

Sample ACCESS 67 County Resolution

Resolution 21-____
A RESOLUTION OF THE ____ COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
SUPPORTING THE FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES' ACCESS 67
INITIATIVE FOR AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET
THROUGHOUT FLORIDA.

WHEREAS, affordable and reliable, high-speed internet access is essential for Floridians to be prosperous, compete in a global economy, and achieve a high quality of life; and

WHEREAS, affordable and reliable, high-speed internet access is as fundamental as acquiring electricity in the first half of the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, the lack of broadband internet access impacts small, medium, and large counties, both rural and urban; and

WHEREAS, the absence of high-speed internet hinders:

- Equitable educational opportunities for school children and workforce development;
- Access to telemedicine to improve health outcomes without demanding travel and transportation needs;
- Rapid communication between the public and law enforcement agencies;
- Economic competitiveness limiting business investment, job growth, and career opportunities;

WHEREAS, high-speed Internet can be cost prohibitive for many Floridians further accelerating the Digital Divide; and

WHEREAS, affordable internet access includes a digital equity component focused on identifying groups disproportionately impacted by the Digital Divide that contribute to national and local disparities; and

WHEREAS, identifying community needs, assets, and barriers is necessary to meet the goal of universal access to high-speed Internet; and

WHEREAS, local governments, states, and the federal government must leverage resources to deliver cost-effective broadband solutions which provide a return on investment to both the public and private interest; and

WHEREAS, county officials play a crucial role as policymakers, funders, data aggregators, conveners, and partners in pursuing sustainable solutions to broadband access, affordability, and reliability; and,

WHEREAS, the Florida Association of Counties ACCESS 67 initiative seeks to implement a comprehensive approach to empowering counties to develop solutions to address the impacts of the lack of ACCESS to critical telecommunication and information technology resources in Florida communities; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 969 in 2020 creating an Office of Broadband within the Department of Economic Opportunity requiring the creation of a strategic plan that has goals and strategies for increasing the use of broadband Internet service in the state; and

WHEREAS, it's critical the strategic plan be based on up-to-date and location-specific mapping that identifies broadband internet speeds at a granular, census block level to accurately assess internet access needs of the public and private sector; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 1239 in 2021, the "Florida Broadband Deployment Act of 2021", finding sustainable broadband Internet service is critical to economic and business development, essential for all residents, and provided resources to develop a state broadband internet service map to identify connectivity gaps to end users; and

WHEREAS, counties serve a vital role in coordinating Office of Broadband Local Technology Planning Teams with their local counterparts, including: libraries; K-12 education; colleges and universities; local health care providers; private businesses; community organizations; economic development organizations; local governments; tourism; parks and recreation; and agriculture; and

WHEREAS, state restrictions limit opportunities for counties to aggregate the user scale necessary to overcome otherwise cost-prohibitive service opportunities, achievable through public-private partnerships; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Counties Broadband Task Force report identified specific themes that serve as force multipliers in deploying better and more affordable services, including:

- Defining a modern "minimum standard" of Broadband
- Implementing smart "Dig Once" policies and practices including "rights of way" as public assets
- Testing and deploying fiber, cellular, satellite and other technologies
- Focusing on local community engagement and partnerships
- Tackling the "Homework Gap"
- Removing bans on municipal broadband
- Establishing a national grants/loans clearinghouse
- Regulating broadband as a utility
- Committing to world-leading broadband data and mapping analytics

WHEREAS, deployment of broadband internet technology solutions should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the local community; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between Internet Service Providers and counties will ensure community needs are addressed within acceptable timeframes to best serve their communities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of _____ County, Florida, as follows:

Section 1. The above recitals are true and correct and incorporated in this Resolution.

Section 2. The _____ County Board of County Commissioners, supports the Florida Association of Counties ACCESS 67 Initiative to implement a comprehensive approach to empowering counties to develop solutions to address the impacts of the lack of ACCESS to critical telecommunication and information technology resources in Florida communities.

Section 3. The _____ County Board of County Commissioners, further supports the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Broadband in its effort to achieve access to reliable and affordable, high-speed internet access to every household and business throughout the State of Florida.

Section 4. A copy of this resolution shall be sent to the Florida Association of Counties; the Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Broadband; the Governor of the State of Florida; the President of the Florida Senate; the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives; and APPROVED and ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of _____ County, Florida on the ____ day of _____, 2021.

Section 5. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.