Connecting Communities through Public-Private Partnerships

As state and local leaders consider the needs of their communities, the need for connectivity remains critical. When considering the most effective and efficient way to bring connectivity to their communities, state and local leaders should consider public-private partnerships (PPPs). PPPs create cost efficiencies for governments, allowing leaders to spend funds on other critical community needs.

Through PPPs, state and local leaders can maximize the use of federal funds as private partners assume responsibility and provide unique benefits to help bridge the digital divide:

**Expense:** PPPs offer the greatest taxpayer value at the least taxpayer risk. Private providers can share the cost of building, operating, and refreshing network technology, rather than relying solely on taxpayer dollars.

- **Network Deployment and Maintenance:** The act of deploying and maintaining broadband networks is a capital-intensive undertaking that requires significant expertise, planning, and funding.
  - The private sector is best positioned financially and technically to deploy broadband efficiently, and to make ongoing investments including upgrades to technology.

- **Sharing the Cost:** In a well-constructed PPP, the private partner assumes much of the cost and risk of building and maintaining network technology, meaning state and local leaders can focus funds on other community priorities. In addition to sharing the capital costs, private partners assume accountability for other critical elements of providing quality broadband service including:
  - Network design and broadband deployment
  - Ongoing maintenance
  - Continued investment and upgrades as technology evolves and advances
  - Customer service
  - Hardening of the network for resilience in the event of natural disasters, such as wildfires, tornadoes, flooding and hurricanes

**Expertise:** Private partners provide specialized broadband expertise in building quality, reliable, and secure networks.

- **Security:** Private providers build, operate, and refresh networking technology and help ensure the availability, integrity, and performance of their respective critical communications networks.
  - Network operators have made extensive investments over many years in capabilities to monitor and help detect and thwart cyber-attacks in their networks at scale.

- **Compliance:** Private partners assume responsibility for ensuring networks comply with federal and international standards, including:
  - Cybersecurity with the most up to date standards, including ISO27001 and GLBA
  - Federal standards and compliance, including the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

- **Experience:** Providers lend their invaluable experience to public partners, resulting in improvements in internet speed, coverage, and customer experience.
• Private providers are responsible for providing customer service and can rely on their extensive experience satisfying customer needs to better serve communities.

**AT&T in Public-Private Partnerships:**
At AT&T, we take our commitment to PPPs seriously. We have a history of meeting our commitments to deploy both fixed and mobile broadband on time and within budget.

• **Scale:** We’re currently leading the nation’s largest fiber build, providing broader reach and speed for consumers, businesses and local governments.

• **Competitive Pricing:** We offer affordable, national broadband rates and special low-income household solutions.

We have recently joined with Vanderburgh County, Indiana to build a state-of-the-art fiber network aimed at delivering high-speed internet to unincorporated parts of the county within two years.

As decisionmakers consider how to close the digital divide in their communities, PPPs offer unique cost efficiencies to governments, allowing state and local leaders to focus funds on other priorities while also bringing quality broadband connection to their communities.