

# Harnessing 5G to Deliver Digital Government



*In recent years, connectivity has advanced from 2G to 4G, but the emergence of fifth-generation wireless technology, or 5G, promises to revolutionize how data is shared across networks and how quickly governments and their constituents can access the information they need. In this interview, **Bryan Schromsky**, managing partner for Verizon 5G Public Sector, shares insights on the promise and opportunity 5G connectivity offers and the steps state and local governments can take to begin building out their 5G infrastructure.*



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## **In what ways is 5G more revolutionary than previous advancements in communications technology?**

We really look at 5G as being the Fourth Industrial Revolution. You actually have a platform or a connectivity infrastructure that can do things we couldn't imagine or dream, and we're not tethered by a particular fiber or terrestrial connection. In previous generations of telecommunications technology, such as 4G, you could watch and upload videos and use unified communications, but with 5G, you can do all those things at a higher level. You get better imagery, AR (augmented reality), VR (virtual reality) and autonomous, fully connected vehicles that receive high bandwidth at very low latency, which is revolutionary.

## **What are some key use cases for 5G in the public sector?**

Some of our public sector customers are using 5G connectivity to power autonomous drones, so not using bluetooth, WiFi or a local radio frequency connection, but actually controlling a drone when it's outside of line of sight. We're getting requests in terms of next-generation, high-speed rail lines and actually building out trackside networks at the federal, state and local level.

A lot of governments are also turning to 5G connectivity for AR and VR-driven training and immersive learning. Many colleges and universities are using 5G to facilitate online learning experiences, and in healthcare, we see organizations use it for robotic surgery and telehealth services to diagnose patients.

## **How will 5G impact service delivery and the constituent experience within state and local government?**

With the pandemic, we've seen a lot of growth in 5G adoption and more of a willingness to build out 5G infrastructure and expand broadband access.

5G broadband access is crucial to facilitate things like distance learning and remote work and reach underserved communities. It's crucial to bridge the digital divide and connect us during pivotal moments, whether it's using videoconferencing tools to communicate with colleagues or a loved one who may be in the hospital, or to give students a more immersive learning experience.

Demand for government services will only increase in the future. The world is mobile now, so implementing advanced connectivity through 5G and edge computing technologies — which provide faster speeds, lower latency and greater network reliability — will give institutions the capabilities to meet these demands.

## **What can state and local governments do to begin building out their 5G infrastructure? How can they maximize current federal funding to achieve this?**

Along with pandemic-related federal aid, there are a lot of grant opportunities for state and local governments. For example, the National Science Foundation and the Department of Transportation have several grants focused on autonomous vehicles. A lot of those grants are actually earmarked for 5G technology or other innovative technology targeted to certain problem sets.

State and local governments can also work collaboratively with telecom partners to begin building out their 5G infrastructure. We're currently doing a lot of public-private partnerships. We've created two 5G innovation centers in Palo Alto, Calif., and Lake Nona, Fla. Governments and their private sector partners can work together to set up similar engagements around the country to learn from these projects and expand access in their communities.