FORWARD

Breckenridge, CO

New Year
New Heights
Setting Our Intentions for 2022
Visit our new and improved website at www.nextcenturycities.org
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At the end of 2021, the Next Century Cities team identified organizational goals for 2022. We reflected on our wins and roadmapped upcoming challenges as we continue to work towards achieving ubiquitous broadband connectivity in communities across the country. Of course, we always want to hear from the local and state leaders at the center of our work. Share your broadband-specific goals with us on social media using #NCCResolutions. Here's a peek into what we are looking forward to in upcoming months.
2022 NCC RESOLUTIONS

1. RELATIONSHIPS
   Develop new relationships with community leaders who are passionate about bringing affordable, high-quality broadband into reach for their communities.

2. LEARNING
   Remain in a state of continual learning. A continuous learning mindset ensures that we are meeting residents where they are, equipping them with effective strategies and information.

3. ALLIES
   Expand our network of allies in the pursuit of universal broadband access and adoption.

4. LOCAL VOICES
   Ensure that local voices are reflected and centralized as states set up Infrastructure Act funded programs. Our members have a wealth of information to share and plugging into that is essential.

5. RESOURCE
   Be a first-of-mind, helpful resource for members and allies.
BROADBAND’S ROLE IN FEEDING OUR NEIGHBORS

by Corian Zacher

Among the many personal necessities that broadband enables, connectivity also allows us to show up for our community. Since the pandemic began, natural and human-made disasters have ravaged municipalities across the United States. Unlike any other time in history, Internet connectivity enables communities to organize mutual aid by reaching people who might otherwise have never learned about opportunities to support their neighbors.

Combating Food Insecurity
Garden Giving OKC is a nonprofit that grows fresh produce for the Homeless Alliance, a partner organization that serves daily shelter breakfast and lunch for upwards of 400 people Monday through Friday. The nonprofit also supports local food pantries and community organizations throughout Oklahoma City. The gardens also support local composting and provide a safe space for pollinators. In just a few hours of volunteering, I learned a great amount about the benefits of different types of plants to the environment, the composting process, and how various cultures use vegetable parts that are frequently discarded in the U.S.

"Unlike any other time in history, Internet connectivity enables communities to organize mutual aid."
This year, I decided that I wanted to find a way to channel my passion for history through my community service efforts. One of the many benefits of having reliable Internet access is being able to do community service online. Even though many traditional in-person service projects have been altered as a result of the global pandemic, there are so many ways in which we can share our time and talents with neighbors in need with the same technologies that allow us to work, learn, or access medical care and essentials service from the safety of home.

The Smithsonian museums offer unique opportunities to give back online through the Smithsonian Digital Volunteers Program. Through this initiative, volunteers from around the globe can work together to transcribe historical documents for the world’s largest museum and research complex.

Continue reading about Brittany-Rae’s Digital Volunteers experience here.
Bipartisan Tech
Virtual Conference
March 29, 2022

Digital inequities have a bipartisan impact on communities nationwide. Register here. Learn about speakers and the schedule here.
GET ONLINE WITH US!

www.nextcenturycities.org

We recently relaunched our website. Navigation updates should make it easier for you to access the information and resources you need. Visit www.nextcenturycities.org and take a look for yourself!
GET ONLINE

NEW MENU OPTIONS

On our homepage, you will find new drop-down menu options.

BE IN THE KNOW

Navigating to the middle of the home page, you will find our latest publications and information about upcoming events.
By scrolling to the bottom of the page, you can keep up to date with what we’re doing at NCC by signing up for our newsletter or following our social media feed in real-time.

We cannot wait for you to use our new site and value your input. If there is something that you love, or something that you wish we had included, please share this feedback with us.
NCC AND ALLIES EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR A SEAMLESS TRANSITION FROM THE EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT TO THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

On December 22nd, Next Century Cities joined public interest allies in a letter asking the agency to proactively address bill shock for households transitioning from the EBB to ACP. Local leaders have repeatedly expressed concerns about ensuring that eligible households learn about broadband subsidy programs from trusted community members.

We urged FCC officials to consider ways to address program attrition and employ communication strategies that minimize consumer confusion. As stated in the letter, “all EBB participants [must] receive clear and repeated notice that the program is transitioning, and they may opt-out or choose an alternative provider at any time.”

The letter emphasizes the importance of communicating with consumers in ways that they can understand.

Community-based partners are not only best-positioned to deliver that message, they also have the social infrastructure to reach households that the ACP was designed to support. Recognizing the need for local partnerships, the Commission is collecting public input on the structure of, and objectives for, an outreach partner grant program.

Next Century Cities curated ACP resources for local and state leaders here. Click here to review the December 22nd letter to the FCC.
Columbus, OH | Ohio State University is developing a new curriculum to train workers to help expand broadband internet access in rural and urban areas of Ohio. The builders will share their information with other educational institutions in Ohio.

King County, WA | The Washington State Broadband Office announced the breakdown of funding that will be used to connect 14 underserved communities across the state. Member municipality King County is among the recipients, with $11.8 million allocated toward bridging the digital divide.

Mesa, AZ | The City Council in Mesa, Arizona, recently voted to allocate money to expand Internet access to neighborhoods on the city’s westside. Funds will be used to build a network of 21 cellular radio towers.

Southbend, IN | The City of Southbend’s ‘Citywide Classroom’ program now provides student households with Wi-Fi hotspots for a five-year time period. Families interested in applying for the program can access the application here.

Washington County, MD | Washington County, Maryland Commissioners approved funding for a broadband expansion project that is slated to connect more than 1500 residents. The project is scheduled to begin in Spring 2022 and will roll out in four phases.
IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

REPORT | A recently released report, "HCS EdConnect: Connecting families to no-cost, high-speed internet in Chattanooga," chronicles the work of the first-of-its-kind initiative developed to bridge the digital divide and provide home WiFi all year long, for families in the greater Chattanooga area. Since its inception, the program has brought high-speed, no-cost home broadband to more than 15,000 students and their families — and will continue to do so through at least 2030.

REPORT | Digiunity commissioned a report from Amy Gonzales, an Associate Professor of Communication at the University of California at Santa Barbara titled "Why Device Support is Critical." The study details the technical challenges that disrupt computer use and offers suggestions for improvement.

REPORT | In collaboration with Tech Goes Home, Dr. Colin Rhinesmith and students at Simmons University’s School of Library and Information Sciences conducted a study titled, "Measuring the Impact of Digital Literacy," examining the economic impact of digital inclusion and identifying ways for Tech Goes Home to address Boston's digital divide.

STORY COLLECTION | On January 21, 2022, the Federal Communications Commission published rules for the Affordable Connectivity Program. The notice includes a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking requesting comment on several issues related to outreach grants. The Office of Commissioner Geoffrey Starks is particularly interested in information regarding those participating in Federal Housing Assistance Programs and Emergency Broadband Benefit Enrollment.

If you or your community has (a) an experience or story to share regarding the challenges faced by those on Federal Housing Assistance enrolling in the EBB or (b) input on how you would like to see a grant program targeted at assisting those on FHA enroll in ACP, you can reach out directly to Commissioner Starks’ Legal Advisor for Wireline and Public Safety Austin Bonner at austin.bonner@fcc.gov. For help setting up a meeting with the office of Commissioner Starks on other issues related to the transition from EBB to ACP please reach out to Ryan Johnston at ryan@nextcenturycities.org.

STORY COLLECTION | The Institute for Local Self Reliance launched the Digital Health Story Collection as an opportunity for health care providers and health care users to share experiences with or difficulties accessing telehealth care across the country. Share your story here.
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**AMERIND** is hiring for a **Critical Infrastructure Project Manager**. The project manager will execute a comprehensive plan for client solicitation and development and new business income sources and strategies, analyze and assist in developing advocacy documents, and support and assist clients in advancing Tribal community welfare and critical infrastructure policy positions before federal, state, local, and Tribal governments. Additional information about the role and application process can be found [here](#).

**The Center for Digital Equity at the Queens University of Charlotte** seeks a **Deputy Director**. The Deputy will work closely with the Executive Director to manage the Center’s daily operations. More information can be found [here](#).

**The Wisconsin Broadband Office** is hiring for several positions including a **Broadband Expansion Manager**, a **Federal Grant Specialist**, and a **Federal Policy and Program Analyst**. Additional information about each role, including the application requirements, can be found on the [State of Wisconsin's Jobs website](#).

**Tech Goes Home** is hiring a **Coordinator of Program Support**. The coordinator will manage the operations of the TGH program team. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Priority will be given to applicants who apply before Jan 31, 2022. Tech Goes Home hopes to have the Coordinator start by March 1, 2022.

**Connect 313** seeks proposals for marketing and communications services. The partner will be responsible for identifying and executing opportunities to amplify the work of Connect 313 through its multi-media platforms, including its website and social media. The qualified partner will also produce Connect 313 specific content, including storytelling and informational style videos. Proposers should submit proposals electronically to [info@connect313.org](mailto:info@connect313.org) by 5:00 p.m. ET on February 4, 2022. Inquiries regarding this RFP may be submitted to [info@connect313.org](mailto:info@connect313.org) no later than February 4, 2022, by 3:00 p.m. ET.

**Libraries Without Borders US** is reopening their Director of Programs search. The Director of Programs will manage program staff nationwide. The updated job description is available [here](#).

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania nonprofit **Meta Mesh Wireless Communities** is hiring a **Business Development Manager** and **Field Installer**. Check out the position descriptions on [Meta Mesh's website](#).

Charlotte-based nonprofit **Eliminate the Digital Divide (E2D)** is hiring for a **Director of Operations**. The Director will work closely with the President and will be responsible for all programs and related planning, organizing, operations and staffing. Interested applicants should [apply](#) by February 11, 2022.