

# Broadband Infrastructure

Smart, connected solutions should be an integral part of every mile of American infrastructure constructed or reconstructed in the coming years.

United States broadband providers invested approximately \$76.3 billion in network infrastructure in 2017, and USTelecom members are among the country's top infrastructure investors. In order to fully close the digital divide, however, a targeted government funding mechanism is necessary to bring modern networks to unserved, high cost communities.

## BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE LEGISLATION

Congress should develop and pass an infrastructure bill that narrows the digital divide, supports broadband deployment, modernizes networks, and gets more Americans connected to the internet. USTelecom recommends:

- **ICT DIRECT SPENDING** ▶ There is a demonstrable need for broadband investment in parts of our country where there is no business case to deploy next-generation networks. Any increase in direct spending should be administered by the FCC, via an increase in the USF high cost fund or through a direct appropriation from Congress.
- **PROHIBIT OVERBUILDING** ▶ Funding should be targeted to truly unserved areas and not for duplicative networks to overbuild another provider's existing broadband infrastructure.
- **SERVICE STANDARDS** ▶ The cost of delivering resilient and reliable broadband connections varies depending on the geography and population density of a given area. Any infrastructure bill must establish reasonable and realistic service parameters with respect to speed, latency, and cost and allocate funding accordingly.
- **PERMITTING REFORM IN CONJUNCTION WITH NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGIES** ▶ A coordinated federal government effort to standardize and streamline permitting for fiber deployment would increase the speed and reach of broadband infrastructure, from wired broadband to wireless backhaul and tower connectivity.
- **POLE ATTACHMENT REFORM** ▶ Give the FCC authority over municipal and co-op utilities for pole attachments as those industries roll out broadband services to their customers and limit state and local governments from restricting access to poles and rights of way.
- **COST RECOVERY FOR RELOCATION** ▶ The cost of relocating telecommunications facilities during municipal road moves generally falls to the service providers, with little or no opportunity to recover those costs. Every dollar of capital spent to relocate facilities is one less dollar spent on deploying broadband or upgrading broadband speeds. Any infrastructure package should allow providers to recover all or a portion of the costs related to road moves. These costs should be part of the municipalities' road move project budget.