

# Community Broadband Networks



## 1. What is a Community Broadband Network?

The County's community broadband networks will provide internet access using landlines and/or radio links.

## 2. How did the Community Broadband Network project emerge?

On August 31, 2021, the Board of Supervisors unanimously [adopted a motion](#) to assess options for the County of Los Angeles to facilitate residential access to reliable broadband service in low-income communities that lack affordable, high-speed internet service.

On September 30, 2021, Internal Services Department (ISD) [submitted a report](#) outlining options for the Board to consider, including the option to deploy Community Broadband Networks.

On November 16, 2021, the Board unanimously [approved a motion](#) to advance the Community Broadband Networks by instructing ISD to coordinate implementation.

## 3. What is the County's plan to deploy Community Broadband Networks?

The County intends to contract with one or more Managed Service Providers (MSP) to deploy and operate Community Broadband Networks within Los Angeles County as part of a 5-year demonstration pilot. These networks will be deployed through public-private partnerships and offer reliable, high-speed internet services in underserved communities where a high number of households lack internet due to affordability, limited access, and/or low adoption. The networks will also leverage assets owned by the County, City of Los Angeles, school districts, and other partner municipalities and agencies for the effective placement of equipment.

## 4. How will the County select MSPs?

On March 21, 2022, the County released a Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) to develop a shortlist of network providers who are qualified to deploy and operate a community broadband network. MSPs will be evaluated in three categories:

1. *Experience.* To what extent has the company successfully provided similar services?
2. *Technical Approach.* Is the company's proposed technical approach viable? Will it meet the County's minimum performance standards?
3. *Financial Capacity.* Is the company's proposal cost effective and financially sustainable?

Once the shortlist is established, the County will release competitive solicitations (work orders) for designated neighborhoods and invite shortlisted companies to bid on deployment. Creating a shortlist allows the County to:

- Quickly expand to new neighborhoods
- Obtain more accurate bids from potential MSPs
- Let multiple MSPs to compete for contracts

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## 5. Why is the County choosing to invest in Community Broadband Networks?

While there is no single solution to the digital divide, Community Broadband Networks will quickly give residents the reliable, high-speed internet access they need while supporting innovation to improve affordability.

The County is seeking to balance the need to provide immediate connectivity to families, while also ensuring that federal dollars make lasting improvements to our broadband infrastructure.

Subsidizing existing ISPs connects people quickly, but when money for subsidies runs out, residents aren't left with lasting improvements or new service options.

Depending on the technical solution, the County hopes to deploy the community broadband networks in months rather than years, while also building lasting assets for the County.

## 6. Why is the County proposing to build Community Broadband Networks when there are commercial services?

The County's mission is to establish superior services through inter-Departmental and cross-sector collaboration that measurably improves the quality of life for the people and communities of Los Angeles County. In advancing this mission, the County is committed to improving the quality of life for residents impacted by the digital divide. A computer and reliable internet service are essential to accessing education, employment opportunities, healthcare services, financial resources, support networks, and commerce.

The County acknowledges that commercial entities offer internet services and have done so for many years. Still, more than 365,000 households lack internet service within Los Angeles County. Most of these households are located in underserved and low-income communities, and the subscription rates for quality internet service are too costly for thousands of residents. The Community Broadband Network program is an initiative to accelerate digital equity and seeks partnerships with public and private sector entities to ensure the delivery of affordable and reliable high-speed internet service to households in need.



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## 7. Which neighborhoods will receive Community Broadband Networks?

The County is considering several factors to determine which neighborhoods are best suited for a Community Broadband Network. These factors include, but are not limited to:

1. *Level of Internet Adoption.* Neighborhoods with among the lowest levels of internet adoption, including households that do not have a home internet subscription or are only connected through mobile devices.
2. *Availability of Public Assets.* County assets like buildings and street poles are essential to facilitating the deployment of a Community Broadband Network; thus, the County will consider neighborhoods where critical assets are readily available.
3. *Equity and Inclusion.* Neighborhoods that align with the objectives of the County's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative.

The RFSQ proposes seven demonstration neighborhoods that meet this criteria—Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles, Pico-Union, Panorama City, South LA, Sun Valley-North Hollywood, and Watts-Willowbrook.

The networks are not limited to these neighborhoods and new neighborhoods can be proposed at the County's discretion.

## 8. When will MSPs be selected?

The County is planning to establish the initial shortlist of qualified MSPs by late summer 2022.

## 9. When will construction begin?

Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors, the County expects to award contracts to MSPs and begin construction in late 2022.

Not all neighborhoods will begin construction at the same time as the County will work to prepare work orders tailored to the specific requirements of each neighborhood. The County anticipates construction to continue throughout 2023.

## 10. When will residents be able to subscribe to the network?

The County expects the first households to be connected by the end of 2022. However, selected MSPs will continue to deploy their networks throughout 2023. Local residents will be provided with additional information and assistance through a series of public awareness campaigns and events.

## 11. Who will be eligible for service?

At a minimum, residents who are eligible for federal subsidies through the Affordability Connectivity Program will be eligible for service. It is possible that other residents and/or businesses who reside in the selected neighborhoods may also be eligible for service.

## 12. Who can I contact for more information?

All email inquiries can be directed to [CommunityBroadband@isd.lacounty.gov](mailto:CommunityBroadband@isd.lacounty.gov)

