

# Waiting to Connect

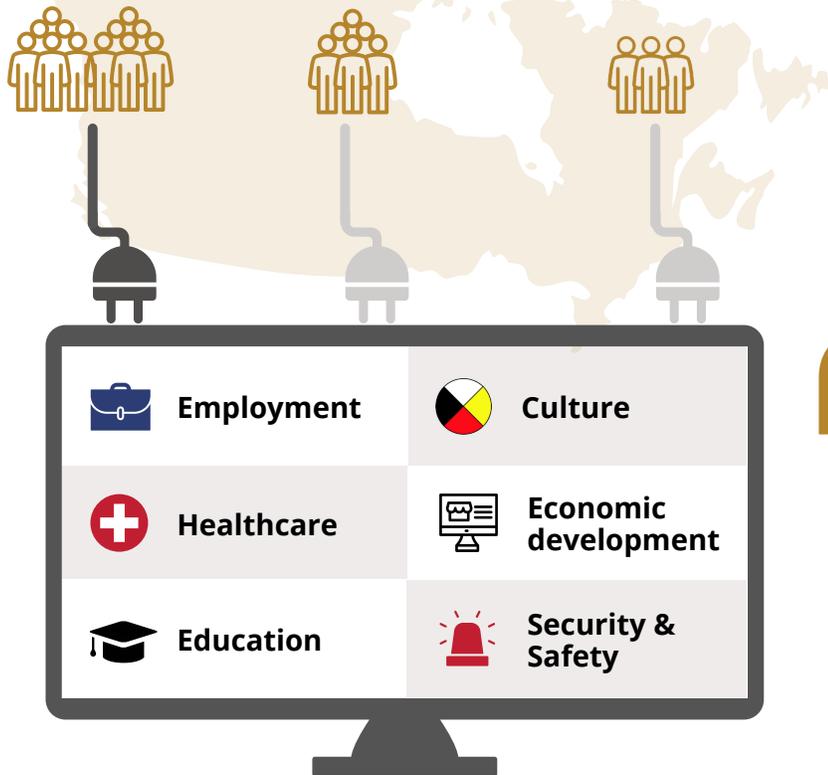


Many people in Canada are still unable to access essential services and struggle to thrive in an increasingly connected economy. Incremental policy approaches have failed to close the connectivity gap, and introducing new technologies may unintentionally exacerbate disparities. **Waiting to Connect** examines the non-technical issues that led to the connectivity gap, the barriers that persist, and the practices and principles that can guide the journey to equitable connectivity.

## CANADA'S CONNECTIVITY GAP

As of 2019, the percentage of households in Canada that have access to broadband services meeting the Government of Canada's target speed of 50/10 unlimited:

**99%** of urban households    **46%** of rural households    **35%** of households on First Nation reserves



Connectivity in Indigenous communities supports **self-determination** and elevates Indigenous participation and leadership in the economy.

During the **COVID-19** pandemic, communities with low-quality broadband experienced worsening inequalities.



*Bridging the connectivity gap means providing broadband in rural and remote communities comparable to that in urban centres in terms of speed, quality, and cost.*

## SPEED IS NOT ENOUGH



↓ **50** Megabits per second (Mbps)  
↑ **10** Mbps



What constitutes “high” speed internet is a moving target. The Government of Canada’s 50/10 targets are insufficient and will not meet the needs of rural and remote Canada by 2030 and beyond.

### A HIGH-QUALITY NETWORK HAS:

- Redundancy
- Reliability
- Symmetrical or near symmetrical upload/download speed

People in rural and remote communities who don't have access to **affordable, high-quality networks**, or who don't have the devices or **digital literacy** to take advantage of them are being left behind.

# 9 PRINCIPLES FOR EQUITABLE CONNECTIVITY



## UNIVERSALITY

Sufficient funding to ensure high-quality service to **all** communities in Canada.



## EQUITY

Explicitly integrating equity into all aspects of program and policy design to guarantee connectivity.



## PLACE-BASED & NEEDS-BASED APPROACHES

Flexible policies and programs built around the specific needs and potential of rural and remote communities.



Canada's current broadband funding and consultation processes are often complex, onerous, competitive, and involve many actors, making them difficult for small, capacity-limited organizations to navigate.



## FUTURE-PROOF TECHNOLOGY

Networks designed for current and future bandwidth needs.



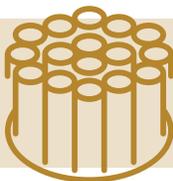
## ACCOUNTABILITY

A department consistently responsible for reporting, especially if public funds are used.



## TRANSPARENCY

Clear funding criteria metrics, and connectivity data.



Broadband infrastructure can only meet long-term connectivity needs if it is scalable and sustainable, and if there is local expertise and capacity to build, operate, and maintain it.



## INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

Indigenous reconciliation, including economic reconciliation, by elevating Indigenous participation, innovation, and leadership.



## COMPETITION & REDUNDANCY

Options and backup services for rural and remote regions.



## MEANINGFUL INCLUSION

Meaningful inclusion of, and benefits for Indigenous communities from the outset, including in program design.



Indigenous people are innovators and creators driving change. Their leadership and entrepreneurship are key components in shaping digital society.