

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2010, Connected Texas has been the “voice of broadband” in the Lone Star State. Offering a neutral perspective on broadband access, adoption, and use, Connected Texas has worked closely with communities, providers, government officials, and anchor institutions to accelerate technology in the state.

Connected Texas served as the state’s designated entity for broadband mapping, research, technical assistance, and local technology planning. The following report summarizes advances made in broadband access, adoption, and use over the past five years, as well as outstanding challenges and opportunities for continued growth to ensure that all Texas communities, residents, institutions, and businesses are connected to twenty-first century technology and equipped with the skills and support to utilize it to its fullest.

According to Connected Texas’ broadband maps, the state continued strong growth in broadband infrastructure and deployment, as well as increased competition among the higher broadband speed tiers over the last five years. Despite progress, significant connectivity gaps persist in the state, particularly in the state’s rural areas.

While expanding broadband access to these areas is important, without corresponding broadband adoption among Texas’ consumers and businesses, further investment and build-out could be deterred. To provide information on the people, businesses, and communities that are taking advantage – and more importantly, not yet taking advantage – of the expansive opportunities provided through broadband, Connected Texas conducts annual statewide residential and business broadband surveys.

In Connected Texas’ 2014 Residential Technology Assessment, these surveys revealed that 74% of Texans have adopted broadband at home, and 80% of businesses in the state utilize broadband. Yet, with nearly 5 million adults and 105,000 businesses statewide still without broadband, there remains much to do.

Within individual communities, Connected Texas facilitated broadband and technology outreach, education, and dissemination through its Connected Community Engagement Program (“Connected”). The Connected program coalesces and trains regional leaders and forms community broadband planning teams to assess the local technology landscape. Each community is then provided a step-by-step action plan to meet their local technology needs. Since 2011, twenty-nine Texas communities have successfully completed local technology assessments and received technology action plans through this program. Connected teams are working to address a wide variety of technology-related issues across community sectors. From addressing rural infrastructure gaps, improving the online presence and use of technology among businesses, or expanding tele-health opportunities at rural institutions, to expanding e-government services, hosting local technology summits, or developing, implementing, and support one-to-one device programs and connectivity for schools, the Connected program offers a direct intervention for accelerating the access, adoption, and use of technology across Texas.