

Tribal Collaboration Outcome Area Working Group Transcript
February 17, 2023

Okay, all right. Well, good morning. Everyone welcome to our first Tribal Collaboration Outcome Area Working Group meeting. A few housekeeping items before we begin. This meeting is being recorded, and the California Department of Technology will be posting a video of this meeting, our slides and transcripts to the Broadband for All portal under past events. Next slide, please. And quickly, too, my name is Anh Nguyen. I'm the Engagement and Operations Manager with the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. As you can probably see on the screen already, our ASL interpreters are being spotlight, so that you can see them throughout the meeting. Under view, side by side, speaker view, you'll see the ASL interpreters, myself, and whoever we'll spotlight throughout the meeting. Once we have our bidirectional conversation, you can switch to side by side gallery view, which will help you see everyone else in the meeting as well. And we have close captioning, and you can turn that on towards the bottom of the toolbar. The chat is on and available. We invite you to introduce yourself, if you haven't already, your name, pronouns, organization, title, where you're joining us from. You can also use the chat to ask our speakers any questions. Our staff will highlight that, and we might read it out loud during this conversation, or ask you to come off mute and tell us your question as well. So lastly, please use your raise hand feature. What that does is bring your screen up so that we can see you and make sure to unmute you so that you can participate. We're trying to reduce background noise for everyone participating. And then with that, I would like to introduce Scott Adams, Deputy Director of the California Department of Technology, Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy to begin our discussion on the State Digital Equity Plan process. And before I hand the mic to Scott as well, I want to make sure that we're aware of the other agenda items today which is having our guest speakers give context to what is digital equity, and why it is important. We'll engage in a bi-directional, multi-directional community and lived experience verbally and on chat. Our next steps and call to action and our closing. So with that, Scott. Well, thank you so much, Anh. And welcome everyone to the first of our digital equity planning process working groups on Tribal collaboration. Just honored to be with you, and looking forward to a fruitful and meaningful both conversation and utilizing this space to grow our collaboration. As Anh said, I am Scott Adams. I'm the Deputy Director of Broadband and Digital Literacy at the California Department of Technology, and our office really works to coordinate the Broadband for All program and related initiatives, and to help close the digital divide and create or foster digital equity throughout the State. Next slide, please. Just real quick. Wanted to point out, as we have this conversation in the context of Broadband for All to note that Broadband for All is the State's overarching program to close the digital divide and foster digital equity. And it's really based on three main things, and that's access, so access to infrastructure, and service affordability, ensuring that service is affordable, and then adoption of the service, and helping overcome those barriers for all residents in California, including, you know, those on Tribal lands, can get to digital literacy and inclusion and digital equity. Next slide, please. Real quick. We just wanted to kind of point out where the digital equity planning process is in the landscape and the evolution of the State's efforts on broadband. And those really began in 2010 with the creation of the California Broadband Council, which is a multi-body entity that has coordinated the deployment and adoption of broadband throughout the State and in un- and under- served communities as determined by the Public Utilities Commission. There are nine state agency members of the Broadband Council, including the Department of Technology and the Public Utilities Commission, the Transportation Agency, Department of General Services, etc. The California Emerging Technology Fund is a non-state entity

member of that body. And there are representatives from the State Assembly and the State Senate. Where you know the focus of the State really changed was during the height of the Covid pandemic. As we all learned and experienced, it shown an even brighter line on the State's persistent digital divide and necessitated bold action. So in 2020 the Governor, Gavin Newsom, issued his broadband executive order, which, amongst other things directed the Broadband Council to develop a statewide broadband action plan, and that step was also done in 2020 in just 4 months at the height of the pandemic with input and collaboration from over 700 entities, and the broadband Action plan really laid out a roadmap of how the state would approach, in partnership with many entities at many levels, to close the digital divide. We really want to point out that a source of pride here in California is in 2021, when, with the passage of the historic Senate Bill 156. So really thankful to the Legislature and the Governor for really creating a structure and a framework and allocating billions of dollars to address the need for funding for additional infrastructure on the middle mile side, and additional funding to support deployment of last mile network solutions, and, you know, 6 billion dollars in total, which has been augmented since then but 3.25 billion was allocated to the Department of Technology to develop a statewide, open access, Middle Mile network. We have retained Golden State Net to be the third party administrator on that project, and CalTrans is really a critical partner in that effort, and leading the construction of the open access middle mile network along the state highway system. Also want to draw attention that Senate Bill 156 allocated an additional, upwards of, you know, 2 billion dollars to the Public Utilities Commission to add to their existing programs and develop last mile grant programs to support, you know, local ISPs and other entrants and other eligible entities like, you know, cities, counties, schools, and libraries to leverage funding to develop last mile network solutions and in un- and under- served communities. And then the last piece is, you know, the state is aggressively working to leverage additional broadband funding in the Investment Infrastructure and Jobs Act, programs in which the federal government set aside an additional 65 billion dollars for states and local entities to you know, both deploy broadband infrastructure, and you know, broadband adoption efforts. And you'll see on the left there. The focus of this engagement session is really you know, the legislature in the last session designated the Department of Technology to go after additional federal dollars that are included in the Digital Equity Act programs to develop a State Digital Equity Plan and leverage funds to implement that plan. Next slide, please. So real quick. I know a lot of folks here are familiar with the previous components that we talked about. So there's the Middle Mile, there's the PUC's last mile programs, and then where there's a significant amount of funding, what we are at the beginning of the process of, working with you all to develop the State's Digital Equity Plan. Which will really afford all of us an opportunity to co-create how we leverage capacity grant dollars that will come to the state once that plan is developed. So in order to maximize the ability for critical, you know, partners and stakeholders, you know, to come to the table, we've developed a five point process. And that's a statewide digital equity planning group that consists of the Broadband Council member entities and twelve other state agencies with a connection to covered populations and subject matter expertise. These outcome area working groups that will be conducted virtually over the next several months to bring together a broad group of partners and subject matter experts. We'll be releasing a number of digital equity surveys to help acquire data to inform decisions from both residents and organizations. And then because we're committed to actually getting out into the communities and engaging with a broad variety of partners in development of the plan, we are going to be working with the Public Utilities Commission to host 20 regional and local events across the State in every economic and broadband consortia region, so that we can meet with you all where you live and where you work, and, you know, seek your feedback and input. We'll also have additional opportunities for, say, like,

public engagement, communicating through the Broadband for All portal, our monthly email updates and other meetings, consultations and opportunities to engage. Next slide. So, as I mentioned, we've developed six outcome area working groups. These are non-exclusive entities, and really, you know, opportunities to expand the table from the existing folks who've been working in the digital equity space and bringing in new partners both on the planning and implementation side. And you know we've set them up to correspond with the state's other priorities. So education, health, digital literacy and inclusion, essential services, accessibility and civic engagement, workforce and economic development and Tribal collaboration. And really want to underscore that these are all inclusive working groups and encourage participation from many different folks across the state. Next slide. One thing we wanted to point out about the Digital Equity Act, which really outlines the work that states must do in developing their digital equity plans, prioritizes investments for 8 covered populations, and wanted to make sure that we call out the covered populations. The lens through which we'll be looking at all of our work over the coming months are, you know, looking at the needs and barriers for individuals living in covered households at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, aging individuals, incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with language barriers, members of racial or ethnic minority groups, and those living primarily in rural areas. Next slide, please. So the focus of the working groups is really, as I had mentioned earlier, to bring together subject matter experts and practitioners and folks in the community to align and develop strategies or develop strategies that align with the digital equity plan priorities, through the lens of the covered populations. The primary objectives of the working groups is to develop a stakeholder map for the outcome area, to help conduct an asset inventory of programs and plans and services for each outcome area, to help promote and encourage participation in the statewide digital equity survey, and then in future meetings, when we've pulled together those data points, participating in kind of a group gap analysis and ultimately develop recommendations to the Department of Technology for both inclusion in the digital equity plan and, you know, direction on how, you know, to really have a say in how we might spend the state's digital equity capacity dollars. And Anh, I think I'm done so I'm gonna hand it back to you. And just thank you very much, really appreciate, you know, folks who are in attendance here and looking forward to the conversation. Thank you for giving us that context, Scott, and thank you for everyone for being here. I know you have plenty of other events and obligations on a Friday. So we're very grateful that you're joining us this morning. And with that I would like to pivot to the next portion, where we have our guest speakers to help us define and give even more context on what is digital equity, and why it is important. And so our list of speakers include Gladys, our FPO from NTIA; Abi, our Digital Navigator Manager from NDIA; Davida, our Digital Inclusion Manager from AMERIND Critical Infrastructure; and lastly Matt Rantanen, Senior Advisor of Tribal Broadband from Golden State Network and CENIC. So Gladys, if you don't mind starting us off with this conversation. Thanks so much, Anh. It's so great to see this gathering, got some great partners on the call, and it's great to see everybody. Good morning, everybody. My name is Gladys Palpallatoc as Anh mentioned, and I am one of 2 Federal Program Officers or State Leads for California from NTIA. Again, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Thank you to the CDT team for inviting us to participate this week. It's been wonderful to hear all the discussions throughout the week and on all the different working group areas. And also thank you for all the good work CDT has been doing. The team has been outstanding, and it's been great to see the evolution of the progress that they've made. It has been a very busy few months. It's also great to see again so many long time partners on the call, and my co- speakers here, are longtime partners so good to see that and look forward to working with everyone else on the call that we're getting to know, or we

will be getting to know. My focus today is to share the definition of DE from an NTIA perspective, it will look very similar to what NDIA will be saying as well, I'm sure. And I will also be talking about that objectives of the planning process for Digital Equity Act, and how it will factor into the next phase of the program, into the state capacity grants. So let me get started. For the Digital Equity Act programs, digital equity is defined as the condition in which individuals and communities have information technology capacity that is needed for full participation in society and the economy. Digital inclusion enables or leads to digital equity. This means the activities that are necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to and use of affordable information and communication technology, such as reliable fixed and wireless broadband Internet service, Internet enabled devices that meet the needs of the user, and applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration. It must also include obtaining access to digital literacy training, the provision of quality technical support, and obtaining basic awareness and measures to ensure online privacy and social s-, cyber security, not social security. Digital equity is the goal and digital inclusion is how we get there. As Scott mentioned, CDT was awarded a 4 million dollar State Planning Grant for one year, beginning in December 2022 through November 2023. The planning process objective is to develop a State Digital Equity Plan. The planning process requires engagement of major key stakeholders like yourselves and the public throughout the State to solicit input and feedback from communities and sectors like yours to develop the State Digital Equity Plan. As part of BIL, or the bipartisan infrastructure law, the Digital Equity Act and the BEAD program goal is connecting 100% of all Americans, so local and regional participation is a must. And all voices need to be heard in order for the programs to be successful. The State will need the help of each working group to reach and engage your networks throughout the State deeply and meaningfully. The planning plot process will factor into the next phase, the State capacity grant. Only entities who complete the planning grant program can apply, and a State Digital Equity Plan is required to be eligible. The state capacity grant will be used to implement the State Digital Equity Plans and promote this digital inclusion. NTIA anticipates a NOFO, or a notice of funding opportunity, as Scott mentioned earlier, for the state capacity grant, by the end of this year. By mid 2024 we anticipate the 5 year state capacity implementation will have already begun. That concludes my quick presentation for today. But please reach out to us for more information, and if you'd like more, a briefing for your organizations or Tribes, we'd be happy to do that as well. We've begun doing that with the Tribal Chairman's Association throughout the state, and so we're going to be reaching out with our Tribal FPOs, who are also on the webinar today to individual Tribes very soon, in this next few months. So thank you again, and we look forward to working with each of you, and I'll hand it back to you, Anh. Thank you so much, Gladys. And next slide, please. We have Abi and Davida. Please take over. You can go on to our pictures slide, where you can get a duplicate image of what we look like. So Davida and I are here. I'm very glad to follow NTIA with representation from NDIA, because our names do get confused sometimes. So I work for the National Digital Inclusion Alliance. We are an organization that works with digital inclusion practitioners all over the community, and we support their community programs, and we also learn from them in order to equip policy makers to act. And so that is our role, and we're very excited to share some similar definitions. A pop quiz to see if you were paying attention to the definitions of digital inclusion and digital equity. And we know we have several slides. And we're gonna go through them relatively quickly. But we want you to have them to access later. So don't worry, those are coming your way. Davida, would you like to introduce yourself? Sure, hi. I'm Davida, a citizen of the Navajo Nation based in Phoenix, Arizona. So as a close partner of NDIA, we at AMERIND Critical Infrastructure help to support NDIA as they implement programs in Tribal communities. And we also just provide general

support and guidance. Thanks, next slide. So, starting with a review of these definitions, and I would say that we had the definition first, and it was written by our community, digital inclusion practitioners worked together to define what digital equity would be. And that is the condition in which all individuals and communities have everything they need to participate in our society, democracy, and economy, and it's really the goal that we're working towards. Next slide. So if digital equity is the goal then the digital divide is the reason that we don't have digital equity right now. It's the gap between those who have everything they need to participate in our society online and those that don't. We know the digital divide disproportionately affects people of color, people on Tribal lands, households with low incomes, people with disabilities, people in rural areas, and older adults. Next slide. And digital inclusion. It's the work that we do towards achieving digital equity. Next slide. I told you there are a lot of them. So here is a list of the 5 elements that our community has recognized as being necessary for digital inclusion. So just quickly those are broadband which is affordable and robust and meets everyone's needs, Internet enabled devices that meet the needs of the user, digital skills training, quality technical support, and applications and online content that are accessible. Next slide. In order for communities to make substantial and sustainable progress towards digital equity, they must have a strong digital inclusion ecosystem and that includes programs and policies that meet all the needs in their community, particularly related to those items on the previous slide. A common way to build a strong digital inclusion ecosystem is to build a digital inclusion coalition. Those are place based collectives of organizations that are working together to raise awareness and funds for their digital inclusion work, and they collaborate to make sure that their efforts complement each other and don't leave gaps. There's a number of great existing digital inclusion coalitions in California, and we're excited to see efforts like this today, where people are working together to make sure that everything is there that these communities need. Next slide. So, even if a community has established the resources that it needs to meet the needs of their community and their individuals in their community, individuals often need support as they understand and access those resources. One model for providing support is the digital navigator model. Digital navigators are trusted guides to address the whole digital inclusion process for community members through repeated interactions. There are sometimes at the front desk of that coalition and they provide that human element, a friendly face to those who are moving towards digital equity. Next slide. So in Tribal communities we are seeing digital inclusion efforts becoming more prominent, and this is evident in Arizona, in the Gila River Indian Community with Digital Connect. Digital Connect currently has a digital navigator on staff who is helping community members with setting up their devices. Their staff are working on building local and state relationships and networking with other Tribes to build job skills and education. Next slide. When we talk about engaging with Tribal communities, we often emphasize that folks at the state and non-Tribal folks that Native Nations are sovereign nations and are therefore rights-holders rather than stakeholders. They have a right to be included in conversations and planning and policy and implementation at all levels, because they have the sovereign right to manage their resources and services. Tribal nations working towards digital equity can toe the line between the technical aspect of broadband deployment and providing digital inclusion resources to the community. This concept of the digital equity ecosystem relates to how the entire Tribal community is working together to solve the digital divide. Excuse me, and Tribal leaders should be informed about digital inclusion to understand these needs of the community holistically. Next slide. So we know that you are connected with this group specifically with California efforts. If you're also interested in networking and learning from folks across the nation, you can join the NDIA community. NDIA is a community of digital inclusion practitioners, researchers, academics, who have a very active list serve and monthly calls. The

Indigenous Digital Inclusion Working Group is fairly new and is working with a network of Tribes, practitioners, and partners, sharing the unique challenges in our communities in Indian country with some international Indigenous representation. We know there's some great efforts happening in California, and hope to learn more, and even connect with you all, if possible as well. Thank you. Thank you so much for sharing all that. Our next speaker, Matt. Can we make sure to spotlight and unmute? Thank you. So, Matt Rantanen, Senior Advisor for Travel Broadband for Golden State Network, which is the third party administrator to the California Department of Technology in that middle mile effort. However, I have, you know 21 and a half years of experience as the Director of Technology with the Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association. And I just wanted to reflect back on some of the things that were said and the importance of this piece of digital equity. You know, I think, what people often forget, those of us that build networks, you know, think "Well, if we build this infrastructure and we have this Internet opportunity, people will just sign up for it and use it." And you know, we had that understanding as we built out the Tribal Digital Village Network in Southern California, and what we didn't realize was that there was this digital equity piece, this understanding and education piece that was a part of that. And you know, we never got more than 50% of the Tribal homes to sign on to the TDV network, you know, for a variety of reasons. But one of the biggest reasons was that piece of equity and ownership and understanding of the Internet. So I you know, I definitely want to make sure that that folks are engaged at this level. Because, as you build out your communications networks as you work with the public utilities to build out your last mile. You know part of the build out of that last mile is building out the education and information and interaction with your community to make sure that that community understands the value of what you're bringing, and what that opportunity might look like to an individual rather than a community at large, or a Tribal government because we did some work in, oh, the ARES stimulus funding act through a BTOP grant in Southern California, and realized, you know, we got a grant that was essentially a digital equity piece, but it was more of a marketing, if you will, for broadband piece, and we didn't have an understanding of what the user level was and experience, and whether or not they, you know, understood what broadband was versus what access to the Internet was. And then, also, whether or not they knew how to integrate that into their daily life without it being disruptive, how to manage their digital footprint, what they left behind when they're using the Internet like, what they left behind for others to see. So it was a real eye opener for us as we look through, you know, our learning process and building out a network for folks and understanding, you know, the grander scope of things, that you're also building community awareness. You're building education. You are building interaction. And in the last year and a half, two years, I've been a part of a thing called the Tribal Broadband Boot Camps, and it's most interesting because Davida and Abi are on this call, and they they do attend the Tribal Broadband Boot Camps. And we have so many people that build networks that are like, "I don't want to do the digital inclusion part. Can we just like stand outside, and we'll just wait till that parts over?" It's so weird that you know the folks building networks don't want to know the whole complete story. And every time we say "no, it's part of the deal. You gotta hang out and learn everything." And once that session is over, we do surveys, and we have people, you know, report on what their best sessions were, and you know what their worst sessions were, and things like that. And Abi and Davida and NDIA and the digital inclusion piece and digital equity piece is ranked the highest in all of the things we do. Even though you can get hands on splicing fiber, hands on building a wireless network, and all kinds of things like that. People rank that digital equity piece as the piece that they learn the most from, and the most valuable piece that's taught. Because it's something that we all forget. It's all a piece. We just assume that people are going to get on board with this. It's not necessarily the case.

There are other barriers like costs and, you know, just access to equipment, computers, etc., and the learning curve to be able to use those devices. But the reality is this completes the picture. So the digital equity piece is really valuable. And in building out that middle mile that I'm a part of, and working with CPUC on the last mile that I'm a part of, and still working with Tribal Chairman's Association, this has become very apparent in our in our features. So just wanna make sure that folks are very aware of this. We will be having more of these meetings, so those of your neighbors, your Tribal neighbors that you engage with that may have not had the time to attend this, please have them either watch the recording of this or attend the next meeting. So thank you. And thank you for extending the invitation. Matt, if you don't mind staying on spotlight, I want to make sure to wrap up this session, thanking Gladys, Abi, Davida, and Matt for joining us and starting this conversation that we're having here today in the next portion. Next slide, please. We would like to open up the floor, the mic, chat, all that is available on Zoom right now for you to share the community and lived experiences of Tribal communities and those you work with. Next slide, please. Just a few things to start thinking about. Please share what you can about what your Tribal community is facing in terms of achieving digital equity. We're hoping to address this larger prompt with 3 questions. So I'll ask the first one. And again feel free to use the chat and to use your hand raised function so that we can unmute you. What digital equity barriers do your Tribal communities, or those you serve experience? And how do those barriers affect educational, health, economic, and social outcomes for Tribal members and communities? We'll let that question sink in for a bit and if any brave soul wants to start us off, go for it. Yeah, either put your information or your question in the chat. Raise your hand. There's a number of ways to get your question out, you know. Feel free to speak up. We know it's tough to sometimes deal with in front of the crowd. I did see in the comments that part of digital equity and part of this Tribal engagement is one on one with each Tribe, and we understand that completely. The focus here is to get general information out and education for folks, so that we can have those one on one conversations with the Tribes, and do Tribal engagement. And also you know some of the stories or the questions that you may have now may be extremely relevant for others that are on the call. So please feel free to chime in. Allen, would you mind going off mute, and sharing your thought, that you also wrote in the chat. Oh, hi. Yeah, I was distracted there. I didn't catch the ask. I was busy typing. No worries. We love what you typed, and just want to make sure others are able to hear it as well. If you don't mind coming off mute and just telling us your insights and your thoughts. Yeah, sure. I'm with the Quechan Indian Tribe Fort Yuma Indian Reservation down here in the extreme southeast corner of California. I spent 12 years working on broadband middle mile in Western Arizona, so I have a lot of familiarity with the topic. I've been with the Quechan Tribe for about a year, and I'm suddenly plugged back into the broadband discussions. We're at a, you know. I looked at the map on one of the links that were sent over on the middle mile build out planned, 100,000 miles, or whatever it was, and I noticed that we're at a key entry point into California. Of course, down here, you know, between Arizona and California on Interstate 8. So that it's almost like a gateway for middle mile investment or build out. I did share on there that I, you know, we just recently had a demographic analysis conducted, and digital equity was on the topics covered in the research, and 85% of our Internet users on the reservation are mobile-based, which is easy to understand, and it's mostly younger users, 19 to 30 years old. But only 12% rely on any type of hard broadband connection to the home. So that to me, that's interesting. That's you know. They're obviously you know, part of that Gen Z type of thing, where you know, mobile is it. But there could be a lot of factors why that 12% figure's there. But the biggest one is our persistent poverty. We're, you know. We're very high up there in the Census Bureau and everything else statistics. And you also have multi-generational households, and a lot of households

are led by single moms with kids. So I think that budget is probably you know one of the biggest factors on why there's not more connection to broadband. So you know, I'm aware of the programs available to help reduce that cost and subsidies for that. But I anecdotally don't know that many people in the reservation are taking advantage of that. And that's about all I can contribute right now. Allen, thank you very much for your comments. It's good to meet you. I did put in the chat my email address. So please copy that down. I would love to have that conversation with you and bring in the folks about network. Sure, I appreciate that. Yeah, our Tribe is very in-tuned with the broadband conversation, we welcome this opportunity to discuss it with you. We have some ideas. I wanted to address number one as well. I do believe we have maybe some CalTrans folks on the call. I'm not positive. I'm looking through the list at the moment. But I would include in that meeting with you your regional CalTrans folks as well to have that discussion about TERO and other Tribal cultural monitoring because they are actively pursuing conversations directly with each Tribe. Okay. You know. As it effects. We ongoing conversations with District 11 down here in San Diego on other infrastructure issues, but yeah, the more hands involved with this the better as far as I'm concerned. Alright great. Shoot me an email and we'll get that going. I sure will, thank you. And can I add to that? Just encouraging not only Allen, but Allen and other Tribes there are also, in addition to the state efforts there are also about a little over, I think, 12 or 13 regional broadband consortia in the state now. Their contact information link is in the chat, but just to loop them in on your efforts and making sure that they are aware of your gaps, whether it's infrastructure or digital equity. They can also be a resource in many ways, particularly for ACP signups. That's something that they've been doing to help communities increase those numbers, so. I'm aware that Imperial County has consortium and those ACP hookups, I'm a fan. I just don't know if the message is being heard, maybe the volume needs to be turned up. They can help with outreach and sign up. Gladys, is that the Southern Border Broadband Consortium? Yeah, it's IVEDC, Tim Kelley's group, Allen if you're familiar. Yeah, I know Tim. Put a bug in his ear. Davida, I think I see your hand. I was gonna say, in terms of ACP outreach and sign ups. Actually, the Hoopa Valley Tribe has a new digital navigator on staff, and they've been learning so much in terms of the experience of not only living in California, but also the Tribal perspective of signing up folks with through ACP. And their digital navigator, Abe, is going to be talking at our Indigenous Digital Inclusion Working Group. So if anybody is interested in hearing that perspective that's going to be, I believe on March 8, but you can email me, too, if you're interested in joining that conversation, too. Thanks. Go ahead, Scott. Oh, yeah, I just I wanted to say thank you, Allen, so much for sharing those, you know, I think unique and common challenges, and I appreciate the comments that others have made in response. And that there are many different investments and components the state is leveraging to support Broadband for All. And you know, as Matt mentioned, these working groups are established to really expand the table of folks committed to, you know, working with Tribal Nations to, in partnership, to address the connectivity and digital equity needs, and the more that we can utilize this space and this informal setting to identify those partners, that's really one of the outputs that we're looking to identify through the digital equity planning process. And then I did just want to note someone made a comment earlier in the chat, that there are multiple touch points over the next many months that we'll be connecting with partners, and particularly the Tribal Nation partners. Both the Department of Technology and the Public Utilities Commission, we'll be doing formal, both group and individual consultations, so wanna make sure that folks know that we're available. I neglected to mention that I'm the Department of Technology's Tribal Advisor. And really our staff is available at any time for formal consultations and informal meetings. And just, you know, this administration and the state are committed to working with our Tribal partners on all things broadband. So wanted to underscore that,

and thank you for giving voice to those concerns. Thank you, Scott, appreciate it. I want to pass the mic over to our graduate student assistant, just so we can, you know, include the next question, but if you have something to share about the first one, please feel free to do so, and don't hold back. And I would like to introduce Zach, please come off mic and introduce yourself. Hi, thank you and hello everyone. It's great to be here with you all today, and thank you for joining us. My name is Zach. I am in my final semester as a masters in public policy student at UC Berkeley. I'm very excited to be helping out with this work and with this planning process. I was previously working with the Yurok Tribe on environmental law regulation, and so pleased to be continuing to work now on the state side, trying to try to boost Tribal collaboration and increase equity for everyone. Our next prompt for our lived experience discussion today, and again you can drop responses in the chat or please come off mute and share, if you're able to, are some examples, we'd love to hear some examples of effective approaches that you or someone you know of, or some community you know of, may have worked on that address digital equity barriers for Tribal communities and on Tribal lands. While we're waiting for others to queue up, just interrupt me as they do, Zach. You know, during that BTOP funding opportunity and grant opportunity, you know, quite a few years back now, we held community sessions where people could come and learn a variety of topics like how to do online banking, how to do video communications with someone over the Internet, and a few of the you know the base level things that we feel so accustomed to doing today. But with communities that don't have access to Internet, those are, you know, strange processes. You know, if you're a student, and you're at school, you understand most of this. If you're a grandparent or a parent who has been at home, you know, or working somehow through Covid, and then not having Internet access at their home. You know, some of these processes are not necessarily normal. So you know, they're, dispelling the myths effectively were one of the effective methods, you know, and how to just manage yourself on the Internet, so that you weren't setting yourself up for failure was one of the best ways I think that we got through to individuals. So that's one example. Thank you, Matt. Linda. I see you've raised your hand. Hi, my name is Linda Thomas and I'm a vice president at Cal.net, and we were awarded 2.7 million dollars in NTIA funds to bring fiber to the home of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians. And there's 59 homes on the premises and several community buildings. So one thing that made our grant awardable, I would say, is our very close working relationship with the Tribal leaders and what they needed and what they wanted, and allowing them to take the lead on a lot of what was said in the grant. And then, as we're building out this fiber also talking to them about things like digital literacy and ACP, because we are an ACP provider and a Microsoft Airband partner. And so we are looking at other Airband partners, such as Rural LISC, who provide digital navigators and digital literacy and digital fluency training to bring in and to help with this, as the fiber gets installed in the homes. Absolutely. Go ahead, Matt. Yeah, I'm just wondering. I see Bob Gemmell on the call. I'm wondering if there's any perspective from the Indian Health Service side on tribal engagement, on digital equity, and from the health and telemedicine side of things. Not to put you on the spot. And he may be tied up. But. I think, Matt, that's a really good point, because there are other state entities and other, I think, partners that are equally committed to working with Tribal Nations on digital equity issues or acknowledged that digital equity connectivity issues really empower other outcomes on their area of focus. So I'm wondering if you know some of those folks here would like to share some of the related efforts that they're working on. While we're waiting for that, I do know that Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association has a current grant application seeking funding that is working in concert with Indian Health Services in San Diego County, in North County to basically create a digital learning facility where people would understand how to do a lot of the things we're talking about today and get their hands on

equipment and get some training, and then also bring an element of Tribal youth through a program that would help elders in telemedicine set up networks, manage, you know, health devices like blood pressure cups and oxygen monitors and different things like that for home care. And we're working, you know, we hope to be working hand in hand with them if the grant is approved, to be able to, you know, make sure that health is woven into the conversation when we're talking about broadband at every aspect and in the training and moving up through there. I see Bob joined. So go ahead, Bob. I'm sorry about that. I had a heck of a time getting unmuted there, should have been more obvious to me. But thank you, Matt, for shouting my name. You were asking about IHS and our engagement, or our perspective on digital equity. Well digital equity, but also like in relation to question number 2. What are examples of effective approaches that you know that have worked on addressing the digital equity barriers for Tribal communities? The ones that you know you engage them on a health perspective, and we're kind of talking about like just a communications perspective, but specifically about health. Well, thank you for asking. If you don't mind, I'm gonna take off my Federal hat and put on a different hat because I used to be the information manager for a Tribe in the Northwest, the Suquamish Tribe. And we actually, it's a very interesting topic to me, because we approached this quite a while ago, and when I first went there it was kind , the Internet was still new, and people were trying to figure out what to make of this technology that's coming down the pike. Is this necessary? How do we use it? And we started thinking about it like, we started building websites and then getting computers to people. And then we built the learning center so that people could learn how to use those computers and then using those computers they could learn how to build websites, etc. We ended up building a communications tower as well. And the point of this is we started to look at this like this needs to be organic. This needs to all be tied together and look at it differently. And look at this A) How does this support Tribal sovereignty? Is there such a thing as digital sovereignty? Do we need to control or protect or expand our sovereignty in the ether, in the information space. The thing I wanted to mention to you, Matt is, I am so happy to see that you're on the call, because when we started doing this, and looking at this more organically, we saw this is all part of a whole. And while I was doing some research, I stumbled across your effort, the digital village, and we're like, "Wait! Somebody beat us to it. Somebody's already thought about all this stuff." And we ended up, and I have to apologize. We ended up calling our project, the Suquamish Electronic Nation Project, and we're borrowing directly from you. So thank you for that, letting us do that. So yeah, for me, to bring it to a point. Yeah, make sure if you're a Tribe, that you're not treating these as separate projects, this all ties together. You need to think about it organically. You need to get the community involved. One of the biggest things we did was getting computers. The BIA had some excess computers. We got them, and they were in great shape. So we moved our computers out to Tribal homes and then set them up with Internet. So we're getting elders involved in learning how to use computers. Get with your Tribal Councils. Make sure there's an ordinance in place that mandates that if there's an open ditch on the reservation anywhere that conduit goes in, so that you are not digging twice to put down fiber optic. Make sure every time, it doesn't cost you anything, it doesn't cost them anything to let you put the pipe in there, and it will pay off eventually. You can build out your network. And then I'm putting my IHS hat back on to answer your question. We come at this. You know Indian Health Services, Indian Health Service and we are about to roll out a new electronic health records system that's going to replace our PMS, our archaic health record system. And for Tribes that want to partake in that the optimal experience is going to be if you have broadband, because it's going to work on slow networks. But it'll be a different experience. And so we can see that health care is going to be supported by broadband in ways that we want to be engaged in in getting the message out. In addition

to that, if California Tribes get together and want to establish, you know, an actual hospital or regional health center in California, then access to those physicians would be best served by having some telemedicine component, and to do that again you need broadband. I think I went on a little long, but thanks for giving me the opportunity. Extremely relevant, as we see, well, specifically, Covid obviously staying at home and then trying to get health services while you're at home was tough if you didn't have broadband. Home visits and things like that potentially spread Covid to people, and that was dangerous. So telemedicine is a big part of our future. Not just physical telemedicine, but like also mental health as well, right. Thank you, Bob, and thanks, Matt, for identifying Bob amongst our participants. I want to make sure we get to the third question, but again feel free to come back to 1 or 2 as you see fit. Can I draw attention to the last entry in the chat. Fear of the Internet is a barrier, people are embarrassed, and they don't know how to use it. So they're also afraid that they will break it. That was one of our biggest experiences on the BTOP grant that we performed, you know a number of years ago, was that they were afraid of breaking the computer, they were afraid of breaking the tablet, they were afraid of breaking their phone if they messed around with the software too much. And we you know, did a lot of work to try to show how resilient these systems are, and resilient these pieces of equipment are, and that you know it took some concerted effort to actually break them. You know it's easy to screw up your configuration a little bit. But it was pretty hard to break something. So, you know one of the things we promote at the boot camps, and I think Abi and Davida could attest to this, is that you know there are no stupid questions, and it's a safe environment to talk about things because everybody's coming from a different learning level. So you know a question on how do I turn on my computer is not an irrelevant question when we're in this arena, because there are people that never have used or had access to computers, and may have a brand new device, and don't know how it works. They may have used a computer 10 years ago for their job, but they've never seen a tablet, and don't understand how it works. So none of this stuff is irrelevant, and so we try to dispel, you know, any of the stigma of like, you know, oh, you don't know what you're doing, kind of a thing, and eliminate as much of the fear as possible, so that it's a comfortable space to talk about this in. And Matt I think that that's a great point that ties back to your learnings about the Tribal Digital Village about, you know, on one hand, that there's the infrastructure side and the service side that is real easy for folks to understand, but on that, on the digital inclusion and the broadband adoption work like overcoming those individual barriers. And so, as we go through that, the digital equity planning process, you know, how can we continue to identify the existing, you know, resources like through the PUC and some of their grant programs, or the NTIA and NDIA, and as Gladys had mentioned, you know, leverage other partners in this space, either consortia or local groups to bulk up digital navigation, you know, programs to support our Tribal Nation partners, you know, to overcome some of those individual barriers. I'm really looking forward to the outcomes of the Digital Inclusion Alliance, National Digital Inclusion Alliance Conference that's coming up. Abi and Davida will have to report back for us. They're over double expected attendance and I think everybody's very eager to step into this space and there's going to be a lot of solutions brought to the table. So I'm very interested to see what the evolution of those solutions are now that everybody's gone through the same pandemic, and are focusing very hard on this inclusion piece and equity piece. So, looking forward to those results. Thank you. I think we are as well and hopefully they will be available to join us and share these next time, too. Ken. I think I saw your hand up earlier. Yeah, thank you. And just really appreciate the conversation today. I know I'm learning a lot, and CPUC staff is tuned in as well. So just a couple of announcements. One general, CPUC is continuing to build out its staff and a real focus on sort of the case work aspect of helping to stitch projects together with funding opportunities, and continue to do the

engagement and sort of Tribe by Tribe, one on one engagement that's really important to the success of the models, Matt, that you mentioned. A couple of event opportunities I wanted to mention. On February 28th, it's coming up around the corner, we have an in person Tribal consultation that CPUC is hosting. Commissioner Houck will be leading that government to government meeting. It's open to all California Tribes. It's an in person event only and it will in some ways focus on some of the initiatives and regional challenges specific to the North Coast area. It's gonna be hosted at Blue Lake Rancheria, and that again is on February 28th, from 3 to 5pm. And I can also provide an announcement for that as a link here after I tell you about these events. Again, we encourage a lot of folks, you know, if you can make it to that, the more that we can continue to engage one on one, the more we learn will help shape programs. And then the following day on March 1st, it's a Wednesday, again at the same location, at Blue Lake Rancheria, we're going to be hosting, as part of a SAFE symposium that's being hosted by the Tribe, a Smoke, Air, Fire, and Energy symposium. There will be a breakout activity that will be a continuation of the consultation from the day before. It'll be more geared towards a roundtable discussion. Again, open all California Tribes. We're gonna have Commissioner Houck available again, so it'll be an opportunity for our leadership to here, directly from Tribal leadership and their technical staff. And we'll also have subject matter experts like Karen Eckersley and potentially Rob Peterson, also a communications division director on hand as well. So it's a good opportunity for us to engage, and we certainly encourage you to participate if you're possibly able to make it. Thanks. Thank you, and final question for us to think about. If we were to go even broader, and you know, outside of these 2 prompts, please share any reflections you may have had about our discussion today, topics we haven't mentioned or specifically asked about, anything digital equity related or collaboration with Tribal communities. Please let us know, and we're here to learn from each other. Well, I think we need to make sure we capture the chat, because there's a lot of that already in the chat, reflecting number three's question. So make sure we capture that for our digestion and absorption later. I feel like Bob and Andrea are having a conversation in chat, and Andrea lost her voice, but would love to engage in that conversation, too. Can I read some of them out loud? Andrea writes "At the DHCS Office of Tribal Affairs we hear quite a bit that lack of broadband is a significant issue especially coupled with the high vacancy rates for clinicians in rural areas." And then Bob's response to that was that Andrea's comment was spot on and that it's imperative to establish a broadband capacity. Lauren, I feel like I've seen your comment a couple of times as well. Do you mind coming off mute to share your thoughts if it's possible where you are? I'm not sure if Lauren's able to come off. Yeah, okay, did you unmute me? Yeah. I'm Lauren Cotter with Community Tech Network. What was your question, Anh? Oh, my question was more so that you've added a few comments in the chat, and if you don't mind just letting us know verbally what those are, and you know whether it's relevant to 1, 2, or 3, feel free to chime in, thank you. So mostly for 3. But approaches also in going after what is a barrier? Because the barrier for a Tribal community may also be for a marginalized community as well. There it may be immigrants. They may speak various languages, so I also think training digital literacy in languages that people are most comfortable with and are their first language, are vital to this, and the state has done a really great job of helping with that. But digital literacy you have to teach, whether it's telehealth, whether it's how to use Zoom, any of those need to be taught with patience and have to be, I think, anyone that's training anyone in that space needs to be background checked, so that you know that there is safety there so that there's trust that's developed. So trust is vital. And then also you can have access, you can have broadband come to your house, but if you can't afford it, and then, if you can't see it on a device other than a phone, then it's very difficult to have a complete experience. And then, if you don't know how to use the Internet at all, so you're lacking in digital literacy, there's a lot of shame

that sometimes is involved. But once you can get past that and have them trust you, they're very, very eager to learn and to develop skills. And so I mean they can do little things such as learning how to play the guitar, that you know, or go to another country through a library, you know. So it just opens up the whole world once they know how to safely navigate it. And we're here to be a support to anyone that might have questions for us as well. So it's so exciting to see this. It really is. I'm so impressed that we're finally here. Thank you for sharing that and being a part of our partnership. And Gladys, go ahead. I agree, Anh. There's a lot of good stuff going on in the chat, as Matt mentioned. I just wanted to make sure that I also, along the same lines, let folks know that, in addition to myself, my colleagues from NTIA are also on this webinar. And not only is California the only state that has 2 federal program officers, we also have 2 Tribal federal program officers, as a resource to you all. And so you see on the participant list, my counterpart is Marina MacLatchie as an FPO for California. And then are two Tribal counterparts and FPOs for the state are Vanessa Cresci and Andrew Orosco. I think Vanessa still is on the call, but I think Andrew had to leave. So just wanted to make sure that there I acknowledged them, and that they are also, we are all at your disposal. Thank you. And I don't know if they want to say something. I am here, Gladys. Thank you. Yeah. Andrew did have to leave. But this is Vanessa and I've been participating in the call, too. Thank you. Alright. If there's no more comment for the session, we'll move on to the next part of it. Oh, go for it. Okay, I think I'm unmuted. Am I unmuted? We can hear you. I'm sorry, I just wanted to sneak this in. I've been having an email relationship with Matt, Andrew, Scott, Karen, and Ken, who are all on this call. So I wanted to say thank you for agreeing to participate in our Tribal leaders consultation in April. I've never had the chance to talk to all of you at once. So I'm going to steal this opportunity. That's all. Thanks. Not a problem. Happy to participate. Love it when you go off mic and you know on camera. Next slide, please, Fiona. Alright. So I'm handing the mic over to Rachna Vas from Broadband Equity Partnership, I always have to make sure I read that right, to talk us through how to take action and how to move the needle forward from identifying barriers and to connecting to the solution and what's next. Thank you, Anh. Thank you. Next slide. So you heard Scott Adams mention, and you've also heard Matt talk about the state digital equity planning process, and part of this planning process requires a needs assessment so that we can understand what's going on across California and across all Tribes. So part of this involves what's called an asset inventory of existing programs and services. We've created a tool called the Digital Equity Ecosystem Mapping tool to conduct the asset inventory of what's being offered across all the Tribes in California and across all municipalities and regions within California. Next slide. The DEEM tool will enable us to gather information about what programs are being offered, where they're being offered, and to whom they're being offered. So it's imperative that we get organizations, coalitions, Tribal governments, Tribal schools to be able to engage in this tool to tell us what they're doing for the communities that they serve. So we really need your help on this call to be able to push out the DEEM tool to all of your local authorities, the schools that you work with, libraries, any organizations, any Tribal governments to engage in this tool to help us understand what's being offered. The incentive of completing this tool, or for completing this tool is to basically showcase these programs so that they're in the running in the future for possible funding from the capacity grants and competitive grants. So it's imperative for the State to know what you're doing in your communities, so that this funding may be available to you in the future. Next slide. So who should participate in completing this tool? If you leverage technology to provide a service or a program, you should be completing this tool. So anytime you help anyone access the Internet to do anything, you're engaging in a digital equity service or a program, and we'd love to be able to know about it so that we can actually map it. Next slide. While we're concurrently doing an asset inventory of programs and

services across California, we also need to understand what California households are experiencing in terms of their access to the Internet, their access to affordable programs, affordable Internet services, and access to skills training to be able to use the Internet. We want to understand what are Tribal households experiencing. We need to get this information through something called the public survey, the Digital Equity Public survey. Next slide. So the Digital Equity Public Survey is going to be released in the coming weeks, and we will release it in 12 languages. I heard Lauren Cotter explain how we need to be mindful about working with different communities, and some of the barriers that different communities face for languages and understanding what's being asked of them through these tools. And so we're trying to be more comprehensive and inclusive as we prepare these tools in a number of different languages. And we're also including audio files with these tools so that people can actually hear the questions in their own languages being asked with the same intonation that they would use in daily speech. So these are not screen readers for accessibility. These are actually translated questions with the proper intonation for folks to understand, especially in limited English proficiency communities. So we want to assure you that we are trying to be as thoughtful and thorough in this process as we seek to engage the public in understanding what's happening in the household, and what people are experiencing in terms of barriers to digital equity. So, next slide. So this tool, the public survey tool that we're releasing, is going to be disseminated via an online survey as well as through a phone survey, and we hope to disseminate this in the next 2 weeks to all the 58 counties, and we want to oversample for the 8 covered populations that you heard mentioned earlier. Next slide. So if we have a bit of time, can we just take a sneak peek at some of these tools, if you can just hit on new share. Sure, I'm just having a little Google Chrome playback issue, just take 30 seconds. No problem. We'd love to be able to share what we're planning to release. And if you have some input today, we'd love to hear about it. And so, Venetia, you're asking about how we are oversampling for covered populations. So while we are doing randomized sampling for the phone survey, we are actually targeting specific samples like veterans. We'll work with the Department of Rehabilitation to cover and sample for people with disabilities. So we are making sure that we're also targeting populations that are, that fall under covered samples. So this is currently the public survey that you're looking at. So if you can just scroll through. So it will ask you some of the questions just to identify what demographics you're in, but these are anonymous. So we don't collect any personally identifiable information. So we want to assure everyone that this is a private survey. We are acknowledging privacy issues. So please don't hesitate to complete this tool and push it out to the constituents that you serve, so that we can understand better what's going on in terms of households, how are Tribal residents using access to the Internet. If they're using wireless services, in fact, if they're using their mobile phones to access the Internet, what are they using it for? We want to get a better understanding of how all California residents, including Tribal residents, are leveraging the Internet for their daily lives. So if we can actually get to the DEEM tool. So we basically want to understand from the DEEM tool what is going on your end in terms of your ability to provide programs and services to the constituents that you serve. Are you experiencing connectivity issues and barriers to connectivity that prevent you from engaging your respective constituents in in some of the services that other groups in urban and suburban sectors can actually leverage. So we're trying to understand this from a very comprehensive approach from the household to the organizations serving that household, where are there barriers to digital equity. And you can go back to the PowerPoint. So if you have any questions about this tool, about the information that we're collecting, how to push out this tool to the groups that you serve, the Tribes that you work with, please contact us. We're here to help. We're here to help explain the tool in detail. We're here to help answer any questions about what we hope to gain

from the data that we collect. And we're also going to post this data in aggregate form once we have everything collected later in the year. So with that I'll send this over to Anh, and we'll be here again for any questions that you might have. Thank you so much. Thank you, Rachna. And yes, I'll keep an eye out on the chat, too, because sometimes questions for you do come in via the chat. And next slide, Fiona. Yes, and what our Tribal Outcome, Tribal Collaboration Outcome Area Working Group will be focusing on in the next few months, including developing strategies that align with our State Digital Equity Plan priorities, conduct the gaps analysis, and through the tools that Rachna just mentioned, we'll be able to evaluate assets and develop recommendations for CDT within the assigned outcome area working group for inclusion in the SDEP. So next slide, please. And what that looks like in terms of our month by month working group is in March, we're hoping to look at how this digital inequity creates social, economic, educational, and health disparities for Tribal members. So what we did today is more of a kickoff, right, going broad and bringing key partners in this first meeting. And we're hoping to rely on you to expand our reach, bringing more Tribal representatives to the space as well as going deeper in these topics and questions that we post earlier. In May we would be discussing what digital equity programs are currently working well in your community and what's missing. So kind of what we ask in number 2, but more so if you have impact reports, programs that are making progress that you're very excited to share with us. We would love to hear from you, even if they're ongoing, right. It does not have to be in the finished and final phase for it to be successful. We're all trying different strategies here. And then in June, using the public survey and DEEM data to shape SDEP priorities, we hope to be able to report to you what our surveys, you know, find by then. We're hoping to see and identify how we can incorporate it into SDEP. And hopefully you can lend us your voice and expertise, and let us know how to prioritize what we found from data to narratives to recommendations. Next slide, please. Okay, and then this one is our high level timeline of what our plan looks like, and we talked through a lot of our different planning components. But want to bring your attention to July and August. Where we really want to be, is by July, be able to draft these plans with the recommendations that you all bring forward. And then, once we have that draft, use August as the month to engage and collect public comment. So an entire month to make sure that those who are involved and impacted by SDEP have a chance to have their say. And then really using the last 3 months from September through November to refine the plan, right. To make sure that what we're submitting is inclusive and equitable and representative of what we're putting forward. And hopefully mid to late November, that's when we'll submit. And that's our entire planning process. Happy to go deeper into any of this if you want to, but want to make sure we have time for questions as well. Last slide, please. And this is our contacts. The general one is "digitalequity at state dot CA dot gov". Tish will put all other relevant links in the chat where you can find past events, upcoming events, what is DE process about if you would like a written version of that, and our contacts on the screen. But with that, thank you so much for joining us, we'll stick around for any questions, or if you have any last minute comments, please for free to go off mute and we'll chat. Thank you for your time. Anh I just wanted to ask, are we going to get the information so we can send out the DEEM surveys to our communities? Absolutely. You're going to get a link. You're gonna get an accompaniment that explains the DEEM tool. We will make sure you have everything that you need to promote this. And just you know again, if you need anything more than that, if you feel that that what we've given is insufficient, and you want more, please reach out. I will do whatever it takes to get people to complete this. And when we're at an ACP event, is that a good time to ask questions? That's a perfect time to ask questions. I'm so glad you brought that up. Thank you. That's actually a good strategy. That's a good place to ask some of these questions, and you know, I know that in working with other Tribes in other states that it's helpful to have

a paper copy ready to be able to help some elders fill out some of these tools. So if that works, please let's connect offline and let's find you ways to get all the help you need to leverage that, especially when you're going for an ACP event. Thank you. I also wanted to mention one other barrier, that we have found sometimes people don't want to give information because they're afraid the government can track them. And so you know, it's really working with a trusted partner that helps us overcome some of those barriers, so that it's not just us trying to do something. It's with the partner that they have a comfort level with as well, so. And it's getting that partner to trust you. So it's, there's a lot of trust that goes into these relationships, and really being able to get people online and build them up so that they have more opportunities in their life and change their lives. So I just wanted to mention that as well. Thank you so much for that, couldn't agree more. And we need trusted messengers and trusted partners to help us in this process. We can't get those tools completed when there is current mistrust and we need to rely on you and others to help us in engaging Tribes and Californians in general to come to the table to make their voices heard. So thank you so much for that. Thank you, everyone. It was really wonderful. Thank you. Thank you. Thanks. Thank you to all of our speakers and our ASL interpreters as well for helping us throughout this session. Thanks, Anh.