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## **Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce Releases Milestone Strategic Plan**

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### ***Connected Nation Drives Historic Effort to Boost Broadband Access, Adoption, and Use***

#### [Read the Plan](#)

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce (PRBT), working with non-profit Connect Puerto Rico, a subsidiary of Connected Nation, today unveiled a groundbreaking strategic plan aimed to assess the digital divide across the island and formulate a series of recommendations to close it.



The goal of the Puerto Rico Broadband Strategic Plan is to achieve a twenty-first century technology infrastructure and broadband adoption in Puerto Rico while strengthening the economy, increasing access to healthcare, and boosting technology in the classroom. As the Plan notes:

There is no reason why every municipality in Puerto Rico cannot be “as connected” to the Internet as any city in the Western Hemisphere. Puerto Rico businesses can overcome the distance barrier by interacting with their customers worldwide via broadband-enabled applications such as video conferencing. Students in Puerto Rico’s schools and universities can have the same access to distance learning opportunities as those on the U.S. mainland. Through telemedicine, patients in Puerto Rico can receive better quality of healthcare and access to doctors worldwide.

All of this is possible.

To achieve this vision, the Plan sets 25 strategic goals for the access, adoption, and use of broadband technology in Puerto Rico. The Plan also recommends 40 specific policy strategies aimed at achieving those goals.

“The Plan is an important guidepost for increasing broadband access, adoption, and use across Puerto Rico,” said Connected Nation COO and President Tom Ferree. “We congratulate the Taskforce on this milestone and being at the forefront of proactively planning for the economic, health, education, and quality of life benefits of broadband access. The report should serve as a model for any state or jurisdiction seeking to develop a plan and strategies to close broadband adoption gaps.”

"With this strategic plan, we will put Puerto Rico on the information technology train of the 21st Century. We seek to end access, adoption and use gap of broadband Internet that currently limits the island's economic growth and competitiveness. While on the island we have a 86% availability of broadband internet, only 31% of households adopt this service. Across the Island, only 55% of households have a computer and of these, only 31% subscribe to broadband Internet. Our goal is to ensure that all Puerto Ricans access to this service today, which is fast becoming an essential tool for growth," said the Governor, Hon. Luis G. Fortuño Bursset.

"The importance of broadband Internet is incalculable. Just imagine the things we can do without the limitations we have today. With better broadband service we can make our children learn at the same speed as the world's most advanced schools. We can bring health services to every corner of Puerto Rico, even from the comfort of your home; we can improve communications between a mother living in the mountain region, with her son or daughter out of Puerto Rico. We can expand Puerto Rican businesses' markets not just in other U.S. states, but also to Europe, Asia and Africa. We can reduce the response time of police and medical services, improving the safety of everybody," said the Governor.

“Expanding broadband access and adoption across Puerto Rico is essential to ensure our economic sustainability and competitiveness,” said Chief Information Officer of Puerto Rico Juan Eugenio Rodriguez de Hostos. “Puerto Rico’s work force is highly educated and bilingual and is well positioned to be a key outsourcing center of high-tech jobs and services. For this to happen, however, it is imperative that we upgrade our infrastructure and ensure that all businesses and citizens have access to and use fast, ubiquitous high-speed Internet.”

The PRBT was formed in 2011 with two key objectives: to determine the size and scope of the digital divide in Puerto Rico and identify strategies to close it. The PRBT is a non-governmental, public private partnership conceived by the Chief Information Officer of

Puerto Rico, the President of the Telecommunications Regulatory Board, and the Internet Society of Puerto Rico.

At 31 percent, broadband adoption across Puerto Rico is less than half of the estimated broadband adoption rate across the U.S. Through efforts like those championed by Connect Puerto Rico and the PRBT, progress is being made. Puerto Rico made a significant gain, and is now second in the region, going from a 43rd to 36th ranking on The Global Information Technology Report 2012 Network Readiness Index (NRI).

The Global Information Technology Report 2012 is a World Economic Forum project to explore the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) on productivity and development. The NRI is a benchmark used by the Forum to quantify economies across the world, based on their use of ICT to achieve a competitive advantage.

The Puerto Rico Broadband Strategic Plan is only the start of the process of reform and change. As the Plan notes, “this process will not happen overnight and will require waves of reform, coordination, and adjustment across multiple agencies and functions of government, and the private sector. As such, this Broadband Strategic Plan – the first one of its kind for Puerto Rico – should be understood as the beginning of a dialogue and action plan, not the end.”

“The Broadband Strategic Plan will be an important catalyst for social change in Puerto Rico, and we are tremendously proud of Connected Nation’s role in the process and our partnership with the OCIO and the Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce,” Ferree said. “We stand ready to help other states develop similar comprehensive plans for the benefit of all their residents.”

Connect Puerto Rico has supported the Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce in the preparation of this Strategic Plan by providing research and analysis consulting services. Connect Puerto Rico is a subsidiary of Connected Nation, Inc., a non-profit corporation working with the Office of the Chief Information Officer of Puerto Rico to conduct comprehensive research and analysis of the broadband landscape in Puerto Rico as part of the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) federal grant program managed by the Department of Commerce under the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

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**About Connected Nation:** Connected Nation is a leading technology organization committed to bringing affordable high-speed Internet and broadband-enabled resources to all Americans. Connected Nation effectively raises the awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions of influencers and enablers for improving technology access, adoption, and use. Connected Nation works with

consumers, community leaders, states, technology providers and foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to develop and implement technology expansion programs with core competencies centered on a mission to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked.

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