

How to Bridge the Digital Divide to Provide Access to Legal Services

New York Civil Legal Aid Technology Working Group 2021 Webinar Series

May 27, 2021, 1pm - 2pm

Panelists

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Moderator: Tim Baran - Technology Innovation Manager, Pro Bono Net

Tech Support: John Greiner - Founder and President, Just-Tech

Racial Disparity

-80% of white adults have home broadband.

-71% of Black adults

-65% of Hispanic adults

Source: [Pew 2021](#)

Socio-Economic Disparity

-92% of adults with household income over \$75,000 a year have home broadband compared to just 57% of those with a household income under \$30,000.

Source: [Pew 2021](#)

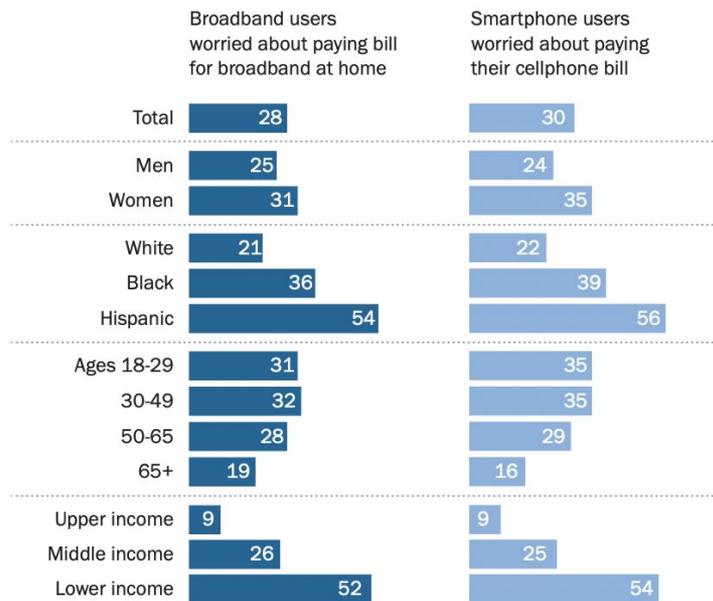
% of U.S. adults who say they have a broadband connection at home, by annual household income



Source: [Pew 2021](#)

Hispanic and lower-income tech users are especially worried about paying home broadband, cellphone bills

*% of home broadband and smartphone users who say they worry **a lot** or **some** about paying their bills over the next few months for ...*



Note: White and black adults include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2018 earnings. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

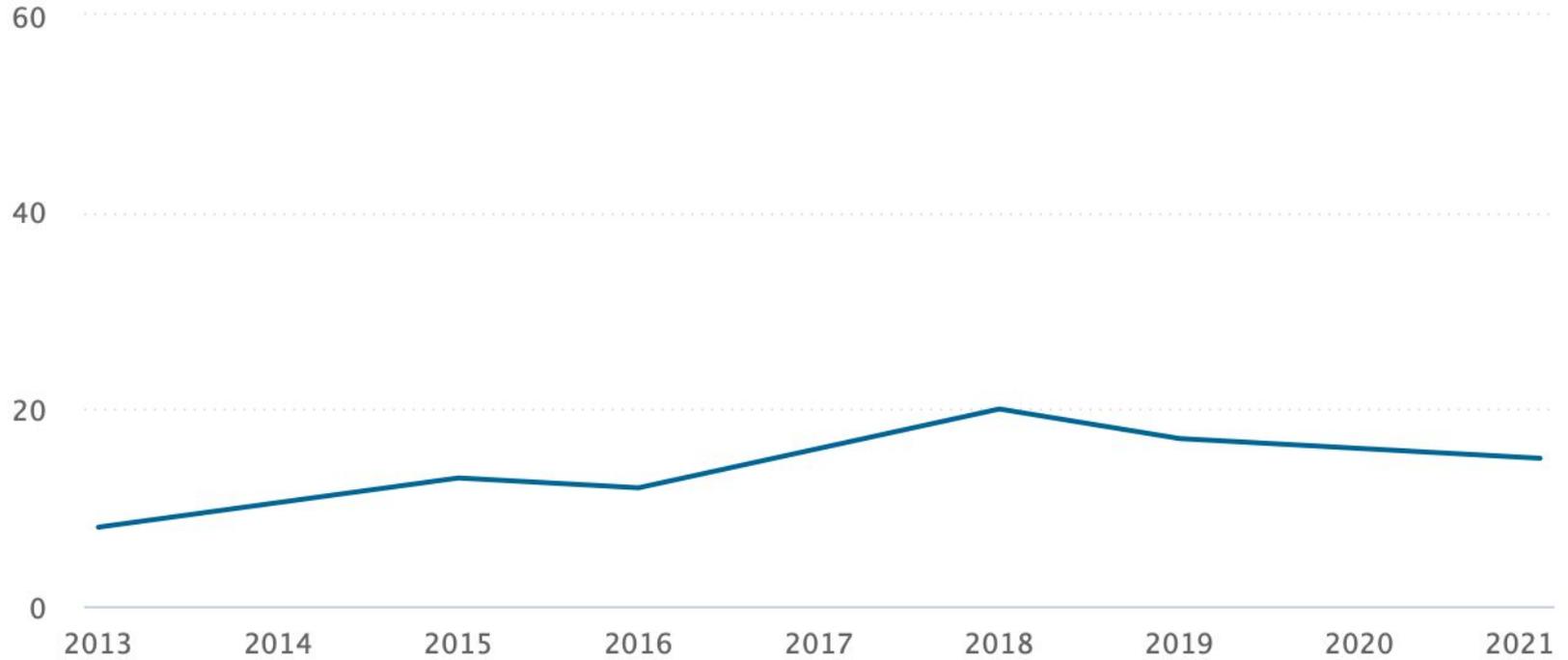
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

“53% of Americans Say the Internet Has Been Essential During the COVID-19 Outbreak”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: [Pew 2020](#)

% of U.S. adults who say they do not use broadband at home but own smartphones



Source: [Pew 2021](#)

% of U.S. adults who say they do not use broadband at home but own smartphones, by annual household income



Source: [Pew 2021](#)

Seniors

-22 million American seniors do not have broadband at home. That's 42% of all seniors, compared to 27% of younger adults.

Source: [Humana Foundation, 2021](#)

Digital Divide Blocks Seniors and others from accessing Telehealth and Legal Help

-26.3% of Medicare beneficiaries have neither a smartphone with a data plan nor a computer with home WiFi, according to a [JAMA Network paper](#) from August 2020.

-50.1% of Medicare beneficiaries who are in poverty lack digital access compared with 11.5% of Medicare beneficiaries with incomes four times the poverty level.

The homework gap

-Even before COVID-19, 1 in 4 Black students and 24% of low-income students reported being unable to do their homework because they lacked internet access at home compared to 13% of white students and just 9% of high-income students.

Source: [Pew 2020](#)

Spotlight: New York

-38% of all New York households earning \$25,000 or less have no high-speed home internet connection according to an analysis of 2018 census data.

-Upstate cities: 32% of Syracuse households, 19% of Buffalo households, and 20% of Rochester households have no broadband.

Source: [Democrat and Chronicle, October 2020](#)

New York's Stark Homework Gap

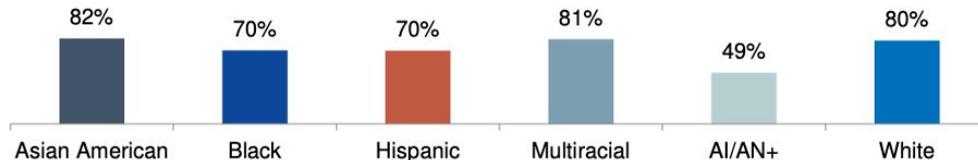
-In New York State, 689,404 children, 23.8% of all kids, do not have full digital access.

-34% of children in renter households lack full digital access

-30% of children in households with at least one unemployed parent lack full digital access

-44% of children whose households are in poverty lack full digital access

Full Access by Race/Ethnicity



Source: [National Education Association: September 2020](#)

Emergency Federal Programs

- \$50 monthly payments for low-income households to cover internet bills, which rolled out two weeks ago and had [over a million](#) sign-ups in its first week. The program is funded at \$3.2 billion as part of the December package – it can last until 6 months after the emergency, but likely will run out sooner. It's about 5 times as generous as Lifeline, and includes up to \$100 for the purchase of a computer or tablet.
- The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan included \$7.2 billion for E-Rate – boosting funds for schools and libraries' internet connectivity efforts.
- It also includes [\\$24 billion](#) for New York's state and local governments and \$9 billion for NY schools (on top of \$4 billion from the December bill).

What are the Options?

Low-Cost Internet Access

- Federal Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program
 - [Search tool to find broadband service providers](#)
 - Greenlight Networks
- Internet Providers: Comcast, Charter Communications/Spectrum, and Altice
- NYCDOE Device Distribution
- FCC's E-Rate Program

Sources: [NYC DOE](#)
[USAC](#)

Options via Phone Carriers

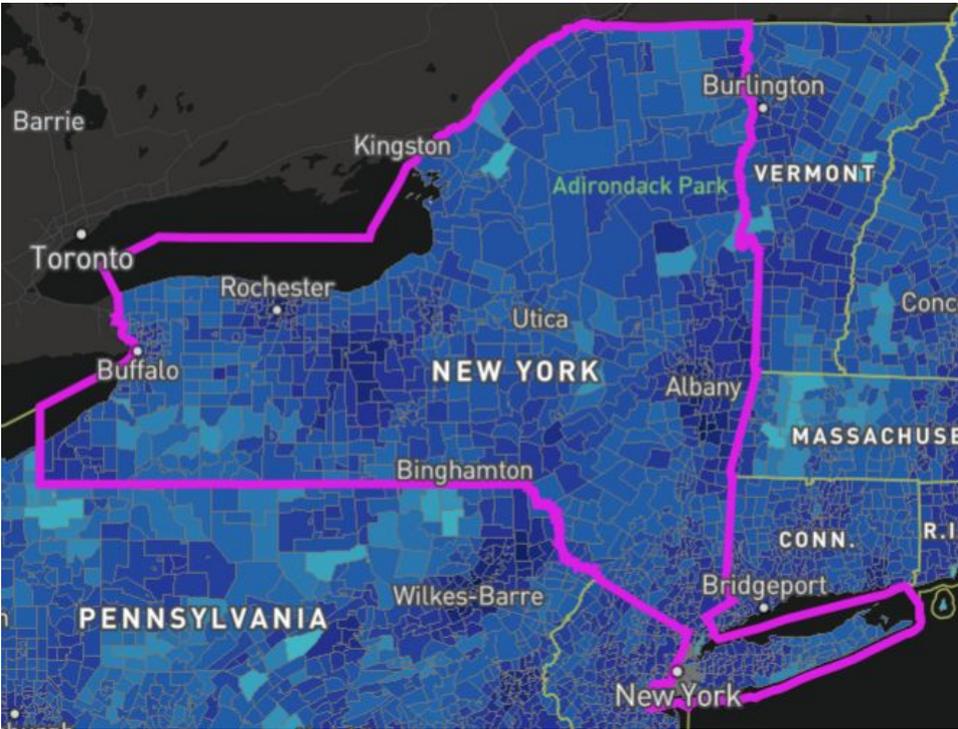
- T-Mobile: Project 10 Million
- Access from AT&T
- Verizon: Visible

Free Internet Across NY State

- All branches of the New York Public Library
- Several public spaces in Lower Manhattan.
 - [List of spots with free wireless Internet in Lower Manhattan.](#)
- Several parks across the burroughs.
 - [Wi-Fi Hot Spot Parks Locator](#)
- LinkNYC kiosks across the City - Each Link provides fast, free public Wi-Fi, phone calls, device charging, and a tablet for access to city services, maps and directions.
 - [Find a Link near you.](#)

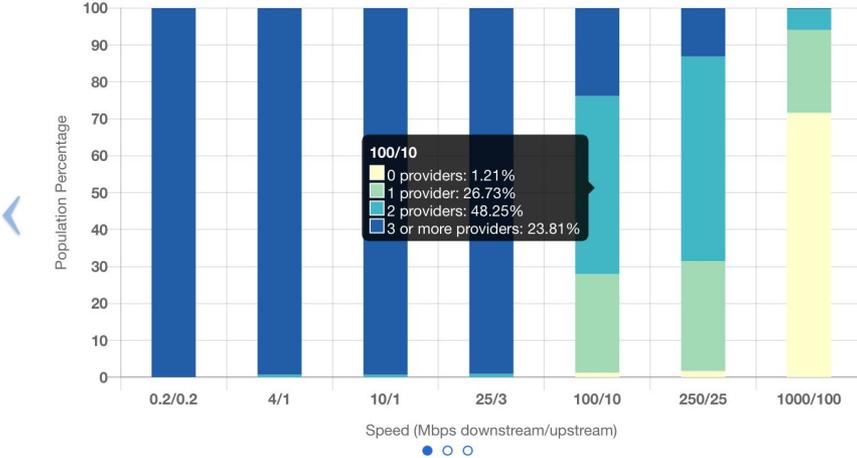
Source: [NYC DOE](#)

NY Broadband Connectivity



Broadband

Technology ADSL, Cable, Fiber, Fixed Wireless, Satellite, Other
Speed ≥ 25/3 Mbps
Date June 2020 (latest public release)



Source: [FCC](https://www.fcc.gov)

Access and Affordability

181.9

MBPS AVERAGE STATE-WIDE
SPEED

2nd

STATE BROADBAND ACCESS
RANKING

Broadband Speeds

98.0% of New Yorkers have access to broadband 100mbps or faster.

12.3% of New Yorkers have access to 1 gigabit broadband.

Wired Coverage

99.3% of New Yorkers have access to wireline service

64.3% of New Yorkers have access to fiber-optic service

97.1% of New Yorkers have access to cable service

91.1% of New Yorkers have access to DSL service

Largest Competing Providers In New York

1 Frontier vs Optimum by Altice

2 Frontier vs Xfinity

3 Spectrum vs Frontier

4 Xfinity vs Consolidated

5 Spectrum vs WOW!

Coverage by County in New York

County Name	% Broadband Coverage
Albany	99.2%
Allegany	75.9%
Bronx	98.1%
Broome	99.0%
Cattaraugus	80.6%
Cayuga	84.7%
Chautauqua	95.2%
Chemung	95.7%
Chenango	82.9%
Clinton	93.4%
Columbia	97.5%
Cortland	89.2%
Delaware	96.8%

- 307,000 NY residents do not have access to internet capable of 25 Mbps download speeds.
- 820,000 people statewide only have one wired internet provider to choose from in their area.
- 112,000 residents have no wired internet services available at their New York address.
- 70% (13.7 million people) have access to a wired internet plan that costs \$60 or less per month, which is above the nationwide statistics.

Source: [Broadband Now](#)

Additional Resources

- [Techsoup.org](https://techsoup.org) - non-profit discounts on hardware/laptops and software.
- [United Way Crisis Funding](#)
- [Justice Bus](#)
- [DASNY Capital Grant Programs](#)