



Since our inception, nonprofits have served as the bridge between government and community – a role that has ultimately defined America. As a reliable and trusted source of information, you are the best messenger to educate your nonprofit network and the communities within your service areas about the role accessible broadband plays in addressing critical needs, developing community solutions, and sustaining countless services that are essential to everyday life.

The Issue

State of Play: The debate on whether internet access is a luxury or an essential component for survival is over. There are extensive and persistent divides between those with broadband accessibility and those without it.

The digital divide is an equity issue that exacerbates disparities nationwide. Systemic investment to increase access to broadband services is needed to ensure vital services are accessible to all in times of increased need. Remote work, distance learning, civic participation, telemedicine, arts and culture programs, religious services, public safety, and countless nonprofit priorities require accessible and reliable internet services.

What Can I Do To Help?

This toolkit is designed to support your advocacy and mobilization efforts. Curated content and resources included are as follows:

- Talking points and context to support the enclosed policy solutions
- An email template with sample language to support outreach efforts to advocates and stakeholders
- A letter template to support advocacy efforts to Congressional lawmakers
- Social media graphics and sample text to support digital advocacy and engagement

Talking Points & Context

Economic Opportunity Requires Equitable Broadband Deployment

Use the following talking points and context to engage policymakers, constituents, and nonprofit advocates:

Broadband Deployment is a Necessity for All, Regardless of Income or Geographic Location

- In 2019, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reported that 21.3 million Americans lack access to broadband availability. It's abundantly clear that there are extensive and persistent divides in this nation between those who can easily access the internet and those who cannot. Digital services are critical to ensure the global pandemic does not further isolate or neglect marginalized communities in most need.
- We support \$100 billion in federal investment to guarantee all citizens access to affordable highspeed broadband, as proposed by H.R. 1783, the Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act.
- We support the buildout of broadband infrastructure that prioritizes the "last mile" hardest-to-serve communities as well as funding for the Emergency Connectivity Fund, closing the homework gap, and enhancing digital literacy.
- Additionally, reinstatement of net neutrality rules could help ensure all individuals and institutions, including nonprofits, have the same level of access to the internet.

Nonprofit Services Require Reliable & Affordable Broadband Infrastructure

While many nonprofits are able to convert to virtual operations, the persistent digital divide prevents them from fully serving their communities.

- Though the systemic fixes needed to permanently close the digital divide may be beyond the scope of the forthcoming legislation, a significant investment to expand access broadband is an attainable and necessary measure that is long overdue.
- During these extraordinary times, the people served by the nonprofit community are increasingly dependent on reliable internet to access a variety of nonprofit and life-sustaining services.

- The digital divide is an inequity that plagues rural and urban communities alike. Congress must act swiftly to ensure that households in all communities can fully participate in civil society.

Nonprofits are Trusted Sources of Information — Our Collective Advocacy is More Important Now than Ever

Research indicates that nonprofit roots and trust within communities provide ample opportunity to increase civic engagement among those who are regularly excluded from the democratic process.

- Our natural engagement assets and unparalleled reach make us particularly well suited to encourage active civic participation.
- As the nation's third largest employer, nonprofits are able to organize 12.3 million employees and mobilize networks of donors, volunteers, and constituents across 1.5 million organizations.

Email & Letter Templates

Expanding Broadband Access Through Civic Infrastructure

Take Action Today

Economic mobility and opportunity begin with connection. It's incumbent upon Congress to prioritize equitable broadband deployment in the forthcoming infrastructure package.

- We ask you to submit a [letter](#) to your members of Congress to urge their support for broadband funding infrastructure as we seek to help underserved communities recover from this unprecedented crisis.
- Encourage your nonprofit network to take action using our [Nonprofit Infrastructure Investment Advocacy Toolkit](#).

Use the following email templates to support your outreach efforts to organizations in your network and policymakers:

Call-to-Action Email to Advocates

Issue Summary: Legislative negotiations for the historic infrastructure package are underway. Nonprofits must act swiftly to ensure that millions of underserved Americans have broadband access to connect to loved ones, essential needs, and countless nonprofit services. Take action today, to ensure the communities you serve can fully participate in civil society.

Subject Line: Act now to ensure that every constituent has access to life-sustaining internet services

Dear {Name},

The debate on whether internet access is a luxury or an essential component for survival is over. The digital divide is an equity issue that exacerbates disparities around educational achievement, civic participation, economic mobility, and countless other nonprofit priorities. Increasing access to internet and digital services is critical to our economic recovery efforts.

In 2019, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reported that 21.3 million Americans lack access to broadband availability. Communities served by the nonprofit sector have become increasingly dependent on reliable internet to access distance learning and workforce requirements, telemedicine needs, job searches, unemployment resources, public health tools, religious assemblies, cultural programs, and more. To ensure that the ongoing pandemic does not further isolate or neglect marginalized communities in most need, Congress should provide \$100 billion in any infrastructure legislation to support broadband deployment and bridge the digital divide.

While the systemic fixes needed to permanently close the digital divide in this nation may be beyond the scope of the forthcoming relief package, a significant investment to expand access to critical, life-sustaining services is an attainable and necessary measure that must be taken to improve the quality of life. Take 60 seconds to send an automated letter to your Member of Congress.

Sincerely,
{Organization}

Thank You:

Thank you {{contact_first_name}} for supporting our efforts to bridge the digital divide by expanding broadband access to our nation's most vulnerable communities. We urge

you to share this information with your personal and professional networks to encourage others to take action today!

Letter to Congress

Dear {{target_appropriate_greeting}},

The digital divide is an issue that exacerbates disparities in rural and urban areas alike. Communities served by nonprofits are increasingly dependent on reliable internet to access a variety of charitable services, including public health information, telemedicine, unemployment resources, education, artistic inspiration, religious services, and more. Broadband access is infrastructure, because opportunity begins with connection. While Congress has provided important emergency funding during the pandemic, further investment is needed to meet ongoing needs and build for a more connected future.

Specifically, I urge you to invest \$100 billion in forthcoming infrastructure legislation to guarantee all citizens access to affordable highspeed broadband, as proposed by H.R. 1783, the Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act. I support at least \$85 billion for the buildout of broadband infrastructure that prioritizes the “last mile” hardest-to-serve communities, \$1 billion for digital skills development, an additional \$6 billion for discounted access through the Emergency Broadband Benefit, and an additional \$2 billion for the Emergency Connectivity Fund to close the homework gap.

In addition to being a critical priority in its own right, this request also aligns with the agenda of the Nonprofit Infrastructure Investment Advocacy Group. This diverse coalition advocates for investments in and through nonprofit organizations that strengthen civic bonds across the country, put people back to work rebuilding our communities, and provide – at a national scale — the critical resources and services nonprofits need to accomplish their missions. I hope you will see more about this coalition’s policy agenda: independentsector.org/infrastructure_agenda

Sincerely,

{{contact_full_name}}

Social Media Graphics & Sample Messaging

Use the following messages and graphics to engage in digital advocacy across your organizational platforms:

Graphic: Infrastructure is broadband access for everyone. Because opportunity starts with connection.

Tweet/Facebook Post: Think about the virtual year of 2020 – how we stayed in touch, did our jobs, received healthcare, accessed services, and educated our kids. Now imagine if you didn't have internet connection. Every person needs access to the internet. That's essential #civicinfrastructure.



Additional digital advocacy resources can be accessed [here](#)