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June 1, 2021

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
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From: William S. Kehoe 
Chief Information Officer

REPORT BACK ON DEVELOPING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN (ITEM NO. 11, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 23, 2021)

On February 23, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the County of Los Angeles (County), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), in coordination with the Departments of Internal Services; Regional Planning; Public Works; Consumer and Business Affairs; Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services; County Counsel; and other relevant departments, to develop and implement a County Digital Divide Internal Action Plan in 90 days that, at the minimum:

1. Aggregates all existing and planned Digital Divide efforts by County departments;
2. Identifies common strategic objectives among the various efforts and ensures coordinated implementation of the various efforts;
3. Standardizes the reporting on activities and outcomes, including an evaluation of utilizing visual dashboards to track progress; and
4. Identifies gaps and limitations, including resource and funding constraints, that will assist in the strategic development and prioritization of future initiatives.

In addition, the Board directed OCIO, in coordination with the above-listed departments, as well as external stakeholders including cities, private sector partners, community-based organizations, school districts, nonprofits, venture capitalists, and others, to develop and begin implementing a Comprehensive Regional Digital Divide Strategy for the County.

The OCIO initiated the effort in March 2021, by establishing the “*Digital Equity Regional Teams*” (Teams) structure to facilitate the development of the Digital Divide Regional

Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan). The Teams consist of multiple groups, including the working groups, the “*Los Angeles County Digital Divide Action Team*,” focused on an internal action plan, and the “*Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Strategy Team*,” focused on the regional strategy.

The following are the activities that were performed by the Teams:

Los Angeles County Digital Divide Action Team: The Los Angeles County Digital Divide Action Team (Action Team) is comprised of business leaders from 35 County departments. The objective of the Action Team is to come together as one organization to solve the digital divide problem documenting, aggregating, communicating, and providing visibility to current projects and initiatives and identifying synergistic efforts and gaps that will inform the development of a comprehensive Strategic Plan. The Action Team has been fully engaged since March 2021 and has achieved the following activities:

1. Collated all digital divide efforts completed/in progress by participating departments;
2. Developed strategic goals, strategic objectives, measurement criteria, and potential future initiatives;
3. Identified opportunities to consolidate cross-departmental efforts to improve synergies and reduce overhead; and
4. Initiated data strategy efforts to collate existing datasets available from all sources to baseline the current state at detailed level.

Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Strategy Team: The Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Strategy Team (Strategy Team) is comprised of a diverse stakeholder group representing public sector, private sector/corporation, academia, risk capital, and the entrepreneur community. The objective of the Strategy Team is to support short-term action plans that provide immediate assistance and develop a long-term Digital Divide Regional Strategy enabling sustainable solutions for addressing the digital divide problem holistically in the County. The following activities have been performed as part of this effort:

1. Defined comprehensive criteria to select external stakeholders to have a diverse, inclusive team who represent government, academia, private sector/corporation, venture capital, entrepreneurs, and nonprofit organizations;
2. Finalizing the contract with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program, as a Strategic Advisory Partner; and
3. Reviewing inputs from the Action Team and in the process of identifying quick wins, as well as existing solutions, which may be replicated with other locations.

Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Advisory Team: The Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Advisory Teams (Advisory Team) is comprised of three regional advisory teams that were nominated and established in early May 2021. The

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Advisory Team members consist of industry experts, community-based organizations, private partners, and subject matter experts. The objective of the Advisory Team is to inform and ensure that the Strategic Plan accounts for the diverse digital needs of the community, currently available digital projects, and future needs and new solutions. The Advisory Teams will be focused on equitable access to broadband, providing devices, and digital literacy. The purpose of the Advisory Teams is to identify gaps, validate the approach and solutions, provide feedback to the other Teams, and assist in identifying appropriate solutions. The Advisory Teams are scheduled to be kicked off in late May 2021, which will be the key to the success of the Teams.

As a next step, the Teams will focus on the following:

1. Leverage the Strategic Plan to include regional initiatives and validate objectives/metrics;
2. Finalize the data strategy, including the development of visualizations reflecting the initiatives, progress, and potential impact using defined metrics; and
3. Prioritize future initiatives, which are high impact and can be initiated with available resources and funding. It will include identifying top communities (pilot regions) in each Supervisorial District and prioritizing the initiatives in these communities.

The attached report provides details of the approach, efforts, current status, and next steps.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me at (213) 253-5601 or bkehoe@cio.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:TJM
WSK:JD:jmn

Attachment

c: Department Heads



Developing the Digital Divide Strategic Plan

Jagjit Dhaliwal
Deputy Chief Information Officer

MAY 2021



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1. Glossary and Acronyms

Term/ Abbreviation	Definition/Expanded Name
American Community Survey (ACS)	ACS is a demographics survey program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It regularly gathers information previously contained only in the long form of the decennial census, such as ancestry, citizenship, educational attainment, income, language proficiency, migration, disability, employment, and housing characteristics.
AmeriCorps	AmeriCorps is a voluntary civil society program supported by the U.S. Federal government, foundations, corporations, and other donors that engages adults in public service work with a goal of helping others and meeting critical needs in the community.
California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF)	CETF is a nonprofit corporation, established by the California Public Utilities Commission, with the mission and explicit focus to close the digital divide in California (https://www.cetfund.org/).
City of Long Beach Digital Inclusion Initiative	Digital Inclusion Initiative, established by the City of Long Beach, focuses on digital inclusion through an equity lens, proactively ensuring everyone has equitable access and use of digital literacy training, the Internet, technology devices, and other digital inclusion resources (https://longbeach.gov/ti/digital-inclusion/).
eSports Gaming Arena	eSports Gaming Arena is a chain of indoor arenas and event centers dedicated to esports. Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is exploring eSports programs for children at DPR facilities.
Geek Squad	Geek Squad is a subsidiary of Best Buy and offers various computer-related services and accessories for residential and commercial clients.
Gig Economy	Gig Economy is a labor market characterized by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs.
Geographic Information System (GIS)	GIS is a conceptualized framework that provides the ability to capture and analyze spatial and geographic data.
Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN)	GAIN Program, established by the Department of Public Social Services, provides employment-related services to help participants find a job, stay employed, and move on to higher paying jobs (https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/jobs/gain.html).
MiFi	Mobile Wi-Fi.
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
Pew Research Center (PRC)	PRC is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping the world. They conduct public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis, and other data-driven social science research. They do not take policy positions.
Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP)	REAP is a global program offered by MIT to assist regions in developing their regional strategies to solve their social economic issues through entrepreneurship opportunities (https://reap.mit.edu).

Term/ Abbreviation	Definition/Expanded Name
Sidewalk Infrastructure Partners (SIP)	SIP is a holding company that pioneers technology-enabled infrastructure to transform urban life and create long-term value. SIP's anchor partners are Alphabet Inc., Google's parent company and a world leader in technology; Sidewalk Labs, Alphabet's pathbreaking urban innovation platform; and the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (https://sidewalkinfra.com/).
South Bay Fiber Network	South Bay Fiber Network is a regional broadband, fiber-optic network, developed by South Bay Cities Council of Governments, who worked with the South Bay Workforce Investment Board to connect to at least one city facility in each of the South Bay cities (https://www.southbaycities.org/programs/south-bay-fiber-network).
Venture Capital (VC)	VC is a form of private equity financing that is provided by firms or funds to startups, early-stage, and emerging companies that have been deemed to have high growth potential or which have demonstrated high growth.
Work Ready Program	Work Ready Program is a workforce development program launched by LA County Library (Library), designed for Library customers who are looking to build job skills or discover new career opportunities, but who lack the device or internet connection to make it happen.

2. Background

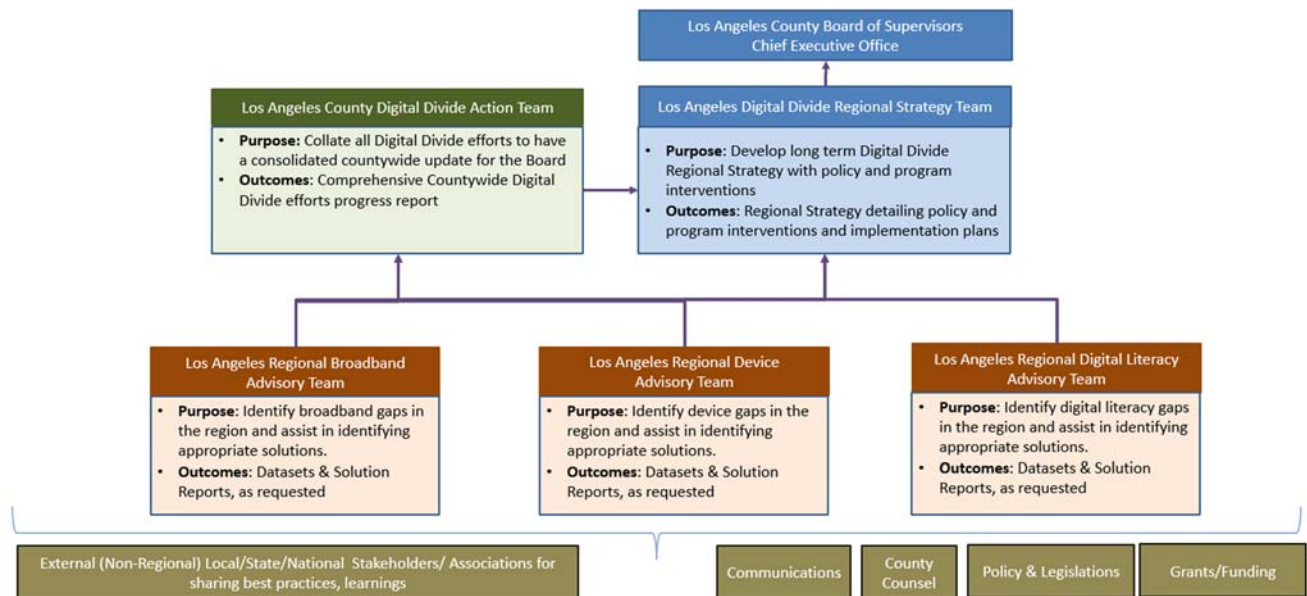
Historically underserved communities are impacted due to the lack of internet services, either because of their affordability, or unavailability of internet in their community. Communities may lack access to technology, such as computers or laptops, or they may lack knowledge and skills to effectively use these tools. Some communities experience all three barriers. As it is a multi-dimensional problem deeply interconnected with other social-economic issues, it requires a Digital Divide Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan), in partnership with County of Los Angeles (County) departments, cities, states, private partners, and other institutes. The Strategic Plan would enable sustainable solutions that will bridge the digital divide gap to provide all residents in the County the same opportunity to access and receive crucial information and services. The Strategic Plan will enable greater access to broadband, devices, and training, thereby increasing digital literacy in underserved communities in the County.

The following principles will be adhered to, to ensure the development of holistic sustainable solutions:

1. Equitable Access of broadband solutions to all communities.
2. Sustainable Solutions to provide all households in the County the same opportunity to access and receive crucial information and services.
3. Secured Solutions addressing internet security and privacy issues.
4. Inclusive Approach involving ecosystem stakeholders – private, public, and community partners.

3. Digital Equity Regional Team

As directed by the Board of Supervisors' (Board) motion dated February 23, 2021, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has established a Digital Equity Regional Team, which consists of various working groups as illustrated below:



The Digital Equity Regional Team will engage with the Board to establish the Community Cabinet to seek involvement from the community leaders in identifying, prioritizing and accomplishing high impact initiatives.

Los Angeles County Digital Divide Action Team: The purpose of the Los Angeles County Digital Divide Action Team (Action Team) is to come together and collaborate as one organization to solve the digital divide problem. The Action Team is documenting, aggregating, communicating, and providing visibility to current projects and initiatives, and identifying synergistic efforts and gaps that will inform the development of a comprehensive Strategic Plan. The working group will contribute to the Strategic Plan efforts with external partners. The Action Team membership consists of senior business leaders represented from all County departments. Since its launch in March 2021, the team has focused on the following:

- Developed draft strategic goals, objectives, and initial measurement criteria, as summarized in Section 4;
- Collated all County Digital Divide initiatives, as well as brainstormed on the future initiatives;
- Identified opportunities to consolidate cross-departmental efforts and existing Digital Divide governance structures to improve synergies and reduce overhead; and
- Initiated Data Strategy efforts to collate existing datasets available from all sources to baseline the current state.

As a next step, the Action Team will continue working to produce the following outcomes:

- Visual Dashboard reflecting the status of all ongoing initiatives, priorities of upcoming initiatives, and respective metrics.
- Planned Budget reflecting budget needs for the upcoming initiatives and associated funding source.
- Backlog activities/efforts/gaps which require intervention from external stakeholders and/or are not addressed by current ongoing initiatives.

Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Strategy Team: The purpose of the Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Strategy Team (Strategy Team) is to support short-term action plans that provide immediate assistance, and develop a long-term Digital Divide Regional Strategy enabling sustainable solutions for addressing the digital divide problem holistically in the County. This is being accomplished by partnering with a diverse stakeholder group representing the public sector, private sector/corporation, academia, venture capital, and the entrepreneur community.

The selection criteria, based on domain expertise, commitment to support the regional digital divide effort, innovation and visionary approach, diversity and inclusivity, and local community contribution, was defined to shortlist the Strategy Team members. The Strategy Team is partnering with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP) for this strategic effort. MIT is assisting the County as a Strategic Advisor, bringing diverse stakeholders together to formulate a comprehensive strategy with an actionable implementation plan.

The Strategy Team has started looking at the current state baseline efforts and potential initiatives that can be started immediately. The Strategy Team is also receiving inputs from the Action Team, as well as the Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Advisory Teams (Advisory Team), to ensure feedback from local stakeholders for leveraging existing solutions and identifying new required solutions to fill gaps in the near and long-term are included.

The Strategy Team will review internal and external programs and help the Action Team by providing guidance and removing roadblocks. The Strategy Team will advocate for legislation and policy changes with the County, State, and Federal government to streamline processes and/or implement innovative solutions. The following are the outcomes expected from the Strategy Team:

- **Region's Current State:** Regional ecosystem assessment report with current gaps, GIS databases and maps, current state metrics, available current solutions, and strengths and challenges.
- **Regional Strategic Plan:** Encompassing strategic objectives developed based on data and analysis of the region and team's goals, associated metrics and sustainability, and strategic interventions (both policy and programs).
- **Holistic Program Roadmap/Plan:** Multiple program(s) implementation plan (subject to budget/priorities/timelines), along with synergies, and dependencies.
- **Funding Sources:** Comprehensive list of all funding sources, including stimulus, Federal/State grants, and private investments, with clear plan to secure the funding for the region.
- **Regional Dashboards:** Reflecting the status of all ongoing initiatives, priorities of upcoming initiatives, and respective metrics.

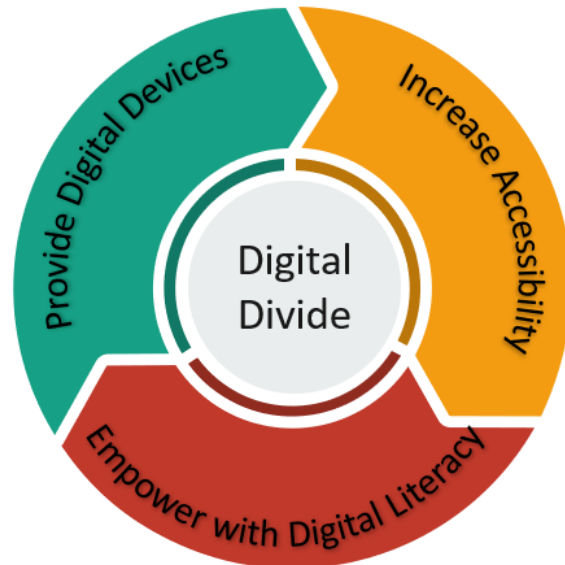
Los Angeles County Digital Divide Regional Advisory Teams: The Advisory Teams consist of three advisory focused groups: Los Angeles Regional Broadband Advisory Team, Los Angeles Regional Device Advisory Team, and Los Angeles Regional Digital Literacy Advisory Team. The purpose is to gather thought leadership from the regional experts in greater access to broadband, devices, and training (digital literacy) with a focus on actionable plans to achieve sustainable

solutions for the future. The Advisory Teams were launched in May 2021, and will continue to provide feedback, insights on the solutions and data needs for the Strategic Plan.

4. County Strategic Goals

The strategic approach will help in identifying the residents in communities that are most in need and provide tailored sustainable solutions by applying equitable and inclusive approaches. First and foremost, it is important to measure the gap by identifying the residents accurately that do not have internet access. The gap may be due to any of the following reasons:

- Low-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color do not have equal access to broadband and upgrade services.
- The community cannot afford the internet services.
- The gap could be due to awareness or language in which services are offered.



The gaps need to be validated by authentic engagement with the communities to ensure that all voices are heard, and that they are part of the solution process. Once the gaps are identified, the next step is to conduct outreach/make them aware of the solutions, if available, develop new solutions as needed, and then provide a best fit solution based on their need/situation. During the process, it is important to identify the datasets required to measure the gaps and provide visualization to track the progress. The following three goals and respective objectives are identified to solve this problem holistically:

<u>Increase Accessibility</u>	<u>Provide Digital Devices</u>	<u>Empower with Digital Literacy</u>
• Identify gaps in the availability of broadband access, capacity, and services. • Accelerate broadband access solutions deployed in the underserved areas. • Reduce internet subscription costs. • Increase public-private partnerships related to broadband access services. • Increase awareness about broadband access in the community.	• Develop sustainable device procurement process. • Enable reduced cost device options. • Enable after-purchase technology support options.	• Identify digital literacy gaps. • Enable new channels to deliver digital literacy programs. • Introduce new training programs to cover diverse needs.

5. Current and Future Initiatives

Apart from finalizing the County Strategic Goals and Objectives, the Action Team collated all County current initiatives and potential future initiative ideas. Please find below a list of current and future initiatives grouped by the Strategic Objectives. The department name in parentheses represents the department leading the respective initiative.

5.1 Goal 1: Increase Accessibility

Objective 1: Identify gaps in the availability of broadband access, capacity, and services.	
<u>Current Initiatives:</u> • Develop a database and GIS mapping viewer to catalog publicly available major existing broadband infrastructure to serve as the basis for a future needs assessment. • Work with external Federal and State partners to standardize on broadband service definition. • Leverage existing data sources, including ACS, PRC, CETF, to identify the gaps. • Develop Data Strategy with focus on data driven metrics, visualization and reports (OCIO, Internal Services Department [ISD], Department of Regional Planning [DRP], Department of Public Works [DPW]).	<u>Future Initiatives:</u> • Define broadband access criteria in terms of cost, speed, and other required parameters. • Develop datasets of households and homeless residents with mapped information about their current state of internet access, devices, and literacy levels/needs. ○ Enhance GIS maps by overlaying County information, including race, education, income, and community facilities. ○ Partner with national and State associations and private partners to access the required dataset to identify the gaps. • Develop new platform/enhance existing platforms to aggregate the developed datasets with an ability to refresh to provide up-to-date information on the baseline and gaps. • Develop dashboards to visually track the baseline and periodic progress made by initiatives.
Objective 2: Accelerate broadband access solutions deployed in the underserved communities.	
<u>Current Initiatives:</u> • Identify grantee nonprofits have boosted Wi-Fi in their facilities to allow community members to use it outside the building (Department of Arts and Culture [Arts and Culture]). • Develop best practices for accelerating the permitting of high-speed, broadband internet infrastructure (DPW, DRP). • Explore potential revisions or additions to the County's General Plan to ensure unincorporated areas have sufficient access to high-speed internet (DRP).	<u>Future Initiatives:</u> • Identify opportunities to accelerate, and aggregate/centralize between permitting jurisdictions, the permitting process for broadband infrastructure to accelerate deployment, particularly in underserved and under-resourced areas. • Identify and provide incentives for deployment of broadband in underserved communities. • Identify methods to increase competition in target areas to provide more customer choice and reduce access costs.

• Explore innovative strategies and permitting fee structures to enable the timely review of permit applications for high-speed broadband infrastructure (DPW, DRP). • Provide additional Wi-Fi hotspots in the Library parking lots in currently 34 locations. • Provide remote charging stations and Wi-Fi hotspot for Safe parking (Department of Military and Veterans Affairs). • Ancillary/work-related payments to CalWORKs participants for internet, laptops, and trainings through the GAIN program (Department of Public Social Services). • Evaluate extended range Wi-Fi at sites and MiFi program for program participants - Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS). • Develop and prepare for final adoption by the Board, two (2) wireless ordinances (Title 16 – Highways and Title 22 – Planning and Zoning) that will establish development standards and streamline reviews. Both ordinances will facilitate the build-out of broadband infrastructure to close the digital divide (DRP).	• Provide hotspots in the targeted buildings, including County buildings, senior living facilities, homeless shelters, and affordable housing. • Increase publicly available secure Wi-Fi locations in underserved communities. Partner with local facilities (senior centers, community centers, parks, academia and religious centers) and broadband providers to provide services to underserved communities at a reduced cost to the facility hosting the service. • Replicate successful programs like South Bay Fiber Network, and approaches from City of Los Angeles and City of Long Beach to other underserved communities. • Provide free Wi-Fi at County Parks (Department of Parks and Recreation [DPR]).
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Objective 3: Reduce internet subscription costs.

Current Initiatives:

- Explore innovative short- and long-term strategies to provide free or low-cost highspeed internet and related devices to underserved communities (DPW).

Future Initiatives:

- Low or no cost access for low-income/underserved communities and define the criteria for free internet eligibility.
- Tiered price plan options for high-speed access based on income level of the residents.
- Enable subsidy/reimbursement options for eligible community.

Objective 4: Increase public-private partnerships related to broadband access services.

Current Initiatives:

- Explore public-private partnerships and develop recommendations to incentivize private investment, including leveraging local, State, and Federal grant

Future Initiatives:

- Increase partnerships with companies to provide broadband accessibility.
- Train and develop skillsets required by the internet companies to develop local

opportunities, in broadband infrastructure in historically underserved and rural communities (DPW). Partnership with Long Beach COVID-19 Pandemic Digital Inclusion Response Working Group (Los Angeles County Development Authority [LACDA]).	workforce needed by these companies as they expand their services.
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Objective 5: Increase awareness about broadband access in the community.	
<u>Current Initiatives:</u> Create a County workforce development pipeline program that identifies career opportunities created by supporting the expansion of broadband, fiber, and related telecommunications infrastructure industries (DPW).	<u>Future Initiatives:</u> - Develop and implement a Countywide awareness campaign with the goal of increasing broadband utilization. - Education efforts in native languages for free programming and access. - Promote education on broadband issues and promote engagement in broadband planning in local communities. - Enable digital divide solutions hotline.

5.2 Goal 2: Provide Digital Devices

Objective 1: Develop sustainable device procurement process.	
<u>Current Initiatives:</u> - Grantee arts nonprofits (and non-arts nonprofits that use arts in their programming) distributed tablets, laptops, hotspots, or other hardware to program participants during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Arts and Culture). - Laptop/MiFi kits made available at 85 libraries as part of the laptop lending program. Expanding availability to laptop and hotspot kits delivers an essential connection to job-seeking resources, educational materials, information, and benefits that the most underserved in these communities lack (Library). - Provide hardware, internet access, and digital literacy classes in community centers for residents (LACDA).	<u>Future Initiatives:</u> - Enhance County salvage process to provide devices with adequate software and all required hardware. - Provide easy to use and easy to manage devices for unserved communities. - Evaluate and replicate other cities/counties' successful efforts for free home internet and/or free Chromebook options. - Mechanism for residents to order digital device through call center. - Identify all partners and areas served by the partners and explore options to cover the gap areas. - Partner with technical trade schools to repair the salvaged devices and deliver it through community-based organizations. - Develop Technology Innovation Labs and upgrade Computer Clubs' desktops (DPR).

Objective 2: Enable reduced cost device options.	
<u>Current Initiatives:</u> Library Work Ready program - 200 Laptop/MiFi kits available at 10 libraries (Library).	<u>Future Initiatives:</u> Insure low-cost devices for low-income/underserved communities.

Laptops for school kids in various school districts (Los Angeles County Office of Education).	- Affordable options for devices (income-based payment plans). - Partner with Health Plans (or other community-based organizations) in support of this initiative.
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Objective 3: Enable after-purchase technology support options.	
<u>Current Initiatives:</u> Identify nonprofit/community-based organizations in the region that provide technology support.	<u>Future Initiatives:</u> - Leverage Gig Economy workforce and college students for part-time technology support. - Partner with private corporations and/or nonprofit companies to provide after-purchase technology support (e.g., Geek Squad, AmeriCorps). - Partner with 211 call centers to provide Tier 1 support services. - Partner with local schools to provide an opportunity for high school students to earn work experience credit.

5.3 Goal 3: Empower with Digital Literacy

Objective 1: Increase outreach to identify and fulfill the digital literacy gap.	
<u>Current Initiatives:</u> - Library locations provide informal digital literacy education to customers regarding computer use, and using the Library website, Digital Library, devices, etc., upon request (Library). - Library continually develops in-person and, more recently, virtual digital literacy programming to assist customers of all ages with digital literacy. These include computer classes, coding classes, classes on how to download library materials onto devices, and instructions on using the Library website, app, databases, and online learning, etc. (Library).	<u>Future Initiatives:</u> - Identify gaps of technology educational skills in underserved communities, such as basic knowledge of apps, computers, internet, social media, and smartphones, through County outreach programs including surveys and interviews. - Identify challenges impacting the digital literacy of County residents. - Targeted outreach program to create awareness in underserved communities on the existing training programs. - Integrated digital literacy programs with the device and internet programs to serve the holistic needs of the underserved communities. - Partner with organizations which provide literacy programs and collect datasets and metrics available with them. - Leverage best practices from other social issues and outreach approaches (e.g., food distribution). - Leverage percent of online/in-person users for other County services to baseline the

	literacy level (e.g., number of people who can make an appointment for their vaccination and able to file their taxes).
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Objective 2: Enable new channels to deliver digital literacy programs.

Current Initiatives:

- County Work Ready Program includes virtual programs and YouTube tutorials (Library).

Future Initiatives:

- Make digital services available in several native languages.
- Community-based training programs - train the trainer format.
- Incentivize training programs – trainer-offered free or discounted devices.
- Provide digital literacy training along with device program.
- Explore partnerships with existing training partners (Udemy, LinkedIn Learning, etc.) to make available a free targeted computing basics/digital literacy curriculum for residents.
- Leverage County programs to deliver devices and literacy as they visit the County facilities for services which can be delivered online efficiently.

Objective 3: Introduce new training programs to cover diverse needs.

Current Initiatives:

- Delete the Divide (DTD) - Empower youth and small businesses in underserved communities with direct access, training, and support services in modern technologies (ISD).
- Provide grants to arts nonprofits (and non-arts nonprofits that use arts in their programming) throughout the County, some of whom use these funds to build their digital content and communication (Arts and Culture).
- Piloting a program to check on homebound seniors daily through a real-time feature using Amazon Echo Show that will have additional software added to monitor their health and well-being (WDACS).
- Telehealth visits via phone and video - partnership with Healthnet to provide phones during the COVID-19 Pandemic; robocalls to patients; Patient Wellness Portal; text messages; chatbot; re-designed

Future Initiatives:

- Develop introductory Information Technology literacy training courses.
- Provide local in-person training opportunities at County facilities as well as other locations, including community centers, senior centers, parks, and religious facilities.
- Develop podcasts for basic digital literacy needs, including 101 sessions and short videos for respective communities.
- Develop standards for eSports Gaming Arena (DPR).

internet site (Department of Health Services).	
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6. Key Milestones

Many departments have completed or are working on the digital divide initiatives and have achieved milestones that are listed below.

Internal Services Department
DTD is an initiative led by the County to empower youth and small businesses in underserved communities who are adversely impacted by the digital divide. <u>Milestones executed in the last 3 months:</u> • Finalized agreements with core partners; • Launched website; and • Issued press release and began marketing/outreach. <u>Milestones to be executed for June 2021 launch:</u> • Finalize portal functionality and content, including eligibility/registration authentication, career pathways and course catalogs, and other program resources; • Launch community outreach and informational sessions; and • Launch DTD-sponsored events to increase youth and small business registrations, including MoonMark Challenge and Youth Enrollment Challenge. <u>Milestones to be executed after June 2021 launch:</u> • Establishment of DTD centers where participants can have access to computer equipment; • Continue to establish agreements with corporate partners for more programs, events, and resources to offer to DTD participants; • Continue creating partnerships with nonprofit organizations to provide assistance with outreach, equipment needs, and mentorships; and • Project-based learning and internships through WDACS, and initial program metrics on quality and value (site analytics, enrollment data, feedback from interest survey, etc.), which can be used to modify offerings and outreach strategies.
Los Angeles County Office of Education
<u>Milestones completed:</u> • Initiated an agreement with Spectrum Charter Communications to identify service addresses for district students; and • Completed the process for one district as a pilot to identify all students who have Spectrum service, all who do not, and, of those who do not, whether Spectrum could provide it or not, and at what speed. <u>Planned Milestones:</u> • Replicate this process to all districts throughout the County who are willing to participate.
Public Works
DPW reported the progress to the Board on January 25, 2021. Since then, the Bridging the Digital Divide cross-departmental team, which DPW leads, has continued to:

- Meet with external and internal partners to explore public-private partnership opportunities (e.g., Charter/Spectrum, Verizon, Crown Castle, CETF, SIP, City of Los Angeles, etc.);
- Work collaboratively with ISD and DRP to investigate additional data sources to enhance the County's GIS database, in order to identify the needs and gaps in service levels related to digital/broadband services;
- Meet with DRP and County Counsel, as well as private sector entities, regarding streamlining the permitting process to expedite broadband expansion, with a particular focus on areas that are underserved and under-resourced;
- Examine DPW assets that may be used to expand broadband infrastructure and resources (e.g., street light poles); and
- Finalize the Request for Proposal for expert consulting services to assist the department in achieving the directives of the Bridging the Digital Divide Board motion.

Public Social Services

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the GAIN Program expanded its ancillary policy to adopt a basic laptop allowance for GAIN participants to purchase a laptop (and show proof of purchase) to support vocational or educational classes that transitioned to online courses, or to those participants who wanted to enroll in online courses after April 2020.

Milestones completed:

- Since the policy was put in place in April 2020, GAIN staff have issued laptop payments to a total of 2,918 CalWORKs GAIN participants. The total expenditure in laptop allowances as of March 31, 2021 is \$1,115,692. This represents a monthly average of \$92,974 in ancillary issuances for laptops, to the benefit of an average of 243 CalWORKs GAIN participants a month.

Los Angeles County Development Authority

LACDA has recently joined ConnectHome USA Initiative and Long Beach COVID-19 Pandemic Digital Inclusion Response Working Groups.

Milestones completed:

- LACDA has concluded a basic digital needs assessment, surveying 220 tenants for the Housing Assistance Division, and a total of 227 tenants for the Housing Operations division, focusing on the Long Beach Housing site, Carmelitos.

Library

Milestones completed:

- As part of the Library Laptop and Hotspot Loan Program, Library delivered 2,290 Chromebooks to LA County residents in 7 months.

Upcoming Milestones:

- As part of the upcoming efforts to expand the Library Laptop and Hotspot Loan Program, Library plans to obtain 1,500 additional kits by the end of 2021.

7. Next Steps

The following are the key activities being pursued by the Digital Equity Regional Team:

- **Data Strategy**
 - o Development of data-driven metrics;
 - o Inventory of data sources;

- o Visualization of current baseline; and
 - o Development of a dashboard, reflecting the initiatives, progress, and potential impact using defined metrics.
- **Prioritize Future Initiatives**
 - o Prioritize key initiatives, which are high-impact and can be initiated with available resources and funding; and
 - o Identify top communities (pilot regions) in each district and prioritize the initiatives in these communities.
- **Regional Strategy**
 - o Expand the Strategic Plan to include regional efforts.