

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Biden-Harris Administration Awards \$2.9 Million to Louisiana in First of 'Internet for All' Planning Grants**

*Louisiana Will Receive Nearly \$3 Million in Funding for Internet Infrastructure Deployment and Digital Equity Programs*

**WASHINGTON** – The Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced that Louisiana is the first state to receive planning grants for deploying high-speed Internet networks and developing digital skills training programs under the Biden-Harris Administration’s Internet for All initiative. Louisiana is receiving \$2,941,542.28 in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, signed by President Biden, plan for the deployment and adoption of affordable, equitable, and reliable high-speed Internet throughout the state.

Andy Berke, U.S. Special Representative for Broadband, announced the grants at Louisiana’s inaugural broadband summit alongside Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards. This announcement follows a visit from Vice President Kamala Harris and Deputy Secretary of Commerce Don Graves earlier this year to hear directly from Louisianans about the struggles they face due to the stark digital divide and lack of access to fast, affordable, and reliable broadband.

“The Internet for All initiative is on track and on schedule,” said **Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo**. “Over the coming weeks, every state and territory will have funding in hand as they begin to build grant-making capacity, assess their unique needs, and engage with diverse stakeholders to make sure that no one is left behind. My thanks go to Governor Edwards and his team; Louisiana was among the first to sign onto Internet for All and to apply for funding, and I know they’re ready to get to work for the people of Louisiana.”

“Today’s announcement is just the start of around a billion dollars we can expect from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill to increase broadband access in Louisiana. This will transform our children’s lives and grow our economy,” said **Dr. Bill Cassidy, U.S. Senator for Louisiana**. “A student needs internet access at home to study online, the parents to telecommute, a business to reach its customers, and our state to attract new investment.”

“In 2019, we set a goal to close Louisiana’s digital divide by 2029, and this announcement is another step in the right direction. I am so grateful for the progress we are making thanks to help from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration,” said **Governor John Bel Edwards of Louisiana**. “Some of us take access to broadband for granted, but there are still many people who do not have a reliable or affordable connection, especially in the rural parts of our state. If we can connect those communities, we will improve health outcomes, grow our economy, increase access to educational opportunities, and enhance quality of life for so many people.”

All fifty U.S. states and six territories applied for planning grant funding for the Internet for All initiative's Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program and the Digital Equity Act program. Grant awards for all 56 eligible entities will be announced on a rolling basis.

### **About Louisiana's Planning Grants**

#### *Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program*

The BEAD Program provides \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed Internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs.

Louisiana will receive \$2 million to fund:

- Identification of unserved and underserved locations;
- Outreach to diverse stakeholders across all entities and geographies within the state;
- Training for employees of the broadband program;
- Asset mapping across the Eligible Entity to catalogue broadband adoption, affordability, equity, access and deployment activities;
- Surveys of unserved, underserved, and underrepresented communities to better understand barriers to adoption;
- Efforts to support local coordination including capacity building at the local and regional levels.

#### *Digital Equity*

The Digital Equity Act provides \$2.75 billion to establish three grant programs to ensure that all people and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of our digital economy. The first part of NTIA's execution of the Digital Equity Act is to fund digital equity planning efforts.

Louisiana will receive \$941,542.28 to fund:

- Development of a Statewide Digital Equity Plan;
- Hiring of a Digital Equity/Inclusion Specialist who will create and execute the state digital equity strategy;
- Partnerships with a consortium of our higher education institutions;
- Engagements with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance to provide direct advice and best practices.

### **Internet for All**

President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes a historic \$65 billion investment to expand high-speed Internet in communities across the U.S. NTIA recently launched a series of new high-speed Internet grant programs funded by the law that will build high-speed Internet infrastructure across the country, create more low-cost high-speed Internet service options, and address the digital equity and inclusion needs in our communities.

For more information on the Biden-Harris Administration's high-speed Internet programs as well as quotes from the awardees, please visit [InternetforAll.gov](https://www.internetforall.gov).

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