



Dot Com: Tracing the Digital Divide in Louisiana

By: Michael 'Terra' Polite, A.A.S. | Extension Associate, Horticulture | 4-H Tech Change Makers

What is the digital divide?

The past couple of years have been few and far from beneficial, however, there are technological implications that offer insight into the gaps in access and opportunities for differing geographic areas and socio-economic levels. While the advancement of technological platforms combined with the “virtual move” has grown exponentially, so have the inequalities. This transitional period has brought awareness to the divide between individuals, households, and businesses for increasing accessibility to all users. Paying bills, viewing medical records, doing simple web research, or even running a small business; technology plays a necessary role in decision making and quality of life.

Why is it important?

- “Broadband connectivity allows Louisiana residents and businesses access to the most basic amenities needed in a 21st-century world.”
– <https://connect.la.gov/digital-divide/>
- Residents of all ages, both rural and urban, may experience this resource gap.

What does it look like in Louisiana?

- Since 2015, the cost of broadband in LA decreased by 75%*
– <https://connectk12.org/states/LA>

How can you help someone get connected?

- The Affordable Connectivity Program, through the Federal Communications Commission, “is a benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare, and more.”
– <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>

Benefits

- \$30 per month towards internet service and up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop, or tablet*.
- \$75 per month on qualifying Tribal lands.

Eligibility

- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- Meets the criteria for a participating provider’s existing low-income internet program
- Participates in assistance programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, and others (*check the website for applications and eligibility at <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/>*)

Sources: Affordable connectivity program. Federal Communications Commission. (2022, August 17). Retrieved August 17, 2022, from <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>

Connect K. 12. (n.d.). Retrieved August 17, 2022, from <https://www.connectk12.org/>

Digital Divide. Connect Louisiana. (n.d.). Retrieved August 17, 2022, from <https://connect.la.gov/digital-divide/>

Home - ACP - universal service administrative company. ACP. (2022, August 17). Retrieved August 17, 2022, from <https://acpbenefit.org/>