Broadband in America Report: FWA Focus

Fixed Wireless Access Market Deep Dive

Broadband in America Series

By: CostQuest Associates®

Section 1: Introduction

Broadband in America Report: Fixed Wireless Access Focus

Broadband in the United States is changing faster than ever and understanding these market shifts is essential for strategic decision-making. The **Broadband in America Report** series delivers nationwide insights into broadband coverage, cost, competition and funding across all network technologies, published semiannually with data updates each spring and fall. Complementary regular reports offer deeper analysis of emerging technologies and trends shaping the telecommunications ecosystem.

This month's edition provides an in-depth analysis of the fixed wireless access (FWA) market using the latest market intelligence available as of October 2025. It explores the latest trends in FWA coverage, economics, competition, and its evolving role within the broader broadband market landscape.

The data primarily referenced in this report is Version 5 and 6 of:

- FCC's Broadband Data Collection (BDC) Service Availability Data
- CostQuest's® Location Fabric of Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)
- CostQuest's® Network Cost Model data

About Fabric / BDC Version 5

The filing window opened on June 30, 2024, for this version of the Broadband Location Fabric.

BDC Data Version 5 Vintage Nov 11, 2024

About Fabric / BDC Version 6

The filing window opened on December 31, 2024, for this version of the Broadband Location Fabric.

BDC Data Version 5 Vintage May 20, 2025

The maps and data points only reference licensed fixed wireless access. FWA service definitions follow the NTIA standard for FWA, which requires download speeds of at least 100 Mbps, upload speeds of at least 20 Mbps, and latency low enough to support real-time applications. The referenced Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) used in this analysis align with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) definition of a BSL.

Section 2: FWA Landscape

How Mobility FWA Went Mainstream

Licensed fixed wireless has evolved from a broadband deployment solution for rural areas to a mainstream broadband alternative, competing directly with cable, and in some cases, fiber.

The acceleration of FWA is driven by the expansion of mid-band spectrum (2.5 - 4GHz), 5G upgrades, better customer premises equipment (CPE) and targeted marketing.

Today, the broadband industry's competition revolves around three technology groups:

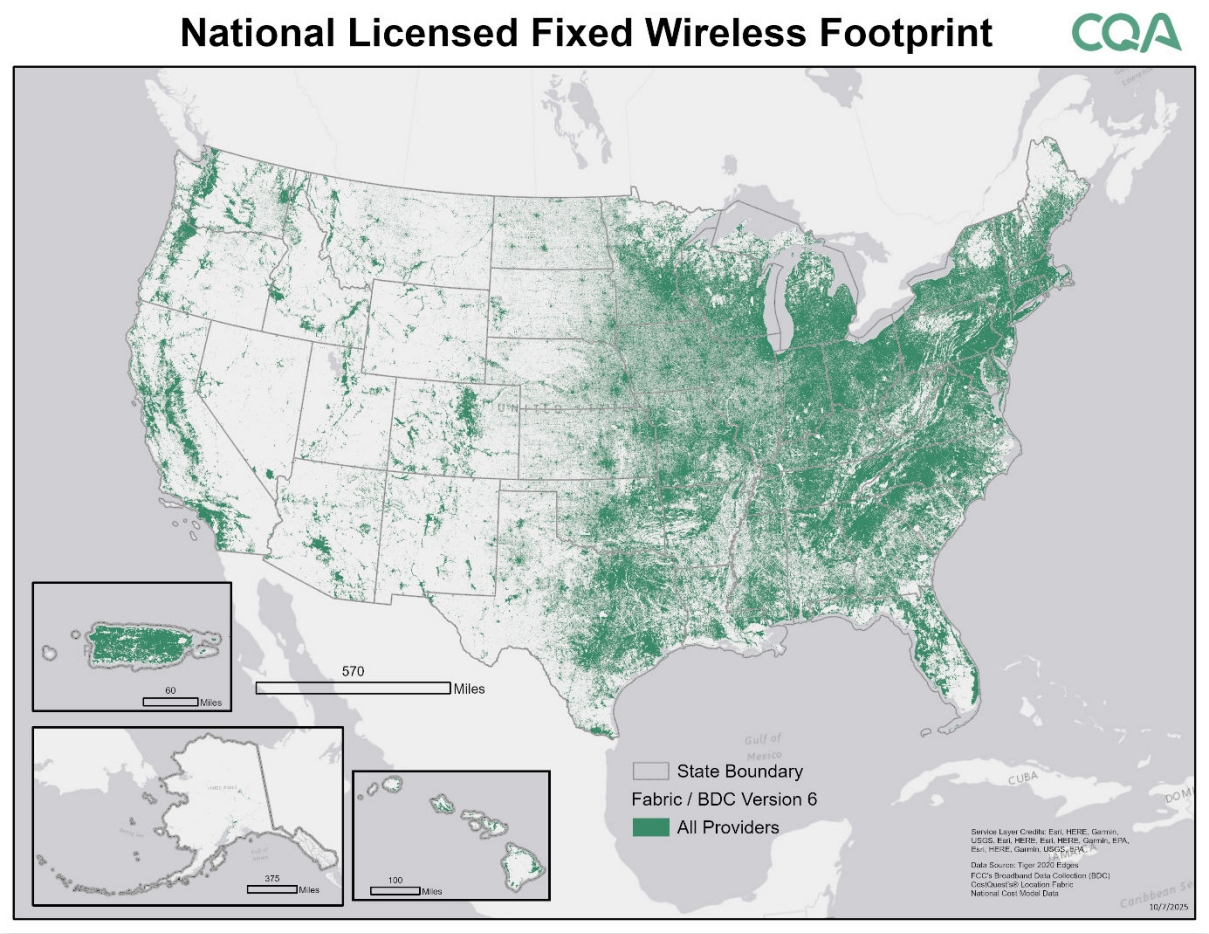
- National mobile carriers scaling FWA
- Cable and fiber incumbents defending with bundles
- Regional Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs) moving into licensed and shared spectrum

Network economics, policy, and subsidies are shaping where each type of broadband technology is most effective in serving different regions.

FWA Demand & Coverage on the Rise

145% Increase in Three Years

From BDC Version 1 to Version 6, licensed fixed wireless coverage expanded rapidly nationwide, with a 145% increase in BSLs now served with licensed FWA and an **8.2% increase from BDC Version 5 to Version 6 (a six-month period).**



The demand for FWA primarily revolves around two use cases:

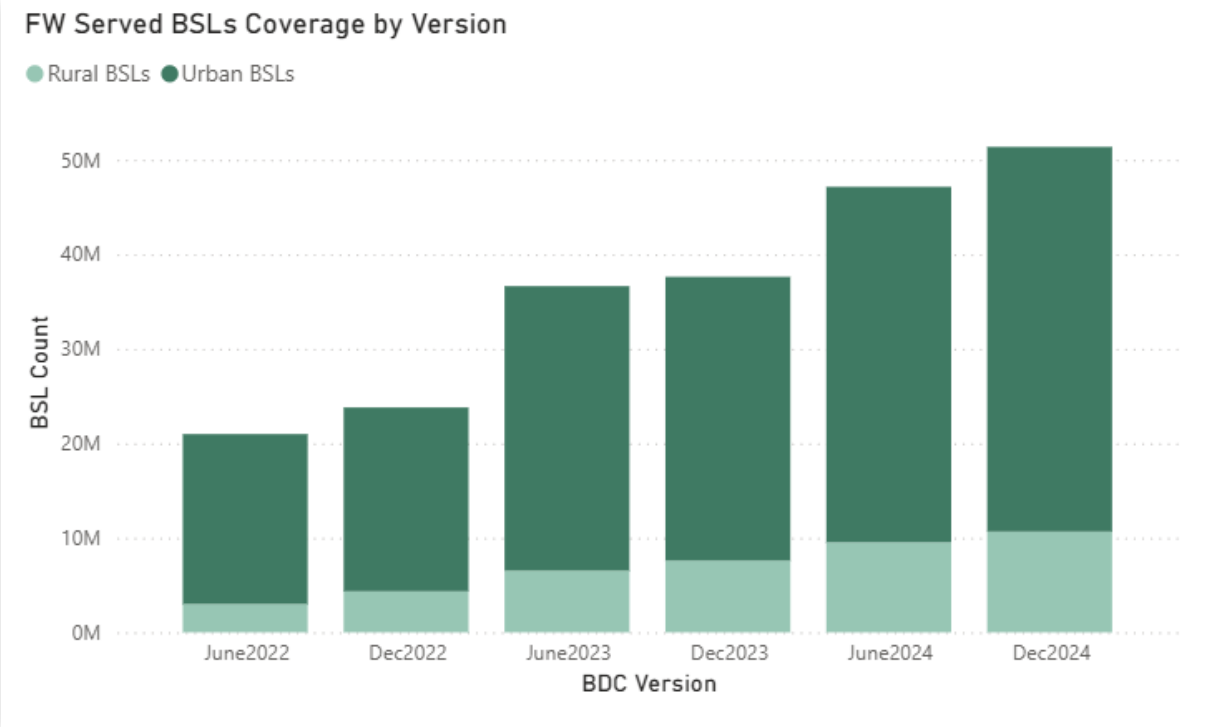
- Primary home broadband and small-business service requiring quick setup and/or
- Business continuity (backup connectivity)

FWA growth initially began in rural areas, but the availability of mid-band 5G[1] has expanded adoption into suburbs and select urban zones.

In the United States, FWA has been the largest driver of net broadband additions for several quarters, led mainly by T-Mobile and Verizon. Additionally, service providers including SECOM, Mark Twain Communications, and ElektraFi saw a notable growth of more than 1000% in the number of locations served.

BDC Version 6 Fast Facts:

- 2.1 million previously underserved / unserved BSLs became served
- 21 providers more than doubled their footprint
- 403 total FWA providers
- 30 new FWA providers
- BDC V1 to V6: 145% growth in Served FW BSLs
- BDC V5 to V6: 8.2% growth in Served FW BSLs

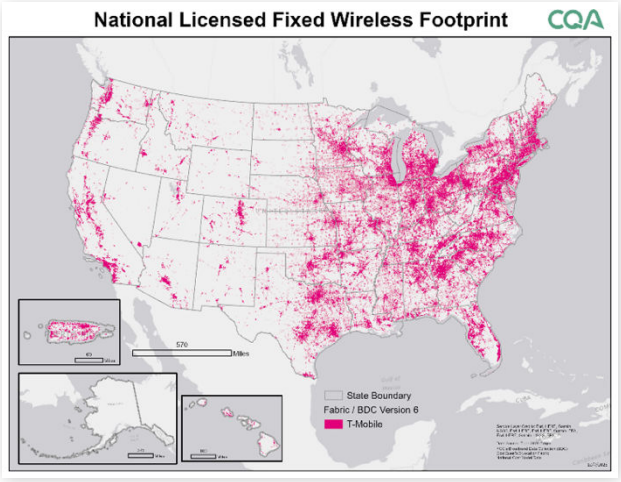


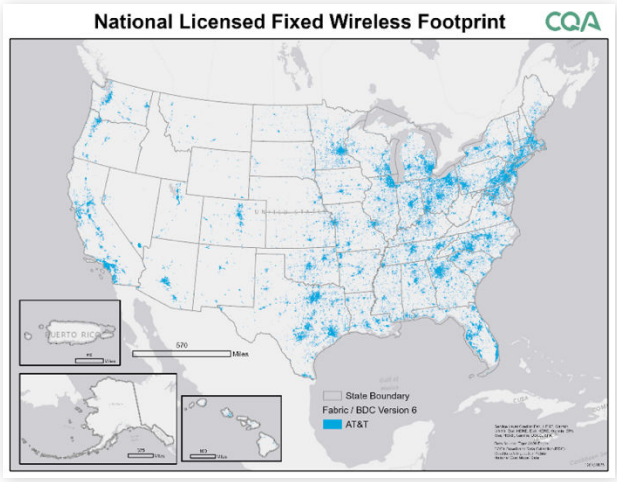
The graph illustrates BSLs served (using the NTIA definition of service, which includes providing access to 100/20mbps broadband speeds) by FWA.

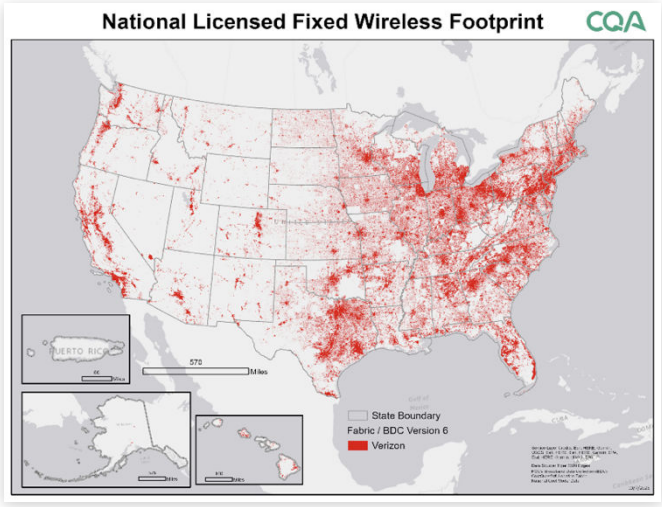
[1] Mid-band 5G spectrum falls between the range of 2.5 - 4GHz

Major US Mobile Network Operators Increasing FWA Market Share

Together, T-Mobile and AT&T serve 37.8% of BSLs with FWA nationwide. Verizon is currently the top FWA provider for served BSLs with 24.6 million locations (21.2% of all BSLs). Between June and December, Verizon's FWA footprint grew 28%.







Top Growing FWA Providers

The fastest-growing FWA providers[2] displayed below more than doubled their footprints in the last six months, with nationwide growth across 26 states. Mark Twain Communications led all FWA providers in percentage growth, posting the largest increase: 25,939 served BSLs, or 2841% growth. ElektraFi increased the number of BSLs they served by 286,095. United States Cellular Corporation experienced rapid wireless growth of 432%. They added 728,251 new FWA-served BSLs to their footprint, bringing their coverage total to nearly 900,000 BSLs.

Top Providers by Percent Growth in BSLs Served

Provider	V5 BSL Served	V6 BSL Served	Growth Count	Growth Percent
Mark Twain Communications Company	913	26,852	25,939	2841%
ElektraFi	17,457	303,552	286,095	1639%
SECOM, Inc.	3,871	63,831	59,960	1549%
Mountain West Technologies	10,355	59,423	49,068	474%
United States Cellular Corporation	168,688	896,939	728,251	432%
Circle B Wireless	2,064	10,263	8,199	397%
WNM Communications Corporation	18,055	47,875	29,820	165%
VTX Communications, LLC.	205,755	530,964	325,209	158%
Poka Lambro Telecommunications Ltd.	6,567	16,486	9,919	151%
Wi-Fiber, Inc.	9,675	20,817	11,142	115%

Market Economics

Mobility FWA is most cost-effective in areas where mobile operators already have spare network capacity. It can generate additional revenue with limited investment beyond customer equipment.

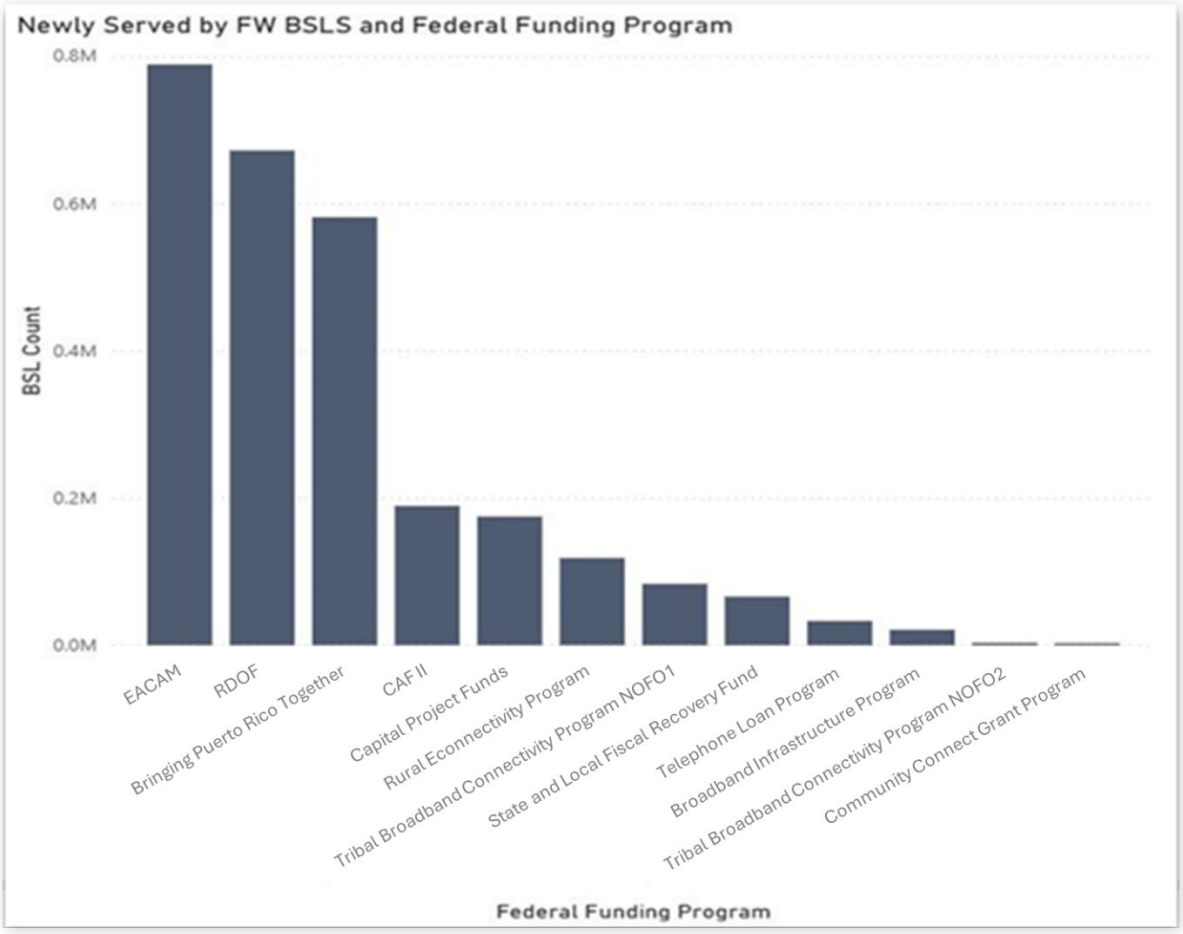
However, as penetration rises, carriers must expand spectrum and/or capacity to prevent congestion. Compared with fiber, FWA can be cheaper and faster to deploy but has greater variability in operational costs, speed, and latency and has limitations in future capabilities as compared to fiber. Radio conditions, interference, and cell load all affect FWA performance, causing operators to rely on eligibility checks and conservative service guarantees to maintain service quality.

[2]Only providers with more than 10,000 served BSLs in V6 were examined.

Funding Programs' Role in FWA Growth

In the second half of 2024, federal subsidies were responsible for: **4.9% of the increase in FWA served BSLs nationwide** and influenced **18% of the increase in FWA to rural BSLs.**

Federal funding programs from Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) and Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) emphasize the deployment of technologies that provide high-speed, low-latency services and are cost-effective. Therefore, driving growth of technological solutions that fit these requirements, such as FWA.



FWA remains an important broadband solution to areas where cost, geography, or timelines make fiber infrastructure deployment difficult.

Beyond government subsidies, factors such as spectrum policy – especially mid-band allocation and Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) – will dictate how quickly FWA can expand.

FWA Competitive Positioning

National Mobile Carriers

National mobile carriers are currently leading mass-market mobility FWA adoption. Their strategy for FWA combines:

- Mid-band spectrum (and millimeter wave (mmWave) in dense areas).
- Simple self-installation home broadband.
- Kits priced roughly $40–$70 per month.
- Frequent discounts when bundled with mobile services.

Their marketing messaging emphasizes transparent pricing, no long-term contracts, quick setup, and sufficient speed for streaming and gaming. To manage network load, national mobile carriers use eligibility gating and analytics to prevent oversubscription.

Regional & Rural WISPs

Regional and rural WISPs focus on markets where fiber economics do not generally see a positive ROI. They offer fast installation for homes, farms and small businesses. Many of these carriers utilize unlicensed and CBRS spectrum to improve throughput and reliability. However, line-of-sight limits, interference, and fiber overbuilds remain market penetration challenges. Consolidation is also increasing as larger players seek scale and spectrum.

Cable & Fiber Incumbents

Cable and fiber incumbents are responding with faster peak speeds, service bundles and proven service-level agreements (SLAs). Their strategy is to accelerate fiber deployment in competitive markets and focus on pricing or bundled value elsewhere.

Technology and Spectrum

Mid-band spectrum is the backbone of mobility-based FWA, offering a balance of range and capacity. Operators often combine multiple bands – such as 2.5 GHz, C-band and CBRS – to boost throughput. Low-band spectrum extends coverage but with limited capacity.

Both traditional WISPs and mobility FWA providers can utilize mmWave to deliver fiber-like speeds, but line-of-sight, limited propagation, and potential for rain fade restrict its reach. Advanced beam forming techniques can alleviate some of these concerns but are not yet widely available.

Standalone 5G network cores offer lower latency, and advanced quality-of-service (QoS) tools are emerging in business-tier FWA offerings.

FWA Market Outlook

Two- to Three-Year Horizon

Based on historical and current market trends, FWA is expected to keep growing in areas where mid-band spectrum is plentiful and fiber deployment is slow.

Where FWA is available and fiber expansion and cable upgrades accelerate, competition will intensify, pushing FWA providers to differentiate through performance and service features.

Over the next two to three years, FWA is projected to remain strong in:

- Suburban markets.
- Majority of rural areas.
- Multi-dwelling units (MDUs) with wiring challenges.
- The small business market, where fast deployment is a key advantage.

To maintain a competitive edge, FWA technology upgrades – including 5G-Advanced capabilities – smarter traffic engineering, and better CPE will enhance performance consistency. However, factors including spectrum policy, subsidy design, and awards from current programs like BEAD will continue to influence which technologies prevail in different regions.

To Wrap Up – What to Keep in Mind

FWA has firmly established itself as a critical component of the United States broadband landscape; its technological footprint is rapidly growing and expected to bridge connectivity gaps and offer a flexible alternative to wired networks.

As spectrum efficiency improves and 5G technology advances, FWA will expand its reach across urban, rural, suburban, and small-business markets. Yet, its long-term success will depend on strategic spectrum management, continued investment in capacity, and balanced subsidy policies that support both innovation and sustainability.

While fiber remains the long-term “future-proof” standard, FWA’s agility and rapid deployment advantages ensure it will remain a vital player in delivering broadband access nationwide.