



**MAINE
CONNECTIVITY
AUTHORITY**

Broadband Access & Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

June 2023

We CAN get there from here!

PROBLEM: Insufficient internet access.

High speed internet is essential to modern society, and has the potential to dramatically improve Mainers' quality of life.

Private investment alone is insufficient to ensure that Mainers get access to secure, affordable, reliable, competitive and sustainable forward-looking internet infrastructure.

SOLUTION: The Maine Connectivity Authority.

A quasi-governmental agency charged with planning, deploying, investing, and enabling **universal access of affordable high-speed broadband**.



- 1. What are the most common questions YOU get asked as Realtors?**
2. Where do you look for answers?
3. What information do you WISH you had that you currently do not?
- 4. What should we, as the state's broadband office, know?**



**MAINE
CONNECTIVITY
AUTHORITY**

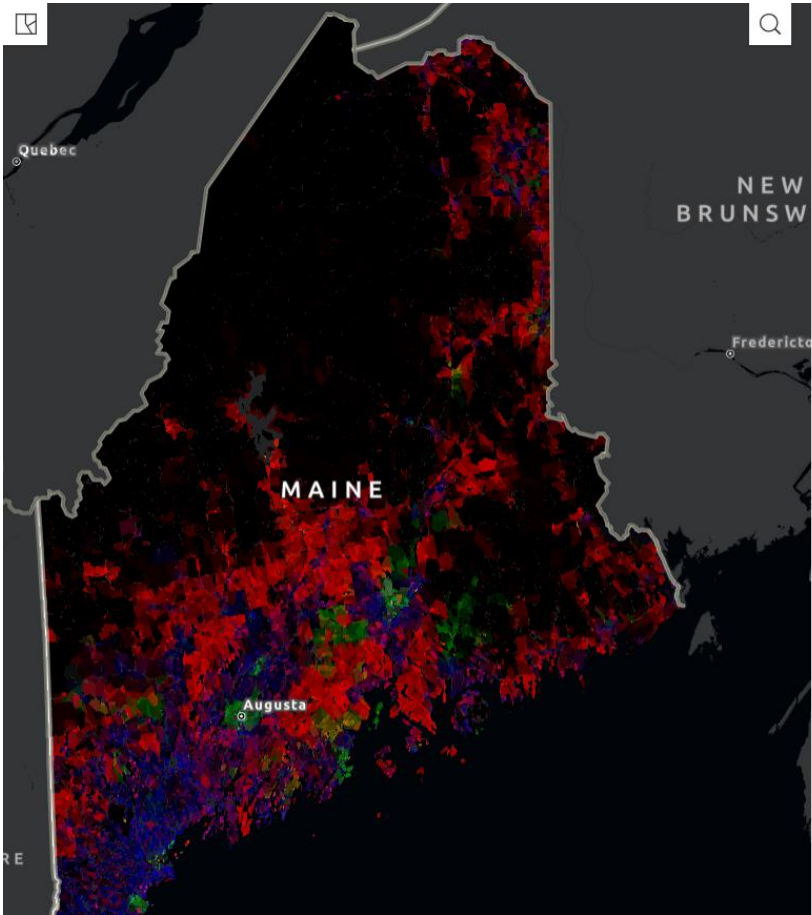


Level setting

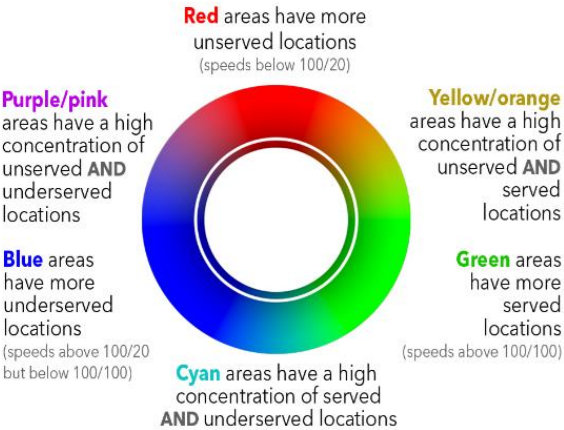
- Maine's definition of broadband is 100/100 mbps.
- Low population density and challenging terrain means the Maine broadband market has **failed to return the ROI most providers need**, hence little unsubsidized deployment outside of dense service centers/suburbs.
- **Symmetrical service** is critical, as we live in an increasingly upload-driven world - particularly for remote workers.
- MCA is technology agnostic but **speed, symmetry, and reliability** are paramount, and yes, fiber is best suited to meet those standards.
- Infrastructure alone is not enough - **digital equity** is a major component of this work.
 - ◆ Having service available to a location does not guarantee that people can afford that service, access it, or have the skills and devices to use it in a meaningful way.



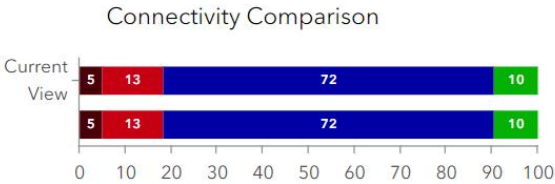
Where is the need?



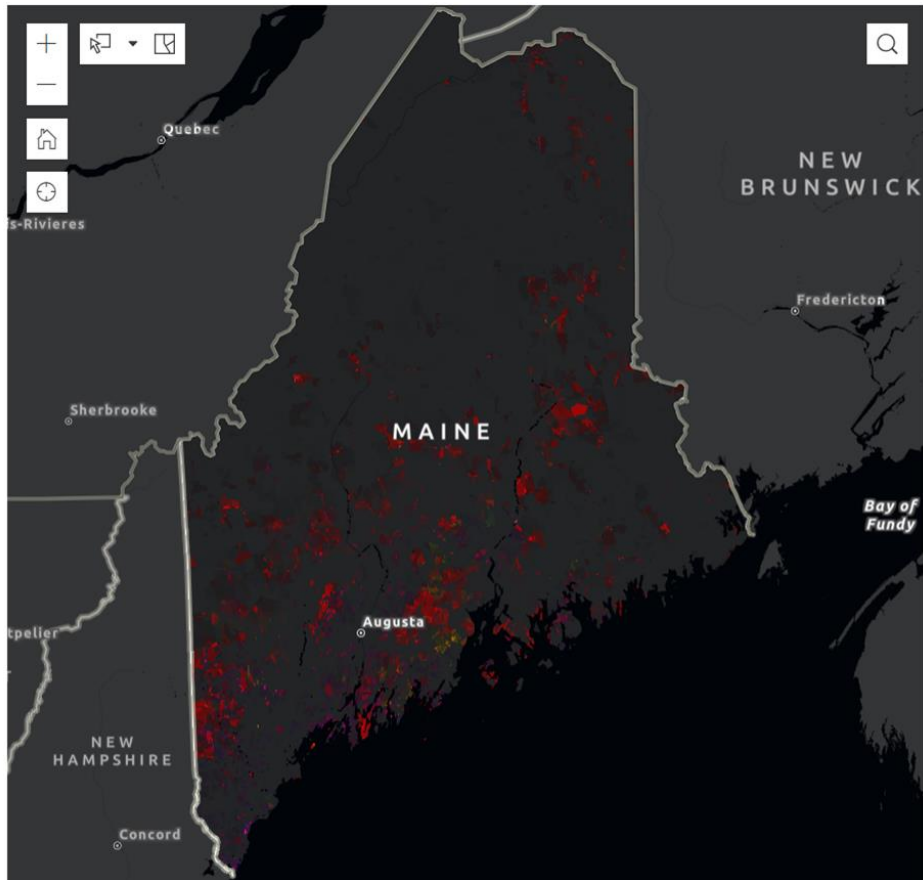
This map shows the concentrations of locations by service availability



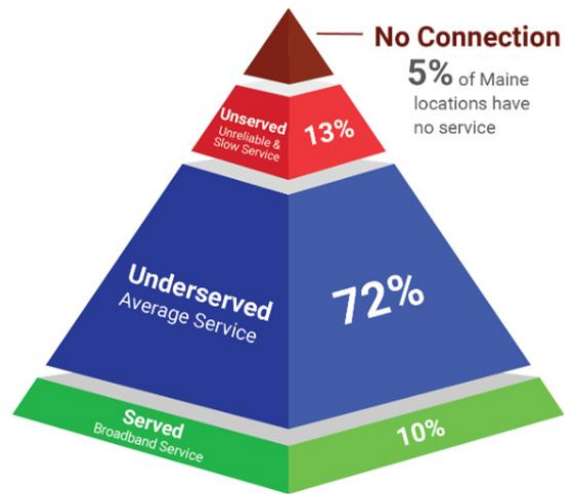
Color intensity represents the concentration of the service types.
Areas in **gray** and **black** have fewer locations.



Priority - at or below 25/3



This map shows the concentrations prioritized by the number of locations with no internet connection.

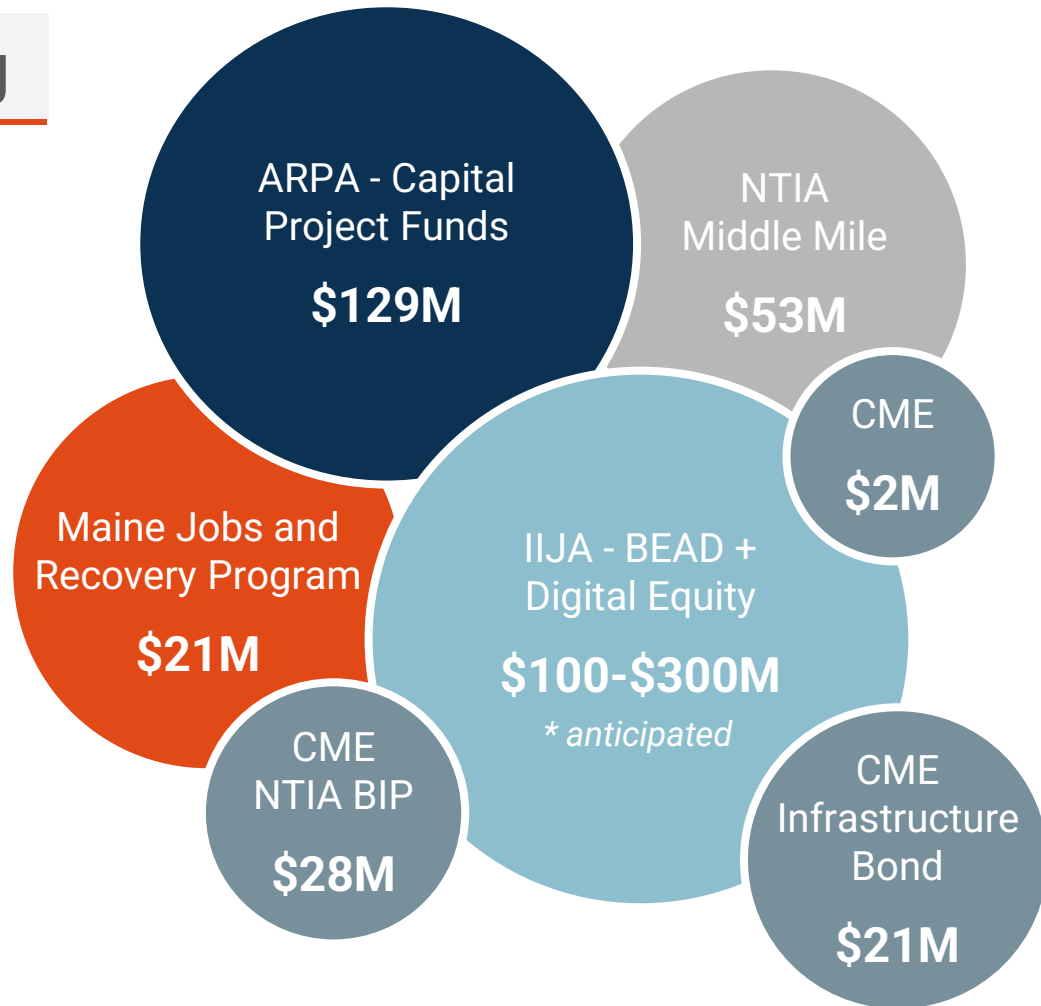


Locations with no connection include those potential subscriber locations without access to internet or wireless service that is less than 25/3mbps.



Sources of Funding

- \$200M under management currently
- Additional \$250-\$300M anticipated
- Examining the capital stack to see what financial resources are missing in the space, particularly for communities, small internet service providers (ISPs), and broadband utility districts (BUDs).



Current MJRP and CPF funded projects



\$40M

Connect The Ready Grants

Competitive grants funding **public/private partnerships** building broadband infrastructure projects in eligible areas.

- January 2023 Awards
- 14 Projects
- 33 Communities
- 18,300 Connections
- \$20M in private funding leveraged

\$20M

Reach Me Line Extension Incentives

Incentives for ISPs to **complete their existing networks** and extend service to all unserved locations in an area.

- April 2023 Awards
- 10 Projects
- 74 communities
- 6,300 Connections
- \$13M in private funding leveraged

\$3M

Regional & Tribal Broadband Partners

Regional partners will lead **digital inclusion efforts** and provide support for **regional-scale broadband solutions**.

- December 2022 Awards
- 13 Partners
- 15 FTEs focused on broadband added across regions

\$1M

Get Ready Community Support

Accelerating **community broadband planning** at a regional scale through tailored technical assistance.

- December 2022 Awards
- 12 Projects
- 20 Communities

\$1M

Jumpstart Wireless Trial Projects

Low-cost internet access to the least served areas of the state by **trialing the deployment of new wireless technologies**.

- December 2022 Awards
- 4 Projects
- Construction started
- 9 Communities
- 1,400 Connections

Utilizing MJRP + CPF funding

IIJA - Broadband as

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

Broadband Equity Access & Deployment Planning:

- MCA must submit a 5-year statewide broadband plan to access our full BEAD Allocation.
- Maine's BEAD Allocation expected to be ~ **\$200-300 million** (TBA June 28) + \$5 million planning

Digital Equity Planning:

- MCA must submit a State Digital Equity Plan to access digital equity implementation funding of a portion of the total **\$1.44B allocation** (formula TBD).

BROADBAND ACTION PLAN (BAP):

- MCA has combined two planning processes into one, resulting in a comprehensive Broadband Action Plan (BAP) with digital equity at its core.
- This ensures seamless integration, maximizes use of our resources, and avoids potential stakeholder fatigue and/or confusion.



What will these plans do?

Identify and prioritize strategies for Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD)

funding - infrastructure deployment and adoption, including workforce programming, concentrating first on unserved locations (no service or less than 25/3 mbps), then underserved (>25/3 but <100/20 mbps).

Identify and prioritize strategies for Digital Equity (DE) funding - DE projects and implementation of DE plans. Includes initiatives like digital skills training, access to devices for underserved populations, and facilitating the adoption of broadband.

Digital Divide

The gap between those who have affordable access, skills and support and those who don't.

Digital Inclusion

Activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies

Digital Equity

All individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.



Timeline



Over 4,000 engagement points



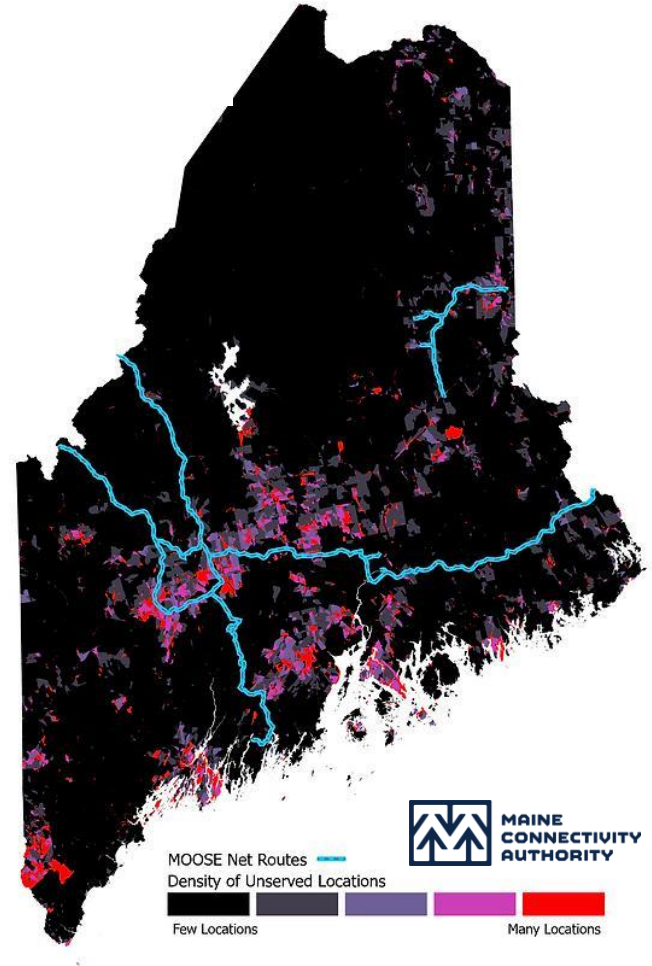
Reflect & Revise

- Use the online [Feedback form](#) to let us know what you think of the draft action plan(s)
- Join us at a **virtual or in-person listening sessions**
 - June 26: virtual ([register here](#))
 - June 30: hybrid, in-person in Machias ([register here](#) for online portion)
- All feedback will be reviewed and the final plans will be submitted in August
- MCA expects that the \$200 - 300 million will become available in early 2024 and is planning



MOOSE Net - Middle Mile Project

- Maine's existing internet infrastructure is a **patchwork of individual private networks**. The middle mile infrastructure supporting these networks was generally not created to support the goal of universal broadband access throughout the state.
- **MOOSE Net is a \$53 million project to create ~530 miles of open-access, fiber-optic network to extend connectivity into some of Maine's most rural and unserved areas**
- This project includes a **\$30 million grant** from the National Telecommunications Information Administration's (NTIA) Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program.
- The proposal was developed in collaboration with NetworkMaine, the Maine Department of Transportation, Consolidated Communications, the University of Maine System, Maine OIT, and others.
- MOOSE Net covers **131 communities**, representing over **11,000 unserved local businesses and residents**. It will reach more than **200 community anchor institutions**, including schools, hospitals, libraries, local government buildings, and civic centers.



Affordability - ACP4ME Campaign

- Broadband connectivity goes beyond the poles and wires across communities. To ensure access, individuals must be able to access broadband service.
- **Access includes financial affordability, access to equipment, and support for training to use digital services.**
- The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a \$14.2 billion federal program that provides eligible households with **a discount of up to \$30 per month (up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands)** and a one-time \$100 discount toward a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet.

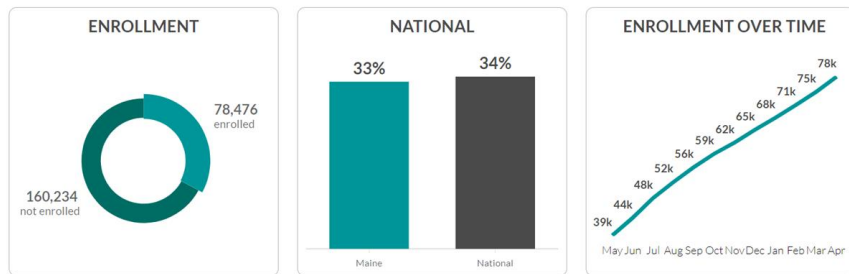


Affordability - ACP4ME Campaign

- In Maine, **238,710 households are eligible** for the ACP, yet **only 68,476 (33% of those eligible)** have enrolled.
- The **ACP4ME campaign** is MCA's new statewide initiative to increase awareness of and enrollment in the ACP.

Maine ACP Adoption

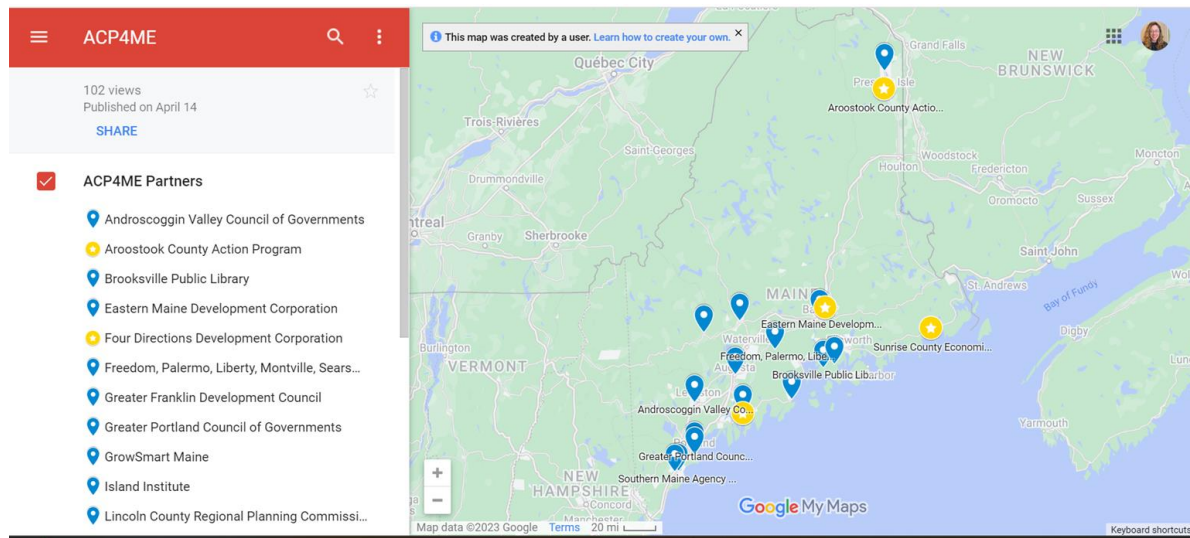
238,710 eligible households



**MAINE
CONNECTIVITY
AUTHORITY**

Affordability - ACP4ME Campaign

- 53 partner organizations have completed the ACP4ME webinar
- [Google map of partner locations](#)



Affordability - ACP4ME Campaign

What are the ACP eligibility requirements?

- A household is eligible if their total income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or if at least one member of the household meets any one of the criteria below:
- Participates in assistance programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program (WIC), or Lifeline;
- Participates in one of several Tribal-specific programs shown in the enhanced Tribal Benefits section below;
- Is approved to receive benefits through the Community Eligibility Provision school free and reduced-price school lunch program;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider's existing low-income program.



Affordability - ACP4ME Campaign

What are the ACP eligibility requirements for tribal members?

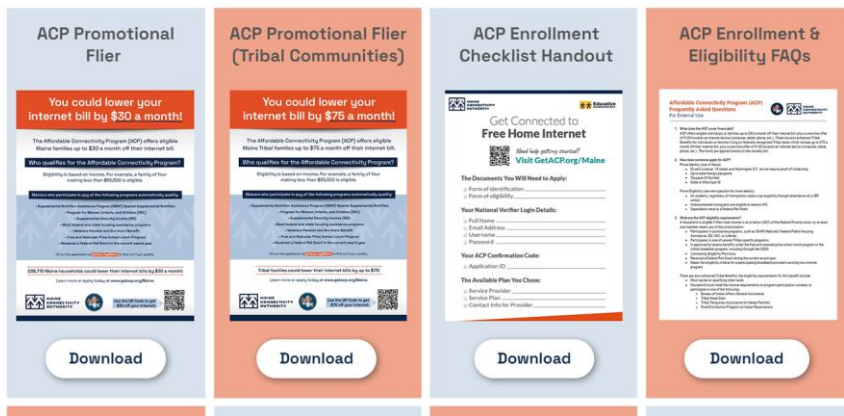
- There are also enhanced Tribal Benefits; the eligibility requirements for this benefit include:
- Must reside on qualifying tribal lands
- Household must meet the income requirements or program participation covered, or participate in one of the following:
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribal Head Start
- Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations



Affordability - ACP4ME Campaign

How can I and/or my organization support people who are enrolling for the ACP?

You can use any of the resources in MCA's [ACP4ME Toolkit](#) to further support your outreach efforts.



Affordability - ACP4ME Campaign

How do our clients enroll in ACP?

- www.getACP.org/Maine - our pre-enrollment wizard is a mobile friendly site designed to help individuals gather documents to make enrollment easier.
- <https://affordableconnectivity.gov/> - This is the FCC's website for the ACP program. Visitors can click "Apply Now" to launch the National Verifier tool.



Where do most ACP recipients live?

Everywhere! This program is far reaching and having a positive impact across our state. To view details by zip code, visit: https://www.benton.org/acp_tool

How long is the program funded?

Current estimates show the funding running out in Q2 2024.

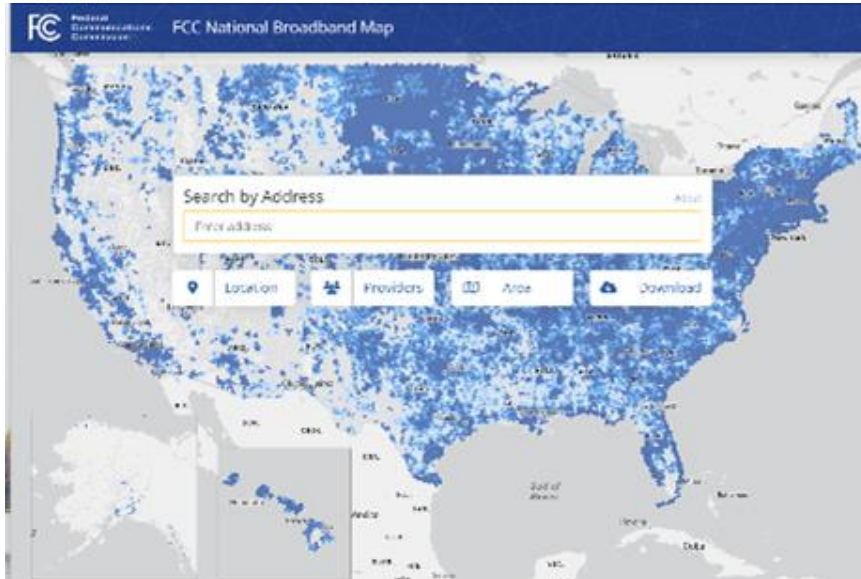


MAINE
CONNECTIVITY
AUTHORITY

Broadband availability

How do our clients learn what options are available at a particular address?

- <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home> - This federal resource will show your clients the service at a given address as reported by the internet service companies. It is always advisable to contact the company listed and ask them what speeds they can provide and by when.



How to stay engaged and informed?

1. Subscribe to Maine broadband newsletters
 - <https://www.maineconnectivity.org/>
 - <https://www.mainebroadbandcoalition.org/> .
2. Reach out to MCA.
 - temery@maineconnectivity.org
 - kreardon@maineconnectivity.org
3. And back to those questions from the start...



- 1. What are the most common questions YOU get asked as Realtors?**
2. Where do you look for answers?
- 3. What information do you WISH you had that you currently do not?**
- 4. What should we, as the state's broadband office, know?**



**MAINE
CONNECTIVITY
AUTHORITY**

