

Owners/Last-Mile Broadband Providers



About the Alabama Fiber Network

Fiber Lease Partner/Owner



Fiber Lease Partner



The Alabama Fiber Network (AFN) — the Doing Business As (DBA) name of the corporate Fiber Utility Network Inc. — will establish crucial middle-mile fiber cable interconnection points throughout rural and urban parts of Alabama, enabling the rollout of Governor Kay Ivey’s ‘Be Linked’ broadband initiative across the state.

With a plan to reach all of Alabama’s 67 counties, over 3,000 miles of new and existing fiber lines; the state will be more connected than ever before.

AFN is owned by electric co-ops that have contributed fiber. In addition, other partners have leased dark fiber strands and contributed engineering and planning resources.

These entities have collaborated to create a robust and scalable middle-mile network that will serve last-mile broadband providers and other large-scale broadband users (Government, Education, Healthcare, Public Safety, Large Businesses).

AFN will extend overall operational/upstream broadband capabilities through its fiber assets.

AFN’s use of mostly existing fiber will allow the network to be running in Summer 2024 — avoiding the extensive time it takes to construct a network comprised of new fiber.

How is AFN funded?

- In July 2021, Gov. Kay Ivey signed the Connect Alabama Act into law, creating a formal structure to drive broadband expansion throughout the state. In 2022, the State of Alabama allocated \$85 million of ARPA funds for the creation of a statewide middle mile network. AFN was awarded a competitive grant of \$82.4 million in September 2022 from this funding source.
- Funds to establish the AFN were received through Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) with US Treasury State Fiscal Recovery Funds to lease existing fiber, build new fiber and procure equipment necessary to deliver broadband services over the network.

What will AFN do?

- Without middle-mile connectivity, last-mile providers — such as member co-ops, cable and telecoms companies — ultimately could not bring broadband service to rural or unserved Alabama businesses and individuals.
- AFN middle-mile interconnection points will be designated physical facilities that house interconnecting fiber pathways, which will allow an enormous amount of broadband traffic to be shared among various last-mile service providers and select community anchor institution customers.

Why does middle-mile matter?

- **EDUCATION:** Alabama Fiber Network’s innovative middle-mile network backbone will enhance high-speed internet capacity needs in communities large and small. Remote learners of all ages will have access fast, reliable internet — equalizing educational opportunities and creating more dynamic learning environments.
- **HEALTHCARE:** With better broadband connectivity will come better opportunity and capabilities for remote healthcare consulting. The delivery of healthcare services remotely through telehealth will offer enormous potential to improve access to care in rural communities.
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Improved broadband will spur economic growth by allowing affordable, scalable high-speed internet for last-mile providers. AFN’s infrastructure will allow companies to work more cost effectively and efficiently — creating subsequent opportunities for economic development and enhanced workforce development.