

# Research and Education Networks (RENs)

What are they? What do they do? Who do they serve? Below we provide you with some fast facts about these special organizations to better understand their public-missions and value.

## Things you should know about Research and Education Networks...



**RENs are different than Internet Service Providers (ISPs) who connect homes and neighborhoods.**

The purpose of RENs and ISPs are very different. RENs are not-for-profit specialized networks that cater specifically to the needs of researchers, educators, and other community anchor institutions. RENs focus on dedicated, high-capacity, secure and resilient network connectivity, data sharing, optimized cloud access, and other specialized IT services for these target communities. Whereas, residential ISPs provide mass-market internet services to individual consumers and households. RENs have a successful track record of forging mutually beneficial public-private partnerships with ISPs, and a variety of other telecommunications partners, for common broadband infrastructure goals.



**RENs across the U.S. are unique and united in a common mission.**

There are over 40 RENs that provide advanced high-capacity, resilient, and secure networking services throughout the country. While united in a common mission, each of these networking organizations are unique in geographic scope, organizational structure, and service offerings reflecting the often-unique state and regional landscapes for community anchor institutions. RENs interconnect with each other and the national research and education network, Internet2, to facilitate specialized collaborations among researchers and educators spanning the country and globe. Through The Quilt, these organizations strengthen alliances with their fellow RENs resulting in greater regional and national opportunities.



**REN services benefit a wide range of community anchor institutions.**

RENs play a crucial role in supporting academic and research institutions. Yet, their impact extends beyond these sectors to other community anchor institutions. RENs provide broadband connectivity, foster innovation and collaboration, drive technology development, promote community engagement, and contribute to economic development. RENs are valuable assets to a diverse set of organizations including state and local government.



**RENs operate on a cooperation model to make services affordable for both large and small organizations.**

As not-for-profits, RENs secure cost savings for our constituents providing resilient and cost-effective services. We achieve these savings through strong fiscal stewardship, expert vendor negotiations, and resource aggregation for greater economic efficiencies. These savings, combined with other collaborative benefits, extend to organizations of varying sizes and financial capacities. RENs aim to make their services accessible and affordable in order to promote inclusivity and drive innovation across the national community anchor institution landscape.

Find a REN in your state or region and learn more about The Quilt on our website.

[THEQUILT.NET](http://THEQUILT.NET)

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