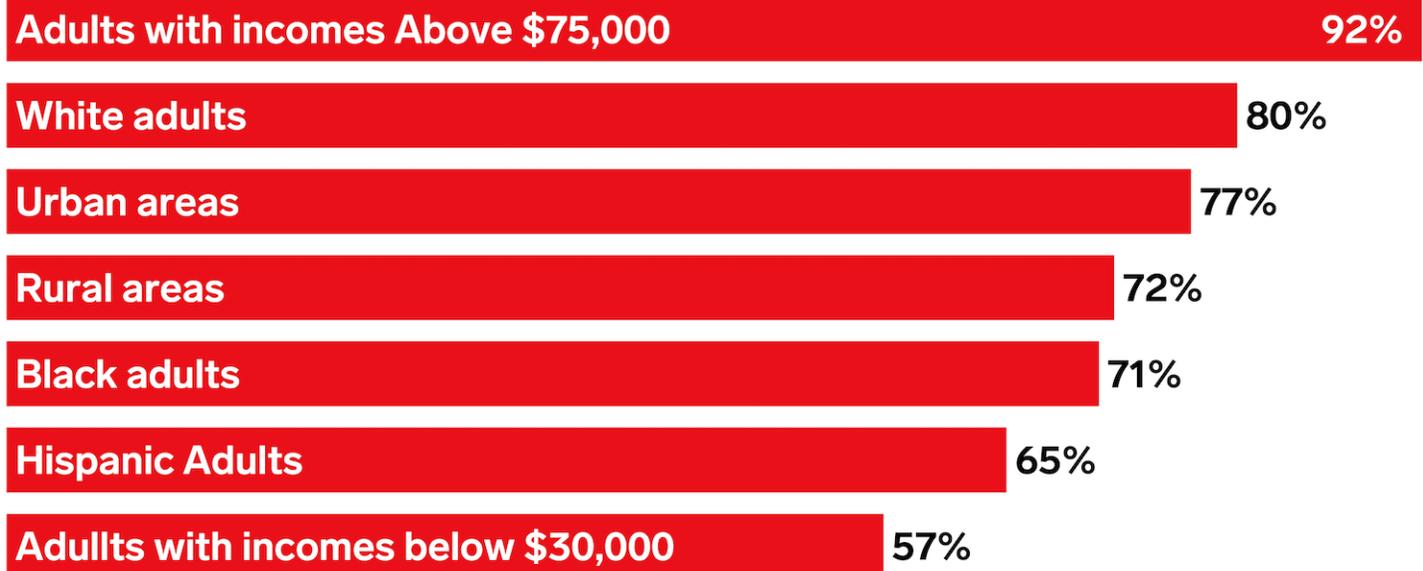
- Broadband connectivity is key for students' learning and also helps in enabling access to healthcare and government services.

**What's the catch?** General component shortages, specifically fiber shortages, could further delay wider broadband adoption, especially in rural areas, but the problem goes beyond those challenges.

- Faster broadband speeds and millions of new households accessing networks could take a toll on existing broadband infrastructure, which is already overburdened with service outages expected to get worse before they get better.
- Existing fiber infrastructure has been around since the beginning of the internet and wasn't installed to sustain the high demand of today's world.

## Income Inequality Drives the Digital Divide

*% of US adults with broadband subscriptions*



Source: Pew, 2021

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