

BROADBAND BREAKFAST

Sen. Alex Padilla Emphasizes Billions in Broadband Funds for California

California also has 18 projects that are part of the state's \$6-billion broadband investment under its California Comeback Plan.



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[Photo](#) of Alex Padilla from June 2019 by Gage Skidmore used with permission

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Padilla, a Democrat, pushed local governments and internet service providers to not only get their fair share of federal broadband funds, but to also “continue to build upon the efforts and experience of truly connecting California families not to just internet connection, but the opportunities and resources that come with it.”

Speaking at a Tuesday event hosted by [California Forward](#) and [California Emerging Technology Fund](#), Padilla discussed federal infrastructure funds for California. As part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, California is expected to receive around \$1 billion in broadband funds for communities.

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California's Broadband Funding

In addition to the 18 [statewide](#) broadband deployment efforts announced by governor **Gavin Newsom** last month, Californians can take advantage of federal funds that will be made available by the National Telecommunications and Information Association.

NTIA Acting Administrator **Evelyn Remaley** detailed programs from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for which organizations should apply:

- \$42.5 billion Broadband Access and Deployment Program. This program, the largest of all the programs administered by the NTIA, is distributed among states, US territories, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico for projects supporting broadband infrastructure deployment and adoption.
- \$1 billion Enabling Broadband Middle Mile Infrastructure Program. This program will be targeted at lowering the cost of unserved and underserved areas to the backbone of the broadband infrastructure.
- \$2 billion added to the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. Directs funding to tribal governments for deployment on tribal lands. The program also funds telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion.
- \$2.75 billion Digital Equity Act Programs. Promoting digital equity to ensure that all communities have the same opportunities to obtain the skills and technology necessary to participate in our digital economy.
- The Digital Equity Act programs includes \$16 million for the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, \$1.44 billion for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, and \$1.25 for the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program.

These investments build on the NTIA's Broadband Infrastructure Program, the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, and the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program (which closed on December 1).

"At the NTIA we are so excited to begin this endeavor to connect every single American to high-speed, affordable broadband," Remaley said. "Senator Padilla talked about the need, we know it is global, and we are committed to getting this done with all of our partners: our states and communities."