

# US to pump \$1.2 bln to expand broadband access

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A job seeker uses an Internet connection to look for work at the South Los Angeles WorkSource Center in January. The US administration unveiled plans Wednesday to spend 1.2 billion dollars to expand broadband or high-speed Internet access to dozens of under-served rural communities.

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The government announced the latest effort for 126 projects using money from the [economic stimulus package](#) approved last year by Congress.

"The [broadband](#) projects announced today will give rural Americans access to the tools they need to attract new businesses, jobs, health care and educational opportunities," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in announcing the grants.

"The Obama administration understands that bringing broadband to rural America provides a gateway for businesses and key anchor institutions -- such as libraries, schools, public safety and community centers -- to provide services to thousands of Americans," he said.

Vilsack promised the projects would create jobs

and bring economic development to rural America.

President [Barack Obama](#) earlier this year presented Congress with a national plan setting a 10-year goal of connecting 100 million US households to affordable 100-megabits-per-second Internet service.

With the US lagging many other countries in access to high-speed data services, Obama has pledged to put broadband in every American home. His administration designated more than seven billion dollars in economic stimulus money to expand broadband access in under-served communities.

With the United States lagging behind many other countries in high-speed [Internet](#) penetration and connection speeds, and the US plan proposes broadband speeds 25 times faster than the current national average.

US connection speeds average less than 4.0 megabits per second (mbps) according to a report by Web analytics firm Akamai, placing the United States 18th in the global rankings behind leaders South Korea (14.6 mbps) and Japan (7.9 mbps).

The United States ranks 12th in terms of broadband connectivity with 24 percent of the population enjoying average speeds of over 5.0 mbps compared with 74 percent in [South Korea](#) and 60 percent in Japan, according to Akamai.

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