

How Cities Can Use ARPA to Advance Digital Inclusion

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Introduction: Angelina Panettieri, Legislative Director, Information Technology & Communications, Federal Advocacy, NLC

Panel: Alejandro Roark, Executive Director, Hispanic Technology & Telecommunications Partnership

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Adam Falk, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs, Charter Communications

September 29, 2021



During an unprecedented time, NLC delivered unprecedented results for our members.

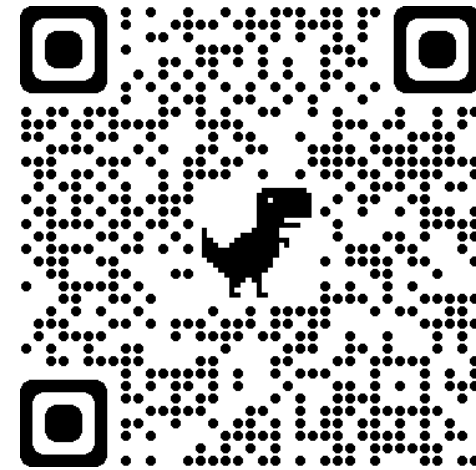
\$65 billion of DIRECT aid to EVERY city, town or village across the country.

nlc.org/stateleague

NLC **DELIVERS**

NLC's COVID-19 Hub

- Blogs
- Local Action Tracker
- Fact sheets
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Webinar recordings
- [NLC.org/Recovery](https://nlc.org/Recovery)



NLC's Question Form

- Support our content
- Inform our talks with Treasury
- <https://bit.ly/3eVyvWt>



NLC DELIVERS

COVID-19 Pandemic Response & Relief

[Home](#) / COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE & RELIEF

Your hub for the latest on infection, vaccination, response and relief

We are bringing you the tools, resources and events necessary to fight back against COVID-19. Check back here for the latest in pandemic response protocols, funding options and more for your city, town or village.

OUR COMMUNITIES WILL RECEIVE

\$65.1 BILLION

in necessary aid through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. Learn everything you need to know about funding through ARPA.

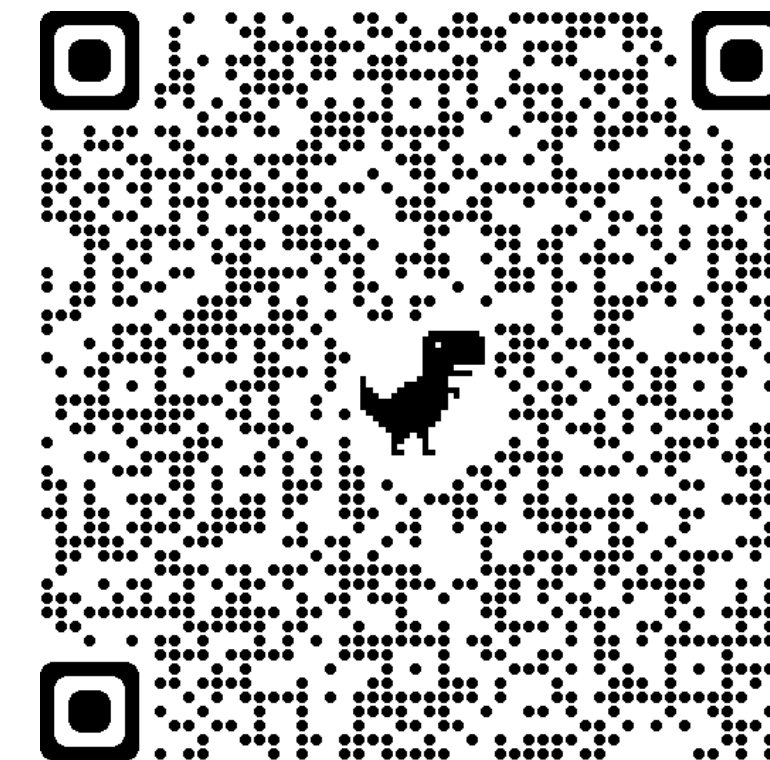
[AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT](#)

Treasury's Guidance and Supplementary Information:

- Interim Final Rule (IFR)
- Allocations and Methodology for Non-Entitlement Units
- Allocations and Methodology for Metropolitan Cities
- Guidance on State Distribution of Funds to NEUs
- Frequently Asked Questions (*Periodically Updated*)
- Compliance and Reporting Requirements
- Treasury Reporting User Guide (Interim Report and Recovery Plan only)

Visit [Treasury.gov/SLFRP](https://www.treasury.gov/SLFRP) for these resources

- For questions, email SLFRP@treasury.gov



What is the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)?

- COVID-19 recovery package signed into law on March 11, 2021
- \$1.9 trillion of programming for emergency stabilization and economic recovery
- Includes Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Grants (SLFRF)
 - \$350 billion for states, municipalities, counties, tribes, and territories
 - Of that, \$130.2 billion for local governments: \$65.1B for 19,000+ municipalities and \$65.1B for 3000+ counties.
- ARPA Fiscal Recovery Grants are not competitive – every city is *entitled* to one.
 - But it's not "free" money. ARPA grants come with significant new requirements and responsibilities
- NLC has developed a summary of other notable provisions relevant to municipalities and local leaders: [Summary of Provisions](#)

SLFRF Uses

- Broadband use category: “necessary improvements in broadband infrastructure”
 - Eligible projects: “unserved or underserved” locations = those without “reliable, wireline 25/3Mbps service”, must provide 100/100Mbps service or if impossible, 100/20Mbps service with the ability to scale to 100/100Mbps
 - Covered projects are encouraged to consider affordability, avoid locations with existing agreements to build 100/20Mbps wireline service by December 21, 2024, prioritize physical connections and last-mile service, and prioritize municipal/nonprofit/cooperative-owned networks
- Economic impact & disproportionately impacted use categories:
 - Direct assistance to households for broadband bills or bad debt with broadband providers
 - Digital skills training
 - Digital navigator programs to support access to benefits, subsidies, and free or discounted devices and service subscriptions
 - And more!

Emergency Broadband Benefit

- \$3B fund authorized in December 2020 Omnibus Appropriations Act
- Provides \$50 discount to most qualifying households (\$75 on Tribal lands) per month for broadband service, \$100 one-time discount on a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer
- Participants must enroll through broadband providers & complete eligibility verification separately
- Participating providers & offerings vary by location and provider – providers must opt into participation in the program
- Enrollment opened May 12, program will end when funds are exhausted
- Funds available to broadband providers – not cities (unless city operates a participating broadband service)
- Learn more: <https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>

Emergency Connectivity Fund

- \$7B ARPA fund to provide schools & libraries with funds to get students and library patrons connected to support educational services & remote learning off-campus
- Subscriptions, equipment, and computing devices are eligible expenditures
- Extension of E-Rate program – standard E-Rate restricted to on-premises equipment
- First round of funding requests closed August 13, second round closes **October 13**
- Eligible recipients are schools and libraries, or consortia of schools and libraries
- Learn more: <https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-connectivity-fund>

Digital Equity

- Digital equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy.
- Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning and access to essential services.

ARPA Planning & Digital Equity

- Is there equitable access within & among communities to COVID relief for connectivity?
- What barriers do your schools, libraries, and residents face accessing benefits?
- How can your city use relief funds to support equitable access to connectivity?

QUESTIONS? GET IN TOUCH.

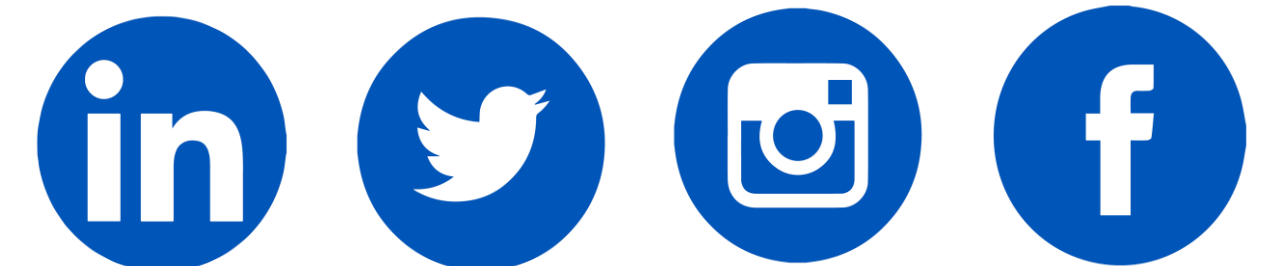
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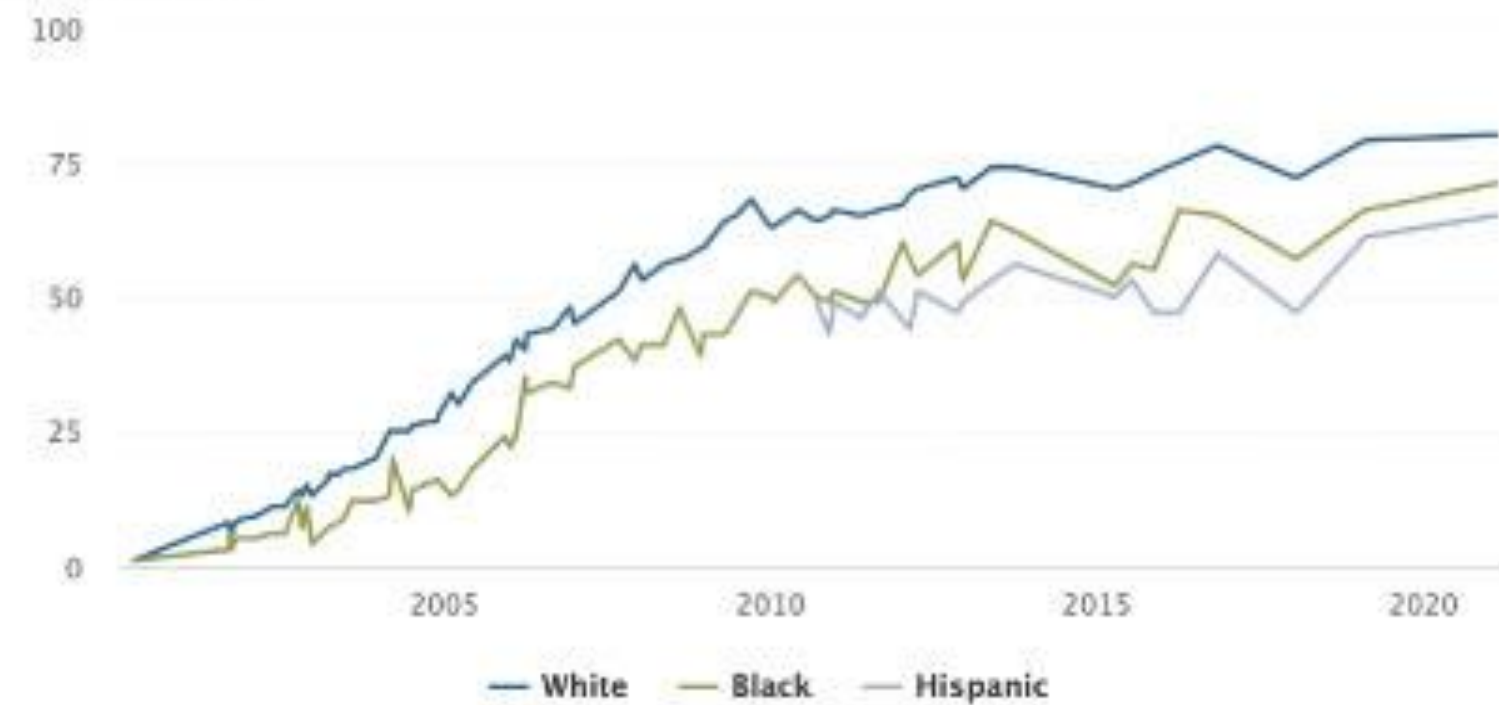
@LEAGUEOFCITIES



The BIPOC Digital Divide by the Numbers

Broadband connection by Race

% of U.S. adults who say they have a broadband connection at home, by race/ethnicity



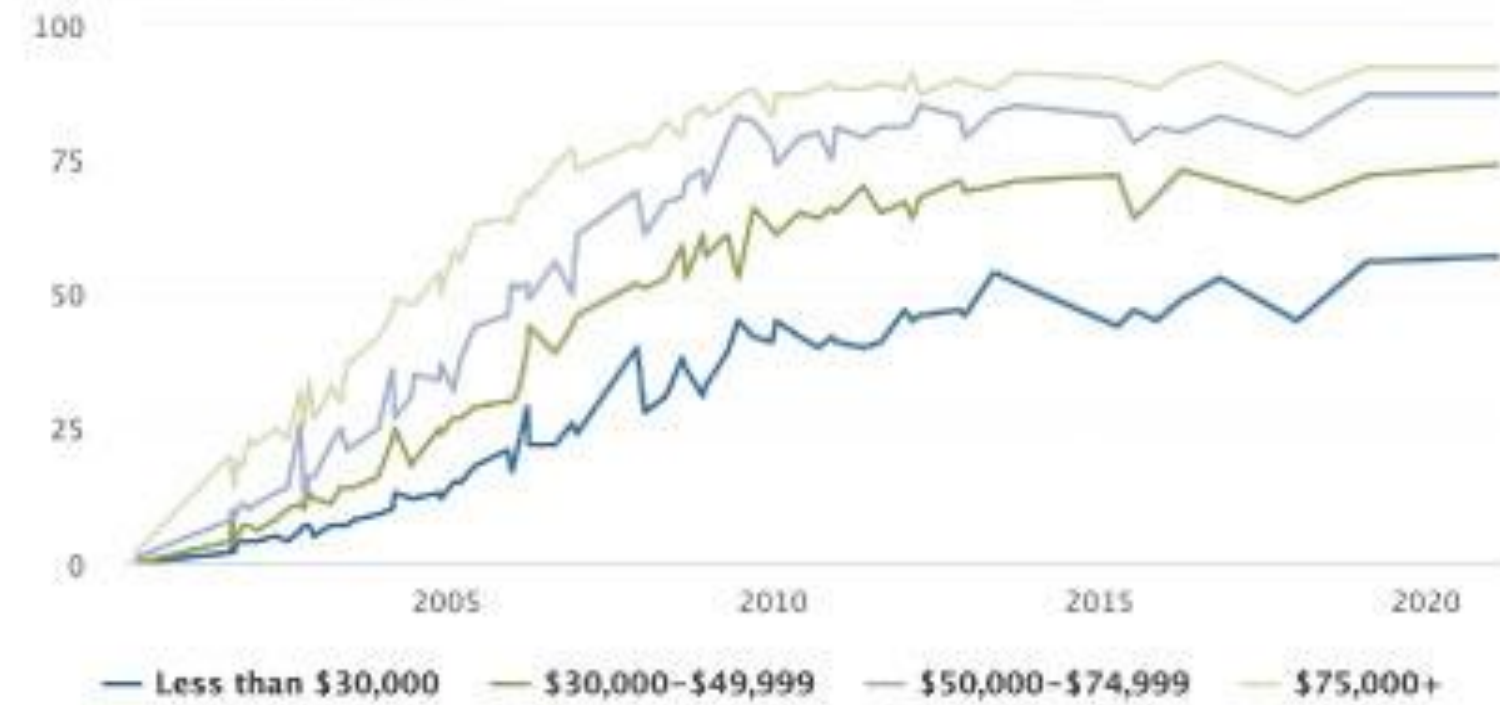
Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. The Center has used several different question wordings to identify broadband users in recent years, which may account for some variance in broadband adoption figures between 2015 and 2018. Our survey conducted in July 2015 used a directly comparable question wording to the one conducted in January 2018.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted 2000-2021.

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Broadband connection by Income

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



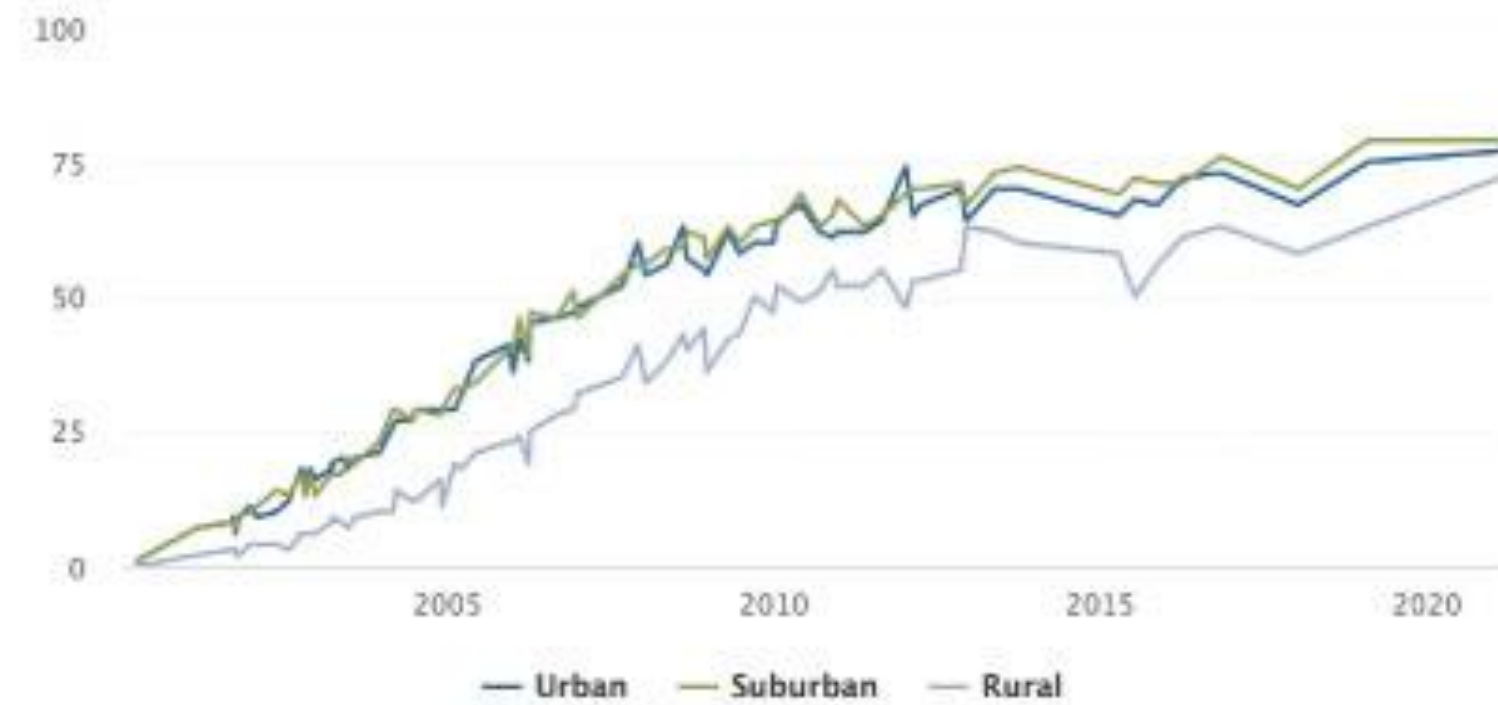
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Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted 2000-2021.

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Broadband connection by Place

% of U.S. adults who say they have a broadband connection at home, by community type



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. The Center has used several different question wordings to identify broadband users in recent years, which may account for some variance in broadband adoption figures between 2015 and 2018. Our survey conducted in July 2015 used a directly comparable question wording to the one conducted in January 2018.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted 2000-2021.

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% of US Adults w/broadband at home

- * 65% of Latino households
- * 71% of Black households
- * 80% White households

Median household income 2020

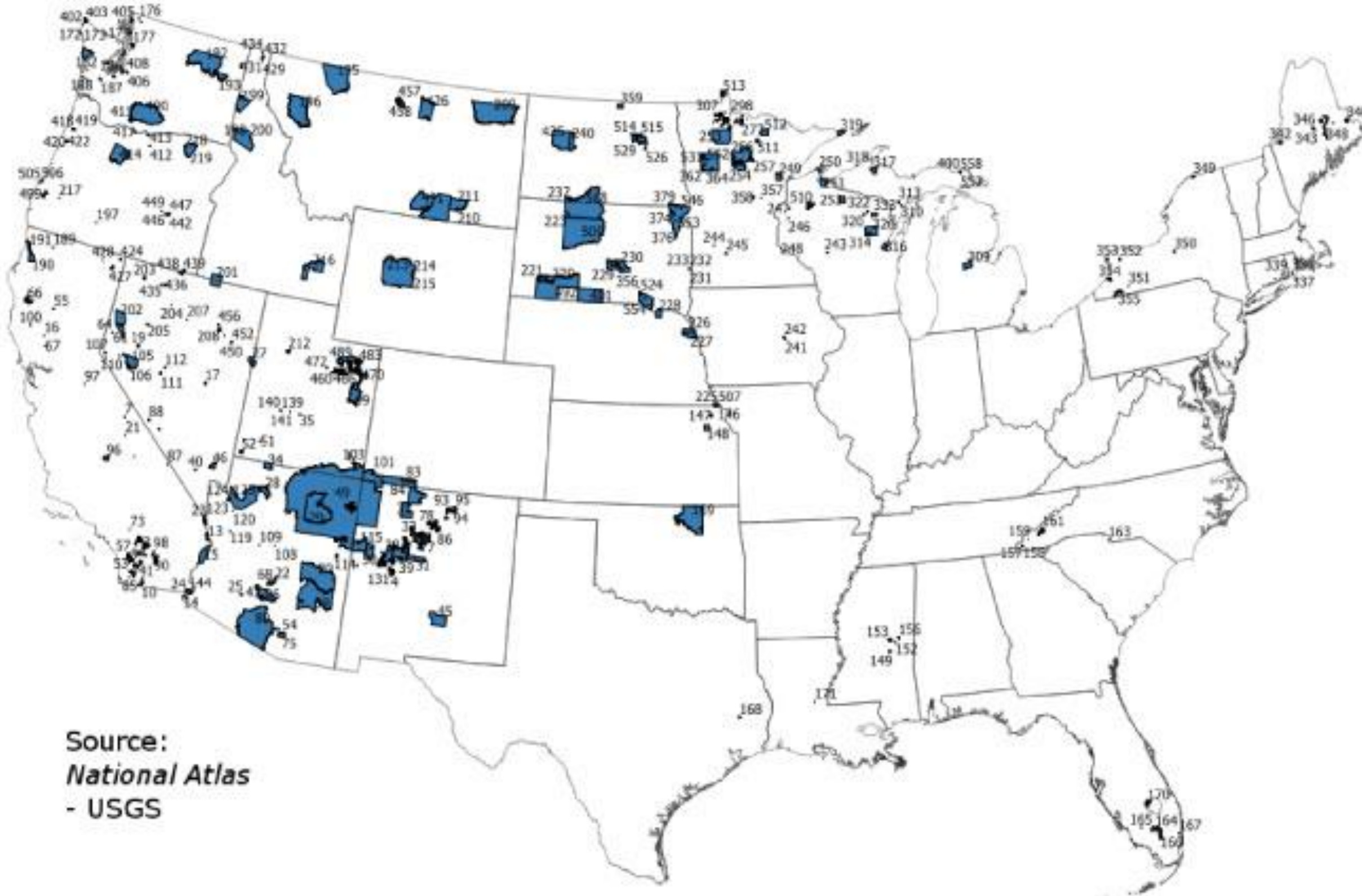
- \$ 56,113 Latino households
- \$ 45,438 Black households
- \$ 76,057 White households

Nation's nonmetro inhabitants.

- Latino - 6.3% (about 3.8 million)
- Black - 7.8%

Tribal Digital Divide / *More Information Needed*

Native American Reservations in the Continental United States



Source:
National Atlas
- USGS

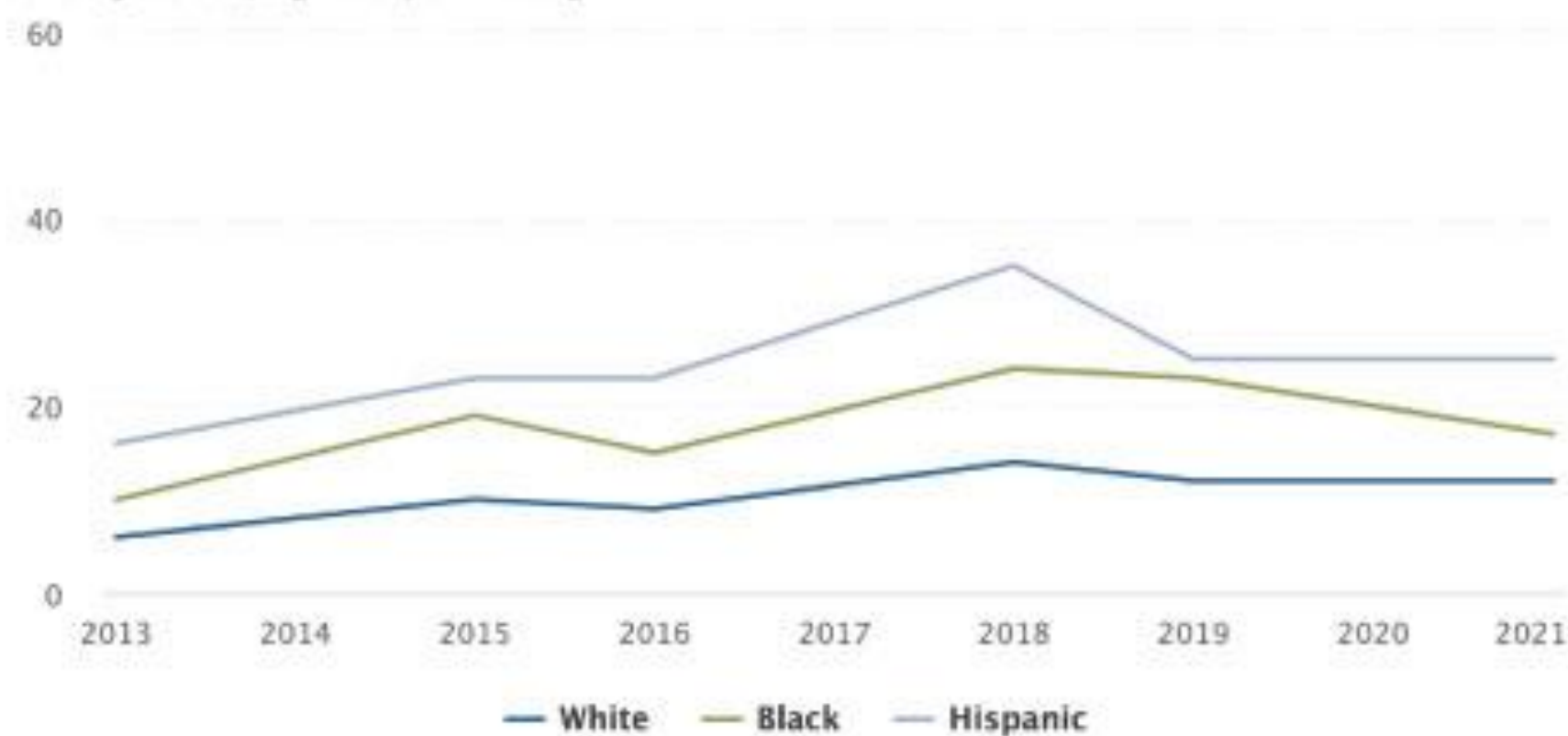
Residents of tribal lands have lower levels of broadband Internet access relative to the U.S. as a whole, but the digital divide may be greater than currently thought.

FCC data overstated tribes' broadband availability and access to broadband service.

Smart Phone Dependent

No Broadband at home only CELL PHONE

% of U.S. adults who say they do not use broadband at home but own smartphones, by race/ethnicity



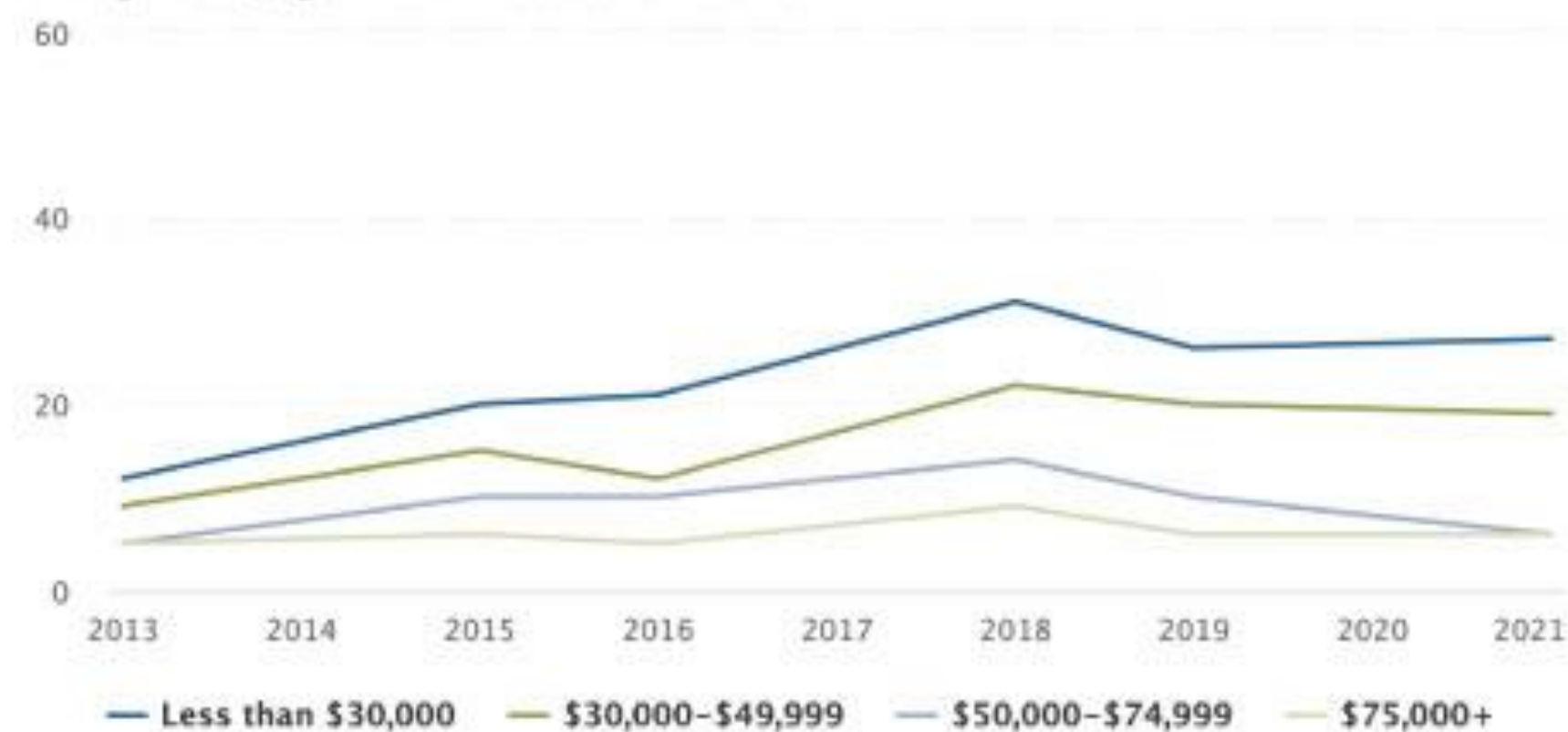
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Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted 2013-2021. Data for each year based on a pooled analysis of all surveys containing broadband and smartphone questions fielded during that year.

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CELL PHONE only: BY INCOME

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



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted 2013-2021. Data for each year based on a pooled analysis of all surveys containing broadband and smartphone questions fielded during that year.

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Reliance on smartphones for online access is especially common among younger adults, lower-income Americans and those with a high school education or less.

WHY?

The majority of smartphone dependent respondents cite **affordability** as the number one reason for not having an at home broadband connection.

Reliance on smartphones for online access is especially common among younger adults, lower-income Americans and those with a high school education or less.

What is the impact?

Limited
ACCESS
Limited
SPEEDS



Limited
OPPORTUNITY
to learn digital skills



Limited
POSSIBILITIES

Digital Equity Policy Pillars



#DigitalEquity



T-MOBILE CONNECT



T-Mobile 5G for Good

- In March 2020, T-Mobile launched **T-Mobile Connect**, its **lowest priced smartphone plan**, to help the most vulnerable among us get and stay connected during the pandemic.
- **Connecting Heroes** is the Un-carrier's 10-year commitment to provide **free service and 5G access to first responders**.
- T-Mobile launched **Project 10Million**, a \$10.7 billion initiative to deliver **internet connectivity to millions of underserved students at no cost to them**. The Un-carrier has also expanded the program to offer more low-cost data options for school districts to pass on to eligible households.





T-Mobile 5G for All

- **T-Mobile Home Internet:** Simple, fast fixed wireless broadband powered by America's largest, fastest, most reliable 5G network.
- **T-Mobile Hometown:** A massive commitment to bring [5G to rural America](#), hire 7,500 new employees in small towns and rural communities over the next few years, and provide \$25 million in grants for community development projects.

\$3M
TECHOVER PRIZE

**NETWORK
ENHANCEMENTS**
FROM AMERICA'S LARGEST & FASTEST 5G NETWORK

**\$200,000
GRANT**

**T HOMETOWN
TECHOVER**



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