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Dear Digital Equity Champions:

**We are so energized to be partnering with all of you to achieve Digital Equity. Thank you for your leadership and congratulations on the progress you've already made in 2023. We are on track to make this a breakthrough year for Digital Equity.**

CETF is celebrating 15 years of serving California by working to close the Digital Divide. Through our collective work, we are achieving Digital Equity for Community Justice. Today CETF is releasing the 2023 Progress Report that summarizes accomplishments, spotlights your success stories, and, most importantly, sets forth future goals.

[Get The Progress Report](#)

As outlined in the 2023 Progress Report, California has made great progress toward the overarching Goals of Ubiquitous Deployment and Universal Adoption.

**However, the 2023 Progress Report also notes persistent gaps remain. This is particularly noticeable looking at economic subgroups with 29% of low-income Californians digitally-disadvantaged, compared to just 15% of the state as a whole.**

The Digital Divide is another facet of the Economic Divide stemming from concentrated and persistent poverty rooted in systemic racism. Thus, closing the Digital Divide must address the interrelated factors and forces that we call the "wall of poverty" that make it very difficult for low-income residents to escape oppressive economic conditions and to succeed in school. This reality screams for systemic change and is why the California Emerging Technology Fund pursues Digital Equity as a 21st Century Civil Right and an imperative for Community Justice.

As we kick off 2023 we are focused on boldly working to achieve Digital Equity with aggressive quantified goals. **The California Broadband Council adopted a goal to get 90% of all low-income households online by 2024.** State Agencies are actively implementing past Legislative and Administrative orders while preparing the Digital Equity Plan and Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Plan. CETF will be right there, alongside them in this work.

The challenge now is to overcome bureaucratic inertia and break through organizational

silos with commitment and urgency to achieve Digital Equity and Community Justice for all Californians.

**It is only a matter of LEADERSHIP.**

Sincerely,



**Sunne Wright McPeak**  
President and CEO  
California Emerging Technology Fund

### CETF And Digital Equity Coalition Plant The Flag In The Capitol For Digital Equity

The Capitol was abuzz with all of you briefing Legislators about the Digital Divide in California and how together we can promote Digital Inclusion to achieve Digital Equity.

You did a great job of championing Digital Equity in California and our proposed solutions to close the Digital Divide.



Senator Josh Newman (center) congratulated members of the Digital Equity Coalition, EveryoneOn Senior Director of Programs Paulina Chavez and UNITE-LA Public Policy Manager AJ Lucas for their commitment to closing

### Digital Champion Spotlight: Assemblymember Mike Gipson

Recently, **Assemblymember Mike Gipson** championed in the Legislature to get connected all residents in publicly-subsidized housing complexes.

His leadership raised awareness that resulted in the CPUC allocating more funds to the CASF Public Housing Account.



CETF was proud to attend

the Digital Divide by promoting Digital Inclusion to achieve Digital Equity.

Together, we delivered Policy Briefing Packets to every Legislator, met with several Legislators and their staff, briefed the Latino Caucus, and hosted a Digital Equity Reception which featured remarks by the Legislative Leadership.



**Latino Caucus Chair, Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes**, says, "Digital Equity calls all stakeholders to the table with non-profits, the public sector and, the private sector to look at what the path forward is."

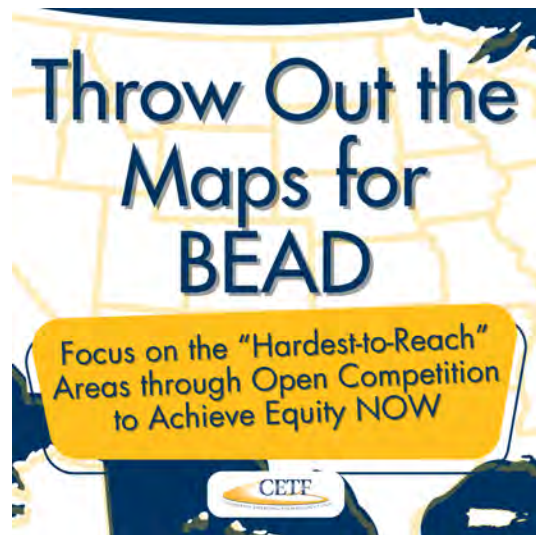


**Senator Steven Bradford** says closing the Digital Divide is critical for everyday quality of life, "getting online is necessary to look for a job, apply for college, find resources and to be socially connected with others."

Assemblymember Mike Gipson's swearing-in ceremony and present him with a plaque in recognition of all his work being a Digital Champion.

## Throw Out The Maps For BEAD

*Focus On The "Hardest-to-Reach" Areas Through Open Competition To Achieve Equity NOW*



California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) applauds Congressman Clyburn and Senators King and Klobuchar for underscoring urgency to achieve Digital Equity NOW and calling for BEAD funds to be distributed on schedule.

**However, more fundamental action is needed to ensure that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) serves the most digitally-disadvantaged as Congress envisioned and intended.** The proposed map for the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program should be "thrown out" for determining allocation of funds both because (a) it is seriously flawed and (b) no map should govern investments.

Maps should be used only for information. **Investment of public funds should be performance-driven through an open,**



Senator Bob J. Archuleta says everyone should have an an equal shot at Digital Equity.



Assemblymember David Alvarez remembers saving money as a young student to purchase his very first computer.

competitive application process that prioritizes the “hardest-to-reach” areas—rural, remote communities, including Tribal Lands, and high-poverty urban neighborhoods. This alternative approach would be a call to action for all Internet Service Providers—private and public—to “Step Up or Step Aside” if they want to serve the best interests of the nation.

Further, BEAD should focus on “at scale” projects, and then connect and upgrade all other locations along the path of deployment, including anchor institutions. The “hardest-to-reach” areas are those where the marketplace hasn’t operated and needs public investment. **BEAD also should embrace common sense to recognize that an “unserved” location is “unserved” regardless of what a flawed map says.**

[Read Full Statement](#)

## Leveraging Technology To Lift The Bar On Student Outcomes

Leaders from **School2Home** partner schools ([Inglewood Unified School District](#) & [Los Angeles Unified School District](#)) gathered together in Southern California to share strategies, resources, and best practices for leveraging technology to lift the bar on student outcomes in Title 1 schools.



**Assembly Majority Leader Eloise-Gómez Reyes** says now more than ever we need to make Digital Access and 21st Century Civil Right.



Regional School2Home planning events help build capacity and energize School Partners and leaders for the year to come.



**Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia** says young people are historically the change makers in communities.



Sunne Wright McPeak congratulated School2Home Partner Schools for their leadership in adapting to online learning and back to in-person teaching relatively easily because all teachers were prepared, parents had been trained and their students already had been assigned a computer to take home.



**California Secretary of Government Operations Amy Tong** speaks at the CETF Digital Equity Reception.

Leaders heard from long-time School2Home partners and now, [Families In Schools](#) new Executive Director Yolie Flores:

*"We're not doing enough to leverage the love that parents have for their children. If we would have, we would be living with a different set of outcomes. But, we're in the golden years of family engagement, as 2 years of the pandemic demonstrated to schools, the willingness of families to step up to the plate. We can't let ourselves go back to the way things were."*



**Former State Senator Richard Polanco** led the day's events, championing Community Justice with CETF and the Digital Equity Coalition.

We shared ways in which policymakers can implement effectively historic investments already approved by the Legislature and Governor to close Digital Divide.

CETF Directors Martha Escutia, Tim McCallion, and Carlos Ramos led several Policy Briefings along with the following Digital Equity Coalition Members: California School Boards Association; EveryoneOn; California Foundation for Independent Living Centers; Northeastern California Connect Consortium; Upstate California Connect Consortium; North State Planning and Development Collective; Valley Vision; Connected Capital Area Broadband Consortium; San Joaquin Valley Regional Broadband Consortium; Broadband Consortium of the Pacific Coast; LA DEAL; UNITE-LA; Southern Border Broadband Consortium; Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation; and Tech Exchange.



School2Home Program Leaders look forward to regional planning events.



School2Home Partner Schools reported broader and more sophisticated use of technology and had students with improved connectivity as well improved parent engagement.

## Affordable Connectivity Program: California Enrollment Update



CETF President and CEO, Sunne Wright McPeak and California Foundation for Independent Living Centers Public Policy Manager, Dan Okenfuss. Photo by CFLIC.



CETF team members at the Digital Equity Reception.

Questionnaire Results Confirm: **Get Connected!** California is Reaching the Most Digitally Disadvantaged

There is no replacement for Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) who are the "trusted messengers" and "honest

Statewide Percent of Eligible Households that are Enrolled as of February 6, 2023



ACP-eligible households in California



Out of **13,044,258** households in California, approximately **5,844,797** are eligible for ACP.

Upcoming **Get Connected!** California ACP Enrollment Events:

**Thursday, February 9**  
**Where: FMCI Community Center & Educare Family Resource Center at 1399 Santee Dr., San José, CA 95122**  
**When: 9 AM – 4 PM**

brokers” conducting outreach in language and in-culture to digitally disadvantaged communities.

During the fall 2022 series of *Get Connected!* California ACP Enrollment events in partnership with the California Department of Technology, California Department of Education, State Library, and CETF, CBOs successfully helped nearly 1,000 families in person through the ACP sign-up process.

Of the enrollees, 377 households completed a questionnaire, the results of which provided unique data on how the efforts of ***Get Connected! California is reaching the most digitally-disadvantaged residents:***

- 76% earned less than \$40,000 per year (90% less than \$60,000).
- 19% never have been connected to the Internet at home.
- Currently connected are paying an average of \$67 per month (\$30 is a real help).
- 60% speak a language at home other than English.
- 55% rate themselves as “beginner” in using a computer.
- 61% want more digital literacy training.
- 93% consider home Internet service “extremely or very important” to their lives.

**Check out the Questionnaire and Survey Results on page 17 of the CETF and [Digital Equity Coalition Briefing Packet](#).**





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