



## **Strategic Action Plan for Digital Equity Outline for Local Governments Overview and Guide**

### **How to Use the Outline**

The purpose of this Outline is to provide an easy and efficient tool for Local Governments to develop a Strategic Action Plan for Digital Equity without a big expense or long time delay. A working version of a Plan can be developed by existing staff within a few hours by gathering baseline data on: (a) Deployment: Unserved and Underserved households (a measure of the availability of high-speed Internet infrastructure, referred to generically as “broadband” including both wireline and wireless networks); and (b) Adoption: Unconnected and Underconnected households (a measure of the number of residents who have no home Internet service, referred to as Unconnected, and those who have only a smartphone, referred to as Underconnected). These data are foundational for setting Deployment and Adoption Goals for a Strategic Action Plan.

The Outline sets forth a logical sequence of 12 Sections as an approach and guide to developing a Strategic Action Plan. Once the above baseline data regarding Deployment and Adoption is gathered for the Local Government jurisdiction, an interim working version of a Plan can be prepared by simply using the Outline content for the remaining Sections. Then, a more detailed version can evolve over time based on experience.

A Local Government can jumpstart the process of preparing a Strategic Action Plan by first implementing the Framework and using the Best Practices Check List to gain familiarity with the issues and experience in tackling the Digital Divide. It also is helpful to use the Resource Guide: *A Broadband Deployment and Adoption Guide for Local and Regional Leaders* (published by the Connected Capital Area Broadband Consortium and the California Emerging Technology Fund and posted on the California Department of Technology. The overall thrust should be to get into action as soon as possible instead of pursuing a long planning process.

Local Governments should establish an outreach and engagement process to obtain community input and technical expertise, which will require a modest investment of time to organize, summarize, and synthesize. However, a Local Government can engage the community and stakeholders to jumpstart action using the Framework and Check List and at the same time gather input for the Strategic Action Plan.

**Framework to Close the Digital Divide, Promote Digital Inclusion, and Achieve Digital Equity  
(Challenge, Process, Results)  
How to Jumpstart Strategic Planning with Action Today  
September 2022**

**Encourage Ubiquitous Deployment**

- **Identify Needs of Unserved and Underserved HHs, Anchor Institutes, Other Locations**
- **Engage ISPs to determine willingness to collaborate and partner.**
- **Help develop last-mile project applications for CPUC funding.**
  - Obtain CPUC Maps to gather data about existing Internet infrastructure, speeds, and adoption rates (CSU Chico can format at needed). Engage appropriate Departments to guide and assist with this initiative.
  - Meet with all ISPs with a set of written questions to ask their plans for deployment to upgrade to unserved and underserved areas. Prepare a summary of the ISPs meetings (and ISP info) as background to inform a Public Forum).
  - Convene a Public Forum with ISPs (in-person and online) for residents to report their connectivity issues and hear responses from ISPs. The announcement of the Public Forum can include a survey or invitation for residents to register problems and complaints. Summarize Public Forum discussion and prepare a report for the Board or Council.
  - Present Report to the Board or Council with all participating residents and ISPs invited to comment. Designate a Department to lead on Digital Equity, especially to work with ISPs and stakeholders in developing infrastructure applications including inventorying of public assets that can be made available for partnerships. Oversee the development and submission of last-mile applications to the CPUC for California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Federal Funding Account (FFA) and Infrastructure Account.
  - Work with appropriate Department and other appropriate agencies to notify and assist all publicly-subsidized housing complexes (government and non-profit organizations) about availability of grants from CASF Public Housing Account.

**Promote Universal Adoption**

- **Get 90% of All ACP-Eligible HHs Enrolled by 2024 (95% by 2027).**
- **Incorporate Digital Inclusion into contracts with all relevant community services CBOs.**
- **Assist CBOs to apply for CASF grants for adoptions, including digital literacy training.**
  - Establish a Digital Equity Task Force to lead-drive progress, using the CDT ACP Enrollment Tracker (IFAN website has Map). Affiliate with *Get Connected California!* for ACP mobilization.
  - Request appropriate County Departments to notify all Medi-Cal and CalFresh recipients about ACP and request the COE to engage all School Districts to notify all NSLP students-families about ACP (90% of ACP-Eligible HHs are in these 3 Big Populations). Reach out to higher education institutions to notify all Pell Grant recipients about ACP.
  - Distribute information about ACP through all available communication channels.
  - Organize *Get Connected! Days* (ACP Enrollment Events). Invite ISPs to help staff.
  - Request CETF to train staff and CBO contractors about ACP to staff and CBO contractors and provide information about how to apply for grants from CASF.



**Achieving Digital Equity in California**  
**Check List of Best Practices for Local Governments**  
**Roles of Local Government Leaders**

Role	Best Practice	Yes
		√
<b>Policy Leader</b>		
Promulgate policies that determine the jurisdiction’s attention and attitude about broadband technology and define the approach to facilitating or discouraging capital investment in deployment and adoption by residents.	Adopt a resolution or policy to accelerate broadband deployment and adoption to achieve Digital Equity.	
	Request all Departments to identify and implement strategies that integrate Digital Inclusion into ongoing services and programs.	
	Participate in a Regional Leadership Group to coordinate plans and actions to achieve economies of scale and optimal impact.	
	Post on website and distribute information to low-income residents about affordable home Internet service offers and lower-cost devices.	
	Establish a remote-work program to reduce vehicle trips (embrace broadband as a green strategy) that maintains workforce productivity.	
<b>Planner</b>		
Prepare land use and other related plans (such as for economic development) that guide the development in the jurisdiction, thus determining “how smart” growth will be and defining quality of life for residents.	Convene community meetings in-language and in-culture to obtain public input on broadband infrastructure needs and affordable access.	
	Prepare a map of unserved areas and digitally-disadvantaged neighborhoods with preferred broadband strategic corridors and identified public assets to accelerate broadband deployment.	
	Share the map with appropriate Regional Leadership Groups and California Department of Technology for middle-mile planning.	
	Identify strategies and adopt policies to accelerate broadband deployment and adoption, including consideration of incentives for ISPs to reach the unserved areas and assist low-income residents.	
	Incorporate the broadband map, strategies, and policies into the General Plan with an analysis of overall programmatic impacts and benefits to streamline compliance with CEQA.	
<b>Regulator</b>		
Adopt implementing ordinances for policies and plans that promote “smart” infrastructure, facilities, and buildings consistent with “Dig Once, Dig Smart” objectives.	Adopt ordinances to implement policies and procedures to accelerate broadband deployment, including online submission of plans and permit applications with ministerial procedures to minimize delays.	
	Enact procedures to streamline broadband project approvals and permitting, including priority focus for partnerships with ISPs.	
	Conduct briefings for ISPs about how to comply with policies and procedures in ordinances to minimize delays in approvals.	
	Incorporate high-speed Internet infrastructure into all public projects, especially major transportation and public utility projects.	
	Require high-speed Internet infrastructure as a condition of approval for all private construction (with public access where appropriate).	

<b>Role</b>	<b>Best Practice</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Consumer Purchaser</b>		
Purchase and utilize technology which can enable residents to access information and services, increasing demand for the technology and encouraging innovation and competition to develop new applications that will increase productivity.	Inventory information technology (IT) and ISP contracts to determine total amount being paid annually for IT and Internet services. Share the inventory with Regional Leadership Group(s) to explore demand aggregation in negotiating for IT and Internet services.	
	Meet with IT and ISP vendors to identify strategies for accelerating broadband deployment and adoption. Consider requiring assistance with adoption programs as a condition of procurement contracts.	
	Ensure all IT and ISP contracts require periodic updates to state-of-art technology with user-friendly interfaces and applications for residents.	
	Develop a robust “green technology ecosystem” to refurbish retired computing devices for donation to unconnected low-income households participating in adoption programs. Encourage other public agencies and larger employers to donate retired devices.	
	Purchase computing devices and hotspots in bulk to be loaned and/or sold at a discounted price for residents in adoption programs.	
<b>Service Provider</b>		
Provide information and services online through broadband that increases the relevance of the technology to consumers, which encourages adoption and reduces impacts on the environment.	Provide online access to all policies, plans, ordinances, and services information, including remote participation in public meetings.	
	Deliver online as many services as possible to reduce vehicle trips and improve efficiency and productivity.	
	Designate the library as a “community digital hub” to help residents become digitally literate and learn how to get online at home.	
	Promote telehealth (as a health provider and/or encourage other providers) to optimize effective healthcare and reduce vehicle trips.	
	Encourage and support schools to implement effective technology and Digital Inclusions programs such as School2Home.	
<b>Total Best Practices</b>	Add up the number of completed Best Practices (Total 25 Best Practices).	
<b>Score</b>	Assign 4 points per Best Practice for your Score (Total Possible Score of 100).	
<b>Progress Rating</b>	Benchmark progress as a percentage of your Score / 100 = % Progress.	<b>%</b>

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Notes:

Broadband is defined in State law as high-speed Internet infrastructure including wireline and wireless technologies. Threshold speeds for adequate broadband is define by State law and regulations. State law currently defines “unserved” as less the 25/3 Mbps and minimums for publicly-subsidized Internet infrastructure as 100/20 Mbps.

Regional Leadership Groups include: Regional Broadband Consortium; Metropolitan Planning Organization; Council of Governments; Regional Transportation Agency; Countywide Work Group; and Other Voluntary Work Group involving multiple Local Governments. It is vital to work with the Regional Broadband Consortium.

Adoption Programs help unconnected low-income households get online at home and generally include: (a) outreach in-language and in-culture by trusted messengers, such as community-based organizations (CBOs), schools, libraries, and community agencies; (b) awareness about the relevance and value of being online; (c) assistance with selecting and signing up for affordable home Internet service; (d) delivery of digital literacy training; and (e) assistance with acquiring an affordable and appropriate computing device.