

Access to reliable high-speed internet has become an essential part of commercial activity and daily life. Since 2019, Illinois and the federal government passed infrastructure programs with funding to expand broadband internet access.

There is a “digital divide” between those with and without access to broadband internet in Illinois.

- Only 83% of Illinois residents have broadband internet access—82% in the City of Chicago, 88% in the Chicago suburbs, and 76% Downstate.
- 82% of working-age residents with broadband internet access are employed compared to just 77% of their counterparts without access, a difference of 5%.
- Workers with broadband internet access earn about \$60,000 in annual incomes, which is 45% more than the \$41,400 earned by their counterparts without access.

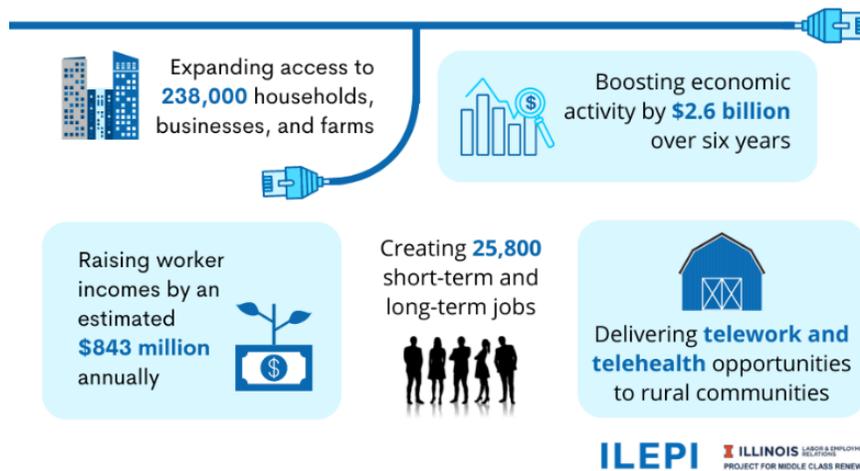
The expansion of broadband internet access from Rebuild Illinois and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will grow the Illinois economy and save or create 25,800 total jobs.

- The bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital program includes \$400 million to expand broadband access.
- The bipartisan federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes a minimum of \$100 million for broadband projects in Illinois.
- The investments will expand access to 238,000 households and businesses, raise worker incomes by \$843 million annually, and improve health outcomes by delivering telehealth opportunities to rural communities.
- During the construction phase, the investments are projected to create 14,400 jobs, including 5,600 direct jobs for workers earning prevailing wages, and boost economic activity by \$2.6 billion.
- After construction, the long-run impact of the expansion is expected to be a gain of 11,400 jobs annually.
- However, despite historic levels of investment, 13% of Illinois residents may still be without access to broadband internet unless additional action is taken.



Expanding High-Speed Internet Will Grow Illinois' Economy

The state's Rebuild Illinois capital program and the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will invest hundreds of millions of dollars in broadband internet access.



Historic public investments in broadband internet access will increase labor income, create jobs, promote business activity, generate tax revenues, and address rural and racial divides in communities across Illinois.

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The Economic, Fiscal, and Social Effects of Public Investments in Broadband Internet Access in Illinois



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Focus Area
Economic Development