



Connect Puerto Rico Applauds FCC Decision to Deliver High-Speed Internet Access to 41,000 Underserved Households

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Connect Puerto Rico broadband maps help inform funding decision resulting in Puerto Rico being among the first to receive approval

San Juan, PR – Today, the Federal Communications Commission approved \$32 million of Connect America Funding to connect underserved homes and businesses in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. The majority of these funds, \$31.6 million, have been granted to Puerto Rico Telephone Company and are expected to bring broadband to 40,736 homes and businesses across Puerto Rico. The funds are expected to impact an estimated 1,317 homes and business in Hawaii, and 316 in Alaska.

“We are pleased that nearly 41,000 households will soon have access to high-speed Internet thanks to today’s decision by the FCC,” said Chris Pedersen, Connect Puerto Rico program manager. “We are working with providers and key broadband stakeholders across the island to identify the availability gaps and barriers to broadband adoption. One of the major barriers for many households has been the need for better broadband access. Today’s news is a big step in the right direction and will help fuel positive economic changes for these underserved communities.”

The FCC determined eligible areas for these funds based data from the National Broadband Map, which was provided by Connect Puerto Rico. Connect Puerto Rico through its parent organization, Connected Nation, is responsible for collecting and validating data from broadband providers to create an accurate picture of broadband coverage in the island so that technology planning efforts are informed by accurate and real-time data. These [maps](#) identify the type of service, speeds, and number of broadband companies that are available to an area.

This funding decision, affecting the states of Alaska and Hawaii, and the territory of Puerto Rico, is the first the FCC has taken as part of the Connect America Fund Phase 1 program this year. Decisions for funding across all other jurisdictions are pending a challenge process regarding eligibility of areas for funding. The goal of this challenge process is simply to ensure that subsidies are not authorized in areas where broadband service already exists. This quick and decisive decision in Puerto Rico, therefore, is directly linked to the reliability of the underlying broadband maps.

“Connect Puerto Rico is very proud to have served broadband stakeholders through our mapping work. We also want to take the opportunity to thank all the broadband providers who over the past years have voluntarily partnered with us to make these statewide broadband inventories possible,” says Pedersen. “We continue to be committed to providing accurate, granular data of the broadband landscape for Puerto Rico, helping broadband stakeholders and policy makers make more informed decisions, and help close digital divide.”

The FCC decision can be found here:

- [Over \\$32 Million of Connect America Funding Authorized to Connect Unserved Homes and Businesses in Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico](#)
- [Over \\$32 Million Authorized To Expand Broadband Access In Rural Puerto Rico, Hawaii and Alaska From Connect America Fund](#)

For more information about this funding opportunity, see Connected Nation’s policy briefs available here:

- September, 2013 - Connected Nation’s Analysis of Areas for Proposed Connect America Fund Phase I Subsidies - <http://www.connectednation.org/fcc-maps>,

which includes a map of the areas in Alaska and Puerto Rico where service would be built.

- August 21, 2013 - [Connect America Fund Phase I: Providers Stake Claims to Build-Out Funding: A Connected Nation Policy Brief](#)
- August 5, 2013 - [Potential Impact of Connect America Fund Phase 1.2 Across Selected States: A Connected Nation Policy Brief](#)

In 2012, Connect Puerto Rico supported the drafting and release of the Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce's Broadband Strategic Plan, a comprehensive plan, which aims to boost broadband access, adoption and use, which will help shape Puerto Rico's digital future. They took the plan to Congress and the White House to demonstrate the critical need for broadband access on the island. The report addressed the opportunity and potential posed by the new Connect America Fund and urged stakeholders to work collaboratively in order to get maximum benefit from the transition. To access the plan please visit: <http://www.connectpr.org/strategic-plan> and for more information on Connect Puerto Rico's broadband maps go to: <http://www.connectpr.org/broadband-landscape>.

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About Connect Puerto Rico: Connect Puerto Rico was commissioned by the Puerto Rico Office of the Chief Information Officer to work with each of the commonwealth's broadband providers to create detailed maps of broadband coverage and to assess the current state of broadband adoption, community-by-community, across Puerto Rico. Connect Puerto Rico will continue to develop and update the broadband data over time, ensuring that territory policymakers and citizens alike are equipped with this important information. Connect Puerto Rico's efforts are funded by the United State Department of Commerce's State Broadband Initiative grant program through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. To learn more about Connect Puerto Rico please visit www.connectpr.org or e-mail us at info@connectpr.org.

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