Corian Zacher
Senior Policy Counsel for State & Local Initiatives

Ryan Johnston
Senior Policy Counsel, Federal Programs
Agenda

Lessons from the Lone Star State

Texas & Network Resilience

The Texas Death Star Law

Recommendations

Questions?
Broadband Makes US Better:
Lessons from the Lone Star State

By Corian Zacher and Brian Donoghue
Texas & Network Resilance

- Winter Storm Uri covered 80% of Texas in snow.
- 208 Peak Power Outages left 369,918 wireless and 34,868 wireline users disconnected.
- In areas where electrical grids could not keep up many providers were forced to rely on backup generators.
- Due to the freezing temperatures many improperly stored fuel supplies gelatinized, making them unusable.
STATEWIDE
Population: 30,029,572
Households without a computer: 6.1%
Households without Internet: 13.1%
Persons in Poverty: 14.2%

MONT BELVIEU CITY
Population: 8,946
Households without a computer: 1.8%
Households without Internet: 7.8%
Persons in Poverty: 9.2%

SAN ANTONIO CITY
Population: 1,472,909
Households without a computer: 6.7%
Households without Internet: 15.2%
Persons in Poverty: 17.6%

GAINESVILLE CITY
Population: 17,912
Households without a computer: 18.3%
Households without Internet: 29.3%
Persons in Poverty: 23.1%

AUSTIN CITY
Population: 974,447
Households without a computer: 3.5%
Households without Internet: 8.8%
Persons in Poverty: 12.5%

PHARR CITY
Population: 80,179
Households without a computer: 12.4%
Households without Internet: 35.6%
Persons in Poverty: 32.5%

Data from US Census Bureau. Population estimates from July 1, 2022.
Computer and Internet Use and Poverty data from American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates (2021).
TEXAS DEATH STAR LAW

- Went into effect on Sept. 1, 2023
- Restricts local governments from preempts local governments from adopting local ordinances, orders, and rules that restrict businesses more than existing state law
- Lawsuits from the Cities of Houston and San Antonio
An important, recurring theme has been the reminder that though high-speed Internet may once have been a luxury, it is now a necessity. Texans need reliable, high-speed connectivity for public health, safety, education and modern agriculture.

-Glenn Hegar, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
## Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Legislators</th>
<th>Local Officials</th>
<th>Nonprofit Leaders</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand local autonomy</td>
<td>Gather feedback from residents</td>
<td>Explore overlaps with existing issues</td>
<td>Seek volunteer opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate with local leaders</td>
<td>Record local broadband needs</td>
<td>Identify local adoption barriers</td>
<td>Raise awareness in your network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support existing community-serving programs</td>
<td>Partner with regional and state allies</td>
<td>Join local broadband coalitions</td>
<td>Encourage local officials to prioritize broadband for all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations For Federal Policymakers:

1. Build Flexibility into programs that allow local leaders to tailor solutions to residents’ needs.
2. Ensure clarifying documentation explains what is and is not allowable under various federal programs.
3. Community insight provides the clearest measure of need. Create opportunities for this work to be done to enhance federal programs.
4. Support municipal efforts to hold federal and state grant holders responsible for completing grant obligations in a reasonable and timely manner.
Thank you!
Please keep in touch!

ryan@nextcenturycities.org
corian@nextcenturycities.org
NextCenturyCities.org