

Digital Communities

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San Jose, Calif., Puts \$24M Toward Closing the Digital Divide

The new program, which will be the largest of its kind in the country, is meant to bring broadband Internet access to 50,000 residents across the city that serves as the heart of Silicon Valley.

BY EMILY DERUY, THE MERCURY NEWS / FEBRUARY 13, 2019



Sam Liccardo, Mayor of San Jose, California

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(TNS) — Despite its “Capital of Silicon Valley” slogan, San Jose is home to thousands of residents who don’t have basic Internet access at home.

On Tuesday, the City Council voted to create the San Jose Digital Inclusion Fund. Once up and running, the \$24 million initiative will be the largest of its kind in the country and would be aimed at bridging the city’s digital divide. Over 10 years, organizations and community groups like the California Emerging Technology Fund are expected to work with the city to expand broadband access to 50,000 more San Jose residents.

Right now, the city estimates that around 95,000 residents have no Internet access at home. The lack of connection is particularly difficult for students, who are often expected to complete homework assignments online.

The program will be funded by the small cell usage fees telecommunications companies pay.

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