



## PRESS RELEASE



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### Sonoma County Economic Development Board

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Access Sonoma Broadband Speed Test Initiative *Want faster internet?***

**SANTA ROSA, CA** (JUNE 3, 2021) - The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) is pleased to announce the Access Sonoma Broadband Speed Test Initiative. This initiative allows community members to test their current home internet speeds while helping Sonoma County pursue funding to deploy better infrastructure and services in historically unserved and underserved areas.

“Collecting accurate broadband availability data is crucial in our efforts to close the Digital Divide. Broadband disparities have always existed in Sonoma County; the pandemic only exacerbated those disparities. Having a clearer picture of internet speeds in our community will help us target resources, and create a more resilient, equitable broadband network,” says Sheba Person-Whitley, Executive Director of Sonoma County’s Economic Development Board.

This initiative will spotlight the quality of internet access countywide, primarily in unserved and underserved areas where services are lacking or non-existent. Current broadband availability data, which is self-reported by providers, is often inaccurate and can result in over claimed service availability. The speed test tool reports internet speeds at a granular household level, allowing residents to verify their own service availability without collecting personal information.

“This Speed Test comes at a crucial time as broadband efforts in Sonoma County are ramping up with the potential adoption of the Broadband Action Plan. This is one of many moving pieces to make sure everyone in Sonoma County has equitable and affordable access to broadband,” says Calvin Sandeen, EDB Broadband Analyst.

In order for Sonoma County to qualify for grants, funding, and other means to improve Internet access for all our communities, Sonoma County needs to identify the actual level of broadband availability using the Access Sonoma Broadband Speed Test’s granular data collection methods. Everyone in Sonoma County, from the most rural homesteads to city centers, is invited to test their internet speeds and help close the Digital Divide in Sonoma County.

Learn more and take the test today at [SonomaEDB.org/Broadband](https://SonomaEDB.org/Broadband).

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The **Sonoma County Economic Development Board** is a County agency focused on growing a healthy economy by helping businesses in Sonoma County. They provide confidential, no-cost consulting services to businesses seeking to start, relocate, and grow in Sonoma County.