

# Executive Summary

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger commissioned the California Broadband Task Force (CBTF) to “remove barriers to broadband access, identify opportunities for increased broadband adoption, and enable the creation and deployment of new advanced communication technologies.” The governor also requested that the CBTF “pay particular attention to how broadband can be used to substantially benefit educational institutions, healthcare institutions, community-based organizations, and governmental institutions.” This document meets both those objectives and also includes specific recommendations to achieve the governor’s goals.

## **The CBTF adopted three key goals:**

- California must ensure ubiquitous and affordable broadband infrastructure, made available through a variety of technologies to all Californians.
- California must drive the creation and use of applications that produce the greatest economic, educational, and social benefits for California’s economy and communities.
- California must construct next-generation broadband infrastructure, positioning California as the global economic leader in a knowledge-based economy.

## **Through analysis of CBTF’s broadband mapping project and independent research, the Task Force determined that California is better positioned than most states on broadband availability and adoption, yet the state lags behind key foreign competitors. Specifically, the CBTF found:**

- 96% of California residences have access to broadband.
- 1.4 million mostly rural Californians lack broadband access at any speed.
- Barely more than half of Californians have adopted broadband at home.
- Only half of Californians have access to broadband at speeds greater than 10 Mbps (including both upstream and downstream speeds).
- Broadband infrastructure is deployed unevenly throughout the state, from state-of-the-art to nonexistent.

**Just as California has invested in other critical infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water, the CBTF believes that the state must seize the opportunity to promote private-sector investment, leverage public-private partnerships, and lead the effort to increase broadband availability and adoption. But unlike roads, electricity, and water, California’s investment in broadband should not be limited to physical infrastructure, but instead should include policies to increase adoption of broadband technologies. Increasing both access to and use of broadband will build economic capital, strengthen public safety resources, improve living standards, expand educational and healthcare opportunities, and raise the levels of civic engagement and governmental transparency. In addition to growing consumer needs, business, research, government, education, library, healthcare, and community institutions require high-speed connectivity to:**

- Share information;
- Promote environmentally friendly technologies such as telecommuting, video conferencing, and high-quality video collaboration;
- Provide distance-learning opportunities;
- Enable remote analysis of medical information; and
- Foster a greater civic discourse.

**The CBTF recommends seven key actions to help our state achieve fast, reliable, and affordable broadband service:**

- 1. Build out high speed broadband infrastructure to all Californians**  
*Advancing new incentives for deployment and improving existing programs will create a world-class broadband infrastructure in California.*
- 2. Develop model permitting standards and encourage collaboration among providers**  
*Developing a public-private partnership between local governments and broadband providers to endorse permitting standards will improve the speed with which broadband is deployed.*
- 3. Increase the use and adoption of broadband and computer technology**  
*Expanding the opportunities for Californians to access, use, and learn broadband, at home and in the community, will provide the foundation for a digitally literate society that is able to fully benefit from broadband technology.*
- 4. Engage and reward broadband innovation and research**  
*Promoting innovative uses of broadband technology and encouraging wider e-government use will result in quality-of-life improvements, while increasing demand for a robust broadband infrastructure.*
- 5. Create a statewide e-health network**  
*Implementing a sustainable statewide e-health network will improve quality of care across the state and simultaneously increase demand for broadband services.*
- 6. Leverage educational opportunities to increase broadband use**  
*Ensuring high-capacity broadband connections coupled with a robust technology support system, relevant curriculum, literacy standards, and off-campus educational partnerships will provide California's students with the skills they need to compete in a 21st century economy.*
- 7. Continue state-level and statewide leadership**  
*Continuing the California Broadband Initiative and supporting the creation of Community Broadband Leadership Councils will strengthen the statewide leadership necessary to drive broadband access and adoption across California.*