

State Broadband Projects and Initiatives

A summary of various initiatives states are pursuing to expand broadband access.

BY: [Mike Maciag](#) | March 30, 2012

States have formed partnerships with telecoms and set ambitious goals in recent years to expand broadband availability. Here's a summary of various initiatives throughout the country:

Arkansas

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is utilizing a \$102 million stimulus grant to upgrade networks connecting hospitals, colleges, libraries and other public institutions. [The effort](#), expected to reach most areas of the state, is scheduled to be completed by August 2012. Arkansas' available Web speeds rank among the slowest nationwide.

Hawaii

Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie [launched](#) an economic initiative last fall pledging connection speeds of 1 gigabit per second statewide by 2018. The Hawaii Broadband Initiative also aims to boost use of high-speed Internet for economic development and establish regulatory and permitting guidelines to encourage investment. Earlier in the year, Abercrombie signed a bill that exempts broadband infrastructure improvements from permitting requirements for five years and relaxes a mandate requiring telecoms to upgrade or replace existing utility poles.

Indiana

Indiana is boosting its' high-speed network linking Indiana University and Purdue University to a national research network in Chicago. When completed in April, researchers will access 100 Gbps speeds to share information. Other institutions throughout the state will also share connections on the Indiana GigaPoP network.

"Clearly every school sees this as an economic driver," said David Jent, associate vice president for networks at IU.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts began constructing a 1,000-mile fiber network spanning the western and north central region of the state last summer, an effort [hailed as one of the nation's largest broadband expansion developments](#). Completion is scheduled for mid-2013 for the project, supported by federal grants totaling more than \$80 million and additional state funds. Internet providers will lease space on the network and are expected to expand service to unserved areas.

Missouri

To expand broadband access throughout the state, Missouri established public-private partnerships with telecoms serving rural areas. Gov. Jay Nixon announced the initiative in 2009, pledging to deliver broadband to 95 percent of residents by the end of 2014.

In all, \$311 million in stimulus grants, state money and private investment will fund various projects. As part of the initiative, representatives from governments, schools, public safety and other areas have formed regional commissions to develop plans for each community.

New York

New York would allocate \$25 million to extend broadband access to unserved areas of the state under a new plan proposed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The proposal calls for lawmakers to shift money from the state's economic development fund and approve partnerships with telecoms to expand coverage. Many areas of upstate New York and the Adirondacks have limited or no Internet access.

Ohio

Ohio Gov. John Kasich recently announced plans to spend \$8.1 million revamping the state's existing fiber optic network, connecting schools, governments and other participating institutions. The plan calls for a ten-fold increase in download speeds, expanding the network's capacity to 100 Gbps. This first phase of the plan, linking Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo, is slated to be completed by June.

John Conley, Chief Technology Officer for the Ohio Board of Regents, told *Governing* that companies can also tap into the state's central network hub for product testing.

Vermont

Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin set a goal of providing broadband access to all residents by 2013. Accordingly, the state legislature worked last year to establish policies and programs facilitating cellular, smart grid and broadband growth.

In January, Connect VT Chief Karen Marshall [told](#) a state Senate committee broadband had been deployed to 95 percent of the state. Better wireless technology will further help the state meet its goals, she said.

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