

RESOUNDING SILENCE:

THE NEED FOR LOCAL INSIGHTS IN
FEDERAL BROADBAND POLICYMAKING

BY RYAN JOHNSTON, SENIOR POLICY COUNSEL



Longmont, CO

IN THIS ISSUE

Seattle, WA



RESOUNDING SILENCE

A new report by Ryan Johnston examines the absence of local insights in the Federal Communications Commission's Rulemaking procedures and provides recommendations for centering community perspectives.

1
Resounding Silence: The Need for Local Insights in Federal Broadband Policy-Making

2
NCC Hosts a Lunch & Learn for Local Leaders in Boulder and Presents at the TechForward Conference in Colorado

3
Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Leadership Among NCC Municipalities

4
Next Century Cities Joins Connect Humanity and Allies to Recommend Changes to the Community Reinvestment Act

5
From the National Broadband Resource Hub - A Broadband Mapping Timeline

6
Changing Our (Virtual) Reality: Telehealth and the US Maternal Health Crisis

7
Opportunities for Members

8
In Case You Missed It



Next Century Cities Releases a Report Highlighting Pain Points in the FCC's Community Outreach and Recommendations for Boosting Local Engagement

By Ryan Johnston, Senior Policy Counsel

Decisions made at the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC” or “Commission”) have a direct impact on municipalities. In some cases, municipalities are directly responsible for federal policy implementation. In others, a federal decision can strip a local government of its autonomy.

Local government perspectives are rarely embraced when these decisions are being made. In fact, few municipalities usually have the capacity or expertise to weigh in on federal proceedings. When they do, too often, their comments are often overlooked. Over time, that unfortunate reality erodes trust and the willingness to devote community resources to what seems like a futile endeavor.

On October 4, 2022, Next Century Cities released a report entitled [Resounding Silence: The Need For Local Insights In Federal Policymaking](#). The analysis documents how local insights have been treated in previous FCC rulemakings.. Specifically, the report highlights the Small Cell and Multi-Tenant Environment proceedings, the challenges and solutions that municipalities suggested, and the FCC’s responses. The report also provides recommendations for immediate actions that the FCC can take to improve engagement with local officials and ensure that community needs are centered in federal policymaking.

Centering community-perspectives into federal broadband policymaking from the start would improve access and adoption programs writ large. With a few improvements, the FCC could work with communities to effectuate universal broadband goals instead of deciding what is best for them with industry partners.

NCC HOSTS A LUNCH & LEARN FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS AND PRESENTS AT TECHFORWARD CONFERENCE IN COLORADO



The week of September 19th, NCC's Deputy Director, Brian Donoghue; Program Director, Roxy Barboza; and Senior Policy Counsels Ryan Johnston and Corian Zacher, arrived in Colorado for the [TechForward Conference](#) in Denver. The NCC also hosted a Broadband Lunch & Learn in Boulder.

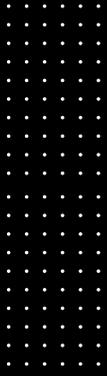
Jasmine Crowe-Houston provided keynote remarks at the TechForward Conference, discussing her efforts to jointly address the hunger crisis and food waste through her startup [Goodr](#), which uses technology to connect businesses with excess food to nonprofits that feed people who are food insecure.

Corian gave a lightning talk on why everyone, particularly nonprofit leaders, have a role to play in improving broadband access and adoption. Corian cited efforts like [Insure the Uninsured](#) Project, which partnered with tech policy nonprofits across the state to improve telehealth advocacy, and [E2D in North Carolina](#).

On Tuesday, September 20, 2022, NCC invited local leaders to a Lunch & Learn in Boulder. Gabrielle Daley, Director of Schaden Experiential Learning Program, University of Colorado Law School, moderated a panel discussion with panelists Colleen McCroskey, Associate Attorney at Kissinger & Fellman; Sarah Smith, Broadband Program Specialist for NTIA; and NCC's Roxy Barboza and Ryan Johnston. Panelists discussed ongoing and upcoming federal and state broadband funding opportunities, and strategies for local communities seeking to take part in current broadband resources.

Read more about NCC's visit to Colorado [here](#).





Next Century Cities Celebrates
**HISPANIC
HERITAGE
MONTH**

Catherine Nicolaou



Catherine Nicolaou grew up in Arizona as a first generation Mexican-American. Today, she is the City of Albuquerque's first Broadband Program Manager, leading City broadband initiatives and efforts while being a voice for community members. As an experienced telecommunications professional, she has worked with state regulatory officials and the legislature to advance strategic broadband goals in New Mexico.

Read more about Catherine's work [here](#).

Ricky Santiago

Ricky Santiago is the Digital Inclusion Manager for Louisville, KY, where he leads the city's strategies for closing the digital divide. Originally from Ponce, Puerto Rico, Ricky's family has lived in Kentucky for more than twenty years. His first job with Louisville Metro Government was with the Office for Globalization, where he worked to welcome newcomers to Louisville and help them get established in the community.

Learn more about Ricky in this month's [feature](#).



Next Century Cities Joins Connect Humanity and Allies to Recommend Changes to the Community Reinvestment Act

Lack of capital for small local Internet providers and community-owned networks is a key contributor to the affordability and access challenges fueling the digital divide. The influx of federal and state broadband funding will create opportunities for developing innovative capital stacks that can help bridge longstanding access gaps for low-income and rural communities.

Adjustments to the Community Reinvestment Act could help banks take a leadership role in enhancing digital outcomes for residents across the regions they serve. [The Community Reinvestment Act \(CRA\) of 1977](#) was passed with the goal of improving the infrastructure of local communities across the country. The CRA's focus includes housing, education, and workforce development. Now that broadband connections are pathways to achieving the CRA's goals, the bill must be updated to include digital connectivity, one of the most pressing current needs of low- and moderate-income communities.

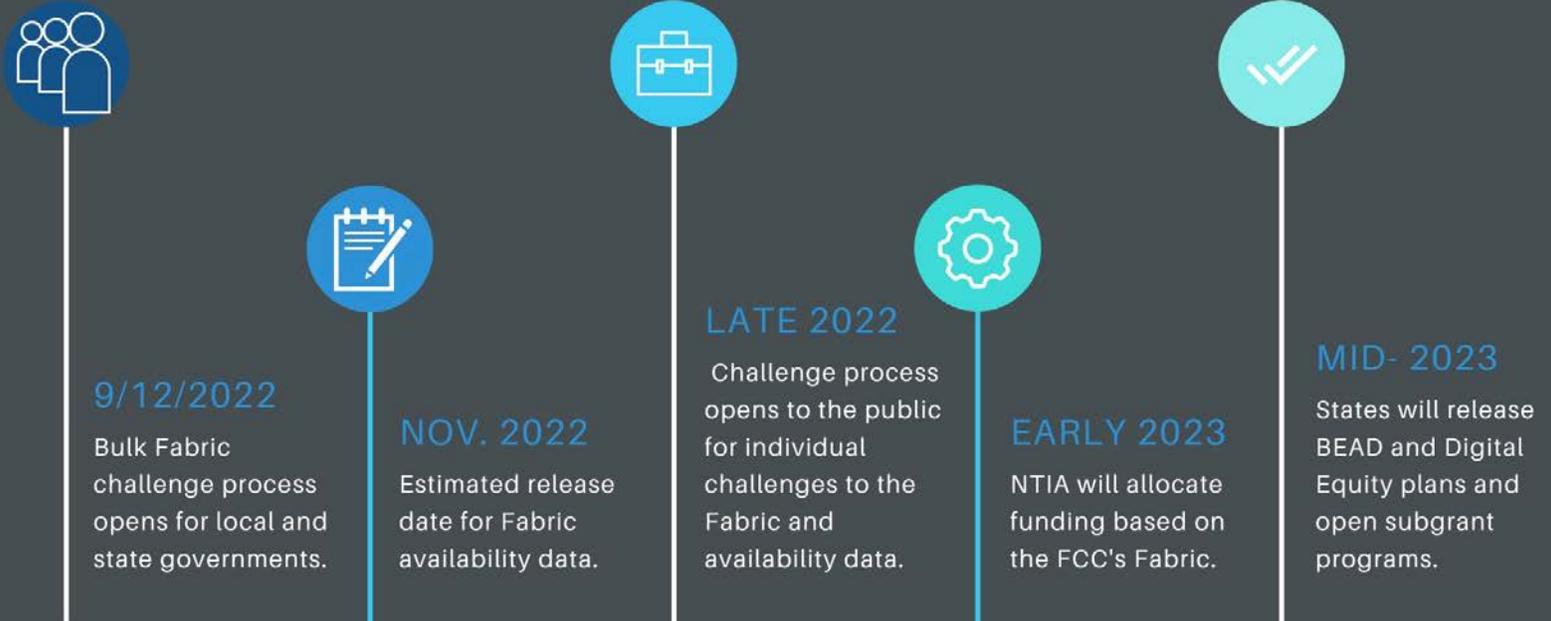
Since the CRA's passage and updates, the economic and social landscape has been drastically shifted by access, or lack thereof, to the Internet. When over [70 percent of jobs in the U.S. require some sort of digital skills proficiency](#), true economic participation requires reliable broadband access. Many of the communities that lack reliable broadband connections are the same as those that the CRA is meant to serve in other aspects of infrastructure. Addressing digital equity is a clear next step for expanding and modernizing the CRA, and Next Century Cities is proud to join Connect Humanity and allies in making recommendations to reform the CRA.

Continue reading for [the listed recommendations](#).

NEW RESOURCE: FOLLOW ALONG WITH FUNDING UPDATES ON THE BROADBAND HUB

Broadband Mapping Timeline

These dates are estimates based on agency press releases and the BEAD program timeline. Actual dates may differ.



New Content. New Partners. The National Broadband Resource Hub provides program and funding resources for state and local leaders.

Read more about the broadband mapping timeline at www.broadbandhub.org.

In early September 2022, Next Century Cities announced a partnership with Pew Charitable Trusts and Rural Innovation Strategies, Inc., to lead the National Broadband Resource Hub. Leveraging our shared expertise, we aim to provide actionable guidance and content that helps state and local broadband leaders achieve internet for all.

Follow along with upcoming funding deadlines, helpful resources, and ample opportunities to engage with broadband advocates from across the country navigating the influx of broadband funding that will be available over the next several years. Ensuring that broadband maps accurately depict the lived experiences of communities is a critical first step. Learn more by joining the Community Conversations page of the Broadband Hub, where we will post important updates for local and state leaders.

Read more on the Hub:

- [It's time to start engaging in the FCC's mapping challenge process](#)
- [Problems and opportunities for broadband mapping: the FCC needs to ensure the challenge process serves local leaders and their communities.](#)

Changing Our (Virtual) Reality: Telehealth and the United States Maternal Health Crisis



By Brittany-Rae Gregory, Communications Director

The United States is in the midst of a Maternal Health Crisis impacting thousands of women and birthing persons around the country. In fact, despite the fact that many U.S. residents have access to advanced resources and community support, there has been an uptick in the number of pregnancy-related deaths in the last three years. These numbers are even higher among older birth parents and Black people.

These statistics do not have to be the norm. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable. Recent legislation indicates that telehealth and digital technologies could play a crucial role in addressing this health emergency. A multi-pronged approach is required to confront factors such as veterans status, housing security, environmental factors, mental health, and other systemic issues that contribute to the elevated rates of maternal morbidities and mortalities.

[Changing Our \(Virtual\) Reality: Telehealth and the United States Maternal Health Crisis](#) examines the history of maternal health and wellness, focusing on community, state, and federal efforts to identify and address factors that contribute to morbidity and mortality. Among these there is special focus on the role that digital communities and telehealth technologies play in reaching and educating practitioners, patients, and their loved ones.

[Continue reading](#) for additional information and resources. Brittany-Rae will also be holding an author's talk on **Monday, October 17th**. Register for the conversation [here](#).

MEMBER OPPORTUNITIES

PARTICIPATE IN OUR MEMBERSHIP AND BROADBAND SURVEYS TODAY!



Next Century Cities is conducting two surveys and would appreciate member participation. The [Membership Programming Survey](#) will inform future programming and content. The [NCC Broadband Survey Report](#) collects information about member's broadband projects, and NCC will highlight these efforts through reports, filings and future programming.

JOIN OUR UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP CALLS!

We invite members to join monthly calls with the NCC staff. State and federal updates will be shared, and members will have the opportunity to ask NCC staff clarifying questions. The remaining 2022 calls will be held on the following Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. ET: October 20th, November 17th, and December 15th. If you have questions, please contact Program Director, Roxy Barboza at roxanna@nextcenturycities.org. Register for the calls [here](#).

EMPLOYMENT, INTERNSHIPS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

The New York State Library has [two paid internship opportunities](#) for Graduate Students to directly support the State Librarian as Digital Equity Interns during the Fall 2022 semester and ideally through Fall 2023.

The Baltimore Mayor's Office of Broadband and Digital Equity is hiring a [Digital Equity Coordinator](#).

The Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition (SEAMAAC) is hiring for two roles: [part-time or full-time Digital Navigator](#) and an [ESL/DL Literacy Instructor](#).

The University of Maryland Extension seeks applicants for ten [Tech Ext Educator/Navigator](#) roles across the state of Maryland.

The City of Durham, NC is seeking a [Digital Inclusion Program Manager](#).

The Data Science Institute at the University of Chicago is searching for an [Internet Equity Initiative \(IEI\) Director](#).

Georgia is hiring a [Digital Connectivity Manager](#).

Benton opened [a call for Opportunity Fund fellows](#). They are seeking applications from broadband scholars, practitioners, and advocates to support a new generation of leaders. The application Deadline is October 15th and any questions can go to fellowships@benton.org.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

The FCC will host the next Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) informational call on **Thursday, October 13, 2022 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET**. Register in advance [here](#).

The agenda includes the following:

- Welcome and announcements
- ACP Outreach Grant Program
- ACP Housing Pilot Program (“One Home, One Internet”)
- USAC Update

NDIA will host a Digital Inclusion 101 Webinar on **Tuesday, October 4th at 2 p.m. ET**. Register for the workshop [here](#).

Topics covered include:

- Basic digital inclusion terms
- Barriers to digital inclusion
- Key solutions & examples of digital inclusion programs
- Digital Navigator model
- Digital Inclusion Coalitions
- Policy

The Southern Rural Development Center in partnership with the Purdue Center for Regional Development conducted a survey to better understand the depth and breadth of digital exclusion among disadvantaged groups in the South. Learn more about the study, "[Bridging the Digital Divide in Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Communities in the South Individual Digital Capital Survey Results: July 2022](#)."

Attend the [Indigenous Connectivity Summit](#) from **October 24th to 28th, in-person or remotely**. The Indigenous Connectivity Summit brings together Indigenous community members, leaders, network operators, researchers and policymakers with a common goal: to connect Indigenous communities to fast, affordable and sustainable Internet.