

DEEPER DIVE: BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS

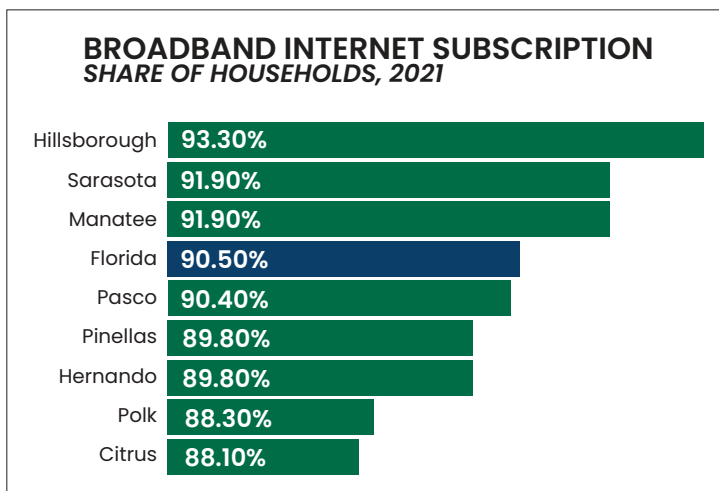
HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS DEEPER DIVE:

- The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the importance of broadband download and upload capacity requirements as more families work and learn from home.
- Broadband affordability leads to broadband accessibility. Since broadband adoption rates are closely linked to income levels, many income-constrained families are left behind from connecting to opportunities for a better, more prosperous life.
- High-speed broadband coverage is often more limited in low-income areas and between U.S. urban and rural populations because of infrastructure limitations.

Broadband is so influential in today’s society that we now consider it essential infrastructure. Broadband access enables people to pursue education, health care, workforce training, and development, use of government services, and lifestyle pursuits, such as worship, social engagement, and other activities that are good for mental health.

According to the Federal Communication Commission, a digital divide exists in the U.S. across income levels. Almost 14.5 million people lack access to terrestrial broadband, with 44% of adults earning less than \$30,000 a year not subscribing to broadband at home.

The Biden Administration announced in June 2023 that Florida will receive an additional \$1.17 billion in federal funding for high-speed internet access to expand connectivity and ease the digital divide. As part of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program has set a goal to connect all Americans to high-speed broadband internet by the decade’s end.



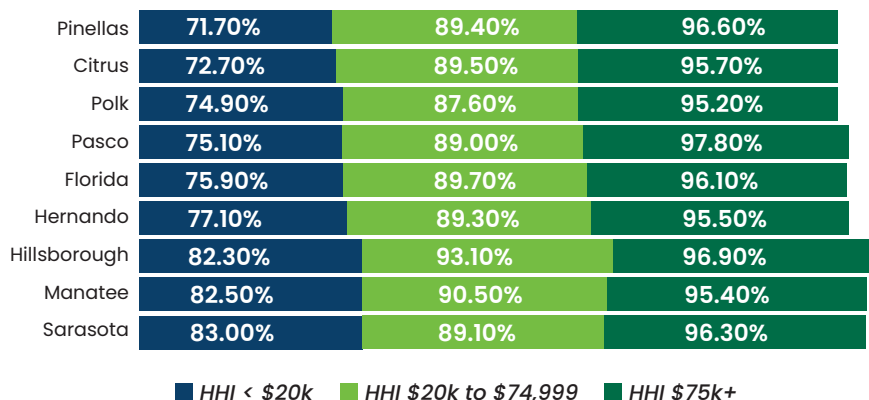
1.

Considering the eight Tampa Bay counties, at 93.3%, Hillsborough County has the largest share of households with broadband internet subscriptions, followed closely by Sarasota and Manatee counties. Pasco, Pinellas, Hernando, Polk, and Citrus counties all fall below the Florida average.

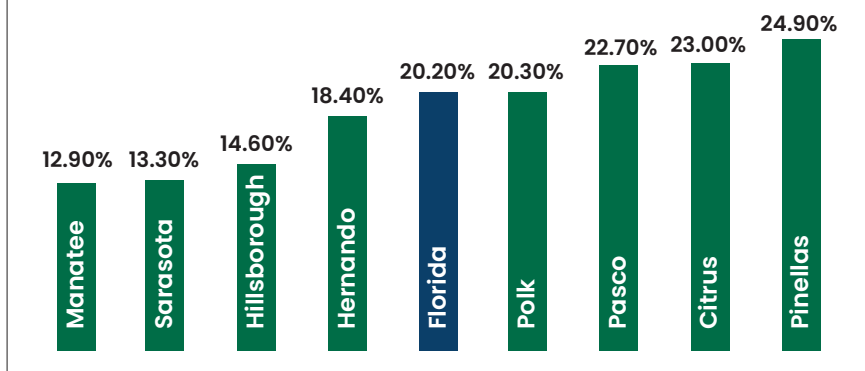
2.

For households earning \$75,000 or more annually, broadband internet subscription rates across the Tampa Bay counties exceed 95%. However, for families earning less than \$20,000 annually, subscription rates fall between 70% and 83%.

SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH A BROADBAND INTERNET SUBSCRIPTION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2021



SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH A BROADBAND INTERNET SUBSCRIPTION DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EARNING < \$20K & \$75K OR OVER, 2021



3.

The difference in subscription rates between households earning less than \$20,000 annually and those earning \$75,000 or greater exceeds 24% in some Tampa Bay counties. Given that higher-income households are more likely to subscribe to broadband services, the deployment of broadband access is typically faster in these areas.

4.

Broadband works best when households have both an in-home connection—for activities such as telework and entertainment streaming—and a wireless subscription. According to the results of a Pew Research Center poll conducted in early 2021, 27% of adults living in U.S. households earning less than \$30,000 a year rely exclusively on smartphones for internet access. Forty-three percent of adults with lower incomes do not have home broadband services and 41% do not have a desktop or laptop computer. In the Tampa Bay region, Hillsborough, Hernando, and Citrus counties fall above the Florida average for the share of households relying on only a cellular data plan.

SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ONLY A CELLULAR DATA PLAN, 2021

