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Connect Americans Now (CAN)



Our lives have grown increasingly digital, yet millions of Americans have been left behind without crucial broadband access. That's where **CAN** comes in to play.

- **Connect Americans Now (CAN)** is a coalition of more than 250 organizations and companies representing voices for agriculture, health care, education, small business, technology, veterans, rural advocacy and more — committed to completely and swiftly eliminating the digital divide in America by supporting a mixed-technology approach that leverages the full potential of every tool in the nation's toolkit.

Our Coalition



The Digital Divide in America

Lack of broadband access is putting communities at risk



Today, **at least 18.3 million** and **as many as 42 million** Americans lack access to broadband internet.

The latest data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) finds 18.3 million Americans lack access to broadband internet. A recent analysis from BroadbandNow finds the true number is close to 42 million Americans.

What's At Stake For Rural America

Improving quality of life and providing more opportunities



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Education

Help eliminate the digital gap in the classrooms and growing divide between rural and suburban schools



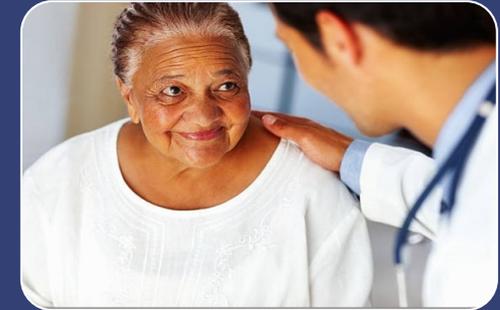
Agriculture

Help farmers compete with use of the latest technology & work more efficiently to yield more crops and products



Small Business/Jobs

Generate higher incomes and lower unemployment rates while expanding customer base for small businesses in Rural America



Healthcare

Offering patients access to variety of medical specialists, telemedicine can greatly increase the overall quality of health care

CAN's Plan to Bridge the Broadband Gap



CAN advocates for solutions in three key areas to bridge the digital divide, including:

- 1. Policies to clear regulatory barriers to innovation** and maximize spectrum resources to increase the pace, scale and cost-effectiveness of rural broadband deployments.
- 2. Improvements to the nation's broadband mapping data** to better measure the scale of the challenge and better direct public and private investments.
- 3. Funding to completely eliminate the digital divide in America**, including by allocating resources for broadband deployments with a technology neutral approach that will most rapidly and most cost-effectively bridge the broadband gap.

Clearing Regulatory Barriers to Innovation

Policies to clear regulatory barriers to innovation and maximize spectrum resources are critical to increasing the pace, scale and cost-effectiveness of broadband deployments.

- There has been commendable progress in this area, particularly at the FCC, where solutions have advanced to clear regulatory burdens to innovation and maximize spectrum resources, including in the 5.9 GHz band, 6 GHz band and others.
- In February 2020, the FCC unanimously voted to adopt recommendations supported by CAN to clear regulatory barriers to TV white space (TVWS) technology — a wireless solution particularly well adapted to broadband deployments in rural areas. The swift adoption of updated rules to clear regulatory barriers to TVWS is essential to increasing the pace, scale and cost-effectiveness of broadband deployments in rural areas.

Clearing Regulatory Barriers to Innovation II

What is TV White Space?



- TV white spaces are unused spectrum in the UHF television bands. This powerful bandwidth in the 700 MHz frequency range enables wireless signals to travel over hills and through buildings and trees. These unique characteristics make the technology **particularly well-suited to areas with low population densities and challenging topographies**, making it critical to an all-of-the-above, mixed-technology approach to expanding rural broadband connectivity.
- An analysis from Boston Consulting Group found that the full realization of the potential of TV white space technology could bring down the cost of bridging the digital divide in America's most rural communities by **80 percent**.

Clearing Regulatory Barriers to Innovation II

Current status on TV White Space

- In 2019, CAN and several rural broadband advocates encouraged the FCC to **adopt a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to clear regulatory barriers surrounding TVWS.**
- In 2020, Chairman Ajit Pai proposed, and the full commission unanimously adopted the NPRM to clear regulatory barriers to TV white space (TVWS) technology.

“TV white spaces can play a critical role in providing broadband services to rural and underserved areas... I saw the promise of this technology in South Boston, a town in rural Virginia, where I met a student who said getting Internet access in his home was a game-changer. The FCC has taken steps to enable the use of white spaces over the years, and this new proposal would further help bridge the digital divide...” — FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, 2/5/20



Fixing Broadband Mapping Data

- CAN has been a strong proponent for more precise broadband maps to accurately measure the full scale of the digital divide and to better direct public and private investments in broadband deployments.
- Current FCC data shows that 18.3 million Americans do not have access to broadband, however recent reports from BroadbandNow show that **42 million** Americans do not have access to broadband internet.
- Progress is being made. Congress overwhelmingly passed and the president signed into law the bipartisan **Broadband DATA Act** in March 2020 to fix the nation's mapping of the digital divide.
- Now, we need Congress to fully fund the implementation of this important legislation.

"Reliable access to broadband is no longer a luxury but a necessity for farmers, ranchers and their rural communities. This legislation will create a more accurate National Broadband Map, which will help ensure resources are targeted to the areas that need it most."

- American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall

"I applaud the President for signing the Broadband DATA Act and thank the leadership of the Senate and House Commerce Committees for their bipartisan work in moving this legislation through Congress. The Act affirms the FCC's approach to collecting more precise and granular broadband data through our new Digital Opportunity Data Collection program."

- Ajit Pai, Chairman of the FCC



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Fixing Broadband Mapping Data II

Why does accurate data matter?

- Without accurate broadband maps, funding will not be allocated to the areas that need connectivity the most.
- FCC data helps determine where public and private-sector dollars go for broadband deployment.
- We cannot solve the problem if we do not have accurate data to measure the problem.
- The Broadband DATA Act is a major step forward in addressing this issue, but **now it must be fully funded.**

“This bill would be an important step for collecting more precise data to improve the FCC’s flawed maps that waste resources and stifle economic development opportunities.”

- Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., the bill’s lead sponsor and chairman of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee

Securing Funding to Bridge the Digital Divide



- Congress must dedicate adequate resources for broadband access and deployments so we can rapidly and cost-effectively eliminate the digital divide.
- This is even more vital in the era of COVID-19, which has exacerbated the many challenges associated with a lack of broadband internet access.

Congress should follow certain guiding principles in allocating resources, including maintaining a technology neutral focus on rapid deployment, targeting particular challenges like remote learning, minimizing cost through a competitive bidding process and reducing regulatory hurdles and market distortions.

CAN and the Coalition in the News

daily dot

"Certainly there's commitment on both sides of the aisle. The challenge is going to be, in an election year, can you bring the two sides together to get something passed? I do have optimism on this, and it's because there really has never been a greater urgency to bridge the digital divide." – Jon Conradi, CAN Outreach Director, 4.2.20

AGRI NEWS

"Now more than ever, rural America needs access to the internet. A panel of farmers, businessmen, educators and other experts spoke up about the topic during a webinar June 9." – AgriNews on CAN's Capitol Hill briefing, 6.24.20

THE ALPENA NEWS

"Congress needs to work to allocate funds to those unserved and underserved areas where the challenge is the most acute to support broadband deployments that are technology neutral, cost-effective, reliable and which can be quickly deployed. Students in our rural communities cannot wait another five years for broadband connectivity. They need it now." – Allen Pratt, Executive Director of the National Rural Education Association, 7.6.20

LA CROSSE
Tribune

"Resources allocated by Congress for broadband deployments must be maximized by going to projects that will deliver the greatest reach in the fastest manner possible — rather than going to one technology or type of provider over another." – Kim Kaukl, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance, 7.5.20

CAN and the Coalition in the News II



"As Congress considers and advances relief packages to address the many-faceted challenges of defeating COVID-19, solutions to boost the pace and scale of investment in broadband deployments must be seen as a critical component of safeguarding the health of the nation." – Richard Cullen, Executive Director of CAN, 4.6.20

TVTechnology

"By supporting innovative solutions, like TV white space, as part of a mixed-technology approach, more of America's farmers and ranchers will be able to capitalize on advancements in precision agriculture that can increase yields and conserve resources; more seniors and veterans will have access to telehealth solutions that can reduce costs and enhance quality of life; more students will be empowered to reach their full potential out from behind the homework gap; and economic opportunity can be increased in thousands of rural communities." – Richard Cullen, 2.28.20

Broadcasting+Cable

"We applaud Chairman Pai and the members of the Commission for taking this important step to unleash the full potential of TV white space technology as a critical tool to help bridge the digital divide." – Richard Cullen, 2.28.20

Multichannel News

"CAN applauds the FCC for making available substantial funding for broadband deployment and supports the FCC distributing this funding in a technology and competitively neutral manner in order to maximize areas that are served at broadband speeds." – Richard Cullen, 1.30.20

Joining Our Coalition

Driving better healthcare access and outcomes



Help to continue making our plan a reality.

We're calling on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Members of Congress to completely eliminate the digital divide.

We've supported commendable strides, but millions of Americans need broadband access now, not in five years.

Your voice is critical to keeping the momentum going and closing the broadband gap.

Five things your organization can do to help.

1. Join our coalition
2. Write a letter to FCC and key congressional leaders
3. Sign an op-ed
4. Help recruit other groups in your industry to join
5. Participate in a CAN event

