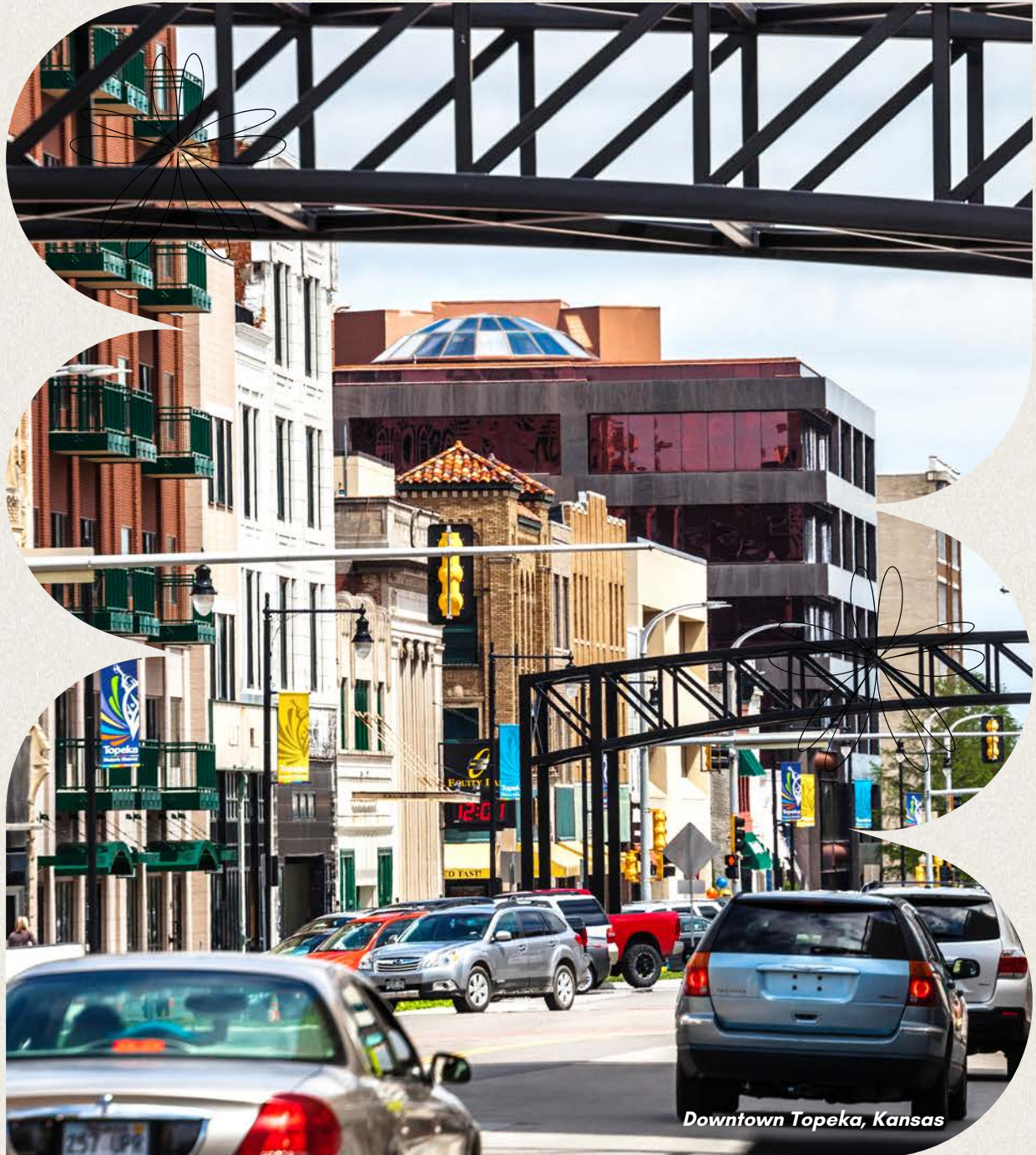# next century cities

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2022

Downtown Topeka, Kansas

NCC HEADS TO THE MIDWEST

WELCOMING CUYAHOGA COUNTY

FEDERAL PRIVACY LEGISLATION

what's inside

Welcoming NCC's Program Director
Roxanna Barboza

It is an honor to be part of the Next Century Cities team. I have traveled to and worked with too many towns that are struggling with broadband, including my hometown in Lost Hills, California. It is clear, local leaders have to be at the center of planning and implementation in order for their communities to thrive. At NCC, I hope to make that the case by ensuring that local leadership has the broadband resources they need and finding new ways to elevate their voices.

Prior to joining NCC, I was at NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association where I led and organized the execution of cybersecurity, emergency preparedness and digital inclusion efforts. Through projects like the Cybersecurity Series and Digital Inclusion Series, I developed resources to help independent, family-owned and community-based telecommunications companies evaluate cyber readiness and to develop broadband adoption strategies to complement deployment efforts.

As a new member of the NCC team, I am excited to assist our membership with best practices, and develop relationships with other stakeholders that are also working to expand broadband access and increase adoption. I hope my experience working with broadband providers and government agencies will allow me to better serve our member municipalities in ways that would enhance collaboration.

I have worked at the United States Department of Agriculture supporting their ReConnect Loan and Grant Program, Wireless Internet Service Providers Association, National Hispanic Media Coalition, and Federal Communications Commission. Due to working at these organizations, I have a greater understanding of how they work and can collaborate with NCC members.

NCC reaches over 200 municipalities nationwide and continues to grow. I want to learn about your community and how we can support members. Reach out to me at roxanna@nextcenturycities.org (or on social media at @RoxyBarboza_NCC) with questions and recommendations. I cannot wait to meet you all in person in future meetings and events.

Let's work together to amplify local community voices!

Roxy

Extending a Warm NCC Welcome to
CUYAHOGA COUNTY
OHIO

Total Population: 1,264,817
County Executive: Honorable Armond Budish
Chief Innovation and Performance Officer: Catherine Tkachyk

Cuyahoga County

FROM *THE OHIO CASE STUDY* BY CORIAN ZACHER

More than **one in five households** in Cuyahoga County do not have broadband of any kind. In county seat Cleveland, more than half of low-income households are completely disconnected from an increasingly digital society. Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 data by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance labeled Cleveland the seventh worst-connected city in the United States.

While some communities suffer from a lack of infrastructure access, **Connecting Cuyahoga** found that physical limitations are not the greatest barrier to home Internet availability in the county. The report centralized the importance of improving digital literacy and skills training, affordability, and device access as influencing factors to equitable digital prosperity.

In December 2020, the Cuyahoga County Department of Innovation and Performance **announced a Request for Information**, seeking ideas for a long-term strategy to address pressing connectivity needs throughout the county. NCC responded to the request, highlighting the importance of prioritizing digital equity, and is working collaboratively to scale workable solutions. Read **NCC's Comment here**.

Local news updates covering Cuyahoga County's July 2022 announcement:
- **Ohio and Cuyahoga County announce investment to provide internet access to 25,000 homes**
- **Low-cost internet is coming to least connected Cuyahoga County neighborhoods**

Broadband Infrastructure Funding and the Digital Divide:
Prioritizing People Over Miles

Bhaskar Chakravorti, the chief architect behind Digital Planet, shared research from "**Broadband Infrastructure Funding and the Digital Divide: Prioritizing People Over Miles**" at the Broadband Access Summit in Cleveland. Last week, he expanded on that research in a Harvard Business Review op-ed, "**How Biden's 'Internet for All' Initiative Can Actually Fulfill Its Mission**,"

Digital Planet is an interdisciplinary research initiative of The Fletcher School's Institute for Business in the Global Context at Tufts University. Its "people over miles" approach is aimed at ensuring that more Americans have access to broadband at speeds necessary to learn, work, and access vital services. Digital Planet cautions policymakers that the current proposed strategy of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program prioritizes 'unserved' over "underserved" areas, which runs the risk of exacerbating existing racial and socioeconomic divides—not living up to the proposed 'equity' in its name."

Digital Planet's Research and Interactive Website

7/12/22 Op-Ed by Bhaskar Chakravorti

LEARN MORE

READ HERE

Next Century Cities visits Kansas and Missouri to Highlight Local Digital Equity Efforts

In early July, Next Century Cities had the privilege of visiting Kansas City, Topeka, and Johnson County to meet with local leaders and hear their perspectives on the broadband funding opportunities developing through the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**. We were also thrilled with the opportunity to share broadband data and research as part of a legislative listening session on broadband access and digital equity, convened by Aaron Deacon and KC Digital Drive.

"TEACHING KIDS HOW TO RUN CABLE AND BUILD NETWORKS FROM THE GROUND UP IS ONE OF THE GREATEST WAYS TO HELP THEM GIVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITIES."

The conversations about broadband mapping continued with a working session at the University of Missouri Kansas City Law School hosted by Tony Luppino. At the start of the session, NCC's Ryan Johnston shared his perspective on the broadband mapping work underway with federal agencies including FCC and NTIA. Dustin Loup, who leads the National Broadband Mapping Coalition, provided an update on the coalition's ongoing work and Broadband Resource Rail. Further discussion centered around broadband data tools and the potential impacts that varying qualities of data will have on IIJA-funded programs.

Our adventures closed with trips to Topeka and ASteam Village in KC, Missouri's third district. You can read more about Corian's Topeka adventures **here**. At ASteam Village, students learn design, engineering, and collaboration skills with the goal of preparing residents for **careers in Missouri's growing tech sector**. Ryan's **Tweet** [above left] in this moment really sums up the group's thoughts as we rode off into the sunset (to the airport).

Continue reading about the Midwest trip **here**.

(Photo on the left: The names of TSC Get Digital coalition members listed below start on the bottom stair: Maria Anderson, Sheri Schawo, Teresa Baker, Ann Mah, LaToya Burnett, Michelle Stubblefield, Lazone Grays, Monique Glaudé, Thad Hartman, Trey George, Susan Harris, Marc Price, Scott Gowan)

(Photo on right: pictured from left to right: Lazone Grays, Sean Scozzare, Maria Anderson, and Monique Glaudé)

Inspiration, Innovation, Ingenuity: TSC Get Digital is empowering Topeka Residents to Improve Their Quality of Life Through Community-centered Connectivity Tools

by Corian Zacher

People may know Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas, as the home of the first Google Fiber network. It provided a test case in a model that has been adopted by communities across the US. 60 miles away, in the 125,963-population city of Topeka, Kansas, a groundswell of support for low- and moderate-income communities inspired a local model that can also be replicated in cities nationwide. A network of local officials and community leaders is providing thousands of seniors and school-age residents with devices, digital skills training, and information about affordable Internet programs.

The FCC's map shows that Shawnee County, where Topeka is located, **has ubiquitous access** to 25/3 Mbps service. However, U.S. Census data shows that **12.7% of Topeka residents** do not have a home computer and one out of four people lack a home broadband subscription. The pandemic exacerbated the gap between broadband availability and adoption, prompting community leaders to work together toward a solution, starting with the youngest and oldest residents. TSC Get Digital brought together Scott Gowan, Chief Information Officer for Topeka Public Schools, Monique Glaudé, the City's Director of Community Engagement & Ombudsman, and a long-time local community advocate and nonprofit leader, Lazone Grays.

Recognizing the need for broadband adoption programming, TSC Get Digital applied for a grant to increase device access in their communities. Through E-Cycle events, TSC Get Digital invited members of the community to be a part of the solution. Residents donate devices that are then refurbished by nonprofit PCs for People and returned to the community. From young children who help with device drives to seniors who offer their laptops for refurbishment, TSC Get Digital has motivated community members of all ages to champion the cause.

Continue reading about the great work happening in Topeka here.

NCC Hosts Webinar With Local Government, Community Leaders, and Academic Partners Who Are Building a Movement in Baltimore

By Francella Ochillo

Reliable broadband access impacts overall well-being, which makes the need to bring affordable high-speed connectivity within reach for every resident particularly urgent. Local officials, community leadership, philanthropic partners, and academic researchers in the **City of Baltimore** are working to target persistent barriers to broadband access and adoption. Their partnerships and investments are helping to revitalize communities that continue to be excluded from the digital economy.

On June 28, 2022, Next Century Cities hosted a webinar called Baltimore's Broadband Movement. The Deutsch Foundation's amalia deloney highlighted philanthropy's role in expanding community-based digital infrastructure. Jason Hardebeck, Baltimore's Director of Broadband and Digital Equity, emphasized Mayor Brandon Scott's commitment to digital equity. His remarks also provided background on the systemic issues that City officials are working to address. Dr. Colin Rhinesmith, Founder and Director of the **Digital Equity Research Center** (DERC), shared research findings from his work with the Digital Equity Leadership Lab.

Through William Wells, Executive Director and Founder, **aSTEAM Village** and **Digital KC Now**, participants learned about a Kansas City, Missouri, program that is training youth in digitally disadvantaged communities. Additionally, Michell Morton, Broadband Program Specialist and Federal Program Officer at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), presented on federal digital equity grant programs. **View the full webinar recording here.**

Additional Resources:
- Deutsch Foundation's slides are available **here**.
- Access Dr. Colin Rhinesmith's presentation on how community leadership can promote digital equity **here**.
- For information on NTIA's Digital Equity grant program, review Michell Morton's slides **here**.
- Media Highlight: **Baltimore Needs Grassroots Help to Bridge Digital Divide, Experts Say** (July 5, 2022)

Rowhouses in Baltimore, MD

The United States Capitol

We're on Our Way to Federal Privacy Legislation

WHAT'S IN THE AMERICAN DATA PRIVACY AND PROTECTION ACT

By Ryan Johnston

As billions of federal dollars are invested into bringing disconnected households online, the amount of user-generated data will exponentially increase. Advocates across the country are working to help communities devise and implement broadband plans. They must also build an understanding of how evolving privacy standards can impact the residents, businesses, and organizations they are working to connect.

Significant privacy legislation touches more than just a user's data, but could also impact the entire landscape of how broadband is deployed, adopted, and used.

New controls over online generated data could necessitate adjustments to digital literacy training benchmarks. Additionally, ever-increasing incentives to collect or monetize user data should be factored into local broadband adoption plans.

For years Congress has tried to pass comprehensive federal privacy legislation. While several states have succeeded in doing so, there has yet to be a federal law protecting consumer data writ large. However, that may change soon. On June 21, 2022, the House Energy and Commerce Committee introduced the **American Data Privacy and Protection Act** (**ADPPA**). This Act will empower the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") to set rules for the policies and procedures covered entities must put in place to protect consumer data and take enforcement actions against those who violate them.

Continue reading about the American Data Privacy and Protection Act **here**.

Downtown Fresno, CA

Chula Vista, CA

Palo Alto, CA

CALIFORNIA'S AMBITIOUS AFFORDABLE BROADBAND GOALS COULD HELP ITS COMMUNITIES ADDRESS ONE OF THE BIGGEST BARRIERS TO ADOPTION

BY CORIAN ZACHER

California's broadband plans are among the most extensive in the nation. In June 2021, Governor Newsom signed SB156 into law, investing **$6 billion** into state broadband programs designed to improve access and affordability. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) detailed affordability parameters in its **April 2022 requirements** for the state's federally funded programs, requiring grantees to offer residents a $40/month 50Mbps plan for the life of the infrastructure.

State broadband leadership directly impacts local goals in NCC's 32 California member communities, which include **Benicia**, **Berkeley**, **Beverly Hills**, **Burbank**, **Chula Vista**, **Culver City**, **Fountain Valley**, **Fresno**, **Garden Grove**, **Huntington Beach**, **Los Angeles**, **Marina**, **Mendocino County**, **Menifee**, **Oakland**, **Palo Alto**, **Rancho Cucamonga**, **Richmond**, **Riverside**, **Riverside County**, **San Francisco**, San **Jose**, **San Leandro**, **Santa Cruz City**, **Santa Cruz County**, **Santa Monica**, **Sonoma County**, **South San Francisco**, **Vallejo**, **Ventura**, **West Hollywood**, and **Winters**.

In May 2020, the City of **Chula Vista** released its **Digital Equity and Inclusion Strategy**, which reiterates the importance of affordability, stating that "affordability and accessibility of digital devices and Internet subscriptions are central barriers to digital equity." Local governments have limited tools to address broadband affordability on their own, making state grant requirements an important complement to broadband affordability initiatives in communities like Chula Vista.

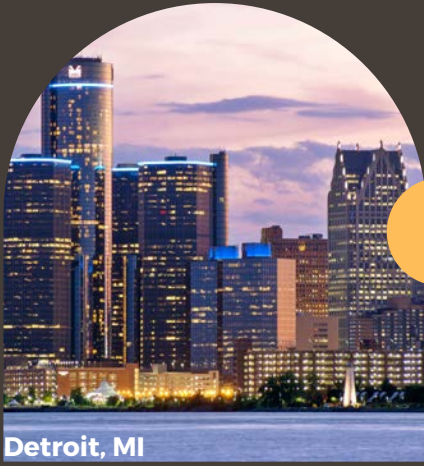Continue reading about California's broadband initiatives **here**.

Opportunities for Members

The Detroit Digital Inclusion Research Symposium presented by Connect 313 | As part of Detroit's Digital Inclusion Week, Connect 313 invites teachers, researchers, and writers covering topics related to digital inclusion or the digital divide to present research at the inaugural symposium to be held on Tuesday, October 4th, at Wayne State University.

Symposium Proposals are due by **Wednesday, July 27, 2022.** Proposals for the following tracks can be submitted: Defining the Digital Divide and Digital Justice, Expanding Internet Access, Digital Literacy and Up-Skilling, Accessing Devices and Fostering Meaningful Connection, Community engagement and Digital Inclusion, Implications of Digital Inequities on Economic Development, Advocating for Policy and Progress Toward Digital Inclusion. Learn more about the symposium and proposal parameters **here**. Contact **Naimah Wade**, Connect 313's Director, Research and Learning, for additional information.

The United States Department of Interior is virtually convening its annual **National Tribal Broadband Summit** on September 13th, 20th, and 27th and seeks proposals for summit presentations. The deadline for abstract submissions is **August 8, 2022.** Learn more about the summit and submission requirements via the **event homepage**.

Contribute to the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation' Digital Equity Leadership Lab (DELL)'s Guest Presenter Base | DELL is a program for Baltimore city residents who want to increase their understanding of the Internet and strengthen their ability to advocate for fast, affordable, and reliable broadband for all of Baltimore's neighborhoods. The are interested in developing relationships with potential presenters on a range of topics, including, but not limited to: Broadband and the Infrastructure Bill, Broadband Consumer Advocacy and Utility Justice, Racial Justice and the Internet, Digital Equity Evaluation, ISPs and state and local lobbying, State and Federal advocacy opportunities. Please complete this **simple survey** to capture names and information. Questions can be directed to **Barbara Eucebio**, Digital Equity Coordinator.

The Washington State Department of Commerce is **soliciting proposals from firms interested in providing Digital Navigator services** to their communities. Proposals are due **August 18, 2022 at 5:00 PM. PT**. Access the Request for Proposals **here**. For additional questions, contact **Devin Gombosky**.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Fiscal Year 2023 **Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) for National Leadership Grants for Libraries and Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Programs** are currently accepting applications. Learn more **here**.

In Case You Missed It

The FCC Proposes to Increase Minimum Broadband Speeds

"The needs of Internet users long ago surpassed the FCC's 25/3 speed metric, especially during a global health pandemic that moved so much of life online," said Chairwoman Rosenworcel. "The 25/3 metric isn't just behind the times, it's a harmful one because it masks the extent to which low-income neighborhoods and rural communities are being left behind and left offline. That's why we need to raise the standard for minimum broadband speeds now and while also aiming even higher for the future, because we need to set big goals if we want everyone everywhere to have a fair shot at 21st century success."

– Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel, FCC

The US Has a Historic Opportunity to Bridge the Digital Divide

"Broadband policies that fail to bake in equity stall progress and impede the United States' ability to compete globally. We have an opportunity to help bridge the digital divide through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), an investment in broadband with the majority of the funding allocated for the $42.45 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) managed by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)."

– Alisa Valentin, Ph.D., National Urban League

Kansas City, MO