

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Brittany-Rae Gregory  
brittany-rae@nextcenturycities.org  
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**NEXT CENTURY CITIES SELECTED FOR FCC BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY WORKING GROUP**

**Washington, D.C. (May 29, 2020)** – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced appointees to the Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee's (BDAC) [Disaster Response Working Group](#). Francella Ochillo was selected to represent Next Century Cities (NCC), an organization focused on supporting local efforts to expand high-speed connectivity.

"When COVID-19 clutched the nation, local officials were the first to develop innovative ways to help disconnected residents get online. Being able to document their success stories and ongoing challenges in a solution-oriented discourse with the FCC is a great honor for Next Century Cities," says **Francella Ochillo**, Executive Director.

**Denise Linn Riedl**, Chief Innovation Officer for South Bend, Indiana, a NCC member city, was also selected to serve. She and Ochillo join appointees from the Cherokee Nation, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Fiber Broadband Association, INCOMPAS, Louisiana Municipal Association, and NTCA in the Working Group.

According to **Rondella Hawkins**, Next Century Cities' Advisory Board Chair, "Next Century Cities is made up of local officials who are willing to tackle complex and long-standing broadband challenges. The appointment to this workgroup is an acknowledgement that we cannot achieve universal connectivity goals without partnerships at the local level."

NCC encourages municipalities across the country to [share their stories](#). The Disaster Response and Recovery Work Group will document COVID-19 specific measures employed to address gaps in broadband connectivity at a time when millions of Americans were simply unprepared to work, learn, and obtain healthcare from home. Recording these strategies will help the Commission to identify best practices that can be adapted in unserved and underserved areas nationwide.