

BUILD OR PARTNER?

6 reasons for government agencies to
choose an established fiber provider



The COVID-19 pandemic placed new strains on networks across the United States. Internet services usage increased as much as 100 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels.¹ For government agencies, stay-at-home orders meant their constituents were transacting more business online, from looking up local ordinances to paying their water bills. Not only did agencies have to balance network traffic so that their own employees could log in from their homes and participate in video calls and online collaboration, but they also had to make sure constituents could get the information and services they needed. In some cases, government agencies had to create public health portals to provide updates on COVID-19 case counts.

Reliable internet connectivity serves as the foundation for constituent services and inter-agency collaboration. Coupled with network modernization initiatives that may have already been under way before the pandemic, it may seem like a good idea for local governments to build a fiber internet infrastructure from scratch and become their own internet service provider (ISP). Government internet would help them meet the demand and offer another utility to constituents, potentially bundling water, electricity and internet service.

While this strategy may help alleviate reliance on broadband internet providers, it may not do much for a government agency's bottom line or deliver any economic benefits. One city in Tennessee spent \$400 million to build its fiber broadband network, but that didn't improve the municipality's job market in any meaningful way.² It may also generate controversy among constituents, particularly when bonds are taken out to pay for the projects.

There's no question that government internet could help solve some of the problems consumers face with existing broadband connections, but you don't have to build it from scratch. Here are six reasons to partner with an established fiber provider.

100%

increase in internet services usage in 2020 compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.⁵

1. Faster time to market

It's past time to have fast, reliable connectivity. COVID-19 increased internet use by 100 percent overall, and streaming by 12 percent, as citizens obeyed stay-at-home orders and looked to bring work and entertainment into their homes.³ Many citizens are still at home, and they may already be looking into upgrading their internet connections or switching providers. Time is at a premium. It took one municipality in Colorado 13 months to get its government internet service online — but the project is only 27 percent complete.⁴

By partnering with an established [fiber internet](#) provider, government agencies can quickly turn up [government internet](#) services in 30 to 120 days, depending on whether fiber needs to be installed. This is much more cost effective and faster than starting from scratch.

Established fiber providers already have the infrastructure in place to expand a government network and can meet the demands of rapidly growing areas.

2. Access to expert resources

Reliable, redundant [fiber networks](#) take a lot of expertise to deploy and maintain, and most government agencies already have to allocate their resources very carefully. In many cases, they're hamstrung by budget constraints for employees, and their in-house teams don't have enough experience with building fiber networks. They need a team to plan, design, install and maintain the network, but just don't have the money or human capital.

Local fiber provider partnerships can bridge the talent gap and provide the much-needed expert resources to successfully manage complex, high performing fiber networks. Instead of using contractors or building new teams, government agencies can access their provider's certified professionals' collective experience.

3. Higher network availability

If the [government internet service](#) goes down at 3 a.m. on New Year's Day, who will troubleshoot and possibly go on location to fix the problem? Most government agencies don't have the in-house staff to call upon at all hours. Without 24/7/365 on-call technicians, it can be hours or even days before issues are resolved — a disruption that can be very costly.

Established fiber providers with resilient networks are already staffed for any type of failure. Their technicians are ready to go out, any time day or night. These providers typically offer a service level agreement (SLA) to ensure uptime, and some providers even for mean time to restore (MTTR), not just respond.

4. Automated network expansion

Even after the network is built, government agencies need to plan for constituent growth. In particular, cities in the southern and western regions in the United States are poised for rapid growth, and municipalities need to keep up. For example, Frisco, Texas grew by 71.1 percent between 2010 and 2019.⁶

The internet service that rolls out today may not be able to keep pace with the demand in a few years, and government agencies will need to lay more fiber. However, established fiber providers already have the infrastructure in place to expand a government network and can meet the demands of rapidly growing areas.

5. A better constituent experience

In addition to constrained IT resources, government agencies may also not have the budget to hire and staff a customer service center for their fiber network. Constituents will have billing questions, service issues and want to know more about what they're signing up for. Agencies will need to provide superior customer service that rivals network service providers. Using an established fiber provider means the customer service team is already in place, along with the technology to track, assess and measure how well customer service is working. They can continuously improve how customers receive service and provide advanced service features like customer experience portals that offer outage information, for example.

6. Lower cost

Government agencies must answer to the taxpayers when it comes to spending money — and taxpayers aren't shy about speaking out. Building, maintaining and expanding a fiber network is expensive, from the initial capital costs to operating expenses. Constrained budgets mean that money may be taken away from other government services, much to taxpayers' chagrin.

A partnership with an experienced fiber provider means that there's no need to spend capital on building a network — it's already there. Government money can be spent on mission-critical initiatives, particularly when revenue may be down. Additionally, some fiber providers also offer flat rate pricing, which simplifies expenses and adds transparency.

The time to partner is now

Government agencies that want to provide more services to their constituents, as well as meet bandwidth demands internally, can rely on Spectrum Enterprise. With over 20 years of experience partnering with the government sector, Spectrum Enterprise has the knowledge and expertise to help government agencies get the most out of their fiber internet connections. Spectrum Enterprise has a Center for Digital Government-certified sales team and local account teams to meet your unique needs. We also participate in multiple discount programs and have master service agreements with many states to make procurement easier and keep costs down.

Fiber Internet Access from Spectrum Enterprise delivers the high-performance necessary for government agencies to meet constituent demands, while making the most of existing IT talent and budget. Learn more about partnering with Spectrum Enterprise for government internet.

Learn more

1. Rahul De, Neena Pandey, Abhipsa Pal, "Impact of digital surge during Covid-19 pandemic: A viewpoint on research and practice," International Journal of Information Management, Dec. 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7280123/>.
2. George S. Ford, R. Alan Seals, Jr., "Phoenix Center Policy Paper Number 54: The Rewards of Municipal Broadband: An Econometric Analysis of the Labor Market," Phoenix Center, May 2019, <http://www.phoenix-center.org/pcpp/PCPP54Final.pdf>.
3. Mark Beech, "Covid-19 pushes up internet use 70% and streaming more than 12%, first figures reveal," Forbes, March 25, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markbeech/2020/03/25/covid-19-pushes-up-internet-use-70-streaming-more-than-12-first-figures-reveal/?sh=55cc45613104>.
4. Sean Gonsalves, "Fired up about fiber on the front range," Community Networks, Dec. 22, 2020, <https://muninetworks.org/content/fired-about-fiber-front-range>.
5. Rahul De, Neena Pandey, Abhipsa Pal, "Impact of digital surge during Covid-19 pandemic: A viewpoint on research and practice," International Journal of Information Management, Dec. 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7280123/>.
6. "Southern and western regions experienced rapid growth this decade," United States Census Bureau, May 21, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/south-west-fastest-growing.html>.

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving America's largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes networking and managed services solutions: Internet access, Ethernet access and networks, Voice and TV solutions. Spectrum Enterprise's industry-leading team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. More information about Spectrum Enterprise can be found at enterprise.spectrum.com.

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