Workforce and Economic Development Outcome Area Working Group Meeting Transcript

March 15, 2023

And here is today's agenda. We will start with an opening panel with experts in the workforce and economic development field. They'll speak to us about the ways in which digital inequities create disparities in workforce development and specifically, how their organizations are addressing digital equity barriers. And we have a really great line up today, and excited for the speakers that joined. We'll then have an interactive discussion like I said, very interactive, about the lived experiences with those impacted by the digital divide. And so really looking forward to you joining and sharing your input. But at this point I'm gonna hand it off to Rida Fayyaz. She's a graduate student assistant from Berkeley Goldman School of public policy, and she's gonna provide us with a brief synopsis of last month's meeting. Rida. Hi everyone really happy to be here, and thank you for the introduction Cole. So we have 4 major takeaways from what we learned from our last meeting in February. The first one is lack of broadband infrastructure in rural as well as urban areas, which means that there is a lack of accessibility and a lack of choice and cost when it comes to the populations that live in such impacted areas. Secondly, barriers related to language and culture were brought up as key issues. For language specifically, there is a need for training and apprenticeship programs to be available in multiple languages, to empower underserved communities for this covered population. Similarly, on the culture barrier aspect having champions from within the communities is essential to encourage participation and retention in programs designed to address digital equity. Nextly, the need for cross-agency and cross-organization coordination was also brought up, so that organizations can avoid redundancy and find resources to build upon each other's programs. Lastly, with regard to pathways programs and vocational training, it is really important to double down on our efforts to connect trainees with the industry and encourage industry participation overall. Thank you, Cole! Thank you, Rida, for that review, and really looking forward to moving to the next phase and this second session of kind of our conversation about workforce and workforce development as it's related to broadband infrastructure and digital equity in general. And to start off I do want to say my name is Cole Przybyla. I did miss our first meeting on paternity leave, introducing my third son. So I am Cole Przybyla, and I'm the broadband infrastructure, access and deployment advisor for the office of broadband digital literacy and it's my pleasure to introduce, next slide, our first speakers. I'm gonna read them all, and then pass the mike on. It's Ryan Shiroy, with the Labor Market Information Division. He'll give us some really great information on workforce and some workforce deployment statistics stats. Gary Bolton with the Fiber Broadband Association, sharing his views and work they've done at Fiber. Jim Hayes with the Fiber Optic Association. Ernie Pacheco, with the communications workers of America and Ken Spence who's with NextGen. And they're all gonna discuss ways in which digital equity in, excuse me, digital inequity creates disparate outcomes. In a workforce and economic development, and furthermore, address the ways they're respective organizations are combating digital inequities. So with that, we'll drop this slides and we'll pass it off to Ryan. Okay. So I'm gonna do a share screen. So this is data that we provided earlier. And this is just data related to our occupational data I should say that's related to fiber optics and broadband. So we were provided a report from the National Broadband Association, and they did a report focusing on occupations within the telecommunications industry. And so we took that report, and we pulled our projections data for California. And we pulled the data for those occupations and put them on this report or this, this data table here. So just to go over the data real quick. This is for California. In the projection period is 2020 to 2030. So that the data elements that we have here is the soft code which is just a unique code for each occupation. The

occupational title. We have our base employment estimate, which is the estimate that we have for 2020, the projected year estimate which is the estimate that we have for 2030, and then the numeric change and the percent change is just a change that we are expecting over the projection period. So the change from 2020 to 2030. Following that we have our exits and transfers. And this is this is just a measure of the amount of turnover that we're that's kind of expected from 2020 to 2030. And this is just to kind of give us a more complete view of the amount of job openings that are expected over the projections period. So when we combine the exits, transfers, and the numeric change that gives us our total openings that will occur over the projections period, and then, additionally, we also have some supplemental data to the occupational projections which includes that meeting hourly wages the meeting annual wages as well as the education and training levels that we have here. And so this projections data doesn't factor in a potential a potential expansion in Broadband. But it's reasonable to expect that if there is one in the future that these are the occupations that would be impacted with that. And so this is this, data is occupational estimates across all industries it's not focused on one. But we did do that. We went on this separate tab. We also have the occupations within the telecommunications industry with for California, and so it's kinda similar to the previous tab. We have our base share employment and project the year along with the numeric and percent change. But when we look at it we when we look at our projections, data at a more detailed level, we don't have the job opening the exits and transfers as well as the education and the training stuff that those are estimated in all industry, level, but this kinda gives you kind of a more detailed look at the type of occupations that would be impacted by an expansion in broadband. And I think it's really important to stress that I think what I heard you say, Ryan, is that this didn't include any large Federal or State infrastructure investments. And I think one of the big things that we're really discussing and what we'll hear from the next speakers is that this digital equity conversation and broadband equity, access and deployment, the BEAD programs are really related to a large investment from our Federal partners through the IIJA investment. And so I think this is where it's really important to stress that you can see on that previous sheet that there is growth and the growth of projection is pretty significant even without these large Federal kind of investment dollars coming down and so this is a really big opportunity to find places to uplift and assist with workforce development. And I'm really excited to be part of the conversation and have this conversation here now. Yeah that's right. So our projections lean more heavily on past trends rather than you know things that could potentially happen in the future. But yeah, if there's an expansion in broadband, these are the type of occupations that would, you know, likely, be impacted by that. Perfect. Thank you, Ryan and I think this is a good spot to now adjust and shift to Gary Bolton who is from the Fiber Broadband Association and has some really good information on how they're working with their group to really begin to train and have some resources available for those that are interested. So Gary. Thanks, Cole. I really appreciate it. You can go ahead and hit the next slide. And yeah, so for the Fiber Broadband Association, we represent the fiber industry. So just about 51% of our members are all the service providers that you have know that are appropriating your broadband service. And then the other half of our membership is on the supply side. So the other half of our membership is on the supply side. So they're the kind of companies that manufacture the fiber that make the electronics the deployments specialists, the consulting engineers, the financeers, and so forth. So we really represent the whole fiber industry, and, as you know, with the all the investment, we're right at the kind of a historical level of investment for getting fiber to every American. And so what we're seeing is that obviously workforce development is a key area and that there's, you know, quite a shortage in not only in fiber industry, but pretty much across the board on shortage of employer, our employees to be able to fill those needs. And

so what we've been focused on is launching a nationwide program to train fiber optic technicians. So basically the you know what's really great about these kind of jobs is that not only are they urgent and necessary but they're available in every community, every community that's, you know, having fiber deployed. It's also a great pathway for a career. And there were, you know, really, it's a great opportunity for hitting the targeted communities to be able to be able to you know, address in veterans programs, tribal. We've been many states. We've been working with as Department of Corrections, like, for example, in Ohio, they have 16,000 people coming out of corrections every year, and to be fine, those available workers that can be trained that are appropriate. And you know, are interested in this kind of career, and it also provides a great, you know wage opportunity from anything from entry level in, from 50,000 to all over into 6 figures, so it's a great opportunity. You can hit the next slide. So, you know, when we look at different jobs. So the ones that we're focused on is on fiber optics and fiber broadband. And so asterisks of the like installers, splicers, maintenance technicians. You know those are the ones that are we cover in our program. But there's a number of others between linemen, and then even when you start to look at things like 5G and so forth. And so we've partnered with the wireless Infrastructure Association WI and they have 15 other job codes. And so we the reason we partner, is that we want to have an industry standard for apprenticeship. And our program is nationally accredited by Department of Labor and the WI's programs are as well. And so this gives an employer a one-stop shop to help with the apprenticeship program. And so whether it's the fiber optic technician, or, you know, some other job code. So we wanted to be really consistent in the industry. You can hit the next slide. And so what our program that we're offering through community colleges and veterans and training institutions across the nation is a 144 hours of classroom and laboratory with a 2,000 hour apprenticeship. So it's not one of these one week classes that you see by a lot of other outfits. But this is really a very narrow, very deep training, and what it does is allows you to take someone with zero experience and be able to have them fully equipped, to be to roll into a fiber optic technician job. And we've had lot of great success with literally high school students and others that have 0 experience. And now they're rock stars. And so we're currently we're in about 38 states right now, as we move out to all 56 States and Territories. It is 67 community colleges. And we're work partnered with 40 different ISPs at the moment. So this is all just kind of in early stages, or ramping out. And so you know. Certainly, if your community or community college or training institute is looking to be able to ramp up these workforce development programs, you know in the last line, Debbie Kish is our vice president workforce development. She's also on the WI TIRAP board, which is telecommunications industry registered apprenticeship program. And so I put her contact information here, anyway, we're really excited about this. We're having great results and looking forward to making sure that we have this up in every state across the nation. Yeah, so Gary, that's actually that's my question for you. Speaking in terms of California, how do we how do we leverage kind of the work you've done and the work you've done in other States? And and I think I asked this both on a statewide level but also we have a lot of community advocates and community stakeholders. And so how do we also help them at the local level. Kind of leverage this this this program in this network you've set up. Yeah, so like, yeah, I was just with Pennsylvania earlier today. And you know we do a lot of work with Ohio and number of other states, but, like, I'll start with Ohio. So if you look at Ohio, what they've done is they've gone to all the different areas that are underserved, and unserved and then they've engaged the community colleges in those areas so that the people in that community can be trained and be able to get fiber and broadband to their community. So they're what you don't want to do is train someone in your community so they have to go off to some other community to get a job. You know what you're trying to do is improve the economic development in your own community with the people who live

there, and so I would highly encourage that to target areas that where you believe the BEAD funding will be going, and to make sure that you have the right, whether it's a community college or some other kind and we've had a lot of success with private training institutions and veterans organizations. Also, you know, targeting whatever community can do is look at basically under employee. communities, you know, like, for instance, alot of the autistic community cause this is a very tactile, and it's a perfect job to be able to buy a great career opportunity for you know, people with autism also, you know, as I mentioned corrections, that's another great way to if the states already investing money to help train people to become productive members of society. This is a great career opportunity to, you know, be able to find the appropriate people that can be to leverage and make sure that we're just finding untapped areas. And then, of course, at rift youth at-risk youth you know, in other areas that you know. So we have a real opportunity here to really hit the root cause of societal issues and be able to solve them once and for all. Perfect Gary, and I see I just wanted to note this for all the participants. I see that we're starting to get some chat going on in the comments in comments in the chat and love to see more and kind of your reactions to the speakers and reactions to what's happening in your community as it relates directly to programs and ideas so please don't be afraid to share thoughts and comments. I just want to do one last quick thing with you, Gary, which is can you address the playbook? And maybe when it will be released. Yeah, so we, there's we have the initial playbook we put out was on the BEAD program that went out to all the State broadband offices. And this was on basically the label, the state offices to get prepared for the BEAD programs, part of BEAD when the eligible expenses is workforce development. And so we are developing a workforce development field guide which is similar to the playbook, and we should have that wrapped up within the next 2 weeks. And so we'll be putting that out. And so we basically gone across to the broadband offices across the nation and talked to a number of key stakeholders. And really looking at as each State office is building their 5 year plan is to really be able to help make sure that workforce development becomes a key pat of that. And one of the things that is a challenge is with the state offices, like to look at it says, Okay, I'm gonna get a 1 billion dollars and I got so many unserved locations. So I take that number divide it by the uncertain locations. And that's the amount of money I have per location. If you go that way then and you worry about workforce development at the end, you won't have any money left. So really you need to be able to figure out how do I get the right number of people on the street to be able to be able to get this broadband deployed and be able to carve out those to get those programs going because if you don't have the workforce, then your projects are going to have longer lead times, which is going to drive up costs. And so it's better to be more efficient. Get stuff accelerated and deployed, get people served, and get more people to work. Awesome. Thank you. Gary, and I see there's questions in the chat that we're gonna address in a little bit to ensure that we get through all the speakers. But those 2 questions are great, and I definitely want to loop back to them. So let's jump to Jim Hayes. At the Fiber Optic Association, Jim. Okay, are we unmuted? Yeah, you're we can hear you, Jim. Great for those of us who have not been familiar with the FOA we are the International Professional Society of Fiber Optics and the worldwide certifying body for fiber optics techs. There we go. I had a pop-up window. I had to get rid of that. The FOA got started in 1995, and our goal was interesting. It was workforce development, but it was workforce development for a new technology called the Internet. So we'll skip all the things we've done, in 27 years, and tell you that we've certified 90,000 techs and 40 or 50 countries around the world, and we're the recognized certifying body for fiber techs practically everywhere. In recent times, we've been working with a lot of organizations and states because of the IIJA broadband money and a point that I like to make is that the broadband money that's allocated is only about 4% of the IIJA project money. And all of the IIJA Project

money, which includes highways, bridges, public transportation, railroads, airport seaports, the electric grid. Water and waste water. All of these involved fiber optics and the FOA right now is busier than a one arm paper hanger working with a lot of groups because there's a lot more than broadband that we have to be worried about. We're working with people like our Ernesto hey Ernesto for the CWA. And the IBEW and part of what we're doing is we're working with the Department of Labor to try to redefine what a fiber tech is. We've been working with them for 20 years. And the problem is the Department of Labor still defines a fiber tech as a linemen, and most of its associated with the electrical trades. So what we're trying to do now is to split it up and make sure that the DOL understands the difference between an electrician and a fiber optic tech. I don't know how much time I've got and how much you wanna spend. But the point I'd like to make is, there are the there are about 7,000 certified fiber techs in California, and that's probably about half or a third of what we need. We have 18 training organizations in the state. There are a combination of union apprenticeship programs like the CWA and the IBEW att community colleges and private trainers and that's not enough. If we're going to address the situations in California, and in our case any other state, it's similar. We have to expand this app, we have to expand into underserved areas. We're working on projects with the incarcerated we're working on projects with tribal lands. We're working with organizations that do job retraining and we have we have a favorite program that we always bring up that shows how you can do that. In 2016 we started working with the state of Kentucky on Kentucky wired. Kentucky wired at the time, had no infrastructure, so they decided to build it themselves. They contacted us, and we got together with them at a meeting in Lexington, Kentucky. We pointed out there were at the time 2 FOA certified fiber optic texts in Kentucky. Today there are 9 schools within the Kentucky community and technical college system teaching fiber optics. There are now 1,200 certified fiber optic techs that they have graduated and sent away to OJT with a 3 major contractors of Kentucky wired. Kentucky wide] was finished in November of last year. Those 1,200 tech who helped build the backbone now live in all the communities around the state where they're going to have to build out the local networks. So they over the course of 6 years build the workforce that they needed to build finish building out the network. So that's the kind of work the FOA does. Hey Jim yeah. And Jim can can you explain the program that potentially I think if I remember correctly it was with Los Angeles and and kind of relate that program you do in Los Angeles with how other communities can get involved with FOA to build something similar. Well we've been working with LA Trade Tech for almost 20 years, and we have only about 3 of the community colleges in the State of California that are part of our network. But we've identified about 18 more that have communication programs. And I wanna share with you something that came from our work with the State of Maine. State of Maine had a consultant do a workforce study for them for the BEAD program and they talk to a lot of people and I want to read you a quote from that report that I think is very appropriate for California. The report quoted one of the interviewees saying fiber optics is the communications platform. It is ubiquitous. Anybody being trained in science, engineering, or communications needs to understand fiber. Fiber optics should be a basic skill used and understood by a broad swath of the workforce. And that's the way we see it too. And Jim to wrap up can you can you tell us where we can find like FOA online training certifications, programs. Can you speak briefly speak on that. Foa.org really easy. Perfect. And what can you find there. What can someone find and get trained to do. Almost anything. We we we have fiber tech doing everything from broadband and long distance to the working on the electrical grid. I'm a consultant with EPRI. The Electric Power Research Institute for example we work with traffic engineers so anybody involved with anything that involves fiber they should contact the FOA and we're happy to help them. This is Karen. I'm I'm the technical I'm the contact person for all these groups. So they first talk to me and we establish

what they have and what they need. And the important things are have you identified an instructor. If not, we help them find one. We have to do, set up their labs. So we really get down very quickly into how this works and La Trad tech is an excellent model. We have been working very closely with them. We are constantly in communication with them and I had an in fact say to somebody no I don't mean Louisiana I mean Los Angeles. So they we would point them and I would share the name of the guy at La Trade Tech with anyone. He's a great person to talk to. Awesome! Alright Jim Karen thank you so much. We'll definitely have time to wrap back around and we'll hopefully connect those that are in the chat that are interested with more of your components. But now I need to move on to the next which is Ernie Pacheco with the communications workers of America. Ernie. Hello! I don't have a deck. Just be participating. I'll start with saying a little bit about our organization on the communication workers. America. We're about a 90 year old organization. We are the communication unions worker in the country. There are others, but we are the main ones. We were established in 1938. We have about 700,000 members in United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada, in California district, 9 of which I'm a member of. We have about 50,000 members. We represent other workers like flight attendants, journalists, programmers, manufacturers, etc. But our core population are communication workers. Before I jump into the workforce development part of this which is what we're here for. I just want to say this is part of the digital equity effort. And I just wanna say that the digital digital equity is like a core issue for us. And digital divide has been a number one priority of our Union for decades. Personally I think my first campaign was in 2007 2006 2007, which we calling it speed matters. I don't even think we're calling it the digital divide at the time so we're ecstatic that the amount of resources are now available here in California to actually get pretty close to ending the digital divide and getting digital equity in California. So a little bit about myself. I am a broadband splicer. I have 25 years with the largest ISP in California as a construction technician. I've been splicing fiber for about 20 years. I'm also the the district 9 environmental programs coordinator and the California broadband policy lead. And I'll drop my information in the chat and as well as links to some of what I'm about to talk about. As Jim mentioned, we work with FOA we've had for over 30 years a JATC program an appreciate program. We are currently expanding that across the State. Our partnership program was focused centered in the South Bay of the Bay Area. We're expanding across the State. We have committed 11 million dollars to doing that here in California over the next 5 6 years. We will announce. I guess I'll announce right now. We just received a grant from the California Workforce Development Board HRTP Program for 4.6 million dollars. That's what's getting us to 11 million dollars that we're investing in the State of California for workforce development and training over the next few years. We also have a referral system for employers that are looking for workers that have skills. It's not a dispatch haul but it is a referral system. Most of that list that we have on our referral system is the large ISPs have been getting jobs in the past couple of years. Everyone here is talking about how we need to we need more workers. And we do. But what has been happening in the industry is that the large providers have been shedding jobs through outsourcing and technology and other things. And in California alone we've lost over 4,000 jobs like in the past 5 years just from the large providers. So I will put a link to our referral hall if you're looking for workers right now, that already have some skills. We are offering things to our partners and are looking to partner with all the people that are on this call. We will be offering free Osha 10 trainings instruction cards for the telecom work. We will have that live in October or November and that will be free to those that we're working with. We have we are nationally for our own members for 700,000 members. We have something called CWA net, where we provide digital training or on all kinds of broadband and other education opportunities. We're trying to figure out how to do that also with our partners at no cost like

we do for our own members. And I'd be interested in engaging conversations with the people that are taking this workshop on that. It's something we're gonna do. Moving forward. The I think that's pretty much it. I'll drop my links in the chat. No Ernie that's great. No no I'd love everything that you're saying and and I appreciate you offering to drop information in the chat I think that's really great and I think one of the things that's great about chat if you're not if you're participating in the chat. I think that's really great. And I think one of the things that's great about chat. If you're not participating and not on the chat yet there's some good contacts and connections happening so definitely get involved on the chat. But Ernie I think you you touched on it. But I just want to stress it and maybe ask it again to reiterate the point. But what training and apprenticeship program specific to broadband can you sure a little more detail. So we cover every hand that touches the cable from the actual placing of the fiber optic cable into the ground or up in the air. Or you know at the head end or the central office to the actual people that rack case and splice it. Generally construction splicers which is what I am. To the people that maintain the system the people that turn up and operate this system from the central office to head in the entire thing and those that do repair. So we cover everything inside and out and our expansion right now is focused on the outside part. We already do we already train on the inside work and we're focusing on construction splicer, and the placing aspect for expansion. And Ernie I know we've discussed it before but I'd love for you to tell this group a little bit more about your referral program and if that's related to that list of kind of jobs. Sure. So our referral system is separate from our JATC. We are hoping that every employer that uses our referral system will at some point want to engage with us in our apprenticeship program. Not every employer is going to want to do that. We do feel that's the best thing for the worker though it. But not every employer will do that. Our referral system has I don't think about 160 the last time I checked a couple of weeks ago workers that were previously working in the industry and for one reason or the other lost their job. What we've found. This may be gone a little of course but this is about equity. In California well nationwide the Union density for this industry is under 20%. In California it's a little over 20%. I believe we have the highest Union density in the nation. And why that matters is union workers get on average over 20% higher wages and they get benefits and work of in quality of life benefits and work benefits that non-union workers generally don't get. I'm not simply they don't get it. That's why we are organized. That's why we're union to better the lives of our workers and give them a voice in their workplace. Give them better working conditions. So our JATC program that is open to those employers who currently do or are willing to enter into a relationship with us where the workers are union. The Referral Hall system isn't like I said that's open to all employers who are interested. They'll of course we would like to talk to you about the benefits of labor piece etcetera in in considering becoming a union shop. Awesome Ernie. I appreciate it. I'd love to have some more time with you but I think we got to make sure we can get opportunities for Ken Spence of Nextgen to join the conversation and we can always come back to Ernie and ask some questions. But now Ken off to you. Sorry trying to get rid of the pop-up. Thanks Cole. Thanks everyone. So I am Ken Spence. I'm a senior policy advisor at NextGen policy. Our organization is a statewide nonprofit advocacy and policy organization centered around equity and justice. We engage in a array of issue areas. But including digital equity and workforce development so I'm gonna try to give a quick overview of our efforts on the policy front programmatic front and a couple of cool things we have in the pipeline. So our goal, our vision is the future where every Californian has access to affordable, reliable fast Internet along with the necessary skills and devices to access the digital world. Work activities, school coursework job searches social interactions all demand reliable high-speed internet and in facility with the requisite digital skills. So we see digital inequity manifest itself on workforce by limiting the opportunities afforded to those on the wrong side of

digital divide. In terms of the types of lifelong learning opportunities and earning opportunities available to them. For example Black Latino Americans combined hold just 15% of the jobs in the tech sector and minorities are less than 17% of all tech executives. So this is a lack of diversity disparities snd who's being hired who has opportunity to advance within the digital economy directly follows from of the digital inequity experienced by underrepresented communities. So what are we doing. On the policy front there's 3 bills that we're supporting this year that we think are important. The first one is AB41 by Mister Holden. This provides a critical update to the 2006 law which was very well intentioned but it's kind of falling short of his goals of increasing competition lower prices and increasing the quality of broadband and cable services. Second we're supporting AB 414 by Miss Reyes. This is a Digital equity bill of Rights. It declares among other things that it's the State's policy to ensure that all Californians have access to broadband that is reliable affordable sufficiently fast ubiquitously available while providing educational opportunities and supporting digital skills development. Finally, we're supporting AB 1588. And this language is still being finalized. But it's an Affordability bill to require State agencies to use ISPs to provide more affordable service plans. Now the programmatic side we have a couple of programs I wanna discuss. So we partner with Compton College in the LA area in 2022 to launch ConnectCore to address issues around digital equity in the city of LA. This program is centered around ensuring angelinos have fast reliable and affordable internet service. The devices necessary for full access in the digital world. And the digital literacy skills for full economic, societal and civic participation. Key components include an IT help desk, digital literacy workshops and community service events. These pieces are staffed by students that we've trained to be digital navigators, and they will help the community. Folks in the community learn to set up a website perhaps promote their small business on social media, use email, complete ACP applications, etc. Another cool program we are doing is the full stack web developer program. This program is one we support it in partnership as a partnership between Kenyatta Community College and the Cody School Qwaisar Silicon Valley to train students to be full stack web developers. It is a not for credit, no degree required course. It takes about 9 to 12 months to complete and it's really focused on competencies and skills. It's low cost but we further subsidize it, so that students only paid a nominal $99 fee and against to reduce economic barriers to like full diverse participation, and by happiness stance in the first cohort we had several formerly incarcerated students who did extremely well, and many were hired before the even completed the entire program. So we were very excited by those results and we had a second cohort they launched in the fall of last year. So what do we have on tap. We're looking to do in the future. So for the digital navigator program in the next iteration, we're looking to include a strong workforce development component. The navigators will be drawn from underrepresent communities. Pay, to learn and provide navigation services to other community members, and they may be prepared to take the Comp. T. Exam which is an industry standard that will prepare them for entry-level IT helpdesk positions. They pay around $70,000 a year on average, and we'll provide them a pathway career pathway into other jobs in tech. On the full stack web developer program side in the next iteration, we wanna replicate it but have an intentional focus on justice. impacted folks, including youth who are currently incarcerated in juvenile detention facilities. And finally and this is the last piece we're working on public sector apprenticeship. So the public sector at all levels state and local is experiencing similar challenges in recruiting and retaining employees in tech positions. So in partnership with Calbright college which is California's online community college in LA county we are working to establish a registered apprenticeship program to create a pipeline for folks outside of public service to get access to these public service jobs. And while it may seem somewhat tangential to this discussion, our digital navigators and full staff web developer programs are ideal

feeders for this apprenticeship program. And we certainly can imagine making up similar workforce development programs offered by other partners other CBO's in a similar way. So we see this apprenticeship program as helping government solve a problem. While also providing advanced digital skills training to underrepresented groups and ultimately diversifying the digital workforce. So it's like a win win win, and I'll stop there. Awesome Ken. This is a lot of great efforts, a lot of great programs and I am particularly excited myself and when you start talking about the digital navigator programs, that's a huge component of what I've been hearing and talking a lot a lot of different programs about so very excited. I do want to actually call on Deputy Director Scott Adams, of the office of Broadband Digital Literacy, and see kind of your thoughts. And if you have any questions, and included into the conversation, Scott. Yeah, thank you. Cole, appreciate it. And really thank you to our speakers today. Such rich content here. Any really helps to to kind of go back to you know what this state is is doing in this particular group, how it's set up, I mean. So the you know. Obviously, you know the State is leveraging all Federal dollars to achieve broadband for all in California. And with the department of technology, we're focusing on developing that digital equity plan with all of you and the Public Utilities Commission has very specific task is the administering entity for the BEAD program to develop the Five-year Action Plan and like Workforce Development is such a you know overlay for both of those plans. So this is where this working group is so powerful and and meaningful. And you know what's exciting about this is that the first work group session that we had last month was listening to the national digital skills coalition and their findings on the types of digital skills that are required. When we get to digital equity and beyond digital literacy, how do we empower you know California residents to seek employment and life outcomes beyond just the basic interacting with the internet. And I think, love, how this conversation is moving forward, that with all this tremendous investment, that the Federal Government and States are making in broadband is that, how do we ensure that the the investments go towards creating job opportunities for members of the 8 covered populations that are called out in the digital equity, planning NOFO. So you know, covered households, aging Americans, disabled residents, veterans, rural residents, incarcerated or justice involved folks, members of racial and ethnic minority groups and rural residents, and veterans that is so key. Also wanna note that on the PUC side separately the BEAD Nofo adds two others you know women and the LGBTQ community. And so what's really interesting is we continue this conversation is to look at like, how can these partnerships that we're discussing, how can these collaborations, how can these training programs be adjusted to be more accessible to the covered populations and and women and the LGBT community to create a more diverse and dispersed and inclusive you know broadband workforce that's reflective of the state's population. And yeah, I think that's it's more of a rhetorical question for the next session going on. But really think that there's there's so much great work going on out there already by, you know, a lot of the not just the speakers that we heard from, but the folks that are here in this space, and folks that have not yet come to the table that we want to you know continue to hear from them. One minor point I wanted to make is that, given the nature of the work that that we're doing on this we know that there are advocacy groups that are going to be a part of this coalition in this working group and just want to flag, that we know folks have important pieces of legislation at the Federal or at the State level that they're looking at. Want to say this is not the space where we wanna or are able to get into speaking about specific legislation. And that's, you know, part of the requirements of our Federal Grant dollars to do the planning on those. Thank you. Scott, and thank you to all the great presentations. Really appreciate your time sharing and being present at this outcome area working group. And now I really want to turn it to a community discussion and meaning hopefully have a conversation with all of you here, participating, and hopefully, some new

voices that we can add in too. We're gonna have a conversation about workforce and economic development. Next slide you are gonna see the questions right here, and they're very similar to some of the questions that were asked in the pre-survey registration. So these won't be new questions. But we saw a lot of great answers we saw a lot of great answers. We saw a lot of great conversation, and we want to make sure that we can expand, elevate, and allow opportunities for the larger group to to discuss these. And so we can go one by one. We can also open it up. So if you wanna address one over the 3 of these questions, please feel free to use the chat. Please feel free to use your raise your hand feature, and I'm also not not shy to call on people, as I know you're there and you're doing great things, if we do have some silence. So I'd love to see if there's any raised hands, and I do know that there, I don't see a raise hand in the next couple of seconds I might call on someone, cause I know they have to leave early, but I think they have a lot of great things going on, and, Erin Hustings, if you can come off mute before you have to head out that'd be great to kind of hear some of the things that are workforce related at Bitwise if you're open to it. Uh-oh might have a shy group. I know we're not shy. Can you hear me? I am so very sorry. I'm actually I was in the middle of washing my hands. I stepped away from the computer at precisely the wrong moment. No! Thank you and my apologies, but please share some of the things that are going on, and maybe as they relate to one of the 3. But I know you have programs and workforce development programs and things that you've addressed in your community. And I know you have programs in workforce development programs and things that you've addressed in your community and barriers to overcome them. This work is so critical. And we're really excited to see a big conversation going on at the statewide level about how to advance it. As I'm getting my thoughts around how to answer these particular questions. Maybe I can just talk about our program. We are a tech services company and we operate registered apprenticeships in right now we started in Fresno, and we are also in Merced, Bakersfield, and Oakland, and I heard actually Ken talk about some of the really promising, I think, practices that are involved in our our programs as well the sent the key to the to what we do is to provide accessible pathways into the workforce for people. No barriers, no prerequisites, you know, except that that people come to us with a base of knowledge, ready to learn on the job, and a base of literacy and the willingness to a grit, a determination in a community orientation and to make sure that folks can succeed from every background. Support services are critical, not just material supports. Emotional supports are really critical. The people that we work with are terribly underrepresented in the tech field as a whole on the average, and sometimes the hardest thing to overcome is the knowledge that technology that the tech field doesn't look like you, that the digital world doesn't look like you when you look to you know how you use that information, and how you make the most of it in the professional world and as an entrepreneur, even after you've gotten into the tech industry. So we focus on belonging, we're putting people to work on jobs that are going to increase demand for what they're able to do down the road and sorry that was the thing that I wanted to say that I heard Ken say that I think is so important. Learners need the most important thing is experience the ability to say I've I've done this, and to point to the work that you've done. I think that's the thing that employers value the most. And when folks are able to get that experience in ways that increase the digital capacity of the entire community, then they're creating a virtuous cycle that's that's going to make a place for those folks to go into user their skills in the community and a launching pad for everything they're able to do as emerging technologists down the road. Sorry that was kind of really off the cuff, and really disorganized. We look forward to really engaging with this whole process, and. No, I appreciate Erin, and thank you for letting me put you on the cuff. I know we'll you'll be part of this, and I know you'll be you'll be back, and you can have some more opportunities to share even more of the things you're

doing. So thank you for letting me call on you, and I'll slow down for the interpreter. I just went really fast, Wendy. I saw you you had your hand raised. I'm gonna go ahead and ask you to unmute. Wendy can you hear me. Yes, we can. There we go! Okay, great. In response to that first question about workforce development and stuff like that, digital equity barriers. Okay, so my thought on this is that a lot of workforce investment programs I haven't yet seen one that is accessible to either people with physical disabilities or emotional disabilities. Okay. And so a lot of that doesn't look like me or people in my community. And I don't know whether anyone in this audience can, you know, address that. And the other part of it is that 40% of all jobs are now independent contractors through things like Instacart, Uber, and stuff like that, and they're kind of stuck in a place where they're working but they're also a small business, but there's also no support about how to use these platforms to to act like a small business. And and that's kinda coming from the other side of it. So those are 2 barriers that are not connecting, and that's my feedback. No, thank you for sharing Wendy. I think that's really important. And not only that, but I saw that you were asking Gary Bolton of the Fiber Broadband Association about programs for people with disabilities. And so my I'm gonna let Gary opportunity time to kinda mule that over and raise his hand and then add into the comment. And then, for now Winnie, I'm gonna go ahead and ask you to unmute. So you have your hand raised. Hi good afternoon everyone. Can you hear me okay? Great I'm just gonna go into the 3 questions. So I'm Winnie Yu director of programs and administration at Self-Help for the Elderly. We actually have a workforce training program that's funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce development. We have industry training in the hospitality, healthcare, and also in appliance repair, which is one of our pilot training programs. We can see that the many residents of San Francisco are bilingual, and many of the technicians need to also be bilingual to make the communication successful. And I think in the deployment of technology that last mile last block needs to have that connection. So the tech workers that can come in or necessarily to do the work of connectivity should be bilingual. To be able to make the services accessible. So we're looking at this from not just the end user perspective, from from the bilingual workforce perspective based on the populations of those who have the most need in needing the access to the technology. What impacts its language access in training programs to have folks who might have a limited English proficiency at ESL Level 7 and 8 with that language sufficient to meet the qualifications of a fiber tech. I think it would be helpful to better understand what the minimum qualifications are in terms of hard skills and soft skills, and also, what does the anticipated industry projections are for this, you know, labor shortage timeline to meet the labor shortage needs when actually, the project will be deployed and people will be hired that would be helpful to then figure out what are the workforce planning curriculum development, etc., might be need to be in place, and maybe I'm jumping too much ahead. But these are kind of the questions I have, and would be interested to learn more. Thank you. And Winnie just at at the risk of letting you go too soon and understanding your organization. Do you have any programs or resources that you could share that you guys are working on in in this space. Absolutely we, as I said, mentioned, we piloted a very successful appliance repair program for folks who are dislocated workers who were transitioning during the pandemic actually. There were a lot of programs that were closed, suspended, or then later became online only. So many of the very populations that were unable to access the internet unable to have the devices, they could not actually join the training. So we made our training program goes a hybrid. So in person when it was safe and also online to make it safe for folks who did not feel safe coming back into the training physically. So we had to change the trade training model, and folks were actually getting hired and offered gigs before they graduated. So that's a very successful model that we wanna replicate

for other technical career paths that folks might be interested to have especially now with the low unemployment rate of about 2% and shifting labor and economic situation right now. This could be a good opportunity for other folks looking for for a different, a transition to a different career pathway. I would be interested to know what the I think I looked at the office of the BLS for the outlook in terms of the wages what are the anticipated you know wages for the San Francisco Bay Area kind of and see if that can incentivize people to participate, depending on the volume or the need, and when we might need this workforce. Awesome. Thank you, Winnie, and I hope that you can also share some potential resources about the program you shared in the chat. So we can kind of have a record of an easy way to find it. Yes. Scott mind coming on off camera real quick. Yeah, thanks. Cole. I just again think this is such a rich and meaningful conversation and exchange of the very tangible and related work that's been going on in, or that's going on in California and workforce development. And you know, as I mentioned earlier, you know, part of this whole process is to really, methodically take a look at you know, the digital equity barriers. How can we eliminate those to close the digital divide and create equity and and basic skills. So that there's this equitable opportunity for life and career outcomes. And so there's the basic jobs that we've or are not the basic, the just as we learn last working session that almost all jobs you know require basic digital skills. And as we've heard that we want to diversify the the leverage the funding that's allocated for broadband to create a more diverse workforce to the people who build and operate broadband projects that are funded by this and also there's the other you know kind of tech related, you know, jobs in the future. We mentioned some last time around, like medical coding information technology cybersecurity. We mentioned some last summer around like medical coding information technology, cybersecurity you know, that's also a part of this working group, too. And I see that Rida Fayyaz our our graduate student assistant that's supporting this effort from Golden School of Public Policy she had some very related direct experience in the tech community. I know that you wanted to share that Rida. So I wanna call on you. Yeah, as Scott mentioned, I'm supporting this outcome area working group as a graduate student assistant, and I'm pursuing a master's of public policy at Berkeley. But before coming to grad school I worked at Tesla, and later at Apple as a manufacturing mechanical engineer and as a product program manager, and I had the opportunity to work with various types of engineers and non engineers in the field but as a lot of other people know and mentioned there are still a lot of barriers in this space. I was often the only woman in most rooms that I was in in tech, and I can it is a very daunting experience, and I can totally see why it is hard for so many people of color women to get into the into the field. I think across, maybe 50 people that I worked with on a weekly basis there were maybe 3 black folks. So there is definitely massive underrepresentation in the space. And then I did want to say though that while I was in tech for about 7 years I started to see a lot of changes towards the last 2. For example, Google has a program that is very focused on hiring from HBCsU HBUCs. So they literally go to HBCUs and do recruiting events there to make sure that they are actively encouraging and, you know, encouraging diversity. While I was at Apple for I was there for about 4 years in my last year, within our review cycle, so like when we would do performance reviews, there was a new segment that was added for diversity inclusion to ask every employee to talk about how they have contributed to diversity and inclusion. And so all that to say that this is the right time this is a great time to have these targeted programs that encourage tech participation where there is computer science or other kinds of science and engineering or you know, basic coding because there is a movement within tech to change that. And a lot of it is coming from the workers a lot of it is coming from the outside world. But I think during during the pandemic there were some serious steps that were taken as as the movement for diversity inclusion rose so I will leave it there, but happy to talk more. And answer any specific questions.

Rida thank you so much for sharing your perspective, and then also all your work to help this outcome area working group really appreciate your your assistance. And I see that there is a new hand up. I'm go ahead and ask Linda to go ahead and unmute. Linda try now. Got it. It wasn't allowing me to unmute. Thank you, Cole. My name is Linda Thomas, and I'm the Vice President of Community outreach with Cal.net and Cal.net won 2 awards of over 50 million dollars to build last mile high-speed broadband infrastructure in rural rural California from Bakersfield to Redding, and we are in the process of doing that. But we don't have enough workers to do the the work that needs to be done. We build towers. We place technology on towers. And we also roll trucks because you can't just put technology on towers and sign up people and walk away. You have to have broadband IT tech support as well. So we're in the process of working we're right now in the west side of Fresno County. Madera and Tulare and Kern counties. We're in the process of working with Workforce Development Board, Economic Development Commission, large corporations and also community colleges in the area to put together a training for people to build towers, to do technology placement on towers, and especially for broadband IT tech support because I want to remind people that's really really needed because when your internet goes out like mine did when the lightning hit our house 2, 3 days ago, you have to be able to call someone who can fix it. And and these days you know, they try to walk you through, fixing it yourself, and that's a nightmare so I'm just I'm saying that there's there's other people out there who are also training training people in this area. So just wanna let people know about that. Linda, do you have any perspective on kind of what is a barrier for those that might want to work for, or those that are trying to get into the space to work for Cal net. I think one of the barriers is it's a technology field. And so as as Bitwise was saying, you know, people have to have the ability to learn complex technology, because that is that's important. These are these are mid-level jobs for people, these these are, you know, they can earn a living wage and so they have to be able to troubleshoot. They have to be able to solve technological problems. And you have to put that with people that also have the ability and a physical mobility to do this. So it's whether you're laying fiber or whether you're building towers and climbing on towers and placing equipment up there you you know you have to you have to qualify for that physically, because it's extremely rigorous. Right. Thank you Linda. And I think Jim Hayes from Fiber Optics Association might have something to contribute to this conversation. Jim, do you wanna jump in? I just had a few comments that a lot of the things that people are bringing up here are things that the FOA has worked with on the in the last quarter century or so, and we were going back and forth with Ken Spence for example, we used to be part of a program in Long Beach. That was a job core program. And those programs seem to have disappeared. But there's 2 check marks. That's both a youth program and a troubled youth program. And those first programs are very important. They're very easy to set up. They're not particularly difficult to find participation these days, and it's one of those things I wish we could see somebody talk to somebody who's doing more of that. We've got programs running around the country. We've we've got programs running with people and incarcerated in California institutions. And, interestingly enough, one of the problems we have in working with people in that environment is they often don't have access to the internet. So we have actually been printing our online programs and sending them to inmates in California in order to help them learn about fiber optics. We give away textbooks. That's a common thing that we do all the time. In fact, if anybody wants a copy of I think fourteenth textbook, which is called fiber broadband, to learn more about how fiber works, send me an email at jim@foa.org and I'll be happy to share you with our textbooks as part of what we do as a nonprofit. Awesome. Thank you Jim. We'll have a we'll have people send you a chat and an email. They're not your emails in the chat, Hey I'm very happy that I don't have to call you out, Bob, because I

saw your comment, and I'm glad that you raised your hand. So I'm gonna go ahead and ask you to unmute. Bob Burris from RCRC. Alright good to see you Cole, and everybody else. I I thought this was an incredible discussion today, and, you know, learned a lot myself about available programs for workforce development and and yes, Jim, I am gonna send you a request for that book. Forgive me, if this sounds like it's coming from an economist, but that's what I was trained to do. I think that a lot of the discussion today and mind you this, I'm talking in the context of, you know, our group efforts at the end will result in in a plan. So you know, for clarity, sake, you know. One suggestion I might have is to look at a lot of our discussion today is really more on the supply side. You know how do we create an equitable workforce to be able to deliver on this promise of creating more access to broadband. So you're looking at I think that's what the discussion really, you know, you move the dial on today. I think another way to look at it is on the demand side. You know what will that the delivery of abundant broadband, with an emphasis on on equity what will that deliver to workforce development and economic development. And I think there's a way to look at that as well. How can that enliven the ability for businesses to succeed, especially in those areas where there's limited access to broadband or bring more people to the workforce or interested parties to programs like you're discussing today, or even allow small businesses or any type, of business to thrive because it's very difficult in the modern era to do that without access to broadband, and I would even and that's not just small facilities. These are, you know, large employers often need access even redundant access to fiber, to be able to operate, and they simply can't create jobs and invest in certain areas because of a lack of broadband. So I would just make a suggestion that maybe we kind of look at it and kind of 2 frames even though it's very circular. I think they both lead to the improvement of the other, but I just wanted to make that comment. But I just really enjoyed and got a lot out of today's comments and questions and suggestions. No, Bob, I truly appreciate your your perspective on that. This idea of the supply versus the demand side. You know, kind of my history, and for those that don't know, I was the county of Tuolumne Economic Development Director for 2 years during the Covid period, and really the big reason that I'm a component of the state's digital equity and broadband plan is that I came at this from an economic development perspective, that demand side which was, we saw, a clear benefit of pursuing broadband infrastructure, broadband deployment in our county, and how that would elevate and benefit our region. And so I definitely agree that if we also add in economic development as a component of this conversation, we're also talking about workforce cause if we can elevate, create more jobs in communities through economic development that also helps that workforce side of it all. So definitely. I think I can agree that we'll have to do some deeper dives into economic development as it relates to the digital equity plan. So we'll definitely come back to this. Yeah. Oh, go ahead, Scott. I would just point out that there are a very specific workforce development requirements in both digital equity in the BEAD program. So, that's why it's first. But understanding the data relatedness between workforce and economic development that's why we've, you know kind of have this work group under you know that name and umbrella and I'm wondering Cole did you wanna call on our folks at GoBiz. Wonder if they have some thoughts on this. Kaina or Joleah, do you guys want to jump into this conversation? Will give one more second! I'm gonna maybe what I well. I know there's folks 2 folks with hands up. Yeah. We can give Kaina and Joleah a chance to kinda gather their thoughts. I think Joleah has unmuted. Hi! Everyone! Thanks for the opportunity to join the conversation. This has been amazing information shared this far great presentation. I having workforce background also, you know, see the importance of just having going into those under served and unserved communities and training persons. And these areas of just meeting the broadband and fiber optics. So I'm a huge proponent of that. I think that was an awesome presentation, and just looking at other opportunities as

far as the America's job centers, the community colleges to get folks on board with training and fiber optics along with all of the other positions that are within this area of broadband. So I think that that's a area that we need to move into to see a greater impact into our regions. And, you know, continue to see growth in those areas of workforce development and economic development. Awesome. Thank you, Joleah, and we'll definitely have GoBiz join in the conversation again at the future point here. I do want to wrap it up. I see one more hand. We have had the opportunity to share. Jennifer, if you can unmute. Hi! I apologize that I'm driving and not able to be on camera. But can you hear me okay. We can hear you. Jennifer, go ahead. Excellent. Thank you for just a minute to make a little comment from. I work with an national nonprofit organization called NPower, which focuses on forging pathways to tech careers for people from underrepresented populations and underserved communities, and just wanted to stress what we think of as the the human element of technology adoption and that there are a lot of organizations like us out there, providing really valuable workforce trainings. We often times are working in silos, trying to recruit the very populations that this aims to serve into our training programs. And it actually takes people it can take a couple years to begin to even think of themselves as someone who is digitally literate. Never mind, actually entering the tech workforce, and if we, as organizations that are offering this workforce training are working more closely together in sort of that identity formation piece and beginning to recruit people from underserved populations, from you know, re-entering citizens to you know, people under the poverty line. If we are working with closely together to try to transform identity and engage some of the people that are going through our program into serving the others in their community, we have a platform that we're piloting in Baltimore that we're looking to pilot in California, too, which is a community help desk that offers free technical support and digital navigation services to the local community. It's a platform where we can partner with other organizations that are doing other kinds of tech workforce development. And it can employ some of the graduates in apprenticeship apprenticeships, leveraging some of the apprenticeship dollars in California, giving them work experience, while at the same time passing on in a culturally competent way some of the skills that they've just gained and so if you're interested in partnering with NPower on that kind of community helped us getting graduates involved in sort of training up their communities. We'd love to connect with you. No, that's great, Jennifer. I love hearing that information. And we're running out of time. So we're definitely gonna reach out to you to kind of involve and hear more and get some more resources. And at the risk of running out of time. I do want Scott Adams to come back on real briefly to address one group. We've kind of haven't addressed as of yet, which is, Will Micklin put in the chat feature about workforce development programs at it relates to tribes. So I'd love for Deputy Director Scott Adams to address that question. Yeah, thanks, Cole. And Mister Micklin, it's great to see you really thankful for that relationship we have that we have Ewiiaapaayp band of Indians. So the answer is, yes. The part of this whole broader broadband for all effort, and the digital equity and BEAD plan is to focus on connecting these workforce development programs to tribes and maybe I'm being a little centric I think the existing programs there's a lot of work that is being done by a number of folks to do the the tribal boot camps to help create localized and sustainable work forces. I think that's one of the things that we wanna continue as part of this planning process over the next 6 months or so, or what are the needs? How can we take the best of what everyone's doing? And connect the dots and create partnerships that can support developing these. These, you know, you know, diverse and talented and skilled workforces out in the communities where the infrastructure projects are. You know, being deployed and to empower communities to, you know, to also engage in economic development activities that would support their community. So the answer is, Yes, and that is part of the ongoing conversation, and we are very happy to have a

conversation with you about how we can connect you up with some of the folks that are in this session. Thank you. Scott, and thank you all for sharing and not only the chat, but raise your hand, and sharing some verbal voices, and so let's move on. The slide. This is the next kind of steps how to take action as we go forward next slide. We're oh, this is actually, I'm gonna pass the mic over to Racha with broadband equity partnership. Rachna. Thanks. Cole. Hi, everyone! I'm Rachna. Vas. I'm with broadband equity partnership. I work as a principal, and we serve as program advisors and and consultants to the California Department of Technology. I just wanted to touch on a couple of surveys that will be going out and I think many of you have already heard about the 2 surveys that are coming your way. One of them is a survey that targets, organizations, and entities called the DEEM tool, and the other survey is aimed at California Residents called the Digital Equity Public Survey. The public survey is meant to help us best understand the digital equity barriers faced by California households, especially as it relates to broadband accessibility of affordability and adoption. The survey is going to be available in multiple languages, and it will have audio functionality to enable participants to hear the questions being asked in their own language. So that survey is forthcoming, we hope to release it in the coming weeks. More information to follow. So please stay tuned next slide, please. The other survey, and this is very important to the participants here, and very important for us to be able to push this out is called the Digital Equity Ecosystem Mapping tool as we affectionately call it, the DEEM tool. The DEEM tool is now live. Many of you have heard me, and Deputy Director Adam Stokes about it in recent months. We're trying to push this out to all state agencies, nonprofit organizations community based organizations, faith based groups, any entity that leverages technology to help Californians get connected to the services that they need. So please push this out to your partner entities. If you have distribution networks, and with other entities that you work with on a daily, weekly monthly basis, push this out to them and share with them that we have this tool that will help us identify the very important programs and services that they're providing to communities to get communities connected to get communities the training that they need, the skills training that they need, the tools that they need we have an outreach toolkit. And we're actually going to put the links in the chat session right now. So this DEEM tool is available in both English and Spanish, and we encourage you to access this toolkit to roll this out with your partner entities and your distribution networks. You can see here one of the collateral materials that will be included in the outreach toolkit, where you can actually scan the QR code and actually complete the DEEM tool online. So please complete this tool. This is important information. We would love to collect whatever information you have to share on programs that you're offering on services that you deliver on mapping tools that you've collected any information that you think will help the state inform the state digital equity plan. Thank you so much and with that I will pass it back on to Cole. Yeah, thank you. Rachna. And Rachna, just real briefly, the tool is in more than English. Can you share kind of accessibility of the tool? Yes, it's actually built with accessibility, features in mind. It does come in Spanish and English, and we worked with the Department of Rehabilitation to make sure that we incorporated accessibility features to make it user friendly. So, if you have any questions about the Dean tool, if you need any assistance with it, you can be just at DEEM@state.ca.gov. Thank you, Rachna, that way to off the cuff add in some information based on a chat, so appreciate it the next way to get involved join us at the Broadband for All portal, find ways to get connected. We send out consistent emails complete that DEEM tool with organizations. Please share it. When the digital equity survey, for the public goes out, please, you share it, please do it. Please send it to your networks. Continue to participate in these outcome area working groups and in the next few months, starting in April, through June, we'll have local events in, I believe, at the next outcome area working group. We will definitely have more

information on sharing those events next slide, and those local events will be in person not virtual. Gladys, would you like to come off of mute to briefly discuss this information? Let me go ahead and ask you to unmute, Gladys. There we go. Can you hear me? We can hear you. Thanks, Cole. Thanks for everyone. This has been a great conversation as everyone has said. I'll be really quick. This is another opportunity. Give feedback. There are, and I just put this in the chat as well, and you'll have it in the slides when they're distributed. But I am from NTIA. I am the Federal program officer for California, or one of them. There's 2 of us and NTIA is seeking comment on 2 upcoming Nofos, or Notice of funding opportunities, one for the State digital equity capacity grant program, and the other for the competitive digital equity program. They want your input and your community's input on these 2 Nofo funding opportunities, and so that's just another way for you all to provide your feedback. There are questions posed in the Nofo and the you'll see the submission deadline there is on May 1st, and you can submit it online by email and also by regular snail mail. And all of that information is provided there, and also please, if you have any questions, please contact me. My contact information is at the bottom of the slide as well as in the chat. Thanks all. Thank you so much Gladys. Apologies on having it be so brief, and appreciate you joining and being part of this conversation, and sharing some more with the NTIA. Finally to wrap up here are some next steps, and just guidance on kind of what we can expect going forward. We're gonna as a working group, we're gonna start to develop those strategies that align with the state digital equity priorities. We're going to use that information from the public survey and the DEEM tools. We're gonna start to conduct a gap analysis. And then we're gonna finally conduct the research, evaluate assets and develop recommendations. So these are all things that we're starting to do as a group next slide. To inform your ability to plan for what we're gonna be talking about in the next few meetings. In May, we're gonna talk about what digital equity programs that are currently working in your community. So start gathering that information and sharing it, and then also in June, we're going to really kind of heavily discuss the public survey and the DEEM data to really shape these priorities. Next slide. This is our contacts. I do want to verbally share, and it's also in the chat that the next outcome area working group will be on May 17th, at 1.30 to 3. Again, that's in the chat May 17th, 1.30 to 3. And 3 min over I'm happy to stay if there's anything left in the chat but that's what we got for today. Truly appreciate you joining and being a part of the conversation, and really kind of setting the groundwork and the information and the review of the work that's already been done to help inform the digital equity plan. So really thank you. And with that we will stop recording and see you all next time. Thank you to all of our speaker too. Really appreciate you joining and sharing your information.