CETF
CALIFORNIA EMERGING TECHNOLOGY FUND
Celebrating 15 years

Dear Digital Equity Champion:

The mission of California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) to close the Digital Divide remains vital for students beginning their school year, older adults wanting access to telehealth care from the comfort of home, job seekers looking for opportunities, and millions of other Californian's in need of affordable home Internet.

We pursue our mission with a sense of urgency because those households stuck on the wrong side of the Digital Divide are being left behind at an accelerating pace, which not only causes distinct disadvantages for educational and economic opportunities for residents, but also puts at risk their public safety.

The sober reality of how far we still have to go comes on the heels of exciting progress:

- **Digital Equity Bill of Rights**, **Assembly Bill 414 (AB414)**, continues to move through the Legislature, having passed the Senate floor and now to the Governor's desk — where we urge you to **take action for Digital Equity today.**
- **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)** enrollment rate has exceeded **42%** — that's **more than 2 million** of eligible California households enrolled.
- New findings are revealed from a **PEW Charitable Trusts** study in collaboration with **University of Southern California, Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, Research Network on International Communications (USC ARNIC)** on **Measuring the Effectiveness of Digital Inclusion Approaches (MEDIA)**.
- **Montebello Unified School District Board of Trustees** welcomes a new partnership with School2Home.
- California leaders are serious about their commitment to Digital Equity in the community and we have important messages from the **California Department of Technology Broadband For All Task Force**, **California State Association of Counties (CSAC) President and Riverside County Supervisor, Chuck Washington**, **Nevada County Board of Supervisors**, and the **City of San José.**

There is a lot of progress being made towards Digital Equity in California and CETF looks forward to continuing to work with all of our partners, broadband stakeholders, state leaders and YOU to close the Digital Divide, promote Digital Inclusion, and achieve Digital Equity. **Your leadership is the key!**

Sincerely,

Sunne Wright McPeak

Sunne Wright McPeak
President and CEO
California Emerging Technology Fund

## Take Action Now For Digital Equity

We are elated to report that the **Digital Equity Bill of Rights**, **AB414**, authored by **Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes**, could soon be law in California.

When CETF first launched the Digital Equity Bill of Rights, the powerful 10 goals of the bill were set to accelerate California's commitment to closing the Digital Divide. Those 10 goals are now codified in Legislation that will deliver on the promise of ubiquitous deployment of high-speed broadband and universal adoption throughout the state.
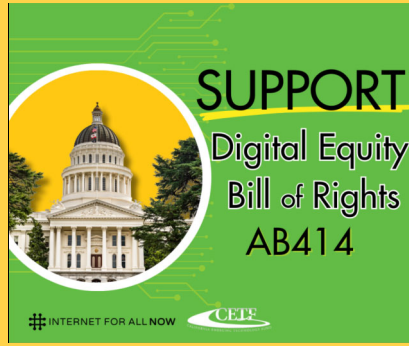
Now is the time to pass the Digital Equity Bill of Rights.

Let Governor Newsom know you support AB414 and urge him to continue his work as a Digital Equity Champion by signing AB414 into law.
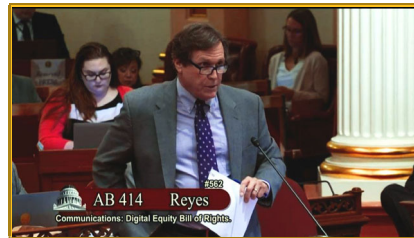
Thank you to **Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes** for authoring this important legislation, **Senator Scott Wilk** for presenting the Digital Equity Bill of Rights on the Senate floor, and all **Digital Equity Coalition** members who stepped up to show their support.

Thank you to the California Senate for passing AB414 out of the Senate on 34 (Yes) to 0 (No) vote.
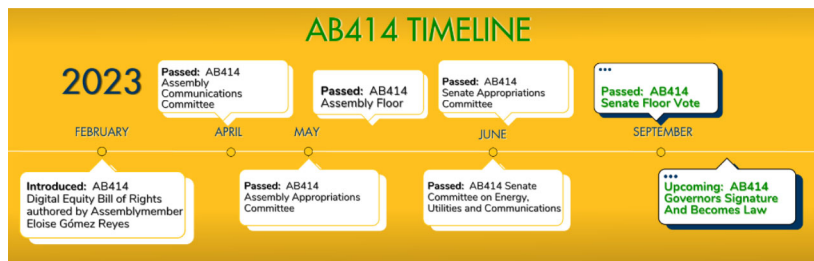
Thank Governor Newsom and Urge Him to Sign AB414

In July **PEW Charitable Trusts** published the latest findings from a multi-year research project on how **Broadband Subsidy Programs Help Deliver Affordable Internet Access**.

The study is part of a research partnership between CETF, Pew Charitable Trusts, and USC ARNIC to share research results with Internet Service Providers (ISPs), federal regulators, and policymakers about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in order to then evaluate the impact of various digital inclusion strategies.

The USC ARNIC leads the Measuring the Effectiveness of Digital Inclusion Approaches (MEDIA) research.

Among the key findings in case studies:

- Through **California's Lifeline** program 87% of ACP program enrollee's qualified through their participation in **Medicaid**, **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**, or **Supplemental Security Income**.
- A pilot project involving the **Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)** found eligibility in the program was tied to residency and that by eliminating the need to provide additional documentation, more than half of the housed residents stayed enrolled in the program — even after 2 years and even after special budget friendly offers on top of the ACP benefit expired.
- **Riverside Unified School District (RUSD)** in California, found that providing devices and training to students and families led to 98% of students participating in at least one distance learning activity during the pandemic.

In all, these findings show both net additions in subscribers and sustaining service for low-income households is hindered by:

1. Lack of awareness and outreach of

California now has exceeded **2.4 million households enrolled in ACP,** which is the largest number of enrollments among all states**.**

However, there still are 3.4 million households to enroll, which is more than $1.2 billion annually in ACP benefits that could be claimed by California residents.

Research has shown that the most effective tool for ACP enrollment is Direct Notification by credible sources, such as State Agencies, Counties, County Offices of Education, Higher Education Institutions, Tribal Governments, and Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs), coupled with having trusted community messengers to reach out directly all ACP-eligible households to notify them of the benefit. These trusted messengers can also coordinate with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide culturally-competent ACP information.

To make progress in reaching all eligible households, under sponsorship of the California Department of Technology (CDT) and California Broadband Council, CETF in collaboration with CBO's, Grantee Partners, and Local Governments, have hosted **75 *Get Connected! California*** ACP Enrollment Events this year.

CETF and the Geographical Information Center at Chico State Enterprises (CSE) also maintains the California ACP Enrollment Tracker on the CDT Broadband For All website. This resource provides the most recent data and progress to date on ACP-eligible households in California.

You can see where your County stands with ACP enrollment here:

ACP Enrollment Tracker

information regarding ACP,
2. High administrative burden, and
3. General mistrust of government programs without a reassuring community representative.

The study concludes that these challenges must be addressed to get every eligible California household enrolled in ACP and connected to affordable home Internet.

County Spotlight: Nevada County

Thank you, **Nevada County Board of Supervisors** for recognizing CETF as a partner and ally in your work to enroll residents in the Afordable Connectivity Program. CETF is proud to announce a $25,000 grant to the county to support continuing ACP enrollment, outreach, and awareness.

CETF President and CEO
Sunne Wright McPeak (fourth from left) joined the Nevada County Board of Supervisors to celebrate their leadership in closing the Digital Divide.

Digital Champion Spotlight: Chuck Washington

California State Association of Counties (CSAC) President and Riverside County Supervisor, Chuck Washington shares a message encouraging Counties to close the Digital Divide in their communities by increasing awareness of and participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program. Please watch the inspiring message from CSAC President Chuck Washington.

Statewide Percent of Eligible Households that are Enrolled as of September 4, 2023

42%
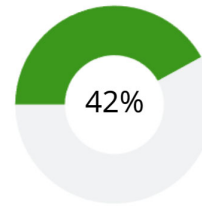
2,479,137 Statewide Enrollment

ACP-eligible households in California

45%
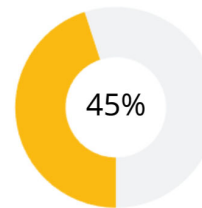
Out of **13,044,258** households in California, approximately **5,844,797** are eligible for ACP.

Celebrating San José

In August, **Congressman Jimmy Panetta**, **San José Mayor Matt Mahan**, **San José Councilmember Bien Doan,** and **San José City Librarian Jill Bourne** joined California Emerging Technology Fund and **San José Digital Inclusion Partnership (SJDIP)** Grantees in celebrating the success of having connected **30,000** residents to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

The event marks the launch of the patnership under new leadership of the San José City Library. City Librarian Jill Bourne says she is excited to continue this important work for San José families.

SJDIP Grantees **(Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, International Children's Assistance Network, International Rescue Committee, Step Up and Do Something, Tech Exchange, and Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation)** shared lived experiences of how they have successfully assisted residents by meeting the needs of the community in-culture and in-language to facilitate the ACP enrollment process.

CETF is honored to have worked with the City of San José and Santa Clara County in launching the San José Digital Inclusion Partnership and wishes continued growth in the program.

(951) 955-1850

Montebello Unified School District Welcomes School2Home

In August, the **Montebello Unified School Board** voted to partner with School2Home by implementing digital literacy combined with technology as a tool for enhancing teacher training, student learning, and deep parent engagement.

In applauding the partnership, **Elizabeth Cabrera, President of the Montebello Unified School Board**, said, "We are thrilled to have School2Home work with our schools to help close the Digital Divide and help engage parents with the use of technology in their child's education. Innovative programs like School2Home are making an impact on students' educational achievement and we are looking forward seeing those results in Montebello Unified School District."

School 2 Home
New School District!
Montebello Unified School District

Digital Equity Champions Are Among Us

CETF salutes and thanks: Tech Exchange Program Manager, Mayra Miranda, Congressman Jimmy Panetta, San José Mayor Matt Mahan (speaking), San José Councilmember Bien Doan, San José City Librarian Jill Bourne, and Tech Exchange Director of Development Amy Himes.

Your Voice Was Heard by State Officials

CDT and CPUC Complete 20 Broadband For All, Digital Equity, and BEAD Regional Planning Workshops

CDT and CPUC, in collaboration with GOBiz and other State Agencies, conducted 20 Broadband For All, Digital Equity, and Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Regional Planning Workshops between April 14 to June 27—17 in collaboration with Regional Broadband Consortia and other Planning Partners and 3 Consultations with Tribal Leaders. CETF was engaged by CDT to assist with organizing and facilitating the Workshops. Planning Partners distributed invitations to more than 60,000 residents with 2,296 individuals participating. NextGen Policy reached out to 175 community organizations to engage Covered Populations and conduct 3 Focus Groups. CDT will be posting all the Summaries of Recommendations from the Workshops and Tribal Consultations to ensure all information is available and accessible to the public.

Please enjoy this spoken word poem by **Jacob Virges, Youth Director, Urban Strategies Council,** which was read at the Oakland workshop.

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