

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Broadband Initiatives: Enhancing Lives and Transforming Communities The Alliance for Public Technology

The Alliance for Public Technology (APT) believes that our nation cannot reap the potential benefits created by advances in telecommunications technology unless everyone has full access to broadband networks and services. Broadband services are no longer a convenience but an essential part of life.

They are critical to American competitiveness, educational infrastructures, economic development and innovation, and our quality of life. Unfortunately, policy-makers have failed to put into place comprehensive telecommunication policies that promote broadband networks and services throughout the country, especially to underserved communities. Inefficient programs, outdated legislation and piecemeal policies have resulted in a disturbing void in broadband access among some sectors of our society.

In addition, the United States trails its global competitors in broadband adoption, telecommunication investments and the speed and price of broadband services. The United States is ranked 16th in the world in broadband penetration, falling from its 11th place ranking in 2002, a trend that foreshadows further slippage in America's future economic competitiveness. As the inventor of the Internet, the United States should develop policies that will encourage broadband deployment to ensure its role as the world leader in advanced technologies for years to come.

To reverse the current course, we must commit to implementing telecommunications reforms on a fast track. After careful analysis and thoughtful discussion with a broad array of policy experts and representatives from industry, consumer, labor and public interest groups, APT developed the following recommendations:

- Establish clear national goals for broadband deployment.
- Require accurate reporting of broadband deployment, speeds and prices.
- Continue to foster private investment and marketplace competition.
- Require Universal Service Fund recipients to offer broadband services.
- Provide tax incentives, low interest loans, and grants for broadband deployment.
- Create an Office of Broadband within the Federal Government.
- Utilize non-traditional, non-telecommunications programs more effectively.

APT hopes that this report not only will spark a re-evaluation of our nation's broadband programs but also the adoption of a comprehensive national policy promoting greater broadband deployment across our entire nation.