



# Oklahoma

## The Sooner State fights connectivity challenges

Oklahoma’s rankings reflect the perennial challenge of large rural states — keeping residents connected. Only 30 percent of all households have internet access at speeds of 25 mbps or more.

Officials are hoping a state program will connect more residents to broadband services. Following a year-long study, the Oklahoma Community Anchor Network received nearly \$74 million in federal funding to build more than 1,000 miles of broadband infrastructure. When the project is finished, the network will bridge the middle mile between anchor institutions and underserved communities across the state, which is especially important for education and healthcare providers.

The state is well on its way to preparing for improved connectivity in medicine. A new law passed in late 2017 established specific regulations for telemedicine operations, allowing doctors to connect with patients remotely.

Despite its challenges in getting more Oklahomans online, the state is building on its role as a hub for aviation to position itself as a new center for drone development. California-based drone developer Kratos Defense & Security Solutions announced in January 2018 that it would be opening an 8,000-square foot design and production center in Oklahoma City, with plans to expand the facility to 75,000 square feet in the future.

Sources: (Oklahoma Broadband) (Healthcare Law Today) (Journal Record)

### WHAT DID WE DO RIGHT?

The state’s electronics recycling law focuses on voluntary computer recycling programs.

### WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER NEXT YEAR?

Oklahoma can try to attract more venture capital investment and spend more on research and development.

### WHERE HAVE WE MOST IMPROVED?

The state now allows self-driving vehicles to operate without burdensome restrictions.

Best & Brightest	B
Fast Internet	D
Grants Advanced Degrees	D-
Tech Workforce	C-
Tax Friendly	B-
Attracts Investment	D-
Entrepreneurial Activity	C-
Ridesharing	A
Short-Term Rentals	B
Sustainable Policies	B
Self-Driving Vehicles	A
Drones	A



### Ridesharing

Ridesharing operates freely throughout Oklahoma.



### Fast Internet

Nearly 50 percent of Oklahoma households have internet connections of at least 10 mbps, but only 30 percent enjoy speeds of 25 mbps or more.



### Best & Brightest

Oklahoma has Right-to-Work legislation but lacks a state statute to protect workers from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.



### Short-Term Rentals

Short-term rentals operate throughout Oklahoma but face restrictions in major markets including Oklahoma City.

## Building Bridges with Business Partners to Fill a Skills Gap in Advanced Manufacturing

Tulsa Tech’s first corporate partnership will bring a new manufacturing program and more workforce training options to a high school in the city.



The program teaches Glenpool Public School students the skills they need to take advanced manufacturing positions in automated design, robotics and welding, where businesses in the area have had difficulty finding qualified applicants.

“Our region’s business community is experiencing a skills gap regarding their current and future workforce,” says Steve Tiger, superintendent and CEO of Tulsa Tech. “This partnership is a tremendous example of education and business partnering in a meaningful way to improve the situation.”

The university is also coordinating with Tulsa-based AAON, which produces industrial and commercial heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment and employs nearly 1,700 people in the area. AAON will give \$100,000 to fund the initiative and plans to open a 134,000-square foot research and development lab in Tulsa in 2018.

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