Sacramento Coalition For Digital Inclusion
April Monthly Meeting Notes
April 16, 2021

State/Federal Updates - Trish Kelly, Valley Vision

- **Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia provides update:**
  - Assemblymember Garcia working alongside Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry on AB 14, which will provide much needed reforms & openings for local jurisdictions to provide key services
  - School districts in CA have played a key role in becoming an internet service provider, and ensuring families and students are connected
  - AB 1176 focuses on affordability, and developing criterias across the board that ensure that certain populations have internet access
- **17+ Proposed Bills, which cover:**
  - CPUC funding for broadband infrastructure, bond funding, permit streamlining for infrastructure, affordable Internet programs, telehealth, public housing, distance learning, etc.
  - Hearings will begin this week, with bills moving forward
  - Speaker's Office is hosting meeting with legislators & key stakeholders to align broadband proposals
  - Possibility of a one-time state General Fund investment
- **Bills To Watch - Passed First Hearing**
  - AB 14 (Aguiar-Curry) - extends surcharge for California's Advanced Services Fund (CASF) for broadband infrastructure to PUC-identified unserved households, expands eligibility, would connect anchor institutions, and extend service to underserved urban neighborhoods
    - Would work in collaboration with SB 4
  - SB 4 (Gonzalez) Extends surcharge for CASF, other reforms
  - AB 34 (Muratsuchi) - $10 billion General Obligation Bond for broadband infrastructure in 2022 by public agencies

SCDI: April 2021 Meeting Notes

- AB 41 (Wood) - Expands "Dig Once" policy for Caltrans to help expedite broadband deployment in unserved and underserved communities
- AB 1176 (Garcia) - Affordable Internet - Establishes a California Connect Fund to subsidize high-speed home internet service
- AB 1425 (Gipson) - CASF Public Housing Account - Declares state policy to get connected all residents of publicly-subsidized housing complexes, with CASF funding for connectivity, digital literacy training, and devices
- AB 32 (Aguiar-Curry) - Telehealth - makes reimbursements permanent for telehealth visits for MediCal patients and plans

- **FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit**
  - $3.2 billion program to help lower cost of high-speed Internet for eligible households during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 COVID relief bill)
    - Up to $50/month discount for broadband services
    - One-time discount of up to $100 for laptop, computer, or tablet (no cell phones); funding extends for 6 months
    - Program anticipated to be open by the end of April
    - Eligible households will enroll through participating broadband providers
    - AT&T and Comcast are providers in our region

- **Federal - American Rescue Plan Act of 2021**
  - Creates Emergency Connectivity Fund - $7.171 Billion to reimburse schools and libraries for providing free broadband service (and connected devices) to students and library patrons at their homes.
    - Infusion into FCC's E-Rate Program which makes telecom services available more affordable for schools & libraries
    - Law allows these community anchor institutions to extend service further into the community
  - FCC is working on new E-Rate rules for implementation
  - Eligible devices include: laptop and tablet computers, wi-fi hotspots, modems and routers

- ○ Funding for at least 1 year after COVID emergency ends
- **Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act**
  - ○ Congressman James Clyburn and Senator Amy Klobucharreintroduced legislation - $94 Billion to bring service where none exists, improve speeds, and help families with monthly bills:
    - ■ $80 billion to deploy resilient bb infrastructure communities (ISPs must ensure affordable internet service)
    - ■ $5 billion for low-interest financing
    - ■ $6 billion for FCC Emergency BB Benefit Program
    - ■ $1 billion for 2 new grant programs for digital skills
    - ■ $2 Billion for Emergency Connectivity Fund
    - ■ Build out over 3-4 years

American Rescue Plan: City of Sacramento Discussion - Renee John, Valley Vision

- Funds expected to go City and Counties (Sacramento County $301,012,092)
- Longer Timeline - funding to extend to December, 2024
- Funding may be used to respond to negative economic impacts of COVID emergency
- Does SCDI want to put forward a proposal if funds become available?
  - ○ Possible connection between small businesses and internet connectivity

Emergency Broadband Benefit Program - Provider Update

- **Guest Speaker Alice Perez, Director of External Affairs, AT&T**
  - ○ Available EBB funding hopefully rolled out by April 26th
    - ■ Funding set to end 6 months after COVID-19 emergency officially declared over, or until funds are exhausted
  - ○ AT&T Eligibility - Households with substantial loss of income from 2/29/2020 onwards, National School Lunch program recipients, Pell Grant recipients
  - ○ Benefits include a $50 monthly benefit for eligible households and $75 a month for tribal households - along with a one-time $100 off eligible devices

- Voluntary participation program
- AT&T using their wired broadband program, Mobility Post Pay/Pre-Pay program, and Cricket Pre-Pay program
- Interested consumers should apply through USAC portal
- Schools can apply to the program to receive promotional opportunities free to students
  - Natomas Unified School District has participated

Emergency Broadband Benefit Program - Provider Update

- **Guest Speaker Philip Arndt, Government Affairs Director, Comcast Cable**
  - More public information on EBB available after April 26th
  - Coordination with Comcast's Internet Essentials Program (low cost internet program for low-income individuals)
    - Cities, organizations, schools cover costs of this program in many areas
    - Includes the option to get a computer for $150 or less
  - Digital equity initiatives:
    - Rise Program
      - Small & medium sized businesses who suffered due to COVID
      - Comcast partnered with NBC to spotlight these businesses, help them with a technology makeover to improve their businesses
      - www.comcastrise.com
      - Application window closes on May 7th
    - Comcast Lift Zone Initiative
      - Working with community organizations, cities, and nonprofits to provide wifi service to community centers, gathering places, etc. to create "learning zones"
      - Communities in need of these zones, and places to connect
      - Reach out to Philip for more information

Open Forum/Updates

SCDI: April 2021 Meeting Notes

- Open hearings coming up at the Capital

- National Skills Coalition partnering with CA Edge Coalition for Digital Inclusion Webinar on April 28th -

  https://caedge.org/register-for-our-upcoming-webinar-on-digital-inclusion/

- Roll out of "Getting Connected - Resource Guide for Local Officials" Webinar on May 14th

Working Groups - April Monthly Meeting Notes

Digital Literacy & Digital Skills Working Group

The group had an update from each of the three subgroups:

K-12 Update
- This group is discussing the foundation of standards and next steps. The following update was provided by email from Sacramento County Office of Education on their efforts:
- "The draft *California Digital Learning Integration and Standards Guidance* is currently under review with CDE and the SBE. At the end of this month, the draft will be posted on the [SBE website](#) and will be on the May 12-13th agenda. We anticipate that the Board will take action in May to move the draft forward. The guide is designed to provide guidance on leveraging technology to support student learning and includes strategies to build educator and system capacity. The guide also connects research on digital learning to inform specific topics outlined in Senate Bill 98. Furthermore, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Educators and the National Standards for Quality Online Teaching were used as a framework to align recommendations for effective technology use. To learn more, please join the SBE meeting livestream on May 12-13th. In addition, CDE will be hosting a webinar to cover what's in the guide after the May SBE meeting, those interested can also participate."
- This group is also interested in a potential mapping project that would overlap with the Broadband Access and Adoption group.

Educators Update
- This group is recruiting members including from Los Rios CCD to have representatives from 2 and 4 year colleges who are preparing educators represented

Adult Learners Update
- This group is finalizing verbiage and definitions to be used consistently in this working group, the general SCDI, for written documents and on the website - Activity 1 .
- The group is also exploring NorthStar as a consistent pre and post assessment tool. Specific information and pricing has been requested - Activity 2

Definitions Shared
The adult learners group shared draft definitions and solicited feedback. The draft definitions shared were as follows:

Foundational Skills - (also called basic skills, gateway skills) the ability to use digital tools to complete basic tasks in various settings ie. turn on the computer, connect to the internet

Workplace Skills - the ability to confidently and competently use digital technology in the workplace ie. Microsoft Office & Google Suite to ICT/Cybersecurity careers

Feedback shared included a request to add more in depth examples of what these definitions cover. Additional feedback included the need to ensure the term "Workplace Skills" also applies to post-secondary students who need these same skills. The definition could be changed to include "to be successful in academic or workplace settings.

A discussion was had about whether or not another term or category needed to be included such as Digital Citizenship - the knowledge and ability to use technology responsibly and appropriately. Feedback was provided that while this is important it can become value-laden and may perhaps not be an area of key focus for this working group.

Hardware Devices Working Group

Donation Update
- By June, United Way (in collaboration with Sac City and C4K) to provide 500 devices and identify neighborhoods for distribution
- Of the 500 devices sitting in the gym, Kevin is currently having conversations with Los Rios to see how many are reserved for Los Rios
- We are in need of a warehouse to store devices, since Los Rios gym will no longer be available
  - One temporary option is to look into storage units
  - A warehouse environment would be most satisfactory, for easy storage of laptops

United Way's Report
- Interesting fact: 84% of households have a cell phone within the City of Sacramento

Action Items
- Look for any potential storage space for devices
- For next meeting:
  - Looking at digital liaison roles/document
  - Specifying a need for a warehouse

Broadband Access and Adoption Working Group

The meeting focused on two main topics:
- Disseminating information to the region on the Federal Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program
- Aggregating broadband demand to identify potential broadband infrastructure projects in the Greater Sacramento Region.

Federal Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program and information dissemination in the region
- The Federal EBB program made available in the FCC website the list of providers for this program, which includes AT&T and Comcast in California.
- Alice Perez (AT&T) and Phillip Arndt (Comcast), provided information on their EBB offerings among other relevant programs information during the SCDI general meeting session. In this breakout session, Alice and Phillip provided additional details. Alice and Phillip will be providing digital flyers to the coalition members for dissemination.
- Group members will continue coordination on dissemination EBB information to residents in the region from participating providers.

Aggregating Demand for Broadband Infrastructure Projects in Unserved and Underserved Areas
- The group continues gathering data from members and broadband stakeholders regarding location of unserved residential customers, and also unserved business customers (agricultural, commercial and industrial buildings) in the Greater Sacramento Region. Furthermore, the analysis includes current levels of service of community anchor institutions (i.e., education, healthcare, local governments, emergency response, etc.). Aggregating location and numbers of potential residential and commercial broadband customers will help to make a better business case to providers and any other interested party to assess potential projects in the region.

Action Items
- AT&T and Comcast will send digital flyers and information to the group for dissemination across the region.
- Coordination will continue to gather more data and to conduct the demand aggregation and mapping analysis. Progress will be presented during the next meeting.