

The Role of State Broadband Policy in 2026

State Connections: Broadband Working Group

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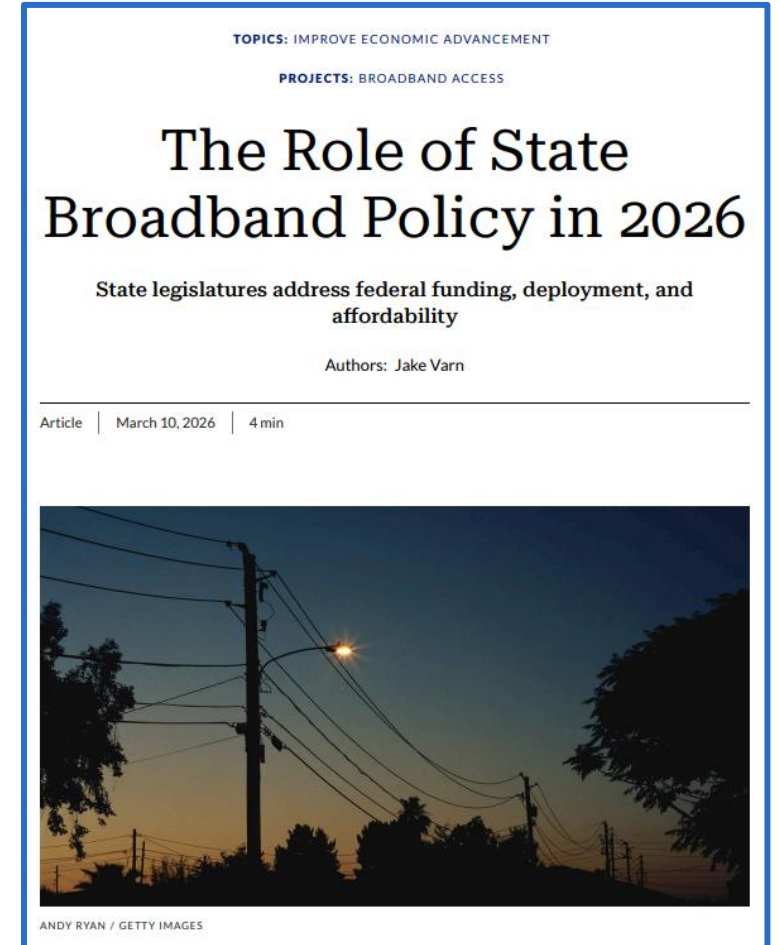
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Top-line trends from 2025 legislative activity

States enacted 160+ broadband-related bills and resolutions, shaping how BEAD will be implemented in 2026.

Legislative focus clustered around four policy categories:

- **Deployment funding** – state dollars complementing BEAD
- **State Broadband Offices** – expanded authority and administrative capacity
- **Network deployment barriers** – permitting reform and workforce development
- **Affordability** – addressing adoption and subscriber churn



Policy Categories

Deployment funding

- 26 states allocated a combined \$1.3B for state programs, government and CAI connections, and other broadband initiatives
- Virginia (\$50M) for make-ready costs and Minnesota (\$50M) expanded long-running state grant programs

SBO capacity

- 13 states passed new funding or increased their responsibilities

Network deployment barriers

- Permitting reforms: Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, West Virginia
- Workforce programs:
 - Texas funded broadband apprenticeships
 - Kentucky funded utility and permitting staff

Affordability

- Oregon, California, and New Mexico launched new state Lifeline programs
- New York and Connecticut enacted low-cost requirements





Thank you

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