Workforce and Economic Development Outcome Area Working Group Transcript February 15, 2023

Great, All right. Let's get started. Well, good afternoon, everyone. My name is Anne Nguyen. I'm the engagement and operations manager here with California Department of Technology, Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. It's great to have you all with us, joining us on our first public Outcome Area Working Group on Workforce and Economic Development. And just a few housekeeping items before we begin. Next slide, please. We will have our ASL interpreters spotlighted here on top of the screen. So if you are seeing our presentation in side-by-side mode with the speaker, you'll see our ASL interpreter at the top of your screen. Later on, when we do have the engagement session, you can switch to the side-by-side gallery mode where you can see everyone else on as well. We have closed captioning, and you can turn that on at the bottom of your toolbar with Zoom. And then in the chat we invite you to introduce yourself, your name, pronouns, organization, or title, where you're joining us from, if that's possible. And if you have questions about what we're representing, please feel free to drop that in as well, and our staff will be monitoring it, getting back to you promptly. And lastly, feel free to use your raised hand feature when we have the open discussion. What that will help me do is see that you're on top of my screen and make sure you're not missed. So, with that next slide, please. And for today we have 5 very high level agenda items. Starting with the introduction of our State digital equity planning process. Scott will take us through that. And then we have guest speakers coming from various organizations to have a discussion, building some context about what digital equity is, and why it is important for us to engage in this effort. Next, we will open up the floor for sharing of community and lived experiences. Afterwards, the calls to action, and lastly, next steps and close. So, with that if there's any questions, please let us know. But as we're slightly short on time, we'll go right into the next portion. Scott, take us away. Well. Thank you, Anne, and welcome everyone. We're really excited that you're here with us today. The Workforce and Economic Development Outcome Area Working Group is part of the State digital equity planning process. My name is Scott Adams. I'm the Deputy Director of Broadband and Digital Literacy within the California Department of Technology and our office coordinates the State's Broadband for All program and related initiatives with California Broadband Council members and other entities. Next slide, please. So, as Anh mentioned, we wanted to place both the digital equity plan and the Workforce and Economic Development Outcome Area Working Group in the context of Broadband for All. Broadband for All is the State's overarching program to close the digital divide and foster digital equity throughout the State, and that program is really designed to address the issues of access, affordability, and adoption. And part of that is really, you know, the digital literacy and inclusion to make sure that we are doing all we can to bring all residents of California into the digital space. Next slide, please. So real, quick and evolution of the State's effort. We know that many of you here have long been working in your regions and your communities within your organizations to deploy broadband or promote digital inclusion, and digital equity. You know, just wanted to point out that at the state level since 2010, the coordination that's been going on amongst the State agencies has been through the California Broadband Council, and

that is a 12-member body that consists of 9 State agencies, including the Public Utilities Commission, the Department of Technology, the California Transportation Agency, the Department of Education, the State libraries, etc. The California Emerging Technology fund is the one non-State agency that is a member of that group, and there are also representatives from the State Assembly and the Senate. But what we really want to highlight in this graph is that as a result of the Covid pandemic, Governor Gavin Newsom issued his broadband Executive Order in 2020, and amongst many of the items that was included in that executive order was a task for the California Broadband Council to develop a state Broadband Action plan, which was done in 4 months in the height of the pandemic, with, you know, consultation and collaboration with over 700 entities and I'm sure many of you participated in that process. Following the development of the action plan in 2021 - thanks, to the Legislature and the Governor – the State passed the historic Senate Bill 156, which really created the framework and provided the funding to address a lot of the infrastructure needs to support access and affordability, and there were 6 billion dollars allocated. 3.25 billion to the California Department of Technology to oversee the development of an open-access, middle-mile fiber network throughout the State. We partnered with a Golden State Net to be the third party administrator, and that network will be the construction. Parts of that will be managed by Caltrans. Related to that, the California Public Utilities Commission received over 2 billion dollars to develop last mile grant programs and other programs to complement the California Advanced Service funds and some of the other programs they're doing to support last mile network solutions that could tie back to the middle-mile. And then at the bottom of this chart you see here, in 2022 is a result of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. There are multiple programs that in total allocate 65 billion dollars to states and local entities to continue to deploy broadband and promote digital equity in their states. One thing we'd like to note here, that's the subject of this meeting, the digital equity planning process, is that at the end of last year's legislative session, through Assembly Bill, 2750, the Legislature and the Governor designated the California Department of Technology to seek federal funding and develop a digital equity plan. And that's where we are right now. So next slide, please. Wanted to talk a bit about the digital equity planning process. Don't want to confuse folks, but the digital equity plan is being developed in close coordination with the broadband equity, access, and deployment 5 Year Action Plan, which is being administered and led by the California Public Utilities Commission. We are leveraging the digital equity planning process to support development of both of those plans. And so there are 5 critical components to how we're approaching developing these. The first is that we have developed a Statewide Planning Group that consists of the 10 Broadband Council member entities, and then it's been extended out to include 12 additional state agencies that have a connection to the covered populations and other subject matter expertise that we'll focus on in the digital equity plan. There are the Outcome Area Working Groups. This is one of 6, and we'll kind of go into that in the next slide. You know, the other groups that are going on, in terms of data acquisition, there will be a number of digital equity surveys that you'll hear about that are designed to both seek information from individual residents, and then organizational partners that are working to close the digital divide here in California. The last thing we wanted to mention is, we're really

privileged to have the opportunity to convene through technology via Zoom. But we understand that those engagements are limited, and so the California Department of Technology and the PUC are committed to actually going out into the community and hosting up to 20 local and regional engagement events to get together with folks and partners and residents where they live and work to better understand the needs and digital equity challenges that they face. And then, lastly, there's, you know, ongoing statewide public engagement primarily through the State's Broadband for All portal. Our monthly email updates and number of ad hoc meetings and consultations that come up as needed. Next slide, please. To the Outcome Area Working Groups, wanted to say that this group is not expected to solve the whole issue. But we're convening, you know, subject matter experts and drivers of economic development in the broadband and digital equity space, as one of 6 groups. The other groups are Education, Health, Digital Literacy, Inclusion, Essential services, Accessibility and Civic Engagement, and Tribal Collaboration. And so individually, groups will take on the task of identifying how the digital equity barriers impact outcomes, and how, by achieving digital equity, we can support and empower outcomes for all residents in those areas. Next slide, please. So, this is really important. The Digital Equity Act. We are putting together this Digital Equity Plan based on a grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The Digital Equity Act prioritizes that states make investments or prioritize those investments for 8 covered populations. And so, all the work that we do should be viewed through the lens of these populations. So, individuals living in covered households, aging individuals, incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, those with language barriers, members of racial or ethnic minority groups, and individuals who primarily reside in rural areas. Next slide. And so each of the working groups' objectives is going to be to convene subject matter experts and practitioners, bring all of us together in a community of practice and learning and collaboration, to develop strategies that align with the digital equity priorities through the lens of the covered populations and the very specific objectives that each working group, you know, if it's an outcome we'd like to see is the development of a statewide stakeholder map for each outcome area, the development of an asset inventory of existing programs, plans, and services for each outcome area. So those kind of programs that support workforce development, the promotion and encouragement of participation in the State wide digital equity survey. Once we get those outputs, they conduct a gap analysis for each outcome area and then develop recommendations to the Department of Technology for inclusion in the digital equity plan. And I believe that is the end of my presentation, and I really look forward to the rest of the conversation and thank you for being here. And thank you so much for that, Scott, and welcome back everyone. Next course next slide, please. In this next portion we would like to ask a few members of our and stakeholder groups what is digital equity? And why is it important? We'll have Gladys Palpallatoc talk through NCIA's definition what digital equity and digital inclusion then I'll introduce Abby Snay from the Department of Labor, Peter Pratt from CPUC, and Amanda Bergson-Shilcock from National Skills Coalition. I want to welcome our guests to join us in the chat as well, and share with us how you define digital equity in your work. Thanks, Anh. And thank you, Scott. Good afternoon, everybody. This is our third meeting in 2 days, so it's a lot. But we're excited. The conversations on the chat, and in

the meetings have been wonderful, and my name is Gladys Palpallatoc, as I mentioned, and I am one of 2 federal program officers, FPOs, or State leads for California from the NTIA, again the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Thank you to the CDT team for inviting us to participate today, and particularly Scott and the CPUC for all the good work they've been doing with the teams. It's been amazing to see the evolution and progression that they've made. It's also great to see so many long-time partners here, and get to know new partners that are new to this issue with us. So that's exciting to see. My focus today is, as Anh said, and Scott, is to share the definition of digital equity from NTIA, objectives of the planning process that we are in now, and how it will factor into the state capacity grants, the next phase that we will be entering for the digital equity programs. Digital equity is defined as a condition in which individuals and communities have the information, technology, and capacity that is needed for full participation in society and in 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 the use of affordable information and communication technology, such as the following, 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 of measures to ensure online privacy and cyber security. Digital equity is the goal and digital inclusion is how we get there. CDT was awarded a 4 million dollar State planning grant for one year, beginning December 2022 until November 2023. The planning process objective, as Scott has said, is to develop a State Digital Equity Plan. The planning process we're in now requires engagement of major key stakeholders and the public throughout the state. It is to solicit input and feedback from communities and sectors like yours to develop the State Digital Equity Plan. As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Digital Equity Act and the BEAD program, the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment program, the goal is connecting 100% all Americans in each of your communities. So local and regional participation is a must, and all voices need to be heard in order for us to be successful. The State will need the help of each working group to reach and engage your networks statewide. The planning process will factor into the next phase, as I mentioned, the State capacity grant only entities who complete the planning grant 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 digital inclusion. NTIA anticipates a notice of funding opportunity or NOFO for the state capacity grants by the end of this year. By mid-2024, we anticipate the 5 year capacity implementation will have already begun. That's the end of my quick presentation. Thank you and we look forward to working with each of you. Please reach out to us if you would like more information. I'll hand it back to you, Anh. Thank you. Thank you for that, Gladys. For our next speaker, I would like to welcome Abby Snay, the Deputy Director Secretary for the Future of Work at the Department of Labor. Abby, do you mind going off mute and on camera? There we go, can you hear me? And you can see me, great. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here today. It's been really exciting for me and my colleagues at the Labor Agency to be part of this whole digital equity planning

process. I want to just say a few words today about the Labor Agency, and then how we're thinking about digital equity through a workforce lens, and how we're incorporating digital equity into our workforce programs. Just at a very top level, the labor agency through our 4 departments, and a mix of Federal and State funding, and I should say, with significant support also from the private philanthropic sector, our workforce programs serve over a 170,000 California workers over a year, and all of our planning and all of our program development, solicitation, and evaluation really looks at and emanates from our core vision and values around equity and around job quality. We increasingly see digital skills as a growing component of our training programs, and those include and build on the specific skills to perform jobs. And I'm excited for you to hear what Amanda Bergson-Chilcock will share later. The digital skills are requisites for all jobs. We see such clear linkages between skill and educational levels to wages and earning and know that investments in skilled development, including and often starting with digital skills are one key to building equity in California's economy. I think it's easy to underestimate the demand for digital skills in the workplace. We need digital literacy across all jobs, and even to participate in training through online formats. And we've learned this during the Covid pandemic. As so many programs just had to make a really quick hope pivot to online learning. And we saw how many people could not participate because of access to broadband as well as comfort and fluency and confidence in online learning. It's also easy to overlook the digital literacy needed for certification tests administered online as these are entry points for jobs and careers throughout the economy. I learned last week about some students in the high road construction careers programs throughout the State, and these are short term pre apprenticeship programs preparing students for apprenticeship opportunities in the construction trades really developed and funded and supported through the California Workforce Development Board. Apprenticeship exams, as you may or may not know, are extremely rigorous, and are now administered online. Many students who flock to the trades often don't have the skill and confidence in academic settings, nor to take the exams, even though they're extremely capable in hands on work. So it just really drove home to me how, I have to train in digital literacy and comfort and fluency to remove that one barrier to entry. I want to just give you a few examples of some of our current and coming workforce programs that really address and include digital literacy. Overall, we're working digital literacy into solicitations for funding as a core element of training. The employment training panel, which is one of the departments under the Labor Agency, just released 10 million dollars in one time general fund dollars to expand workforce literacy training in California. These funds will enable employers and training providers to create or expand workforce literacy training in English, math, digital skills, work preparation activities, and technical skills, really targeting immigrants, refugees and other English language learners. Employers and industries with large numbers of English language learners will be able to tap these funds to build more competitive workforces and create opportunities for career advancement in their companies, and this is one of the first times that digital skills have really been called out in the clustering of skills. The workforce services branch under EDD, the Employment Development Department, just released 18 million dollars for accelerated learning for English language learners through partnerships with community colleges and adult schools that integrate English, math, and digital skills training into technical

skills training through team teaching or alternating days of, say, welding with days of English language instruction, math, and digital skills. Students who whose basic skills need to be bolstered, you know, most likely, because they do not have English as a first language, can move much more quickly through training and into jobs. There is another 130 million that will be released this spring through the adult education consortium for integrated education and training in healthcare, where digital skills are essential for nearly all health care jobs. Think about the medical assistant who communicates with patients, via email and charts, patient visits with providers through electronic medical records. Medical assistant roles are expanding in primary care settings into health care coaches who must work with digital patient records to reach out to people with reminders for screening exams, blood sugar monitoring, and other chronic disease management to keep our population healthy. I had mentioned the high road construction careers earlier, and these are building partnerships, and now 13 sites around the State with community colleges for on-ramp programs. Before starting the formal pre apprenticeship training to really bolster skills in English, math, and digital literacy, to reach more deeply into communities for pre apprenticeship, training, and to create greater diversity in construction apprenticeships and in the trades and with billions of Federal infrastructure dollars about to start flowing into California. The labor agency is working closely with CalSTA, with Caltrans, the Energy Commission, and our partners at the Public Utilities Commission to really develop resources for training that will create pipelines into these good jobs in building and highway construction and electrical vehicle, manufacturing and charging stations, new energy development and fiber optics targeting communities who have historically been left behind and building digital skills as a core part of that. Oh, I'm so sorry! Yes, I tend to talk fast, and I'm happy to try to slow down, and I apologize for not paying better attention to the ASL interpreting. We have also been very excited to build a partnership with the State Library system which has made really impressive, significant, and wonderful investments in online learning which are available to anyone in the State with a library card, and we are finding that partnerships between local libraries and our local workforce boards and other resources can really support workers in California who are between jobs, who've been laid off, who are looking to get new jobs and better jobs by giving them access to online learning while they are doing their job searches and perhaps other occupational skills training. So, as I said at the onset, it's just exciting to be here and to start connecting the dots between the existing investments that the labor agency has and our vision around building a skilled workforce for a more equitable California, and to make these connections to the new Federal funds coming through the Digital Equity Act, and through BEAD. And this planning process we are embarking on together is really a golden opportunity to align those funds with the digital equity and digital literacy components of our State's workforce programs. So thank you so much for the opportunity to be here and be part of this exciting work. Thank you, Abby, and thank you for sharing all of the programs. Next, we would like to introduce Peter Pratt, Senior Policy Analyst from CPUC. May I ask you to go off mute and on camera? Thanks so much, Anh. My name is Peter. Prior to this, Anh said, I'm a Senior Policy Analyst here at the Communications Division of the California Public Utilities Commission. Our sincere thanks to our partners at the California Department of Technology, our newer partners at the California Department of Labor, Go-Biz, and

it is a wonderful working relationship here, and less I leave out our lead partners in the current Federal government that Gladys represents. California is blessed with having strong resources devoted to us by the Biden Administration to apply for the Grants, and to administer those grants both on the digital equity side through CDT and on the BEAD side through here at the CPUC. In parallel to the designation by Governor Newsom last summer that Scott of CDT mentioned for the Digital Equity Act portion of the Infrastructure Act. The California Public Utilities Commission was designated by Governor Newsom as the Administration, as the Administer, and the grant writing agency for the BEAD program. The BEAD program is for a single pot of money, if you will, for our State. That next pot of Federal money is solely for last mile infrastructure for broadband networks. The CPUC, from our Commissioners down through staff, is focused on how we take this new money coming from Washington. We don't know what that total amount will be yet. We're working closely with the NTIA and with our other Federal partners at the Federal Communications Commission to get the maximum return for California on or about June 30th, when the NTIA allocates to California and all other States and Territories in our country. In how much in Federal funding we will get under BEAD. For the first time in those of us that have been in public sector financing for broadband networks for a number of years, Congress in this Administration has done something that we, as advocates and program managers, have advocated for, in my case, for several decades, and that is so called adoption or digital equity funding must be closely coordinated with infrastructure funding. And now that is Federal law, so we want to cooperate with CDT, and we're having a great relationship in doing so. But it's also required by Federal law in both the digital equity side of the house and the BEAD side of the house, that we show our planning processes that both Gladys and Scott outlined are completely coordinated. So, therefore, as we look to plan for the spending of BEAD money in California, we must outreach to those same 8 federally designated groups, traditionally underserved by broadband infrastructure deployment by the public and private sector. We must, along with CDT, reach out to those same groups and assess their needs and make sure our planning and our funding administration targets, those federally recognized groups around our State. The topic today, as Abbey mentioned from our great partners at the Department of Labor is workforce development. And we also have an associated need that will continue working with our State partners at GO-Biz on economic development, as this workshop name implies. As we issue our BEAD money out to so called sub grantees. Corporations, counties, municipal governments, nonprofits are all eligible to apply for and stand in line for a competitive process which NTIA has to approve, and which our commissioners are just starting or proceeding to define. We have to condition the award of those funds to our sub-grantees by making sure that each sub-grantee proves to the CPUC, and we in turn prove to the NTIA, that they have effective workforce development plans in place with proven partners in the field to do so. Our primary partners will likely be community colleges, labor organizations, specializing in the telecommunications field. We will eventually build an inventory of the skills and the crafts needed to deploy and continue to operate this tremendous new public investment in new broadband infrastructure across California. Our Commission will open on the 23rd of this month, a proceeding in which we will solicit import from you, agencies, and citizens around California to tell us what we should do for workforce

development. The CPU is a deliberative body. We are governed by 5 commissioners appointed by the governor, and this process of implementing BEAD which we believe our commissioners will vote through on the 23rd of this month. We are opening the process for you, stakeholders around California, to tell us, in economic development and in workforce development, how we should implement these Federal laws. It's not my job or our commissioner's job to immediately tell how we're going to do that because we don't know until we solicit and deliberate on your input, on public input. Again, this process should be concluded. I would suspect by the end of this calendar year and by, we hope, this time next year or the second quarter of next year, we will be announcing our programs to begin disbursement and competitive bidding against this tremendous new tranche of money in from the United States Government layered upon the money already being spent subject to Senate Bill 156 and subject to how we layered on top of our state program called the California Advanced Services Fund. So I'll shut up. That's a lot of ground to cover. Again, we're thrilled and excited to be part of the largest single tranche of Federal and State money in the history of our country to close the digital divide. Please watch our proceeding. Please check out our BEAD program. Just Google CPUC, BEAD, and you'll see our resources there. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you to conquer the digital divide in California. Thank you. And thank you for that, Peter. Our staff will drop the link in the chat, too. We found that before the meeting, so we're happy to share with everyone here. So, one quick note. Folks can ask questions in the chat between speakers as well. You don't have to wait until the very end for Q&A. So, use the chat function as needed. And next, I would like to introduce Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, Senior Fellow at National Skills Coalition. She will furthermore walk us through recent research on employers' demand for digital skills and a consequent impact on the workforce. So take it away, Amanda. Thanks so much, Anh. So, I am the last person standing between you and hearing the public comment from each other. So, I am mindful of that. I will move quickly through these slides. I do want to be a sure folks that the slides for today will be publicly available. So, if I go quickly, pass something that you think is interesting, or if you're scrambling to take a note, don't worry about it. You will be able to go back and refer to these afterwards. I'm Amanda Bergson-Shilcock. I'm a Senior Fellow at the nonprofit, nonpartisan National Skills Coalition. We are a 20-year-old nonprofit organization with a robust presence in California. Next slide. So, I'm going to walk you through today some recent research on the demand for digital skills. My hope is that this will affirm some things that many of you have been seeing in your own work, and perhaps provide some ideas to spark further discussion. Next slide. So, you all know this, but I think it bears repeating. The digital divide is not just about broadband or hardware. It is also very much about skills. And so when we think about the significant new Federal investments that Peter was just talking about, and the States long investments that Abby was talking about, we need to think about this as an investment in workforce development and adult and higher education. Next slide. So, the study that I'm about to share with you is based on 43 million help wanted ads that we analyze from the year 2021. The data was analyzed by National Skills Coalition, and collaboration with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. The opinions and the policy recommendations are strictly those of National Skills Coalition. Next slide. So, in our analysis we looked at whether skills that employers were looking for were

definitely, likely, or not digital. You could see examples of definitely digital on the slide here, including things like Microsoft Excel. Things that are likely digital are things like bookkeeping, where we know that it's possible to do it on pen and paper, but most people today do it using a computer. Next slide. We saw when we compared California to the national data that California employers were more likely than average, and that's what's highlighted in the orange bars on this chart, to require definitely digital skills. And almost exactly as likely as the national average to require a likely digital skill. Next slide. So let's talk about what some of these skills are. People often think about digital skills, and they think, oh, software engineer or cyber security expert and absolutely, those are examples. But did you know that most John Deer tractors and combine harvesters come with computer equipment installed on them? And ag workers increasingly need to be able to use this kind of technology in order to carry out their jobs. Next slide. We also see a demand for digital skills in occupations like firefighting. I was interested to find out recently that the US Department of Interior is training wildland firefighters with digital skills. Next slide. We also see utility industry as being a huge area for digital skills, including the front-line workers that you may see out in your community repairing and replacing utility wires. Next slide. Of course, California has such a huge creative economy, and many of us recognize the kind of public output of that, which are things like movies that we all see. But there's also podcasts and other kinds of audio materials that require significant digital skills to produce. Next slide. Of course, many of us know, pre-Covid, we would go in person to a medical appointment and a receptionist or an administrator would check us in. Now many of those same staff are helping patients navigate telehealth portals. That's a whole new skill set for them to support the patients. Next slide. So, I hope those examples have brought this home, but the next 2 slides give you some numbers to go with it. Employers are looking for people to have technology skills even for jobs that require 0 to 2 years of experience, so very entry level positions. And in the next slide, you'll see, even for jobs that require a high school diploma or an associate's degree. So, there's robust demand for digital skills. Even at these earlier levels of the job market. We can't assume that this is just about people with bachelor's degrees who work in white color jobs. And that's why these investments through the Digital Equity Act are so important. Next slide. Of course, a lot of folks assume. Well, this might be a problem that the retirement calendar will solve. It's just about older workers who don't have digital skills. Younger workers are all digital natives. In fact, that is not true. First of all, it underestimates older workers, many of whom are very tech savvy and adept. And, second of all, it overestimates younger workers, many of whom have fragmented knowledge. Fragmented knowledge is the technical term for if you're comfortable with some digital skills, but not comfortable with others. So, for example, you might be comfortable creating a Tik Tok video or sending a text message to a friend. That does not mean that you're comfortable using electronic medical records software or creating a budget spreadsheet. So, people need opportunities to build from the skills they have, to the skills they need, and they need those opportunities at every stage of their lives and their careers. We hear over and over again from people that the reason they've enrolled in an education program or a training program is because they want to get a job, or they want to get a better job. And so, we know that making sure that people have digital skills that are relevant for the skills employers are looking for is a really

powerful component of helping them get those jobs that they want to get. Next slide. So, this is a complicated slide, but the take home message is simple. People need both foundational and industry-specific skills. Foundational skills are things like, can you download and install a new app on your phone? Are you comfortable using two-factor authentication to sign into a website if you have to? Can you do basic data entry and typing? Industry-specific skills are things like the examples I was just sharing a few minutes ago. And so, we might have thought back in the day, "Oh, if we just send folks to a general Microsoft office class, they'll be good to go. That's good for certain kinds of foundational skills, but it's not sufficient for helping people build the industry-specific skills that we know they need. So, folks need opportunities for both. Next slide. We also looked at the size of business. And so, the smaller businesses that post between 1 and 50 help wanted ads per year have almost as high a demand for digital skills as those that place more than 500 job ads per year. And here's why this matters. If you're a really big employer, you can create your own in-house training program for digital skills. But if you're a small or a mid-size company, you really depend on the public workforce system, the community college system, nonprofit community-based organizations, labor unions, apprenticeships, all of these partners to help train your incumbent workforce and to upskill folks who may be moving into jobs in your company in the future. So, this is really a slide that affirms the importance of these public investments. Next slide. And our research is very definitive on this point: the more digital skills a job requires, the higher it tends to pay. In particular, the hourly median wage for a job that requires no skills goes up by 23%. If you move into a job that requires even one definitely digital skill. And if I showed you the rest of this chart it would go up in a perfect stair step, as you move into jobs that require 3, 5, 7, or even 9 different digital skills. The hourly wage continues to go up. And you might say, "Gosh, Amanda. How many jobs really require 9 different digital skills?" And the answer is 2.1 million. So, there are a lot of jobs in our labor market that require many different digital skills. Next slide. Of course, the higher pay leads to greater economic vitality, because people contribute more in State and Federal tax revenue as they earn more money, and of course, they consume more, and are helping to cycle money through the economy. Next slide. So, we know from our research that California businesses want workers with a strong base of foundational skills, those ones that I was just talking about that are more basic. Next slide. And industry specific. And I've highlighted a few, particularly in high demand in California on this slide. Next slide. So, we know that as this new Digital Equity Act and BEAD money comes into California, there are wonderful opportunities to take the findings that I've just shared, and use them to ensure that there's a good impact. Next slide. The first is pretty simple. Make sure that some of that Digital Equity Act and BEAD funding actually goes to support digital skills. Broadband is vital. Devices are vital, but they are not enough on their own. People do need opportunities to build skills. Next slide. We also recommend to make sure that the State Digital Equity Plan takes full advantage of the Federal guidelines that allow digital equity money to be used for basic applied and advanced digital skills training, so that includes both the foundational and the industry specific skills that I was talking about earlier. Next slide. We recommend investing in industry sector partnerships that bring together multiple employers in the same industry along with education and training partners to create upskilling programs. Next slide. And we recommend

combining our data analysis with census data to help identify gaps for the covered populations under the Digital Equity Act. So, people of color, rural residents, veterans, folks with disabilities, folks with limited English language proficiency. Next slide. We also recommend investing in the support of services that we know are so important to helping people persist in any upskilling program, things like childcare and transportation. So that takes us through my recommendations. I have a couple of final slides here that you'll be able to refer to later. As you look at the slide deck, that link to our full report if you're curious about that, and I provide by contact information. But I'm at time here, and I want to go ahead and turn things back over to Anh. Thanks, Anh. Thanks so much, Amanda. And before we move on to the next portion - Scott, would you like to make a final comment on the panels? Well, thanks, Anh. I think our panelists covered it pretty well, but we can see how critical this working group on workforce and economic development is going to be, as we consider both the investments and the planning processes, that there's the digital literacy component, there's the upskilling, and then there's, you know, anticipating the expected need for, you know, workers to do the infrastructure job planning. So that's a nuance and a particular charge of this working group, and we just welcome you, you know, in the challenge of working with us to help address how we approach that here in the State. Great, and thank you so much. And with that, can we forward to the next few slides? So, you have to prompt up? So, for this next question, we really encourage the audience to go on camera off mute, and please use your hand raised function, so we know which order to call you, but we would love to hear from you. Next slide, please. These questions. So please share what you can about your community meeting is facing in terms of achieving digital equity and its impact on health, education, economic stability workforce development. The first question to consider is, what are the barriers to digital equity your community members face? How did barriers affect workforce and economic development outcomes? And, Tish, if you can help me drop those questions in the chat, too, so folks can answer there as well. Thank you. And if you feel strongly about the second question, please feel free to do so as well. Don't let me limit you. Thanks. I see Krystal Rawls. I'm going to ask you to unmute and go on camera. Hi, Thank you. My name is Krystal Rawls, and I'm with Cal State University, Dominguez Hills, and one of the barriers that I don't hear talked about a lot is really this cultural relationship. And so, right, we talk about access and giving out equipment. And that's very important. And I very much heard about adoption. But there's a cultural piece to adoption where communities that have been systemically disenfranchised are not wholly trusting. And so, I wanted to just really point out that the partnerships with your community partners, those community-based organizations and academic institutions, so not just academic institutions, but us as well, where people trust us because they see us every day, right. These are some really important partnerships, and I feel like it's a really important piece and barrier that's not talked about often enough, that they have to be active members of the community in order to engage trust in systems that have been previously maybe not trusted in certain communities. Thank you for that comment. And we have heard that a lot, too. When CBOs, as well as anchor institutions, our trusted community members, whether it's our survey tools or you're having these dialogues, folks open up and share more. So, thank you for going off mute and on camera for that. Ken. Thanks. I just wanted to kind of emphasize

something that Amanda had brought up, that we've kind of come across, too, is this need for supportive services. I definitely agree that, you know, they both need opportunity to acquire both basic and more advanced digital skills. Sometimes very basic needs become and be a barrier for that. So not only childcare sometimes like a transportation, a bus pass is something they might need. Other times, you know, they may be facing other barriers like a mental health challenge. It seems like very separate, but I think when we take a more holistic approach, very small investments in these supportive services can allow folks to access these types of programs we're trying to create to close this divide, and I think that we have that in mind. We're open to being more broad in our approach to identifying things that make these programs work better for everyone. Thank you, Ken. Then I see Jose. Hi, my name is Jose Mariscal. I work pretty much at an economic development agency in San Francisco. I think I really resonate with the first speaker. She said that there has to be cultural components to this. A lot of the community members that we work with are first generation individuals, or even recent immigrants. A lot of them, they might not feel represented with some of the learning material that's available. So making sure that learning materials also culturally competent, and then it's also value-aligned with individuals, is going to be super important for community members to feel trust, and actually want to participate in these programs. One of the bigger challenges that we see is that even though we teach individuals how to check their emails. It's like, "Oh, yeah, we check our emails. This is what we do every day." But there isn't that culture of "I'm looking for a job. I need to be checking my email every second consistently." So there also needs to be that component of them learning to adapt to the culture of this, and how we use technology in our everyday life. Thank you. Thank you for sharing. And we can definitely go back to one. But I want to introduce our Graduate Student Assistant, Rida Fayyaz, who I asked to read our second question. She was our GSA coming from UC Berkeley, supporting the Economic and Workforce Development group. Hello, everyone! Thank you for the introduction, and as Anh mentioned, my name is Rida Fayyaz and I'm the Graduate Student Assistant supporting this Outcome Area Working Group. I am a Master of Public Policy student at UC Berkeley. And before doing my MPPA I work as an engineer and project manager at Tesla and Apple for 7 years. I'm very excited to be here, and to be a part of this kind of conversation. With that I will go on to our second question, which is that what are the ways you, your organization or your community, succeeded in achieving digital equity. Please share effective strategies or examples. I see Teresa. Please go off mute, if you can, Teresa. SD Futures Foundation: Hi, Teresa, Teresa Valenzuela, with San Diego Future Foundation here in San Diego, California. I don't believe that we have achieved digital equity. I know that we've been working on the digital divide since 1999, when the county of San Diego outsourced our IT services and created our foundation. SD Futures Foundation: But one thing that we are able to do is to partner with nonprofits. In that contract, that initial contract, it was stated that they give back to the community. So part of our programs and services include providing 5 free computers to nonprofits, so that they in turn to go ahead and reach their customers. And then also, too, we're fortunate in that we represent our community in regard to ability, just as far as ethnicity, language, and so we're able to, we're in city heights and in San Diego, and that's one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the county, and as a workforce we represent them. I don't

believe we've reached that digital equity. SD Futures Foundation: However, the strategies that we're using is partnering with other organizations, and that's made a huge difference. I could honestly say that by doing so, we've given out 15 computers to 1500 nonprofits in San Diego County, and as a result we could say that we reached up to a 1 million people here. SD Futures Foundation: So that's pretty impressive numbers. Thank you. That's amazing. Thank you for sharing, Teresa. All right. Anyone else for question number 2? If not, I'll read the third one. But we can always comment back on 1 and 2, if you feel like it. Lastly, please share any reflections you might have about our discussion today so far, through this speakers and any topics we have not mentioned, or digital equity in general. Thank you for facilitating this, it's just such a a fruitful conversation. I want to make sure that the folks here, you know, feel the freedom to not be constrained by the questions we're asking. Really want to defer to your organizational and regional and local knowledge to, you know, to tell us what we're missing. Now, if we're looking at the ultimate goal of digital equity, and creating, you know, an equitable playing field for all residents of California, we really, you know, look to you for guidance on this conversation. I see Rey LaChaux. Hi! Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Ray LaChaux with the City and County of San Francisco. Great conversations, seeing a lot of leaders that I glean from. And just happy to be here. What I really wanted to talk about is the way that we're going to convey pathways into a lot of these technical jobs. And especially with one of my colleagues from San Francisco, talked about cultural competence or cultural congruence. Right? And language. Access is a big part of that because a lot of folks have, you know certain heritage languages that they speak at home, and they're more familiar with those, and we'll be more receptive to messaging in that form. So that, and then also, with this whole, you know, chat GPT, and all this emerging technology, how does that affect the new world of work, and what the future looks like, and what pathways are going to be, you know, sustainable long term? So I just wanted to kind of pose that question and see if that's something that we're thinking about, because that's definitely something that San Francisco is thinking about. Thank you. Thank you, Rey. Really appreciate you bringing that to the table. And I think that that's, you know, part of the focus here is this is the first and 4 groups is really, you know, establishing a community of learning and community of practice, and drawing from the experiences and the successes that folks are doing in their organizations and communities, so really appreciate you sharing that. And I'm also seeing some comments chat, too, from Cecilia. If you don't mind me reading it, or if you're in a place where you can come off mute, I think we can talk about this, too. You mentioned infrastructure seems to be the biggest barriers in Marin County. And I'm glad to hear from Peter. But your question was, how can we make sure that we access these opportunities with upcoming funding. So, it's really good that you had at that in there. It looks like Peters on mute, and I think Cecilia may be on mute, too. I am off mute on. Anh, could you repeat the question? You broke up a little bit on my end. Yeah. The question was, how can we make sure that we access these opportunities with upcoming funding? And then, Cecilia, if you raise your hand that will bump you up to the top of the screen, so I can unmute you. Okay, how may I do this? Raise hand? Okay. Am I supposed to talk now? Yes, we can hear you. Oh, you can. Okay, yeah. I just wanted to say we've had a broadband issue in our county for a long time. In Marin County, and particularly in the low income neighborhoods,

particularly the Canal neighborhood, and I know Scott and I have known each other for a long time, and he knows that issue. And I think that one of the biggest barriers for us in the beginning was not the coalition, the community building, and all the of the things we've been talking about here, the right partners, etc. It really was the infrastructure. You know, it just wasn't, it's that, you know, planned urban planning exactly what Peter said, you know, infrastructure and digital equity just haven't been working together, forever. And so, you find that you have the you have the momentum of the community. But you don't have you don't have the actual, you know, way to go around it in terms of building up that infrastructure. So I would like to see how those funds come down the pike and come into a coalition that's already built up in our county. And we can work, you know, work on it that way. I know we've had communications partners try to come up with what they can. So that's my concern. Anh, I'm happy to start to answer the questions. Cecilia, thank you so much. I cannot just a matter of public ethics. I cannot advise the county of marine. It's a former client of mine when I was in the private sector. But I'm a very familiar with everything the community has done, particularly in the Canal as Scott is, and everything in my opinion that the county in the city is attempting to do, and I would say this, that at the State level communities in urbanized areas that do not have broadband infrastructure, and that we can prove that at the State and Federal level for the first time, in my opinion, you look at Senate Bill 156 here in California, signed by the Governor, supported by and sponsored by Legislative leaders. That, as Scott says, provides for middle-mile funding across our State, which is under way, thanks to CDT's work and the great Middle Mile Advisory Task force, and the folks working there, and, as Scott also says, here at the CPUC, we have a beginning table stakes, if you will, of 2 billion dollars to address both rural and urban areas. SB 156 requires this commission under State law to co-equally spend that tremendous amount of money. I will back up as I just kind of applaud this amount of public sector funding going into this, Cecilia, and the rest of the audience here. We have done cost models here in cooperation with Scott and his group. We've done cost models for what it will cost to build broadband difference infrastructure to all unserved areas of California, including that necessary middle-mile component, and that runs in the vicinity, particularly if we include hardened networks in our wildfire highest threat areas which are, of course, tragically a need that we must address in rural California. That price tag is somewhere around 8 billion dollars. We're constantly refining it, and we're now using Federal money to better refine that. So, SB 156, where it says that we must address these unaddressed urban areas that traditionally state and federal funding doesn't, it tell us to explicitly look at the unserved areas in our cities, in our urban areas of California. Now, I think, Cecilia, this is the opportunity to do that. I would say, here as a an advisor at the CPUC, and as an analyst that understands what's going on in the Canal, and we have folks out here in San Francisco in our major cities. We've talked recently with the Mayor's office in San Jose. We're in touch with Oakland Undivided we're in touch with La Deal right? These are not rural areas, yet we have collectively hundreds of thousands, if not, millions, of population and hundreds of thousands of unserved housing units. We are working nearly around the clock in cooperation with the Federal Communications Commission that tells us where those unserved areas are to bring those forward to make sure that California gets its fair share of funding to address those areas. But at the top line I would I suggest that you

look at SB 156, number 1 and number 2 through your county government, which I know has a strong broadband, ask them what their strategy is to go after State and Federal grantsmanship that may address that area to me as a practitioner in this area. Having done this for a number of years in other States, and here in California, I would say, this is one of the great challenges to close the digital divide in our country today, addressing unserved and underserved areas of our urbanized residents and neighbors. Thanks for the question. Thank you. I see one more hand. Rebecca. Do you mind going off mute and on camera? Can you guys hear me? Okay. One thing that has come to mind, especially with all of the community slash lived experience discussions is, we obviously have a lot of attendees here today, which is awesome and amazing. And I know for me, since I work for the city of Long Beach. I'm trying my best to speak on behalf of the communities and residents that we serve, especially for those that are able to be here as part of this conversation. And I'm also just curious about how else we can engage with community as part of this process. I know this conversation, based on my understanding of the intent, is supposed to hear directly from community members and stuff like that. And I just want to elevate the fact that typically for us, when we do community engagement in Long Beach, we have to do evening times because many of our residents work, and they have to pick up their kids from school. So, I just want to ensure that there'll be other opportunities for us to be able to share insight and input, especially from those that are affected by this. For me, I try my best to share this information with our digital inclusion stakeholder committee, which includes not only local but regional partners, so that way, they could also share that back to the communities that they're working with. So, I just want to ensure that everybody can participate in this process, and can have a voice and just making sure that we're reaching everybody, especially from an equity, language, access, public participation, barrier standpoint. Thank you. Yeah. And I just wanted to say thank you, to Rebecca, for calling that out in that we realized one of the challenges in a state like California that's a 167,000 square miles and almost 40 million people is how to deal with the implemented, inclusive planning process. And so, you know, at the top, when we were outlining our approach to meeting and planning with folks is that you know, beyond the virtual communities that we're doing, we do plan to have the 20 in person sessions around the State, in all the economic regions, you know, kind of overlaying those with the broadband consortium regions. And so, your suggestions about time and accessibility are heard, and thank you for sharing those, and we'll do our best to incorporate those into the local plans. And I think, you know, all pooled between our planning group and our working groups and the meetings, we're going to have 48 different, you know, ways to engage. Actually, they're virtually, in person, and they're going to do all that. And that's exactly the kind of feedback we want to hear from you folks. How can we, you know, improve on how we're doing things as inclusively as we can be. I agree and thank you, Rebecca and Scott, for saying that. We are so excited for all that we're planning to do, and definitely your comment will be considered and incorporated. Next participant, Kaina, can you go off mute and on camera? Well, thank you, all, for joining and for the tremendous amount of information and sharing, and one of the things I just wanted to mention is, you know, we know that there are difficulties and challenges, and sometimes that expressing those are difficult, and sometimes delivering the message in a way that you really want to can sometimes get lost in the

conversation amongst 50 other people. So, we want to make sure that you also understand that, you know, I have a team that is on the ground, the community and place based solutions team, that will be helping to assist on these 20 different events across the State, and they also aim to be your community partners, to talk to you about what challenges and opportunities you guys see. But really, you know, I want to make sure that we know that this is a safe space for dialoguing about how to reach the most people, and how to actually achieve the outcomes that we desire. But should you want a little bit more handholding, would you want to go into a more personalized discussion on some of these challenges and opportunities. I offer up my team to support you guys in your efforts, and to also, you know, aggregate that information to us, and hopefully present it in a way that's palatable to our agency partners and ensures that everybody gets what they need out of this. So just want to thank you all for this, and thank you so much. Kaina, thank you for your partnership in making your team available. Alice, and then, Abby, then we'll try to wrap that up before the next portion. Thank you. Alice. Unmute, please, and on camera. If you can. Can you hear me? Hello. Thank you. So my name is Alice I. I'm the Equity Program Manager for Cultural District 7 in Los Angeles, and I've been working tirelessly to make sure that I'm being part of the agency that has been tasked to build the next middle-mile network. We are building the next digital transportation system, and as such we have to work collaboratively, and I think it's really important to have to establish a list of comprehensive CBOs, local, State and federal partners that we can reach out to and form a coalition in working together. We had a hard time reaching out and getting responses, you know, from all the agencies, and it it's really difficult when you try to get on the same page and not and not, you know, hearing back from all the agencies. It's really hard to continue working. And one of the things that I also wanted to say is, Rebecca and I actually, you know, we have collaborated on multiple on different projects in the equity. And I applaud the work she does in in Long Beach. And like, I said, yeah, let's just let's make it easy to connect with other partners. Thank you. I'd like to follow up on that, Alice. I think that's such a great statement that you made is that that, you know, the digital divide was persistent before the pandemic, and it's even more so now, and that you know what the Department of Technology and the PUC, we're really intentionally working to do, as part of the digital equity plan, maximize each other's work to kind of eliminate duplication into increase efficiency, so that we can get to the ultimate goals here. So really appreciate you making that comment. Thank you. Thanks, Scott. Abby. Do you mind going off me? Yes. Can you hear me? Wonderful. Okay, so my name is Abby, and I am the Chief of the Office of Private Sector NGO Coordination for the Governor's office of Emergency Services. Very big title. I'll be working. I'll be working mostly with this group when it comes to the essential services working group on this plan, but I have a personal interest in economic development and work development. So, I wanted to join this meeting. I just wanted to hop in here and really say thank you to the participants today and to the folks that commented on these 3 questions here. I am a government person, and I try my best to learn and see how to connect with communities. And just from my perspective, I see the digital divide completely different than what you see, the digital divide and the barriers to digital equity. Some of the things that were mentioned make absolute perfect sense, but some it never would have occurred to me. And so, I just wanted to say thank you for your participation. It

has opened my mind, and it has helped me see things a little bit broader, so I just wanted to comment on that, and let you know that how valuable your comments are to the work that we do here on the State level because it takes community organizations, it takes local leaders like yourselves, to tell us these things, and we're here to learn from you. So, I just wanted to say thank you because I learned a lot just from this hour and a half. Thank you, Abby. I would say our team feels the same, and we get a lot of those bumps to being in these meetings and hearing what you all shared, and with that building off of what you said right in order for us to continue learning and finding out what our communities are facing on the ground level. We're hoping to engage all of you in our efforts. So I'm going to get the mic over to Rachna to help us understand how we can all be a part of this effort. Rachna, take it away. Thank you, Anh. Next slide, please. Thanks. So. Hi! Everyone I know. I just got about a couple of minutes. I'm going to zip through this fairly quickly. Essentially, what I am here to ask of you is to share your programs, plans, and services that you're offering throughout California with us, so that we can actually start cataloging what's going on in the field. We need to understand what programs are being offered, to where they're being offered, and to whom they're being offered in order to better grasp what's happening right now with the digital equity ecosystem throughout the State of California. So we've developed a tool called the DEEM tool, or the Digital Equity Ecosystem Mapping tool. And we will be releasing this in the coming weeks to organizations and entities to identify what programs and services you're delivering. So I see a program is offering pre apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs and electrical and communications. I would love to hear about that. I want to know more about that. So, when this tool comes out, tell us more about these programs. We want to know all about it. Same thing with Julian California State Libraries. We'd love to hear about this as well. So, this tool is going to be coming out soon. Please complete it as thoroughly as possible, so that we can actually understand what's working well in the communities that the you serve, what's missing and where resources need to be allocated. Next slide. So who should be filling out this tool? Anybody who leverages technology to provide a program or service should be completing the DEEM tool. So please push this out with your channel partners, push this out to people that you know, push this out with your colleagues and your supervisors, and have them complete this tool so that we can have a representative sampling of what's going on around the State of California. Next slide. So, while we're actually assessing organizations, coalitions, and entities in the States, we also need to assess what's going on in California households. We will be working with California residents to disseminate what's called the California Digital Equity Public Survey. Next slide. We hope to address and understand first, what barriers California residents face at home. So, what are they experiencing for Internet accessibility? What are they experiencing about affordability issues or access to skills training programs. We need to understand this at a very granular level, which is why we hope to disseminate this survey in all of 58 counties and oversample for covered populations. I had several people talk about how we need to be culturally competent. How we are engaging limited English proficiency communities and people with disabilities, so just so you are aware, we are actually going to release this survey in 12 languages with audio included, so that people can hear this language being relate to them in their own customary manner. So, it won't be scripted on screen. It'll actually be

a person speaking with the proper intonation in that language. So, we're trying to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible in how we assess the State, both from the program perspective as well as from the household perspective. So please push this out with your constituents. Share this with the people that you serve on a daily basis, so that we get a good response rate, and it can understand what's going on in the field and at home. Next slide. This will be set up in an online format, the public survey and a phone survey. So if you have any questions about the online survey, I'm actually going to share my email address in the chat. Please just contact us and reach out to us to ask about the survey in terms of releasing it and sharing it with your partner channels, your partner entities. We are trying to push this out to as many people as possible, so get in touch with us if you want help understanding how best to do this with your constituent groups. And with that I'm going to send it over to Anh. I just wanted to make a comment to reinforce what Rachna was just sharing about both the Digital Equity Ecosystem Mapping tool and the online survey is that we would really hope to enroll you in your partnership as entities that are working in this space to complete the DEEM tool. But to also share it with your partner organizations to help get a good scan of what's going on locally and regionally. So, we don't want it to be a prescriptive effort. We want it to be an inclusive effort, and might hope that you would help us spread that message throughout your regions and in communities, and I really appreciate that Jim Hayes, just from the Fiber Broadband Association or the Fiber Optic Association, shared information about the training organizations. Those are the kind of folks that we would hope that you would help us engage with and to participate in the ecosystem mapping. And then, similarly on the online survey, we intend to do a phone survey, but those are expensive and limited in the sample size. And so, the real aim with the online survey is that if we're going to, you know, do a comprehensive needs assessment and look at the barriers of that. The 8 covered populations throughout the 58 counties that we are going to need your assistance to push that out and get as much granular data and information as possible, so that ultimately the State is making informed decisions on the Digital Equity plan, and that, you know, any decisions about how funding is directed is informed by that data. Just want to issue that call to action. And thank you so much. And with that we're right on top of the hour. So I want to make sure that you have our emails, which will be dropped into the chat, as well as the next steps, I think, mentioned multiple times throughout the presentation, but please continue to be a part of our process and help us develop strategies to align with next step priorities, conduct gap analysis, and, do the work that Scott, Rachna, and others have outlined earlier. Next slide, please. So, also in the chat you see a couple of links where you can find more information as we launch them. And the next 3 meetings that we'll have in March, May and June will focus on these topics on here on the slide, so we'll make sure if you found out about this through one of our newsletters, we hope that you consume checking them to see our brought them updates between now and then.