



NATIONAL  
MULTIFAMILY  
HOUSING  
COUNCIL



## TELECOM & RESIDENT CONNECTIVITY

### **NMHC/NAA Viewpoint**

***The current federal regulatory framework for agreements between property owners and service providers allows the market to work effectively to allocate scarce capital for network construction, maintenance and service upgrades in multifamily housing communities.***

***NMHC/NAA urge Congress and the FCC must avoid counter-productive measures that interfere with private property rights, harm investment, constrain competition, limit consumer access to broadband service and even raise the cost of developing multifamily housing.***

With the rise of e-commerce, a shift in how consumers access media and our ever-increasing reliance on the internet for basic functions, telecommunications policy and broadband connectivity are top priorities for the apartment industry. In fact, research shows that the desirability of an apartment community is linked to its on-site internet: Ninety-four percent of residents surveyed ranked high-speed internet as the top apartment feature.<sup>1</sup> Coupled with broadband service, the availability and affordability of traditional telecom products like wired phone service and video remain an important aspect of an apartment owner's ability to attract and retain residents.

Connectivity is critical to apartment residents, which means that apartment owners and operators actively seek communications providers to meet residents' expectations. Apartment owners and communications providers enter into agreements that are best negotiated under free market conditions, encouraging competition. Because service providers must compete for the right to serve a building, apartment owners are able to ensure that residents have access to a mix of services at competitive rates. This allows owners to preserve the limited space for wiring and infrastructure at their communities for the providers who will best serve their residents.

In efforts to modernize our nation's telecommunications infrastructure and regulatory regime, policymakers have been looking to address a host of issues that include wireless spectrum availability, the deployment of broadband service to underserved areas, the roll-out of cutting-edge 5G technology and rules for technology-based solutions to connectivity challenges. Many of these issues have the potential to impact apartment communities and their residents. In fact, NMHC/NAA has participated in numerous recent proceedings before the FCC, including several recent efforts that threaten existing communications contracts between service providers and property owners without evidence of a market failure or addressing actual barriers to broadband deployment. NMHC/NAA has argued that the current federal regulatory framework for agreements between property owners and service providers allows the market to work effectively to allocate scarce capital for network construction, maintenance and service upgrades in multifamily housing communities and should be preserved.

While working to accelerate broadband deployment and bridge the digital divide, Congress and the FCC must avoid counter-productive measures that interfere with private property rights, harm investment, constrain competition, limit consumer access to broadband and other telecom services and even raise the cost of developing multifamily housing.

***Most apartment building residents have access to two or more Internet service providers<sup>1</sup> but only 38% of Americans overall have access to two or more.***