



Berkshire Connect, Inc.



**PIONEER VALLEY
CONNECT**

Why is Broadband Important?

Economic Development. Broadband has become an absolute necessity to retain and attract business. It is important to businesses of all sizes, from large manufacturers managing their global supply chain, to mid-sized retail and service based businesses connecting to customers, to the home-based consultant or eBay business.

Education. Broadband allows educational institutions, teachers and students to communicate and share information locally, and conduct research and connect to others globally.

Public Health & Safety. Considering that many of the emergencies in Western MA are caused by extreme weather conditions, broadband access is essential. It facilitates communication and the transfer of essential information in cases of emergency, and well as meeting daily needs. Notification of requirements and other information to public health and safety officials is in large part via the Internet. For example, without broadband access, Board of Health volunteers often must take time off of work to attend training seminars that could be taken online.

Sustainability. Workers that take advantage of telecommuting opportunities will reduce traffic congestion. A strong telecommunications network will support access for commuters to Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) services.

Government Efficiency & Local Democracy. Broadband allows for municipal governments to complete state and federal reporting requirements efficiently. It eases communication between government officials and their constituents, which is particularly important for small towns with limited staff hours. Often local government access to broadband will facilitate the creation and maintenance of a municipal website, which can provide important information to residents.

Seniors, Disabled, & Populations Needing Special Access to Information & Communication. For populations such as seniors or the disabled that want and need greater access to the world, broadband is an important tool. Broadband capacity may offer better health monitoring opportunities and meet the greater communication needs of these specific populations to assist in more independent living.

Telephony Communication & Entertainment – Broadband allows for Voice over IP, access to music, movies and more. In some areas, the current copper infrastructure is very limited. Some small town residents have reported that by stretching the existing infrastructures to meet modern needs and a growing population, significant service problems have been created. Some tenants in industrial parks have even reported problems of not being able to get additional phone lines. Investment to build a more robust telecommunications infrastructure may alleviate some of the burden on the old copper lines.