



NEWS

Key Government Entities Making Moves on Internet

While Los Angeles County weighs a comprehensive report on broadening Internet access, San Jose turns to cryptocurrency as a way to fund residents' access.

October 08, 2021 • [Zack Quaintance](#), [Julia Edinger](#)

Los Angeles County, the most populous in the nation, is considering a wide-spanning digital equity report that might have the potential to lead to rapid large-scale deployment of solutions aimed at bringing Internet access to every resident in the county.

The report from the Internal Services Department is titled [Utilizing Existing Infrastructure and Resources to Accelerate Digital Equity](#). It's a public report, submitted late last month, and it includes options for a county-owned municipal broadband service, as well as public-private partnerships, and a set of RFI (request for information) proposals received from service providers that could lead to new access for as many as 300,000 households that now lack Internet.

The intention behind all of this is to find effective options that could lead to bolstered Internet access throughout Los Angeles County by the end of the calendar year.

Meanwhile, the city of San Jose, the nation's 10th-largest city, has [launched](#) an initiative that will pilot the use of cryptocurrency to help residents pay for Internet over the course of six months.

For this initiative, HNT cryptocurrency tokens will be mined through [Helium Hotspot](#) devices in partnership with the [California Emerging Technology Fund](#) and Helium. The tokens will be turned into prepaid cash cards to help about 1,300 low-income residents pay their Internet costs for one year.

Twenty Helium-compatible hot spots will be deployed and installed over the pilot period. The devices mine the currency with limited environmental impact, needing only the energy of an LED light bulb. In addition, the devices will contribute to the Internet of Things infrastructure, offering improved air quality monitoring, fire detection and other climate-related opportunities to the city.

San Jose is no stranger to the use of civic tech approaches in the service of fostering digital equity, with recent developments such as a [digital platform](#) to connect residents with mental health resources and [expanding](#) the city's Digital Inclusion Fund.

Those interested in hosting a Helium hot spot in the city can fill out an [online form](#).

This report first appeared in Techwire's sister publication, Government Technology.

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