

How Licensed Spectrum Drives Digital Equity



27% of low-income adults, 25% of Latinos, and 17% of African-Americans rely on wireless as their only broadband connection.



8x

increase in homes with access to 5G home broadband by 2025.



OVER

50%

of Affordable Connectivity Program low-income recipients choose wireless.

Wireless networks play a major role in bridging the digital divide and delivering digital equity, and new 5G home offerings are bringing more competitive, cost-effective options to the market. To help wireless providers secure a connected future for all, policymakers should make more licensed spectrum available, especially in key mid-bands that offer an ideal blend of coverage and capacity.

Wireless Is an On-Ramp to the Internet

Wireless is a key tool to build digital equity, and its long track record of affordability includes declining prices and customized service plans to accommodate consumer preferences and budgets. Today, unlimited plans are over 40% cheaper and connections are 117x faster than in 2010, helping make wireless the only broadband connection for over a quarter of low-income households.

As the on-ramp to the internet for millions of Americans, wireless helps drive connectivity, choice, and digital literacy within historically underrepresented groups like communities of color, low-income households, and rural populations—all powered by licensed spectrum.

Powered by Licensed Spectrum, 5G Home Connects More People

New 5G home broadband offerings are unleashing the wireless industry's competitive spirit in a whole new market, helping provide more options for high-speed home internet in unserved and underserved communities.

5G home broadband is a cost effective and easy-to-deploy solution. It doesn't require last-mile infrastructure to deliver a strong signal, and consumers can set the service up themselves in minutes. It accounted for 90% of all new broadband subscriptions in 2022, and today, 25M households have access to 100 Mbps FWA service—with estimates suggesting that number will grow by 8x by 2025.

To keep up with this demand and offer high-quality home broadband at scale, operators will require additional spectrum.

More Licensed Spectrum Drives Innovation and Equity

More licensed spectrum is key to meeting the demand for ubiquitous coverage and more applications, including 5G home broadband, that work anywhere and reach more Americans.

To secure further progress and meet the nation's growing wireless needs, Congress should ensure there is a pipeline to free up more exclusive-use, licensed spectrum, starting with the Lower 3 GHz, 4 GHz, and 7/8 GHz bands. More licensed spectrum is key to new innovations that will enhance opportunity for communities and drive digital equity across the nation.