



king county

WASHINGTON

King County, Washington is located in the greater Seattle area. Honoring its commitment to social justice, the municipality uses their resources to advance initiatives, such as the King County Information and Technology (KCIT) Digital Equity Initiative, that helps to create a more equitable community for residents. The County recently completed a [Broadband Access Study](#) which they discuss in the following excerpt.

Give a brief overview on the status of broadband connectivity in King County.

Digital equity is one of our fundamental social justice goals, as access to information and technology is essential for residents to fully participate and prosper in our global world. We completed our [Broadband Access and Adoption Study](#) in January 2020. The results helped identify areas of the County that lack access to broadband speeds of 25/3 Mbps.

Overall, our study results show the vast majority (96%) of King County residents report having internet access in their home, but significant differences are observed across certain groups in King County.

What concerns do residents have about broadband access?

Almost one in four households (23%) cite the cost of service as the most common barrier, followed by slow or inconsistent speeds and confusing service plans. Three-fourths of households report having “mostly” or “completely” adequate internet access. Residents’ confidence in their ability to use technology safely and confidently for a better life also appeared in the survey.

The story was contributed by Darryl Hunt, Tanya Hannah, and Bob Potts. Continue reading King County’s full interview [here](#).

NCC MEMBERS ARE IN THE NEWS

New Hampshire. Governor Chris Sununu has signed HB 1111 into law, which allows communities to identify areas where broadband coverage is weak or nonexistent through the formation of “communications districts.” New Hampshire is home to three NCC municipalities including **Bedford, Hanover, and Keene.** ([WCAX](#))

New York. The New York State Senate passed the [Comprehensive Broadband Connectivity Act](#). The Bill calls for a review of connectivity across the state to determine which areas have adequate broadband access, and ultimately make strategic recommendations for connecting communities throughout New York. Six NCC municipalities are located in New York State including **Albany, Jamestown, Rochester, Saratoga Springs, Schenectady, and Syracuse.** ([State Scoop](#))

San Antonio, Texas. The San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) received a \$325,000 grant from the United Services Automobile Association (USAA) Foundation. The generous gift will help to erect internet hotspots throughout the area served by SAISD. At the start of the pandemic, 60% of students reported that they did not have access to reliable broadband. Though students were provided with devices during the spring semester, the hotspots will allow more students to consistently log on and participate in classroom instruction. ([The San Antonio Current](#))



Seattle, Washington. The Seattle City Council unanimously passed the “Internet for All” Resolution. [The Resolution](#) is the first step in the City’s plan to address concerns about digital equity that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. ([The City of Seattle](#))

"The COVID-19 pandemic, once again, exposes the reality of extensive, inequitable, and detrimental gaps of the haves and have nots."

Council President M. Lorena Gonzalez
Seattle, WA

Montana. The state of Montana ranks 50th in the nation for internet connectivity. Residents statewide feel the effects of weak broadband infrastructure. In this piece, John Heenan goes into detail about the potential benefits of building out Montana’s broadband network. Reliable broadband means stronger businesses, greater job access, and increased support for the agricultural community. **Missoula**, an NCC member municipality, stands to benefit from broadband expansion in the state. ([Missoulian](#))

BROADBAND NEWS



Anchorage, Alaska

A Local Nonprofit Helps Connect Underserved Residents. Being able to get online is more important now than ever, but undocumented families face unique connectivity challenges. In Colorado, Coloradans for the Common Good is working to dismantle those internet connectivity barriers that prevent undocumented families from fully participating and thriving in their communities. [\(Colorado Public Radio\)](#)

Thousands of Orange County Residents Get a Step Closer to Fiber. In 2019, the Orange County Broadband Authority (OCBA) in Orange County, Virginia, surveyed residents and found that 92% of respondents were dissatisfied with their current internet bandwidth speeds and over 40% of students did not have reliable access in their homes to complete schoolwork. Recently, the County selected ADTRAN to bring broadband internet services to its community. [\(Business Wire\)](#)

More Than 16,000 Rural Alaskans Will Receive Broadband Access. A partnership between Alaska Communications and the Connect America Fund II will provide broadband access for more than 16,000 residents, making it the state's largest deployment effort to date. Customers pay a flat monthly fee of \$89.99 for speeds that range from 10/1 Mbps up to 50 Mbps/10 Mbps when possible. [\(Telecompetitor\)](#)

FCC Chairman Pai Recognizes the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In a statement released on July 24th, Chairman Pai highlighted the FCC's commitment to expanding communication policy and technology, so that differently-abled individuals can fully participate and thrive in society. **(FCC)**

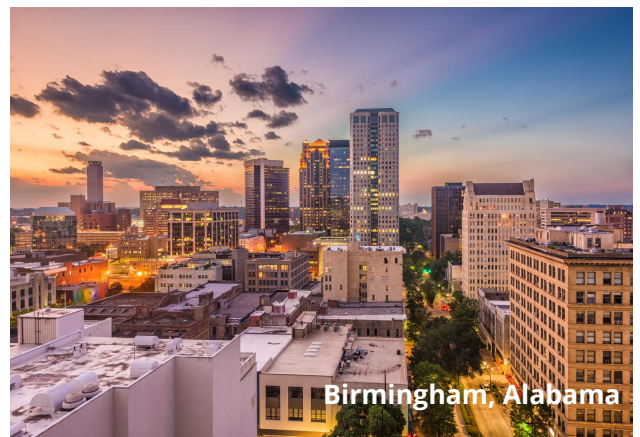


Northern California

Yurok Connect Broadband Project to Aid Tribal Community. The Yurok Tribal Council approved a \$2.1 Million broadband connectivity project that will help to connect the Northern California community. The project is expected to be completed by year's end. In addition to increasing community-wide broadband access, the project will help with emergency communications, telehealth, e-commerce, and education.

(Lost Coast Output)

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey recently announced grants to help expand broadband in seven communities across the state. The \$2.9 million in grants will be awarded to companies through the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund. **(AL.com)**



Birmingham, Alabama

Ohio Nonprofit Works to Bridge State's Digital Divide. The Cleveland Foundation, an Ohio-based nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the city's greatest needs, recently established the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity Coalition. The alliance, consisting of public, private, and nonprofit partners, will advocate for digital inclusion on the federal and state levels. Additionally, the Foundation announced the development of the Cleveland Digital Equity Fund, a program that will provide funding for digital inclusion activities for students, older adults, and members of the workforce.

(The Cleveland Foundation)



Cleveland, Ohio

What's Keeping People from Connecting?

"In many cases, it's cost. While 94 percent of adults making \$100,000 annually or more and 83 percent of those making between \$30,000 and \$99,000 per year say they have broadband at home, only 56 percent of those making less than \$30,000 annually say the same. These are not just numbers. Millions of people lack connectivity that has become central to work, education, banking, housing, government services, and more."

"The pandemic has exposed the holes in America's internet"
Sarah Morris, Director, New America's Open Technology Institute

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

The Cost of Connectivity

(July 2020) | The Open Technology Institute's (OTI) most recent report examines internet affordability through a close look at twenty-eight cities worldwide, including several NCC member municipalities. It was determined that **Ammon, Idaho** has nation's the lowest monthly fiber utility cost.

Advancing Health Equity Through Telehealth Interventions During COVID-19: Policy Recommendations and Promising State Models

(July 2020) | Taking into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic, Families USA developed state policy recommendations for telehealth.

The Case for Fiber to the Home, Today: Why Fiber is a Superior Medium for 21st Century Broadband (October 2019) | The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) examines the benefits of fiber versus coaxial cable and wireless broadband infrastructure.



Kansas City, Missouri



Honolulu, Hawaii



Lafayette, Louisiana



Olympia, Washington

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS

The Washington State Public Works Board is accepting applications for broadband infrastructure projects. The forthcoming projects will help to connect residents in underserved communities. The Board is accepting applications through **September 9, 2020**. Learn more about the request and application process [here](#).

The Kansas Department of Commerce seeks applicants for Broadband Grant Manager. The position is housed within the Community Development Team and works closely with the Broadband Director. To learn more about the position and its requirements, review the posting [here](#).

NCC IS ADVOCATING FOR MEMBERS

NCC Supports Calls to Extend the Rural Tribal Priority Window. On Thursday, July 23, 2020, Next Century Cities submitted a letter to the Federal Communications Commission urging the agency to extend the Rural Tribal Priority Window. Extending the priority window will give Tribal communities nationwide additional time to complete applications for access in the 2.5 GHz band. Tribes have faced many unique challenges in the wake of COVID-19 that have impacted their communities' ability to complete the application by the original deadline. Read NCC's letter [here](#).

NCC's Executive Director Participates in IGF-USA Annual Conference. Next Century Cities' Executive Director, Francella Ochillo, participated in a panel titled "Did America's Tech Industry Deliver for America during the COVID Crisis?" during the 2020 Internet Governance Forum-USA conference. The panel was moderated by David Redl, CEO, Salt Point Strategies and included Vint Cerf, Chief Internet Evangelist, Google; Suzanne Clark, President, U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Jon Husted, Lt. Governor of Ohio; and Chris Wilson, Senior Manager, Public Policy, Amazon. The virtual convening took place over a two-day period and can be rewatched [here](#).

NCC's Lukas Pietrzak Weighs in on Digital Redlining. On July 23rd, Public Knowledge hosted a webinar, "Digital Redlining & Connectivity Barriers In Marginalized Communities." Lukas Pietrzak, NCC Policy Associate, discussed the root causes and potential solutions in cities across the country on a panel of experts from NDIA, NHMC, and MMTC. A recording can be found [here](#). Read more about the webinar on NCC's [website](#).

NCC Presents on How Broadband Can Help Reduce Health Disparities In the Age of COVID-19. On July 23, 2020, Francella Ochillo, NCC's Executive Director, joined Mia Keays, Director of Health Equity Policy & Advocacy for the American Medical Association, and Eleanor Sarkodie, Research Data Analyst at Whitman-Walker Health, for a panel discussion. Using examples for Coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency response efforts, Francella explained how access to broadband could help improve health outcomes. Read more about the presentation [here](#).

NCC Joins a Gigabit Nation Interview. Next Century Cities' Executive Director, Francella Ochillo, joined Craig Settles on the July 22nd podcast episode of Gigabit Nation. They discussed a range of topics related to broadband access and adoption. Listen to the full episode [here](#).



DEMOCRACY

and connectivity

Members of the Next Century Cities Team considered the various roles that broadband plays in a democratic society. Here are several different perspectives on how broadband access and adoption can increase civic engagement, impact due process, and help shape our democracy.

Access to Information is Critical for an Informed Electorate. Our founders envisioned a democratic republic, though imperfect at the time, in which every voter would be knowledgeable about our elected representatives and their daily happenings. This system relied on an informed electorate. To ensure a long-lasting and healthy democracy, voters, especially the newest amongst us, have a right to be informed about the candidates and issues. However, at a time when the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has upended how and where voters get information coupled with the reality that over 20 million Americans still do not have reliable access to broadband, [how can disconnected voters be a part of the informed electorate?](#) --- **Lukas Pietrzak**

Connectivity Supports Due Process. The Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution ensures that “[n]o person shall. . . be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” This promise guarantees that all people will have their day in court and be able to defend themselves (pro se or with representation) against the accusations of another or the State. However, when courts move online it presents unique constitutional challenges for litigants who do not have or cannot afford a high-speed broadband connection. Americans who do not have access or digital tools are at an inherent disadvantage. [Courts must ensure that the transition to long-term remote operation does not lead to unequal outcomes for litigants.](#) --- **Ryan Johnston**

Digital Citizenship Gives Largely Disconnected Populations Freedom. It’s important that my grandmother is able to get online, especially when the coronavirus keeps her away from lifelong friends and church family. Learning how to do a FaceTime call, login to a social media account, or ordering something online requires one-on-one coaching. But, I am committed to helping her navigate this uncharted territory. She deserves the benefits and is willing to learn how to use new equipment to get online. [Increased digital literacy will give my grandmother and so many others like her what COVID-19 has taken away – freedom.](#) --- **Brittany-Rae Gregory**