BroadbandUSA

Auburn University’s Broadband project is funded by a three-year $4.6 million federal grant from the Broadband Technology and Opportunities Program (BTOP), administered by the NTIA within three project categories:

- **Comprehensive Community Infrastructure**: Projects to deploy new or improved broadband Internet facilities
- **Public Computer Centers**: Projects to establish new public computer facilities or upgrade existing ones that provide broadband access to the general public or to specific vulnerable populations.
- **Sustainable Broadband Adoption**: Projects that focus on increasing broadband Internet usage and adoption, including among vulnerable populations where broadband technology traditionally has been underutilized.

For more information on BroadbandUSA, visit its website at: www.broadbandusa.gov.

Organization History

The Center for Governmental Services (CGS) represents Auburn University’s commitment to excellence in state and local government and non-profit organizations. Since 1976, the Center has provided technical assistance, training, and survey and policy research to meet the changing needs of Alabama governments and public officials.

The Center’s mission is to improve and transform governance through innovation, research, technical assistance and training. Through partnerships with Alabama governments, CGS strives to improve the lives of Alabama citizens by promoting the improvement of management and operation of government at every level.

Project Partners

The project is a collaboration of the Alabama Public Library Service, Tuskegee University, Alabama Public Schools, Auburn University Outreach, Auburn University Wireless Engineering and Education Center and the Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy. These organizations have joined together to benefit Alabama communities by connecting libraries, education, government and health care. Visit our website to follow the progress of the project and take advantage of our free training resources: www.auburn.edu/cgs.
Currently Alabama ranks 49th in the nation in households with Internet access. The majority of homes without broadband internet are low-income rural areas. Without internet, these families who could benefit the most from broadband are cut out of educational, civic and economic opportunities.

By improving public access to broadband services in underserved areas of the state, Auburn University’s Broadband project aims to bridge the digital divide between low-income rural areas and wealthier urban areas. With federal and state funding, Auburn University launched its Broadband project in 2010 with the primary goal of making computers and the internet more accessible and useful to Alabama families.

Public Computer Centers
Auburn University’s Broadband project is addressing the digital divide in Alabama by using $4.6 million to deploy internet workstations at public libraries and schools in Alabama’s rural and low-income areas. These centers are open to the public and connected to high-speed internet. They are also internet hotspots where patrons can use their own mobile devices to wirelessly access the internet. Additionally, many centers are equipped with the latest audio-visual teleconferencing technology to facilitate distance education classes and telemedicine sessions.

Learning Opportunities
To make broadband more useful for low-income families, Auburn University’s Broadband project offers weekly computer classes and a range of other courses focused on job creation:
- Computer Skills
- Troubleshooting and Maintenance
- Internet Security
- Internet Research and Online Resources
- Office and Productivity Suite
- Presenting Yourself in Print and Online

Telemedicine
The project’s audio-visual conference centers at public libraries and schools serve as test-beds for next-generation health information and pharmaceutical advisory systems that enhance health care delivery in underserved rural areas of the state. Whereas urban residents can consult face-to-face with pharmacists regarding the pros and cons of particular drugs, this may be not impossible in smaller communities without drugstores. Public computer centers can use the audio-visual conferencing equipment to facilitate conversations between rural residents and Auburn University pharmacists.

Job Growth
Auburn University’s Broadband project aims to stimulate the demand for broadband, economic growth, and job creation. In rural areas, public computer centers play a critical role in the workforce development process as they are used heavily for researching, and preparing and submitting applications for employment. By increasing the number of workstations available at public libraries and schools and enhancing available bandwidth, the project encourages job-seeking activities. Faster and better broadband computing access enables computer centers to give users access to a wider array of online training and workforce development content.

Technology Lifeline
Public computer centers are the technological lifeline to children and families in need. Public libraries and schools are particularly effective at providing broadband access to needy families. These families rely on free public internet centers to apply for jobs, take college classes, and complete school assignments.