# Retail vs. Bulk Telecommunications: What Every Community Board Should Know

**Choosing the right telecommunications model can have a lasting impact on your community's finances, infrastructure, and resident satisfaction. Understanding the difference between retail and bulk service agreements helps ensure decisions are made with clarity and confidence.**

## RETAIL SERVICE: Individual Choice, Individual Responsibility

In a retail model, each resident contracts directly with their provider for Internet, TV, and phone service.

### Key Characteristics:

- **Individual Contracts** – Each household negotiates and manages its own account.
- **Variable Pricing** – Rates can differ among residents and may increase over time.
- **Independent Equipment & Support** – Service levels and equipment quality vary by household.
- Inconsistent service experiences across the community.
- Higher collective costs compared to bulk pricing.
- Limited opportunity to negotiate future technology upgrades or fiber investment.

## BULK SERVICE: Collective Value and Community Impact

In a bulk model, the community association contracts for telecommunications services on behalf of all residents—typically covering Internet, TV, or both.

### Key Characteristics:

- **Bulk buying power yields significant cost savings compared to retail pricing –** Typically 50% less expensive than cost for the same services if charged individually.
- **Single Community Contract** – One agreement covers all households, usually billed through association dues.
- **Locked-In Rates** – Pricing remains consistent and predictable for the term of the contract.
- **Uniform Service Quality** – Every home receives the same high-speed connection and support standards.
- **Community Infrastructure Investment** – Bulk agreements often fund advanced fiber networks that enhance property value.
- Streamlined service management for the board or property manager.
- Enhanced community appeal through reliable, high-quality connectivity.

## Making the Right Choice for Your Community

### When evaluating options, boards should consider:

- **Financial Impact:** How do long-term savings compare to current resident costs?
- **Service Expectations:** What level of speed, reliability, and support do residents expect?
- **Infrastructure Needs:** Does the community require upgrades or future-ready fiber?
- **Governance & Communication:** How will the board communicate and manage any service transitions?