

# Broadband Internet Access & Public Health

## We Believe in a Healthy Louisiana

In 2020, Ochsner Health unveiled Healthy State, a bold plan to partner with local and state leaders and organizations to realize a more equitable and healthier Louisiana. By engaging with healthcare, education and policy organizations from every sector and corner of the state, we are working together to tackle the leading causes of poor health and to create profound impact for Louisiana residents. Find out more at [LiveHealthyState.org](https://LiveHealthyState.org).

## About the Healthy State Broadband Internet Focus

Healthy State's focus on internet access aims to increase the percentage of households with a broadband internet subscription and a computer, smartphone or tablet. High-speed internet is an important resource for work, education and efficient communication. Moreover, having high-speed internet is vital for receiving healthcare via telehealth.

An estimated 19 million Americans lack access to reliable broadband internet. Over half of U.S. counties (57%) experience speeds below the federally defined broadband standard (25 Mbps down/3 Mbps up), but in rural counties this percentage jumps to 65%. Low-income neighborhoods in urban areas have been systematically excluded from broadband service in "digital redlining." Barriers to high-speed internet access include cost and deficient infrastructure.

Among older populations, **broadband access can foster social connectedness, reducing the burden of social isolation, strengthening community support and decreasing loneliness.**

Source: Broadband Access in Louisiana | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

## What Are the Impacts of Lack of Access to Broadband Internet?

- ✓ Lack of access to high-speed internet can restrict access to:
  - Basic government services
  - Educational opportunities
  - Economic opportunities
  - Accessible healthcare through telemedicine
  - Avenues for social connectedness
- ✓ Access to reliable, high-speed broadband internet improves access to education, employment and healthcare opportunities and is associated with increased economic development.

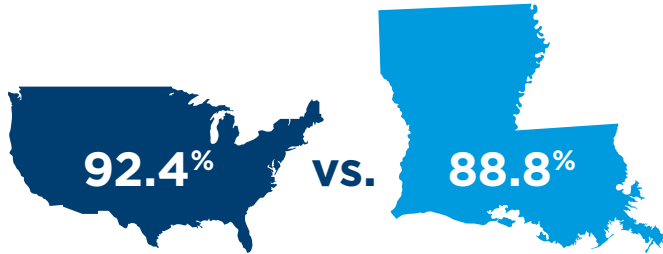


**57% of U.S. counties experience speeds below federally defined broadband standards (25 Mbps down/3 Mbps up).**

Source: Broadband Access in Louisiana | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

## Louisiana Internet Rate: 88.8%

Percentage of households with a broadband internet subscription and a computer, smartphone or tablet.



Source: AHR; Explore Multiple Chronic Conditions in Louisiana | 2022 Annual Report, America's Health Rankings

## Impacted Groups

- ✓ Rural communities and racial and ethnic minority populations are particularly affected by restriction of education and telehealth services caused by lack of high-speed internet access.
- ✓ The percentage of households with high-speed internet is lower among:
  - Female more than males
  - People with less than a college education
  - Rural residents more than urban since 2014
  - Those who make less than \$20,000/year
  - Hispanics
  - Older adults

## Existing Programs

- ✓ FCC Affordable Connectivity Program
- ✓ Access from AT&T
- ✓ Cox Communications Connect2Compete Program
- ✓ ConnectLA, which aims to eliminate the digital divide in Louisiana by addressing issues around access, affordability and digital literacy

## Annual Impact by 2030: 109,000 Homes

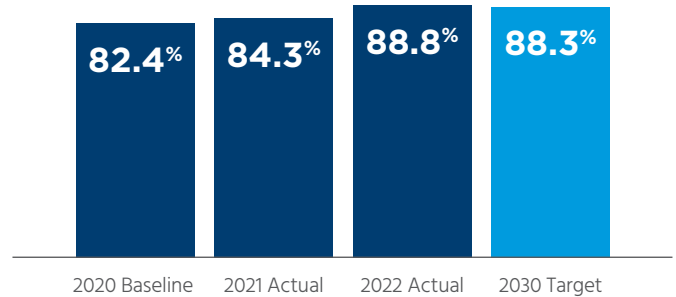
The Healthy State target is to increase the proportion of adults/families with broadband internet access. To reach the U.S. value (92.4%), an estimated 109,000 more Louisiana homes need access to high-speed internet.



## Success Measures

**Goal:** 86,000 more homes with high-speed internet

- ✓ Increase the proportion of adults/families with broadband internet access.



## Questions?

Email [healthystate@ochsner.org](mailto:healthystate@ochsner.org)

