

BROADBAND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

A measure of the use and deployment of broadband telecommunications infrastructure over telephone lines.³¹

Why Is This Important? The ability to transfer large amounts of data is largely determined by bandwidth, the carrying capacity of the connections, or the “size of the pipes” between the sender and receiver of the data. Greater bandwidth allows faster transmission of larger amounts of data, something that is critical for the increasing number of businesses that use the Internet to communicate with customers, suppliers, and other parts of the company. But broadband access for households is also important, not only enabling a state’s residents to more robustly engage in e-commerce, but also enabling telecommuting, distance education, tele-medicine, and a host of other applications that can boost productivity and quality of life. However, while over 70 percent of households have broadband telecommunications available to them (about two thirds of rural users have broadband access), only 12 percent actually buy it. But that number is growing as more broadband applications become available.

The Rankings: The two states with the most broadband are two of the most high-tech states, Massachusetts and California. In addition, because broadband is still relatively expensive, high scoring states tend to be higher income states. Because it’s cheaper to deploy broadband in metropolitan areas, states that are more densely populated tend to have higher levels of broadband. As a result, the lagging states (e.g., Alaska, Mississippi, West Virginia, and Vermont) have more rural and/or lower income populations.

The top five		Composite score
1	Massachusetts	5.42
2	California	5.22
3	New Jersey	4.74
4	Nevada	4.45
5	New York	4.44
U.S. average		3.00

Sources: Pinkham Group, 2001 data;
Federal Communications Commission, 2000 data.

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