



# LIGHT UP LIVINGSTON

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### Why is Livingston County prioritizing broadband?

Livingston County recognizes the vital importance of broadband access. There have been technical studies which acknowledge the need for improved access to broadband internet. These studies include the County's Strategic Plan, the County's anti-poverty initiative called THRIVE Livingston, the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, and the Livingston County Economic Development Strategic Plan.

The County commissioned a county-wide asset inventory, an engineering report and a public survey to analyze the need and shape future strategies for rural broadband development. The survey was distributed county-wide in the winter of 2019 to residents, businesses, and farm operators. It was designed to collect data on current broadband services, offerings and speeds by location. The results from the survey have been vital for a better understanding of the internet landscape in the county. Among respondents:

- 41% lack sufficient internet access in Livingston County today
- 90% of respondents consider broadband internet to be vital public infrastructure
- 79 % stated that government should play a role in financing high-speed internet development

### What is Light Up Livingston?

Light Up Livingston is Livingston County's initiative in response to the need for high-speed affordable broadband service in the County. The goal is to provide access to high-speed, fiber-optic internet to every address in the county. This effort is comprised of several phases, internet service providers and grant opportunities where available.

The Livingston County Board of Supervisors and County Administrator Ian M. Coyle are dedicated to improving the high-speed broadband network to enrich the quality of life for residents, ensure that economic development opportunities are available for agriculture and businesses and have a positive impact on education, telemedicine, emergency services, the local economy and home values.



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## What are the goals of Light Up Livingston?

The goal is to form public-private partnerships with internet service providers (ISPs) which:

- Provide the opportunity for 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps) speeds to every address in the county.
- Increase high speed internet offering and availability in all of Livingston County to promote economic development and quality of life.

## What internet download and upload speeds are considered “high-speed” in Light Up Livingston?

County leadership has set a goal of making 1 Gbps level download speed (or greater) and 50 Mbps upload available to those interested.

## When will high speed internet be available at my address?

The New York State Broadband Program Office awarded a grant to Hughes Network Systems and Armstrong Telephone to expand high-speed internet in southern Livingston County. This is considered Phase I under 'Light Up Livingston'.

*Phase I:* New York State Broadband Program:  
<http://armstrongny.com/Home/Map>

*Phase II* of 'Light Up Livingston' is funded through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) ReConnect grant program and is the first step toward the County fulfilling its initiative. This phase involves a public-private partnership between Livingston County and Empire Access, a local Internet service provider.

*Phase II:* United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) ReConnect grant program public-private partnership with Empire Access:  
[www.empireaccess.com/livingston/](http://www.empireaccess.com/livingston/)



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## Is Livingston County an internet service provider?

No, the Livingston County Board of Supervisors decided that it would be best to support public-private partnerships to expand broadband service offerings.

The New York State Broadband Program Office awarded a grant to Hughes Network Systems and Armstrong Telephone to expand high-speed internet in southern Livingston County. For more information on where these providers have expanded in Livingston County please visit:

<https://nysbroadband.ny.gov/resources/residential-broadband>

The USDA ReConnect grant program partnership is with Empire Access.

## Who is involved in the ReConnect public-private partnership?

Livingston County solicited a request for proposals and partnership on the USDA ReConnect grant application. Empire Access was the selected internet service provider for this partnership. Empire Long Distance Corporation d/b/a Empire Access (Empire) is one of the area's leading telecommunications companies, providing the latest technology for communications.

As part of the public-private partnership, Empire Access will own and operate hundreds of miles of a fiber optic network that will offer reliable, high-speed Internet access to the County's most underserved and unserved areas. Upon completion, household, farm, business and school addresses on the network will have access to 1 Gigabit-level Internet service. The fiber-to-the-premises network will be capable high-speed internet services depending on the need of the customer.

Empire is a family owned and operated company, and operates in New York and Pennsylvania. Today, Empire delivers communications services and solutions to a variety of customers ranging from residential, retail, manufacturing, wineries, banks, health care facilities, schools and law enforcement agencies. Empire Access utilizes a 100 percent fiber optic connection to deliver service. For more information on Empire Access please visit: [www.empireaccess.com/livingston/](http://www.empireaccess.com/livingston/)



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## What does fiber-to-the-home mean?

Fiber optic technology uses strands of pure glass to transmit data via light waves. Fiber is the best choice for digital communications, such as high-speed Internet and digital TV, and capable of much greater bandwidth than other technologies. Fiber to the home is a solution for the future of technology.

## What role does Livingston County play in the public-private partnership?

Livingston County sponsored the ReConnect grant application and will provide match and seed capital for the Phase II effort.

## Who owns and maintains the broadband fiber?

Livingston County is partnering with private companies to expand broadband service offerings. For *Phase I* of Light up Livingston Armstrong Telephone owns and maintains the network and for *Phase II* Empire Access will own and maintain the Livingston County USDA ReConnect Network.

## How is this project being paid for?

The Light Up Livingston initiative is a phased approach where the county is leveraging grant opportunities as they become available. Right now, there are several funding sources and phases that make up Light Up Livingston.

*Phase I:* New York State Broadband Program

*Phase II:* USDA ReConnect grant program

## When will the fiber installation begin?

Armstrong Telecommunications has begun installation for the New York State Broadband Program in the Towns of Nunda, Ossian, Portage, and West Sparta. For more information visit: <http://armstrongny.com/Home/Map>

For the Phase II ReConnect grant program, Empire Access is the provider partnering with Livingston County. For an update on their schedule, locations and pricing visit: [www.empireaccess.com/livingston/](http://www.empireaccess.com/livingston/)



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## What is involved when I sign up for fiber installation? What should I expect?

Typically, after expressing interest in signing up for service customer service representatives will get in touch with you to finalize your sign up and schedule your installation date. Next, construction technicians will run the outside fiber line to your home or business before your scheduled installation date. Finally, on the scheduled installation date, a technician will arrive at your home or business to install equipment inside.

## Who do I contact if I would like more information?

For more information on the Light Up Livingston Initiative, please contact the County Planning Department at (585) 243-7550 or visit:  
<https://www.livingstoncounty.us/LightUpLivingston>

For more information on NYS Broadband Program, visit:  
<https://nysbroadband.ny.gov/>

For more information on Armstrong Telecommunications deployment visit:  
<http://armstrongny.com/Home/Map>

For more information on Empire Access fiber deployment visit:  
[www.empireaccess.com/livingston/](http://www.empireaccess.com/livingston/)