

Treasury Department Announces Approval of Federal Funds to Help Close Digital Divide in Puerto Rico as Part of President Biden's Investing in America Agenda

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American Rescue Plan funding will also invest in multi-purpose community technology centers, which will bring connectivity to Puerto Rico communities for years to come

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced the approval of \$158 million in federal funds for broadband infrastructure and multi-purpose community facility projects in Puerto Rico under the American Rescue Plan's (ARP) [Capital Projects Fund](#) (CPF), part of President Biden's Investing in America Agenda. Today's announcement includes two funding plans: \$85.7 million for broadband infrastructure, and \$64.7 million for multi-purpose community technology centers / "Centros Tecnológicos," which will bring connectivity to Puerto Rico communities for years to come. The remainder of the funds (approximately \$8 million) will be used by Puerto Rico to administer the programs.

A key priority of the CPF program is expanding economic opportunities and providing internet connectivity in communities with unmet needs. Already, President Biden's Investing in America agenda has delivered affordable, high-speed internet to over 20 million American households, through these CPF investments funded by the ARP, and through the Affordable Connectivity Program funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

"One of our first tasks at the Treasury Department involved prioritizing equity in our pandemic recovery efforts – not just to return to the status quo, but to ensure communities like those in Puerto Rico benefited from structural, long-term investments to help spur economic development beyond pandemic recovery," said Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo. "This was done particularly through our implementation of the American Rescue Plan, including the Capital Projects Fund. The funding being announced today is a key piece of the Biden-Harris Administration's historic investments to increase access to high-speed internet for millions of Americans and provide more opportunities to fully participate in the 21st century economy."



"The Biden-Harris Administration's historic investment will help us bridge the digital divide and is one of many efforts by the President that underscores his commitment to equity. Access to

affordable, reliable high-speed internet is a necessity, connecting patients with providers, students with teachers and small businesses with a global market,” said Deputy Secretary of Commerce Don Graves. “More than 61,000 homes and small businesses in Puerto Rico are in areas without broadband infrastructure. Increasing broadband access will expand access to healthcare, education, and employment, and is a monumental step that will allow more Americans to participate in our modern economy.”

“These funds will make a huge difference in Puerto Rico, since they will help us ensure that our Island has the necessary broadband infrastructure, and that all our citizens have the internet access, tech assistance and training they need and deserve,” said Puerto Rico Governor Pierluisi. “I thank the Biden-Harris Administration and all federal officials here for their support of our people’s needs. We are changing the news on Puerto Rico, as we are evolving from facing challenges to making real progress.”

“The Pandemic created a national teaching moment on how much every family now requires affordable, high speed broad band to enjoy basic economic and education opportunity,” said Gene Sperling, White House American Rescue Plan Implementation Coordinator and Senior Advisor to the President. “Affordable, high-speed broadband for all is now a must-have, not a luxury, and this \$158 million from the American Rescue Plan for community technology centers and undersea middle mile connections, will be a big step forward for Puerto Rico realizing this critical goal.”

CPF provides a total of \$10 billion to states, territories, freely associated states, and Tribal governments to fund critical capital projects that enable work, education, and health monitoring. In addition to the \$10 billion provided by CPF, many governments are putting a portion of their State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) toward meeting the Biden-Harris Administration’s goal of connecting every American household to affordable, reliable high-speed internet. Together, these ARP programs and the BIL are working in tandem with President Biden’s Investing in America agenda to close the digital divide – deploying high-speed internet to those without access and lowering costs for those who cannot afford it.

Puerto Rico is approved to receive **\$85.7 million**  to improve the resiliency, reliability, and speed of the island’s high-speed internet access. This funding will specifically promote the Puerto Rico Submarine Cable Resiliency (PRSCR) Program, which will construct a new submarine fiber route to the island of Puerto Rico from the Dominican Republic and the U.S. Virgin Islands and create three new cable landing stations on the island’s coastlines. Puerto Rico will invest an additional **\$64.7 million**  of CPF funding in the Puerto Rico Multi-Purpose Community Technology Center Program, which seeks to create multi-purpose community technology centers / “Centros Tecnológicos” in areas across Puerto Rico where the public can access high-speed internet, use on-

site devices, borrow devices for at-home use, have access to educational opportunities in technology, digital learning, work remotely, and access healthcare services. Together with their administrative funding, these projects represent 100 percent of the territory's total allocation under the CPF program.

The Treasury Department began announcing state awards in [June 2022](#). To date, CPF has awarded nearly \$8 billion for broadband, digital technology, and multi-purpose community center projects in 47 states and three territories. These states and territories estimate that the broadband investments will reach over two million locations, in addition to the tens of thousands of individuals who will be served annually by connected multi-purpose community facilities. The Treasury Department will continue approving state, territory, and Tribal plans on a rolling basis.

CPF is one of many initiatives the Treasury Department has taken to invest in Puerto Rico's economic development under the Biden-Harris Administration. The ARP broadened tax benefits at an unprecedented scale by permanently expanding the Child Tax Credit (CTC) in Puerto Rico, delivering direct assistance to more than 250,000 families in 2022, a six-fold increase over the prior year, with an average benefit of \$4,700 per family. Earlier this year, Puerto Rico was approved for up to \$109 million in State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) funds, a small business program reauthorized and expanded under the ARP. And in April, Deputy Secretary Adeyemo and Vice President Harris announced grant awards through the Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund's (CDFI Fund) Equitable Recovery Program, which included many awards to community development financial institutions (CDFIs) that have strong track records of lending to Latino borrowers and in majority minority census tracts. A key part of those ERP awards includes 70 grants totaling \$226 million to CDFIs in Puerto Rico – the largest infusion of ERP funding to any single state or territory.

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