



For Immediate Release: 1/5/2022

GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

**GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES NEW \$1 BILLION 'CONNECTALL' INITIATIVE
TO BRING AFFORDABLE BROADBAND TO MILLIONS OF NEW YORKERS**

ConnectALL Initiative to Transform New York's Digital Infrastructure

First-Of-Its-Kind Interactive Broadband Map to Support Consumer Decision-Making and Identify Areas for Investment

New Grant Programs and Partnerships to Expand Broadband Access, Affordability, and Equity Statewide

Removal of State Fees, Outdated Regulations to Support Growth of Broadband in Rural and Underserved Areas

Governor Hochul today announced the \$1 billion ConnectALL initiative - the largest ever investment in New York's 21st century infrastructure - as part of her 2022 State of the State. This plan which will deliver affordable broadband to millions of New Yorkers and transform the state's digital infrastructure through new investments. Under the new ConnectALL initiative, New York State will use over \$1 billion in public and private investments to connect New Yorkers in rural and urban areas statewide to broadband.

"The pandemic exposed how without broadband internet, New Yorkers can be disconnected from school, work, and families," **Governor Hochul said.** "The ConnectALL Initiative will empower local municipalities and state agencies to set up nation-leading broadband infrastructure statewide, ensuring that every New Yorker has access to the internet when they need it."

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed how inaccessible and unreliable a broadband connection was for many New Yorkers, who suddenly were forced to live their lives through the internet. It is essential that all New Yorkers have equitable access to the internet, as marginalized communities are most affected by this lack of broadband access.

Closing this remaining digital divide is critical, because having universal access to high-speed broadband in our digital economy is as essential as having heat, water, and electricity. Connectivity helps New Yorkers go to school, work remotely, find a job, start a business, access healthcare, and communicate with loved ones. Further investment in

this vital public infrastructure will not only strengthen the progress of our State's initial investment, it will boost economic growth and local innovation far into the future.

Driven by a new ConnectALL Office, this initiative includes:

- **Broadband Assessment Program and Interactive Map:** The Broadband Assessment Program, administered by the Public Service Commission, will provide New York with the first ever, in-depth interactive broadband map. This map will detail the availability and reliability of broadband infrastructure statewide, and serve as a useful tool for targeting where investment in broadband connectivity is needed. Consumers will also have the ability to search for broadband providers and review what services are available in their area.
- **Grant Programs:** To support local efforts to expand broadband, the ConnectALL initiative will establish three grant programs to provide funding to local municipalities and other entities to plan, engineer, and construct accessible broadband infrastructure. The State will coordinate with municipalities in every corner of New York to ensure funding is directed where it's most needed and that every community has the support and resources to effectively participate. The grant programs are focused on three primary efforts:
 - **Local Connectivity Planning and 21st Century Municipal Infrastructure:** This program takes a pioneering approach by providing grants to municipalities, non-profits and other entities to construct open and accessible public broadband infrastructure.
 - **Rural Broadband:** This program will provide matching grants — plus hundreds of millions of forthcoming dollars from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) — to support rural broadband access, including last-mile connections and middle-mile projects.
 - **Connectivity Innovation:** This program will provide competitive grants to entities statewide to pilot and construct creative, innovative, and new solutions pioneering future breakthroughs.
- **\$30-a-month Affordability Subsidy:** To further the expansion of affordable broadband, the Department of Public Service will administer efforts to ensure every eligible New Yorker can take advantage of the IIJA's \$14 billion Affordability Program to support a permanent \$30-a-month broadband subsidy for low-income households. The Department will also conduct a statewide marketing program geared toward increasing enrollment in this program — which currently lags below 30 percent of eligible households in New York.
- **Affordable Housing Connectivity Program:** As part of the agency's overall housing plan, New York Homes and Community Renewal will expand the affordability of broadband by working in partnership with Empire State Development to fund the retrofitting all affordable housing projects with broadband installations.

- **Digital Equity Program:** To ensure equitable access to broadband statewide, the ConnectALL initiative will embark on a three-pronged effort:
 - Empire State Development will lead the development of a Statewide Digital Equity Plan in coordination with other State and local government agencies as well as private and not-for-profit organizations;
 - Governor Hochul will establish a Digital Equity Grant Program to support the work of the groups and organizations developing the Statewide Digital Equity Plan; and
 - New York will appoint a Digital Equity Director to coordinate and spearhead these statewide efforts.

- **Removing Fees, Outdated Regulatory Hurdles and Leveraging State Assets.** This includes a set of reforms not limited to:
 - A Build-Free Initiative for Rural Broadband Deployment - Eliminate state use and occupancy fees that hinder rural broadband deployment directing the Department of Transportation to exempt ConnectALL projects, reducing costs for program participants.
 - Streamline Make-Ready Processes: Direct the Department of Public Service (DPS) to streamline the current make-ready process.
 - Standardize Right-of-Way Access for Cellular and Fiber Deployments and Establish Clear Timelines: Establish clear permitting timelines for cellular and fiber deployments on state land and rights-of-way with simple and standardized forms and processes.
 - Leverage Existing State Fiber Assets: Conduct a pilot to leverage existing State fiber assets to support middle-mile broadband.

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