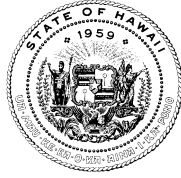


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Broadband Program FAQs

“Kāko 'o I Ka Lāhui: Supporting a Nation Through Connectivity”

1. Broadband Basics

- a. *What is broadband?*
- b. *How fast is broadband?*
- c. *What different types of broadband are there?*
- d. *Why is broadband important?*
- e. *What should I consider when choosing a broadband provider?*
- f. *Am I considered “Served”, “Underserved”, or “Unserved” according to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)?*
- g. *How can I check to see if I am “Served”, “Underserved”, or “Unserved”?*

2. DHHL Specific Broadband Topics

- a. *What Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are available to Beneficiaries?*
- b. *How much data do I need to purchase, per month, for my household?*
- c. *I pay for a specific speed, but I never seem to get it, why is that?*
- d. *If I am having issues with my Internet service, what do I do?*

3. FCC Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) FAQs

4. Spectrum Specific FAQs

- a. *I am having trouble reading my bill, is there something that can help me?*
- b. *How can I find out broadband options from Spectrum?*

5. HawaiiTelcom Specific FAQs

- a. *I am having trouble reading my bill, is there something that can help me?*
- b. *How can I find out broadband options from Hawaiian Telcom?*

6. SIC Specific FAQs

7. Ookla Speedtest FAQs

Broadband Basics

a. What is broadband?

Broadband is essentially high-speed internet. It allows you to connect to the internet much faster than traditional methods like dial-up, enabling activities like streaming videos, online gaming, video conferencing, and downloading large files with ease.

b. How fast is broadband?

Speeds vary depending on your location and service provider, but “high-speed” broadband is generally defined as having at least 25 Mbps (Mbps stands for megabits per second) download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed. This is significantly faster than dial-up, which typically reaches only 56 kbps (kilobits per second).

The FCC is in the process of raising the minimum speed benchmark. In November 2023, they launched an inquiry to consider increasing the standard to 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload. This process is ongoing, and a final decision is expected within the next year.

c. What different types of broadband are there?

The most common types are:

- Fiber optic: The fastest and most reliable option, but not always available everywhere.
- Cable: Uses the same infrastructure as cable TV, offering good speeds and wide availability.
- DSL: Utilizes existing phone lines, making it widely available but delivering slower speeds than cable or fiber.
- Satellite: Covers remote areas but suffers from high latency (delay) and unpredictable speeds.
- Wireless: Mobile network technology like 4G and 5G can offer broadband speeds, but data caps and network congestion can be limitations.

d. Why is broadband important?

Broadband is no longer a luxury, it's essential for everyday life. It allows us to:

- Work and learn remotely: Video conferencing, online courses, and cloud-based work rely on good internet connections.
- Stay connected: Social media, email, and video calls keep us in touch with loved ones.
- Access information and entertainment: Stream movies and music, play online games, and browse the web without frustration.
- Improve productivity: Download files quickly, send emails instantly, and use online tools efficiently.

- Facilitates remote consultations with healthcare professionals, expanding access to quality medical care for individuals in rural areas, with limited mobility, or facing transportation challenges.

e. What should I consider when choosing a broadband provider?

- Speed: How much speed do you need for your typical activities?
- Price: Compare plans and deals from different providers.
- Data caps: Some plans have limits on how much data you can use.
- Availability: Is the service available in your area?
- Customer service: Look for a provider with a good reputation for customer support.

f. Am I considered “Served”, “Underserved”, or “Unserved” according to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)?

The FCC currently defines minimum broadband speeds as 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, a National Telecommunications Information Agency (NTIA) program, defines “served” based on reliable broadband service with specific minimum speeds and other criteria that are substantially higher than the FCC’s definition. It’s important to distinguish between “served” under the BEAD program and the meaning determined by the FCC. “Served” under BEAD qualifies as 100 Mbps download speed, 20 Mbps upload speed, low enough latency to support real-time applications like video conferencing, and no more than 48 hours of outage time over a 365-day period.

It is very important to note that being “served” or “unserved” just means that you, as a household or business, have **access** to internet services at the abovementioned speeds. Realistically, this means that a service provider (like Spectrum or Hawaiian Telcom) has cables on your street; this means that you technically have **access** to subscribe to their services.

g. How can I check to see if I am “Served”, “Underserved”, or “Unserved”?

To check to see what status your household or business has according to the FCC, please visit [Home | FCC National Broadband Map](#).

DHHL Specific Broadband Topics

a. What internet service providers (ISPs) are available to Beneficiaries?

There are several internet service providers (ISPs) available in Hawaii, but the two main players are:

1. Spectrum:

- Offers reliable cable internet with coverage across most of Hawaii and no data caps on all internet packages.

- Provides customer support, available 24/7.
- Provides download speeds up to 1 Gbps in most areas.
- Popular option with competitive pricing and widely available WiFi hotspots throughout the islands.

2. Hawaiian Telcom:

- Offers fiber optic internet with the fastest speeds in Hawaii (up to 1 Gbps).
- Covers most major islands with reliable service and good customer support.
- Can be slightly more expensive than Spectrum but offers a superior connection for heavy internet users.

Other options:

- T-Mobile 5G Home Internet: Affordable fixed-wireless option with decent speeds (up to 25 Mbps) but wider coverage than fiber or cable.
- Satellite providers: Starlink, Viasat and HughesNet offer service throughout Hawaii, but speeds are slower than other options and latency can be high. Also, network congestion can occur when using these services in close proximity to additional users.
- Smaller local providers: Companies like Sandwich Isles, Xiber Hawaii and Pacific Direct Connect Inc. might have limited availability but potentially offer competitive deals in specific areas.

b. How much data do I need to purchase, per month, for my household?

Low data usage (less than 50 GB per month):

- Basic web browsing: Checking email, news, and social media occasionally.
- Light streaming: Watching standard definition (SD) videos on platforms like YouTube or Netflix for a few hours per week.
- Music streaming: Listening to music on Spotify or Apple Music at low quality.
- Online gaming: Playing casual games that don't require heavy downloads or constant online interaction.

Moderate data usage (50 GB to 150 GB per month):

- Regular web browsing: Checking email, news, and social media daily.
- Moderate streaming: Watching HD videos on platforms like YouTube or Netflix for several hours per week.
- Music streaming: Listening to music on Spotify or Apple Music at high quality.
- Online gaming: Playing online games with moderate data requirements.

High data usage (150 GB to 500 GB per month):

- Heavy web browsing: Streaming music, watching videos, and downloading files regularly.
- Heavy streaming: Watching 4K videos on platforms like YouTube or Netflix for several hours per day.
- Gaming: Playing online games with heavy data requirements, like MMORPGs or FPS games.
- Working from home: Video conferencing, uploading and downloading large files for work.

Extreme data usage (500 GB or more per month):

- Multiple users: Households with several people who heavily use the internet.
- 4K streaming: Watching 4K content for extended periods.
- Downloading large files: Regularly downloading large files for work, gaming, or entertainment.
- Running servers: Hosting your own game server or other online applications.

Remember, these are just estimates, and your actual data consumption may vary. Consider tracking your data usage for a month to get a better understanding of your own needs and choose an internet plan accordingly.

c. I pay for a specific speed, but I never seem to get it, why is that?

There are several reasons why you might not be getting your subscribed max internet speeds all the time. Here are some of the most common culprits:

Internet Service Provider (ISP) Issues:

- Network Congestion: During peak usage times, your ISP's network may become congested, leading to slower speeds for everyone. This is especially common in the evenings and on weekends.
- Oversubscribed Plan: Your plan might not be able to handle the amount of internet traffic you're using. If you have many devices streaming or downloading at the same time, you'll likely experience slowdowns.
- Faulty Equipment: Your ISP's equipment, such as the cables or lines leading to your home, could be malfunctioning, causing speed issues.

In-Home Issues:

- Wi-Fi Interference: If you're using Wi-Fi, interference from other devices (microwaves, cordless phones, etc.) or neighboring Wi-Fi networks can significantly impact your speed.

- **Outdated Router:** Older routers may not be able to handle the speeds your plan offers. Upgrading your router may help.
- **Weak Wi-Fi Signal:** If you're far from your router, the Wi-Fi signal may be weak, leading to slower speeds.
- **Wired Connection Issues:** If you're using a wired connection, the cables could be damaged or faulty.

Other Factors:

- **Location:** Your distance from the ISP's infrastructure can affect your speed. If you live in a rural area, you may not be able to get the same speeds as someone in a city.
- **Website or Server Issues:** The website or server you're trying to access could be experiencing slowdowns, which would not be related to your internet speed.

Troubleshooting Tips:

- **Run a speed test:** Websites like Speedtest.net can help you determine your actual download and upload speeds. Compare these to your subscribed plan to see if there's a significant difference.
- **Restart your router and modem:** This can often resolve temporary glitches.
- **Check for Wi-Fi interference:** Try moving your router to a different location or using a different channel.
- **Connect directly to your modem:** Bypassing the Wi-Fi can help isolate the issue.
- **Contact your ISP:** If you've tried troubleshooting and are still experiencing slowdowns, contact your ISP to report the issue. They can help diagnose the problem and suggest solutions.

By understanding the potential causes and trying these troubleshooting tips, you should be able to identify and address the reason why you're not getting your subscribed max internet speeds all the time.

d. If I am having issues with my Internet service, what do I do?

First, please call your ISP as they may be able to troubleshoot your problem. If your issue is found to not be related to anything within your control, please make sure to request that your ISP fix this issue. Make sure to always schedule dates for a technician to investigate and/or fix your problem.

Second, please call the Department's Call Center, (808) 620-9500, if you are facing the following problems:

1. Internet Service Provider (ISP) failed to schedule a service installation within 10 business days of a request.

2. Provider did not install the service at the agreed-upon time.
3. Provider requested more than the standard installation fee (\$120.00) to connect this location.
4. Provider denied the request for service.
5. No wireless or satellite signal is available at this location (this only applies if your location can only receive fixed-wireless or satellite service).
6. New, non-standard equipment is required to connect to this location – meaning, if your ISP is requiring you to install equipment other than fiber or cable when your neighbors have that.
7. If your internet service has been down for more than 48 hours and your Service Provider has not fixed this.

FCC Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) FAQs

Please follow this link to review current information regarding the Affordable Connectivity Program.

[Affordable Connectivity Program Consumer FAQ | Federal Communications Commission \(fcc.gov\)](#)

Spectrum Specific FAQs

a. I am having trouble reading my bill, is there something that can help me?

Yes, please follow this link ([Your Spectrum Bill \(youtube.com\)](#)). This video breaks down your spectrum bill. Spectrum customers can call the customer care center at **808-582-6100** or **888-369-2408** (both these numbers go to the same place).

b. How can I find out broadband options from Spectrum?

Through the following two ways:

1. Through the web site at: [Spectrum Packages - Best Bundles for Cable TV, Internet & Phone](#)
2. Contacting the Spectrum customer care center **808-582-6100** or **888-369-2408** (both these numbers go to the same place).

Hawaiian Telcom Specific FAQs

a. I am having trouble reading my bill, is there something can help me?

Yes, please follow this link: [2021Q1_HTHowtoReadBill.pdf \(hawaiiantel.com\)](#). This PDF breaks down your Hawaiian Tel bill. Hawaiian Tel customers can call the customer care center at **808-643-3456**.

b. How can I find out broadband options from Hawaiian Telcom?

There are two ways to find out broadband options from Hawaiian Telcom:

1. Through the web site at: [Telecommunications – High Speed Internet & Phone Service in Hawaii \(hawaiiantel.com\)](#) There is a link available to shop for residential services. New subscribers will need to submit the address where service is desired.
2. Contacting our call center at: 808-643-3456. The representative will also need the address where service is desired.

SIC Specific FAQs

If you currently subscribe to SIC broadband service, please follow this link to review information about their services. If you have any additional questions, please contact SIC at their listed number in the document.

[Microsoft Word - Open Internet Policy \(sandwichisles.com\)](#)

Ookla Speedtest FAQs

Ookla's solutions provide up-to-date insights into global fixed broadband and mobile performance data based on controlled testing and consumer-initiated tests taken every day with Speedtest®. Ookla's tools provide actionable insights based on network performance and consumers' real-world experience accessing the internet. DHHL will utilize this data so that we can better understand and improve the true performance of broadband networks within home lands based on historical and near real-time insights. Please follow this link to review further FAQs regarding the Ookla Speedtest service.

[Speedtest Frequently Asked Questions](#)

If you would like to test your service speeds, download the free "Speedtest by Ookla" app from the Apple Appstore or Google Play Store. By participating in speedtests you will be able to:

- Monitor your internet speeds whenever you want.
- Compare tested speeds as shown in the Speedtest app to the speeds that you subscribe to through your Internet Service Provider.

When performing speed tests:

- Remember that a wireless connection (WIFI) will run slower than a wired connection; the most accurate way to test would be to wire your computer/laptop into your router or modem.
- Ensure that no other devices that are connected to your network are using the internet while you are running your test. This will skew the results and not show your true speed.