



CALTRANS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (SCAG)

SOUTHERN BORDER BROADBAND CONSORTIUM (SBBC)

FOCUS GROUP

AT-A-GLANCE REPORT

In January 2022, Southern Border Broadband Consortium conducted 25 Focus Group in-person surveys interviewing residents within disadvantaged communities in Imperial County to determine the potential for low-income residents, who are the majority of unconnected and under-connected households in the region, to reduce vehicle trips and therefore decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, if they had access to high-speed internet infrastructure and were digitally proficient. Survey interviews were conducted with community members who were in need of no-cost personal protection equipment (PPE) for their families.

- The participants identified a total of **400** vehicle trips could be avoided by using the internet at home. This is an average of **16** trips saved per participant.
- The highest ranked trip types for potential to reduce vehicle trips:
 - Work
 - Paying bills
 - Banking
 - School or education
- The majority of participants are employed and **20** identified themselves as “essential workers.”
- **2** respondents do not have internet at home.
- The average home internet bill was **\$68** per month.
- **3** respondents had internet service under \$25 per month.
- Most participants have internet at home, but only a few knew about any discounted programs for low-income households. The most known category is free data programs with their carriers, with **3** participants familiar.
- Most participants participate in programs to help their families, including Medi-Cal and Free and Reduced Price Meals program at schools.
- Almost all participants had at least a smart phone to connect to internet, and **3** participants listed a smart phone as the only device they use to access the internet.
- The average satisfaction rating for the focus groups existing internet service was **3.3** in a rating from 1 to 5.



FOCUS GROUP: PPE DONATIONS TO COMMUNITY

| Estimated Vehicle Trips Saved if Connected to Fast, Affordable, and Reliable Internet: 400 | |
|---|---|
| Total Participants: 25 African American: 0 Asian-pacific islander: 2 Latinx: 17 Native American: 1 White: 4 Female: 13 Male: 12 Age Groups: 21-35: 5 35-50: 8 50-65: 10 Over 65: 1 | Top Ranked Trips Saved: 1. Work - 92 2. Paying bills – 56 3. Banking – 46 4. School or Education – 46 5. Other Shopping - 38 |
| Essential Workers: 20 Working: 21 Not Working or Retired: 4 | Have Internet at Home: 23 Do Not Have Internet at Home: 2 |
| Targeted Zip Codes/Areas: Imperial County community | Smart Phone Only: 3. |
| Other Target Areas: Families in need of no-cost PPE | Average Home Internet Bill: \$68/month \$25 or Below: 3 |
| Heard of Discounted Internet Programs for Low-Income Families: 4 | Average Rating for Existing Internet Service: 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 5 Rating Description: Slow speed, connection lost, reliability issues |
| Top Responses for What Will Make Connecting at Home Easier: Better internet access at home More affordable home internet service | |
| Comments: <i>Having fast, affordable and reliable internet service could help me “save money on gas and anxiety.”</i> <i>Having fast, affordable and reliable internet service, “I would be able to attend zoom meetings without going to the office.”</i> <i>“I usually experience better service at school.” [outside Imperial County]</i> | |