



FAQ: CONNECT THE FUTURE

WHAT IS CONNECT THE FUTURE (CTF)?

Connect the Future (CTF) is a new group seeking to accelerate the deployment of high-speed internet to unserved communities – including millions of rural homes, farms, and businesses. CTF endeavors to educate stakeholders and gather critical support for opportunities to bridge the national digital divide. By raising awareness and promoting solutions to increase connectivity to underserved households, businesses, and communities across the country, CTF will spur economic growth and foster new opportunities for millions of Americans.

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF CTF?

We're gathering leaders in fields like economic development, education, telemedicine, agriculture, community building, and telecommunications who support CTF's mission to:

- shine a light on the barriers to internet access, especially in rural areas
- show the solutions to expand access to more homes and businesses, including improving pole regulations
- shift the national conversation to enact those solutions – soon

HOW DOES CTF AIM TO BRIDGE THE NATIONAL DIGITAL DIVIDE?

We know the macro problems – and how to craft policies that will result in increased private investment in infrastructure. We know the micro problems – like the delays and expenses that can be seen from the process of attaching to utility poles in rural areas. And we're calling for common-sense solutions that will make these problems a thing of the past. Whether at the federal, state, or local level, we are turning advocacy into action to expand high-speed internet access and the opportunity that follows.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW?

Reliable fast internet is in demand like never before, as millions of Americans have turned to online learning, remote work, telehealth, and other online services to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges. But even as broadband providers have reached millions more unserved Americans and invested billions in broadband network expansion and improvement, too many remain unconnected. It is critical that we increase connectivity across the country and ensure that all families and individuals experience the benefits of broadband.

IS CTF A POLITICALLY PARTISAN GROUP?

No, CTF is not committed to any particular political party – or technology. Our agenda is simple: connect more Americans and do it quickly.



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WHY SHOULD I JOIN CTF?

We're working to gather additional support from those who understand the unique challenges facing unserved communities and who are willing to help us elevate the conversation.

The more leaders who get involved, the more successfully we can impress on policymakers the breadth and diversity of organizations and supporters who want to see action on this issue. Our supporters will come from a wide array of backgrounds – and each has their own priorities, responsibilities, and constituents – which is exactly what we want.

By showcasing all the different voices who care about this issue, we hope to strengthen the dialogue and build a network that can help rally support for new and innovative solutions at the federal, state, or local level.

By contributing your voice and support to CTF, you'll help bring access to high-speed broadband to more Americans and empower them to take advantage of opportunities needed to thrive in the 21st Century, whether in rural, suburban, or urban areas of the country. You'll help strengthen America's economy, expand opportunity, and usher in a better future for all.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES BEHIND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE?

More than 18 million Americans remain on the wrong side of the digital divide, unable to access high-speed Internet at home. 82 percent of those without broadband access live in rural areas, where additional investments are needed to connect homes and businesses over long distances in less-populated areas. In these communities, more infrastructure is often needed to cover each user, and that infrastructure may need to cross more difficult terrain.

CAN YOU SPEAK MORE ABOUT THE RURAL AREA UTILITY POLES ISSUE?

A major factor keeping rural residents from broadband access is the state of utility poles where they live. Utility poles represent the backbone of our nation's broadband infrastructure, especially in rural areas. However, a patchwork of laws governing utility poles creates confusion and dramatically increases the time and money needed to connect rural communities. "Make-ready work" or the process of attaching broadband cables to utility poles, includes everything from permitting and renting space for equipment to replacing old or out-of-code poles. Inconsistent ownership and regulation of these poles frequently lead to increased time, money, and other resources needed to install broadband infrastructure onto the poles and connect these unserved communities.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT CTF?

Visit our website: www.ConnectTheFuture.com