

\$25,000 a year did not have internet access. That number nearly doubles to 40% of BIPOC-headed households within the same income bracket. The full study can be found on the [City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's website](#).

The study also helped to illuminate the differences and similarities in the form the digital divide takes in rural and urban communities. In the State of Oregon approximately 70% of unconnected households are located in urban areas. Furthermore, in urban areas the primary barrier to getting connected is affordability while in rural areas both affordability and deployment are barriers. The Broad Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program as defined in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will help to lower the deployment barrier in rural areas. However, only a small portion of the Federal funds for bridging the digital divide might reach urban areas. This disparity is further exacerbated by the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program and the near monopoly status of the broadband market in Portland. Given all these factors, it should be expected that the digital divide in Portland and similar communities will likely grow larger in the coming years.

There are actions that could be taken that would help mitigate or reverse this course. Overturning the Mixed-Use Rule would reduce competitive market barriers and potentially unlock local funding sources for digital equity programs and infrastructure investment. Increasing transparency in MTE advertising and pricing would reduce competitive market barriers and therefore decrease the cost of services. Requiring broadband providers to disclose services provided rather than advertised would reduce market barriers and increase transparency for local jurisdictions to guide infrastructure development and target digital equity services.

