Digital Equity Stakeholder Briefing
September 12, 2025
11:00 a.m. – 12:09 p.m.
Meeting Minutes and Transcript

The Digital Equity Stakeholder Briefing met virtually on Friday, September 12, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. Engagement and Operations Manager Anh Nguyen welcomed attendees and instructed them to introduce themselves in the Zoom Chat box with their name, job title, and affiliated organization.

Housekeeping

Engagement and Operations Manager Anh Nguyen reviewed a few housekeeping items for attendees to participate in the conversation and have the best experience throughout the meeting. ASL interpreters were available throughout the meeting. Closed captioning was provided as an option for attendees throughout the meeting.

Agenda

Ms. Anh Nguyen briefly provided an overview of the Digital Equity Stakeholder Briefing agenda, which included a welcome remark from Deputy Director Scott Adams, Engagement Next Steps by Engagement and Operations Manager, Anh Nguyen, Centralized Services by Broadband Administrative Manager, James Spencer, Existing Funding and Resources by Digital Inclusions Manager Aracely Hernandez, Next Steps and Closing Remarks by Deputy Director Scott Adams. She shared that Broadband Equity Partnership (BEP) Principal Shawn Daugherty will facilitate a poll and discussion after each agenda item.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

Deputy Director Scott Adams of the California Department of Technology (CDT) Office of Broadband & Digital Literacy (OBDL) shared welcome remarks and highlighted the efforts and dedication of Broadband Action Plan, Digital Equity Stakeholders, and provided a path forward. He first provided an overview/closeout of the Digital Equity Act programs since the termination on May 9, 2025, including the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program and Digital Equity Competitive Grant program. He also noted that the NTIA guided closeout was final on September 5th. Mr. Adams shared a chart of Broadband for All to demonstrate California commitment to closing the digital divide precede the Digital Equity Act programs. After, he highlighted goals 1, 2, and 3

from the Broadband for All Action Plan. Deputy Director Adams then closed out his portion of the presentation with a path forward that reinforces the progress of Broadband and Digital Equity efforts within our ecosystem. He emphasized ongoing coordination, collaboration, alignment and encouraged the ecosystem to continue leveraging existing investments and development of new partnerships and efforts aligned in the Broadband Action Plan.

Discussion

BEP Principal, Ms. Shawn Daughtery, moderated the discussion sessions, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A and Chat box. The presenters proceeded to address questions.

There was only one question that came in through the Q&A and Chat box, but no attendees came off of mute to ask questions.

Agenda Item 2 – Engagement

Ms. Anh Nguyen, Engagement and Operations Manager, presented the purpose of future Community of Practice as regular convenings for digital equity stakeholders to share information, best practices, and resources, to foster coordination, collaboration, and alignment related to broadband adoption, devices, digital literacy and skills training, and digital navigation.

Poll & Discussion

Ms. Shawn Daughtery moderated the poll and discussion session, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A and Chat box. The presenters proceeded to address questions.

The poll asked: What topics would be most relevant for a Community of Practice (select all that apply). The poll found interest in the following: 76% Digital Literacy and Skills Training, 54% Artificial Intelligence, 40% Devices, 38% Essential Services, 32% Adoption, 32% Cybersecurity, 5% Other.

There were many questions that came in through the Q&A and Chat box, and seven meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:
- Karla Suomala, San Francisco Tech Council
- Rebecca F. Kauma, County of Los Angeles
- Kami Griffiths, DigitalLIFT (formerly known as Community Tech Network)
- Patrick Messac, #OaklandUndivided
- Arlene Krebs, Loaves, Fishes and Computers

- Jonathan Alvarado, CWA D9 Apprenticeship and Training Trust Fund
- Ron Suarez, Broadband Institute Foundation, DBA Community Internet

Agenda Item 3 – Centralized Services

Mr. James Spencer, Broadband Administrative Manager, presented on centralized services, which include the following: Digital literacy skills and training platform, Digital navigation training, educational and workforce development, statewide DE survey, DEEM survey/DE resource finder 2.0, and translated materials.

Discussion

Ms. Shawn Daughtery moderated the poll and discussion session, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A and Chat box. The presenters proceeded to address questions.

The poll asked: Which of the following resources would be most useful for your organization (select all that apply). The poll found interest in the following: 56% Digital Literacy Skills & Training, 53% Education & Workforce Dev, 39% Digital Navigation Training, 31% Translated Materials, 22% DEEM Survey / DE Resource Finder 2.0, 18% Statewide DE Survey, 24% All of the Above, 10% Other.

There were many questions that came in through the Q&A and Chat box, and three meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:
- Kami Griffiths, DigitalLIFT (formerly known as Community Tech Network)
- Patrick Messac, #OaklandUndivided
- Lindsey Skolnik, CADE

Agenda Item 4 – Existing Digital Equity Resources

Ms. Aracely Hernandez, Digital Inclusion Manager at CDT's Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, began her presentation highlighting various CPUC programs, such as the CASF Broadband Adoption account, CASF Broadband Public Housing Account, and CASF Tribal Technical Assistance. She acknowledged that CPUC had a ruling on the LifeLine Home Broadband Pilot Program. She also noted the Broadband for All Portal offers resources including the Affordable Service Finder Tool, Broadband Funding Finder Tool, and Digital Equity Resource Finder Tool.

Discussion

Ms. Shawn Daughtery moderated the discussion session, starting with those with their hands raised on Zoom, and then those received via the Q&A and Chat box. The presenters proceeded to address questions.

There were many questions that came in through the Q&A and Chat box, and two meeting attendees raised their hands and came off mute to ask questions:
- Eduardo Gonzalez, Rural Prosperity Center
- Cinthia Diaz, #OaklandUndivided

Agenda Item 5 – Next Steps & Close

Deputy Director Scott Adams provided next steps by announcing the upcoming California Broadband Council on October 24 and the next Digital Equity Stakeholder Briefing later this yar. After that, Mr. Adams highlighted how to subscribe to Broadband for All email updates and how to find Broadband for All portal and team's contact information.

No attendees came off mute to ask questions, and there were no questions from the Q&A Box.

Deputy Director Scott Adams thanked attendees and presenters for their participation and engagement throughout the briefing. The briefing adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

(The recording and presentation slides from the meeting will be posted on Broadband for All portal.)

Transcript

Hi, good morning, everyone. Good morning, and welcome to our September 12th Digital Equity Stakeholder Briefing. On behalf of the State of California and the Department of Technology, we thank you for being here. Great to see familiar faces again. We will begin the meeting shortly. Please use the chat box to share your name, job title, and affiliated organizations as more folks are coming in. And before we begin, a few housekeeping items. Next slide. This meeting is being recorded. We will be posting the recording of this meeting, slides, and transcript to the Broadband for All Portal. Presenters, please cue Ricki to advance your slides. Please select side-by-side speaker mode for the best viewing experience when slides are shared, and for best visibility of our ASL interpreters. Closed captioning is available. Please select Closed Caption on your toolbar and select Show Subtitle. Please note that there is time allocated at

the end of each agenda item for a poll and discussion. Please use the Q&A box to type in your questions related to that portion of the agenda while the presenter is presenting. Please use the raise hand icon on Zoom, or star 9 if you're calling in by phone. Our team will request that you come off mute or video. Feel free to join us on your mic and move your video at that time. Lastly, we will temporarily turn off the chat while the presenters are speaking so that no questions are lost in the chat. Chat will be available when prompted. So, next slide. And today's agenda, brief, but plenty to talk through. We will begin with a welcome remark from CDT Deputy Director of Broadband and Digital Literacy, Scott Adams. I will share a bit about our engagement plans. Broadband Administrative Manager James Spencer will provide a high-level overview of centralized services. Digital Inclusion Manager Aracely Hernandez will share existing funding and resources. Scott will close today's convening with a few next steps. After each agenda portion, from BEP, Program Director Shawn Daugherty will facilitate a short poll and discussion. So, with that, I would like to introduce Deputy Director Scott Adams.

Hi, thank you, Anh and team, for all your hard work in putting this together, and thank you, California Digital Equity ecosystem partners, for all of your partnership over the last couple years and moving forward. We know that the last couple months have been disappointing in some cases with the federal policy changes, and that there's been a lot of fluidity and ambiguity in this space. So part of our goal today is to really get our ecosystem partners together, share an update about the status of the Digital Equity Act Programs, but then really looking ahead to, at least in the short term, share some information about existing funding and resources, and then really wanted to engage with you all to get your feedback on how CDT and OBDL can continue to best serve ecosystem partners, because there's a lot of great stuff going on in Digital Equity and Broadband for All here in the state. So, could we please advance the next slide? I think the big thing from some of the pre-registration questions that were asked is the status of the Digital Equity Act Programs. I think everyone knows that on May 9th, the federal administration terminated the Digital Equity Program. So nationwide, the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, which was terminated for all states, including California, a $70 million capacity grant. Our CalDEP Program is still suspended till further notice. Again, very empathetic to all of our ecosystem partners who coordinated with us and submitted some really strong Competitive Grant applications. Those are also terminated, and that's a big number there, 13 California-serving entities or coalitions, and $130 million.

The update we can assure you is that with the new guidance from the NTIA, the closeout deadline on those grants was September 5th, so I wanted to let you know that CDT did submit our final closeout documents for the grant, as asked, and that while we don't agree with the termination, we complied with the rules that were outlined. So, that's where we're at with the Digital Equity Act Programs. Can we go to the next slide? The one thing that we really wanted to share with folks here is, as disappointing as it is about the Digital Equity Act Programs, the state's Broadband for All Program and initiative predated those and is actually quite strong. I know all of you have seen this from the work of the Broadband Council to Governor Newsom's executive order to the Broadband Action Plan in 2020, and then the tremendous amount of resources that the state has invested in both the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative and CPUC Last-mile programs. There's still a lot going on and a huge commitment to Broadband for All and Digital Equity. I would also point out that CPUC has a suite of last-mile programs that are legacy programs that existed before SB156. So, we're going to highlight some of those for you all a little later. Next slide, please. We wanted to reinforce for folks that the goals that were outlined for Broadband for All and the Action Plan, and that were outlined in the Digital Equity Plan, those are now kind of interdependent and interwoven and still exist. The first goal is that all Californians have high-performance broadband available at schools, homes, libraries, and businesses; that all Californians have access to affordable broadband and necessary devices; and that all Californians can access training and support to enable digital inclusion. None of those goals—or our focus or commitment to those—have changed with the termination of the Digital Equity Act Programs. In fact, we're as committed as we have been before. We're not really going to dive into it much, but on Goal 1, great progress is being made on the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative in terms of access and availability of infrastructure, and our partners over at the PUC are doing one heck of a job with their CASF Infrastructure Grants and on the Federal Funding Account, and they're working their way through the BEAD guidelines. So, I think really our partners here can hopefully continue to focus on Goals 2 and 3 and continue to make a huge difference on the digital divide here in California. Can we go to the next slide, please? So, the path forward—hopefully the theme has resonated with you—is that we just wanted to reiterate that the state, the Department of Technology, the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, and the numerous partners are as committed to Broadband for All and Digital Equity as we have been before. As we move further, I think we can all and should acknowledge how robust our ecosystem is and how strong our collective network of partners are. It was strong

before the pandemic and the BEAD and Digital Equity planning begun. It's now grown to over 12,000 entities. We would ask that we all continue to lean in and work together and coordinate and collaborate, and to continue to align efforts to conserve and share resources and have an impact at scale. Really, what we're seeking to do and encourage other folks to do is to really focus on leveraging the existing investments and efforts that are out there and then continue to leverage existing and develop new partnerships. There's new folks that can come together to the table, like the private sector and philanthropy. And that's what we're gonna do, and that's what we hope y'all will continue to do, hopefully in partnership with us. That's really it for me now. I think we can take the slides down. I'm happy to answer any questions that folks might have on what I've shared with you before we move on to the rest of the agenda.

Thanks, Scott. So, yeah, if anybody has any questions about what Scott just presented on, feel free to add them to the Question and Answer box. If you would like to raise your hand, we can unmute you as well, and you can ask Scott your question directly. Looks like the chat has been reopened, so lots of opportunities to engage in this conversation, and just acknowledging we're just getting started for the morning. Alright, so, Jake Levy asks in the chat, what current funding opportunities are there that can provide connectivity and devices to vulnerable Californians? Scott, I don't know if you want to address that now, or I know funding opportunities is something we cover a little bit later on.

Yeah, I think, Jake, it's a great question. What I would say is that my colleague, Aracely Hernandez, is going to go over the current funding opportunities later on, and particularly we're excited about some work that's being done on devices that we're hoping to talk a little bit more about during the California Broadband Council meeting that's going to be on October 24th.

I'm not seeing any more questions in the chat or the Q&A. So, I think we can maybe move on to our next section, and for that, I'm going to turn it over to OBDL's Engagement and Operations Manager, Anh Nguyen.

Hi, good morning again, everyone. Thanks for the introduction, Shawn. Let me just take it away. Next slide, please. So, as Scott mentioned earlier, it's very important to acknowledge that we here at the Office of Broadband Digital Literacy have built a very strong and collective network of stakeholders and have partnered with you since the pre-planning period, and so we're hoping to continue doing that by leaning in and aligning our efforts. One of the ways we

hope to do that is through Community of Practice. The purpose of this is to have regular convenings for Digital Equity stakeholders to share information, best practices, and resources to foster coordination, collaboration, and alignment related to broadband adoption, devices, digital literacy, and skills and training, and digital navigation. So, with that all, briefly conclude my presentation and turn the mic over to Shawn to facilitate a very short poll and discussion so that you can let us know your interests in which Community of Practice may be most relevant to your organization.

Great. Thanks, Anh. Yes, so in just a moment, the slides are going to come down, and a poll is going to pop up on the top of your screen. We're really curious about what kind of Community of Practice topic you would find most relevant. We give a bunch of options, such as adoption, devices, digital literacy and training, artificial intelligence or AI, cybersecurity, always an issue of importance to us, essential services, and so we're just gonna leave this up there for a little bit to get kind of a reasonable quorum of answers. We'll keep that going until it kind of starts to slow down. Great engagement, thank you, everybody. All right. Since this is the first one, I'll let this go a little bit longer. We're gonna maybe have another poll or two today. I love the real-time reactions. Okay, maybe give it another 5 seconds more or so. Okay. Alright. I think we've got a fairly good percentage there, so, Luke, are you able to end our poll and maybe share the results? Luke, are you able to share the results on the screen? Sorry.

They should be shared for everyone to see.

Okay, great. Sorry about that. Alright, looking like digital literacy and skills training was really having the most interest at 76%. Then we've got some artificial intelligence. Yes, absolutely, that is a big topic of conversation. Then devices, closely followed by essential services, and then kind of rounding out the pack is cybersecurity and adoption, both at 32% each. Great! Thank you so much for participating in this. We're gonna take all of this information back as we continue to think critically about engaging with the stakeholders in the coming weeks and months. Alright. And then, also going to open it back up for questions and answers with regards to the community practice. I see Scott's come on camera, and so, again, the chat has been opened. You can put questions in the Q&A box; you can raise your hand as well. Great. And I will acknowledge that Ron Suarez did put a comment in there asking specifically about Bay Area in-person meetings, so I don't know if there's other individuals from that area who want to respond to that if they know of any events

specifically. Estefania from Long Beach has asked, will these meetings be in person? That's a great question. Did Scott freeze, maybe, by chance? I think those are all ideas that we're taking into consideration if there's interest in in-person meetings. Great. And Kari, I'm going to ask you to unmute.

Oh, I just saw that Karla raised her hand, so I'm just gonna say what Karla's about to say, so I yield the floor to Karla.

Then I will unmute.

Hi, everybody!

Okay, great.

My name is Karla Suomala, and I'm with the San Francisco Tech Council, and I was actually just in the process of putting it in the chat. We're hosting the second annual Bay Area Digital Inclusion Summit on October 30th. And it's, I say Bay Area, but if you're anywhere near, please feel free to join us. I will put the information and registration in the chat. And we're looking at a lot of the issues that we were just talking about in that poll, and so I'll put the link, take a look. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact me. Looking forward to seeing many of you.

Thanks, Karla.

Yeah, Shawn and Anh and folks. I'm sorry my internet keeps breaking up, but I don't know. Did we ask? It looked like there were some significant responses to the different groupings that we put up there, but some people said other. I'm wondering, did we have a chance to ask folks who might have said other? We don't assume we know all the answers, and really, we value hearing from you. So, if there are folks who put other and you're willing to share, we'd love to hear from you what some of those ideas might be, either by raising your hand and talking it through, or putting it in the chat.

Yeah, through our poll, it looks like at least 5 individuals marked other, so we'd love to hear from them.

Looks like Rebecca's got a hand raised.

Alright, good morning, can you guys hear me okay?

Yes.

Awesome, thank you. I hope you guys are all doing well. Rebecca Kauma with the County of Los Angeles, Director of Digital Equity. So, I'm one of the people that did mark other, and one of the things that I wanted to uplift, and this is something that we're looking here at in Los Angeles County, is making sure that we're aligning Digital Equity with other issue areas. So, I think it would be helpful going back to the California Digital Equity Plan and how they had those priority areas within there, I think it would be helpful for us to have Communities of Practice that center around that. So, for example, we recently applied for a grant that's focused on workforce development, and some of our partners that joined us in that grant are on this call here today. So I think perhaps maybe having Communities of Practice that center around economic development, workforce development, healthcare, because what we're finding is that there are a lot of funding sources that support those issue areas where we could easily align and tie in Digital Equity as part of that, so we're trying to be very intentional with making sure that as we're advancing Digital Equity, we're also aligning with other issue areas to be able to have that collective impact with the work that we're doing. So, I would like to uplift workforce development and economic development, as well as healthcare as two communities of practice, and I also want to provide LA County as an opportunity and a space for us to be able to convene in person. We already have convenings here, so if you guys are looking to find partners where you guys can convene, I'm offering that, through LA County, and providing our capacity in that way. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Rebecca. And, I know, on two fronts, I just want to respond that we really appreciate your feedback on not forgetting about the outcome areas at all, just knowing how the other issues overlap, but potentially looking at the idea of broadband funding on healthcare. We've been looking at the, out of the Big Beautiful Bill, rural healthcare funding that potentially has some opportunities for technology and other funding. So that's a great idea. We appreciate that. And on the invitation to do in-person convening, we've got a little bit of a tough budget year, and travel is kind of a challenge, but within the Department of Technology, our director is really interested in us getting back out into the community. So, both, thank you for that offer, and any other folks, we'll try to see what we can do to get back out there, because it's really valuable to us.

Absolutely. Alright, so I'm gonna have Kami come off mute, but while she does, I'm gonna.

Hi!

Great. Go ahead, Kami.

Thank you. I also marked other. Kami Griffiths, Founding Executive Director of DigitalLIFT. We once were called Community Tech Network. The other represents the desire to connect with agencies who are doing capacity building and train-the-trainer. We've been doing more of that over the last 3 to 4 years, and I want to learn from the other capacity builders out there what's working, what's not working, where the gaps are, and so that we're not overlapping as far as creating new curriculum or other things that could support the wider network.

Thanks, Kami. I think that's a really great suggestion and appreciate that capacity. One of the things we were looking at in our poll is not just capacity, but digital navigation training within organizations, so really appreciate that, and we will integrate that into Communities of Practice moving forward. Thank you.

Thanks.

Great. And digital navigator training is something that Eduardo highlighted in the chat, too, so great to hear that we're hearing that from many people. Alright, Patrick Messac, you have your hand up next, so I'm gonna unmute. You should be able to speak shortly.

Hey, y'all, great to see everyone. It's been too long since we've all been together. I know it's a super challenging time, so thanks for convening us, Scott, and for helping to guide us through this kind of really uncertain time. Just a quick note, and then my other comment. I really appreciate this format where we can see each other's faces, engage in the chat. I know that it doesn't come without its risks, so I just ask that we all kind of find a way to step up, step back, so that we can continue to have spaces like this that aren't in the webinar format, where we're all just kind of super siloed. So I just really want to encourage us to preserve this space. And the other comment for me was just, I didn't see broadband affordability. I think oftentimes it's kind of clustered under adoption, but I think adoption kind of connotes that the main issue is that folks don't know that the internet's important, and we know that overwhelmingly, what keeps people offline is not that they don't value the internet, need the internet, want the internet, but the cost is prohibitive. We saw that in the State Digital Equity Survey. We regularly see that the average broadband cost for a household is around $90 a month, and I think there are some potentially really exciting opportunities coming down the pike, the CPUC Lifeline Broadband Pilot,

amongst others. So, yeah, really excited about diving deeper on this specific issue of broadband affordability. It is the number one barrier to getting folks connected online and just want to thank you again for putting together this convening, Scott, and the rest of the CDT team.

Patrick, thank you very much. I want to first, on the format, during the planning process, it was a lot of webinar format, it was very presentation heavy. What we heard during the post-Digital Equity Plan submission and moving forward is that we're 100% committed to keeping this format, where we talk less, we listen, and we highlight others. So, I think looking at Community of Practices, the team had been looking at really highlighting and uplifting others and featuring them as the main spokespeople there. Appreciate that. Per your comment on affordability, yeah, we're not losing affordability. I think sometimes adoption and affordability get conflated because cost can be such a barrier to adoption, but really appreciate you to be sensitive to us, that by conflating them together, we sometimes lose that 61% of the people in California said that affordability is the main barrier to getting connected. So, thank you very much.

Great. I'm actually going to have Arlene speak next. I noticed that a little bit ago she had come on camera and had her hand raised, so go ahead, Arlene.

Thank you, and hello, everyone. I believe the area of collaboration is not only among ourselves, but collaboration among the major private funding agencies in this state. There is, they need to understand the leaders of our major foundations, as well as our local community foundations, need to understand the gravity of the cuts in public funding. And the issues that low-income and marginalized communities and families face. And so the efforts, I believe, could be led by the Department of Technology, since you have the data, all of the issues that we've participated in over the years, and now is the time to bring these key funding agency leaders, the heads of foundations and community foundations, to understand what the depth and breadth of our work has been. The success of our work, and how we have to continue to move forward. So, my suggestion is that collaboration occur within communities and counties. But that leadership comes from the top to bring Digital Equity Summit, not so much only for us, but for them. And perhaps California can once again take the lead on how the private and public sectors come together to address this need for participation in, dare I say it, our dwindling democracy and to revive it.

Well, thanks, Arlene. Drop the mic. That meaning we really appreciate that, and I think it serves as validation of some of our thinking. We kind of, crave note, that

expanding these partnerships is part of this, but we agree and looking at ways that we can bring larger funders to the table, and to highlight and underscore not just the great work, but the impact that the loss of federal funding has made there. So, thank you so much for your comments and your partnership.

It's nice to see you.

Good to see you, too.

All right, we're gonna have Jonathan and then Ron, and then I think we'll move on to the next section. So, Jonathan, you should be unmuted in a moment. Go ahead.

Awesome. Okay, Jonathan Alvarado, CWA Apprenticeship Program. We train telecommunications tech and fiber tech, to get certified as a journeyman. We are seeing some really big issues as far as the Public Works Projects, specifically, just low-road hiring from private companies, and what we're seeing now is it's so difficult for apprenticeship programs, and my, I'm just right now, just speaking for me, but I know, for everybody, the Public Works Website, which is the only and primary source of where we can get information about the Public Works Projects going on, and the contractors assigned to them, is so difficult to navigate. You've got to filter one word at a time, download 900,000, project information database, and then filter from that. And I've painstakingly gone through it and filtered it to the companies in certain areas and targeted them. And what I'm finding from that research is walking into the subcontractor, right, so contractor wins it, they subcontract, they subcontract, they subcontract. 7 layers down is the most that I've seen, but it's usually around 3 to 5. By the time it gets to the fifth subcontractor, they don't even know it's a public works project. They're paying their guys whatever they want, they're getting contractors from out of the state to come in, and I show up talking about compliance, talking about them breaking the laws of doing these public works projects. I've been run out. Things thrown at me, it gets really bad, really ugly, really fast. But I drop off this information. And I'm collecting data on the companies that are not following. I take it up with whoever subcontracted them into the first one. I take it up to the awardees and try to get information. It's very difficult to get any information at all. There's no teeth to me asking for it, other than, hey, I can report you to the CPUC, and from the apprenticeship standpoint, there has to be apprentices for one-fifth of a journeyman's hours, and so I can report to the DAS saying, these folks aren't doing, following the rules. But it's getting so difficult, and my team is pretty small, a team of seven, but trying to run compliance checks for all of the

Public Works Projects in California, and this is only for communications and fiber optics projects, right? And low voltage in general. The other.

Jonathan, what I would love to do is, and I'm sorry to cut you off, and this faces mostly on the non-deployment issues, but the workforce development concerns that you're highlighting, and the other things are really important to us. I'll put my email in the chat, and if possible, would love to kind of have a follow-up meeting with you and see if we can address this issue with the right folks. Would that be okay with you?

That's fine, and so I'll move just from one side to the other and just leave you guys with this. We're seeing an influx of private fund companies come in and offer open access fibers, what they call it, where they run the fiber and then lease it to companies that will eventually give it to those residents, and they do exactly the same thing. They come in, hire low road, and then leave and sell that equipment to AT&T and Spectrum and all these companies, and what we're seeing is those standards of California standards aren't met. And then the folks that worked on it are not from the area, they're usually out-of-state contractors, or out-of-the-area contractors, so it doesn't benefit the community. And then once they all leave, there are no trained technicians in that area where they just put it in, so when anything goes wrong with that. AT&T purchased it, but… or purchased the leasing rights, but it belongs to the city, so if anything goes wrong with that, the city has to pay for it, and they don't have any contract with any of these folks, so when they reach out, they reach out to CWA, and we have to go in and see this, and we don't want to touch it because it wasn't deployed properly in the first place. So, just a heads up across California, open access is beautiful, the funds are amazing, make sure you're reading the fine lines, make sure there's a maintenance part, make sure there's a resident benefit part. There's gotta be education for elected officials, city councils, town hall meetings about, like, when you get this info, please reach out to the folks who kind of do the regulation of, compliance checks, regulation of all these things going in.

Thanks a lot, Jonathan. I put my email in the chat for you, would love to have a follow-up conversation with you about that, okay?

Got it, thank you, Scott.

Thank you so much.

Alright, Ron, you've patiently waited. And now you can unmute.

Oh, I started clicking on mute. it just said I could unmute.

You're good.

And I'm a quadriplegic after a serious spine cord injury, so I'm a little slow with my finger. Anyhow. First, it's really exciting to be a part of this. We recently just opened an office here in Alameda to be in the San Francisco Bay Area, and I love the fact that you get so much participation from people in these meetings. Too often, I hear from people, supposedly well-meaning, that they just want to talk to people, and they don't want to listen. I originally, well, just a tiny bit of background. Cut me off if I go too long. A tiny bit of background. We just moved out here to open an office in the Bay Area. I was born in New York City in Spanish Harlem but then went to the University of Michigan in 1976, where I got a PhD in psychology, and I did a postdoc in cognitive neuroscience. So, I started learning artificial intelligence in 1976, and was, like, in and out of that. I was counseled as I was growing up, my father only made it as far as the 8th grade, was counseled that minorities need to get an education to get ahead, but no one ever warned me to not get too much education. So, after I did a 4-year postdoctoral fellowship in cognitive neuroscience in the middle of a divorce, I started looking for jobs as a programmer in Michigan, and no one would hire me because I was overqualified. So, I went into business in the late 80s, never having thought that I would do something in business. I was the co-founder of a worker-owned cooperative, and what I'm really interested in doing for workforce development and helping people to collaborate is helping people to start their own businesses. I think that we need government grants, and we need public works and all kinds of things, to happen, but I was back in New York City for 10 years until 2019, and I was a member of NYC Mesh. The largest, the largest mesh network in the United States, second largest on the planet. The largest is Guifi.net, in the Catalan region of Spain, where all the anarchists were in the 1930s. And I had two great uncles that fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War, so I have a special place in my heart for that, but too often I hear people, like the ACP program, give money to poor people so they can give it to the big corporations who helped create the digital divide, instead of helping communities to own their own internet infrastructure. And we're getting started with a develop tokenizing learning process to create a co-tutoring model, so we'll train the people who then train others. So that's where, any of you presenters, any of you people who are listening in, I put my links in there. We're, as you can see above my head, Communityinter.net. We're a 501c3. And we've started Communityagents.ai, and we're interested in also looking at for-profit

spin-offs. I have no problem with a for-profit corporation as long as they're ethical. We have two basic, three basic rules. No lying, no cheating, and no Nazis.

Yeah. Hey, Ron. Thank you so much. Really appreciate it. Interesting story and interesting thing that you're up to. We put our email in the chat, and it's going to be here. If you'd like to talk further about some of what you're doing, wanted to say we've got some other important information we want to share with folks, and we want to kind of be mindful of the time. Is there anything else that you wanted to share with us, and just, congratulations on moving up here in your next endeavor. Thank you.

Great. Okay, so I'm going to spend some time going through the chat to make sure we didn't miss anything, but I am also going to turn it over to James Spencer, OBDL's Broadband Administrative Manager. So. There you go, James.

Thank you, Shawn. And thank you, everybody. As Shawn said, my name is James Spencer, and I am the Administrative Manager of the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. We specifically appreciate your partnership and engagement and thank you for joining us today. Next slide, please. So, like Scott said at the beginning, in this limited time frame, we're going to use our existing staff and resources to move forward as much as we can. Part of what that means is looking at our existing budget and seeing what type of centralized services, resources, or tools that we can develop, procure, or curate, and make available. So, seen here are some of the proposed centralized service tools to support implementation, but we'd really love to hear from you on what would be most useful for your organization. So, for the next portion, we'd like to survey you in a poll. Again, I invite Shawn to join us and help facilitate this portion.

Great. Similar to last time, we're gonna have a poll pop up. And this time we're gonna, inquire about what type of resources would be most useful to your organization. So, we're gonna give it about 30 seconds to a minute again. You can select all that apply, so you don't need to just obviously pick one. Some resources related to digital literacy skills are a training platform, digital navigation training, resources for educational and workforce development. The Statewide Digital Equity Survey, the online public survey that was implemented during the planning process. A Digital Equity Resource Finder, kind of 2.0, a revamped version of what is currently on the portal. Translated materials, right? We have the option of selecting all of the above or other, and if you select other, we might be calling on you again to speak a little bit more about what

those resources might be. And we'll give folks just a little bit more time, and then we'll see what kind of percolated, and then have some conversations on what resources we have already, and maybe what would be most useful? Okay, we seem to have slowed down pretty significantly. So, maybe a few more seconds, some last-minute ones coming in. Alright. Luke, I think maybe we can end the poll there and share some of the results? Looks like digital skills and digital literacy training really percolated to the top again, 56%. Educational and workforce development was a popular one. Digital navigation training, always very popular. Translated materials, great. We, I believe, translated the survey into 13 different languages, so we know that there is a huge need for language translation across the state for this work. Great. So, at this time, I believe the chat is opened again, if we have any questions in the Q&A box about this. I do also maybe want to acknowledge, I think this is the right time, that earlier in the chat, Rick, Rick Lackey, mentioned, highlighting or possibly developing a resource around sharing community events, so wanted to note that that was something else. Right? A Google Doc, website, Instagram link, where people can kind of post their events throughout the state, sharing that information. Great. I don't know if anybody who spoke about other would like to kind of mention what some of their other ideas are. We have a comment. Are you still planning to publish a Digital Equity Plan template for those who would like to move ahead?

Yeah, it's certainly something that we're working on, and particularly if there's a need. I think part of what we're trying to balance is not asking folks to do too much, particularly if they're, the capacity funding was something was there, but absolutely that falls under the kind of category of developing curated resources. There's a number of other very good resources out there, too. And I did want to say, appreciate, during the CalDEP planning process, we created the, actually, James and his team developed the Partnership Collaboration Resource. It sounds like there's a good use case to kind of, modify that for the purposes that people have mentioned here, so that's, one thing. You want to go to Kami?

Yeah.

Thank you. So, my other is, has to do with a tool that would allow organizations who are delivering training to track the impact that they're making. Our agency, we've been around for 17 years, and we still struggle with it. We tried a Salesforce solution, we've tried other solutions, nothing has really worked for us, and we've invested a lot of time and money. So having something that we all use collectively, where we can have our own accounts, enter in our classes, the

number of people who took the class, pre- and post-surveys. I've done a lot of thinking around this, but to have something that's easy to use and free for us would allow you all to show our data somewhat in real time. So, if that's of interest, I would love to chat with someone and share some of my ideas.

Yeah, Kami, and we'd like to, maybe folks could, put, either their names in the chat, or email the email we provide at the end if you'd like to be a part of that, because I think, Kami, that's one of the things, is developing a public dashboard on the progress that we're all making. So, we'd really like to get some folks together and see what the need is, how it could potentially work, and how we might be able to develop something like that.

Great. Any other discussions on other topics that might have been raised? Go ahead, Patrick. Did you, let's unmute you.

Yeah, just raising. I was an other again, although the list was great. I'm wondering if Arlene, I believe it was Arlene, apologies if I messed up your name. You talked about needing to remind foundations and potential funders about the importance of this work ongoing. I think a similar effort needs to be undertaken with the legislator. I am concerned that the farther we get from the pandemic, and especially as the legislator kind of turns over. Do legislators know in their district where the digital divide exists, right? There's the American Community Survey data, which shows where families don't have internet. I know that some nonprofits and advocacy groups put together kind of one-pagers that explain where the digital divide exists within their district. But I think if we're going to continue to get sustained support from the California legislator, which I think we're going to need to rely on more than ever over the next 3 years especially, it's really important that we continue to keep the digital divide centered, in their focus. I know that in the digital inclusion space, it does seem like AI is kind of taking over, and for good reason, and I worry that if we lose foundational access as an important thread amongst our legislators, it's going to be really hard to get kind of some of the policy progress to have success. And then the second idea, I'm totally ripping this off from SF Tech Council, sorry, but it's such a good idea. When we look at, when I was helping people enroll in the ACP, one of the biggest challenges was walking through the process in kind of like a sandbox. Helping a low-stakes way of going through an enrollment process, where you didn't have to, under the risk of perjury, enter data, and they got nervous and they weren't ready yet, but I just wanted to show them the full process. For things like the CPUC's Home Broadband Pilot, I think sometimes the

PUC and CDT, they have so much to learn from each other, and I think CDT's done a much more robust job of community engagement. And I'm wondering if CDT can support PUC on efforts like the Home Lifeline broadband enrollment, with all the lessons we learned from ACP, one specific tangible output could be, can we make a sandbox for the enrollment process for the Lifeline Pilot, so that CBOs can walk through the process, both to train the trainer and with folks who might be interested in the process? Things like that, where you've learned so much from your work engaging community, but the PUC that implements all these programs might not have that same expertise, so just looking for opportunities for synergies, and cross-collaboration there.

Thanks, Patrick. We're equally excited about the CPUC Standalone Lifeline Pilot, and know that there's some stuff that needs to occur before that gets online, but we've been looking forward to partnering with PUC as a Broadband Council members and other folks to really, see how that can, be of expanded use to folks on affordability. And also, all the other pieces, just don't want to get ahead of ourselves on that.

Great. All right, Lindsey.

Thanks, Shawn. Hey, Scott and team. Thanks for convening us here today. So, I don't know if this is a suggestion necessarily for centralized services, but it's something I've been thinking about certainly after May 9th, once the capacity and competitive grants were terminated. You know, I know there's a lot of folks in this space that are trying to be really creative about identifying additional funding opportunities for digital equity projects, and even beyond what CDT is doing, obviously there's a lot of potential opportunities at the CPUC and other agencies, like GO-Biz or what have you. I'm curious if, in the future, there's a way to bring a lot of that stuff together for folks to easily access opportunities, even if it's just a really small carve-out of a larger proposal that an agency is looking to RFP out to folks or what have you? I mean, like I said, I'm not sure if that's exactly right for centralized services, but something that I've been thinking about and would love the state's support with as folks try to identify more funding streams for our projects locally.

Yeah, I think that that's a wonderful idea and would love to have a follow-up conversation with you on that. So, I think you know how to get ahold of us. We'd love to hear more.

Great. All right. So, I think we're gonna move to one of our final sections, and I'm gonna have Aracely Hernandez come on. Great. Our Digital Inclusion Manager.

Thank you, Scott, or thanks, Shawn, for the introduction. Good morning, everyone. It's a pleasure to see familiar faces here today. Next slide, please. As Scott mentioned earlier, while the Digital Equity Act funds were terminated, there are still some funding opportunities to leverage that provide significant funds by the California Public Utilities Commission. We want to specifically highlight three grants that are available through the California Advanced Services Fund in response to some of the questions that we've received. The first is a Broadband Adoption Account. It provides grants to increase broadband access and digital inclusion, such as digital literacy training programs to communities with limited broadband adoption. Eligible applicants include local governments, senior centers, schools, public libraries, nonprofit organizations, as well as community-based organizations. The grant size amount really varies depending on the size of the project, and the funding also includes community outreach and call centers that will increase broadband access and adoption. The next one is the Broadband Public Housing Account. It provides grants to low-income communities to finance projects to connect broadband networks that offer free internet service for residents in public housing, farmworker housing, mobile home parks, multi-dwelling units, as well as tribal housing. Funds are up to 100% for wiring and broadband network equipment. And last is the Tribal Technical Assistance Program. The grants are available up to $250,000 per tribe per fiscal year, to improve voice and broadband communications needs and access. This includes projects on market and feasibility studies, business plans, grant writing, consulting, as well as administrative costs. So, for all three grants, essentially applications may be submitted at any time, but there are some upcoming deadlines, highlighted here. You may submit applications at any time. They will be batched for processing. We have added links to all of the CPUC grant details. They are embedded directly onto the headers and the slides will be made available on our website in the coming weeks. Next slide, please. Next, good news here. We wanted to make sure that we highlight the Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Program, as it was recently approved by the PUC. As we all know, the ACP really greatly benefited Californians, and so we are looking forward to the Home Broadband Pilot Program, as it will make a significant contribution over the next 3 years. Eligibility requirements here include participation in state assistance programs, such as Medi-Cal, SSI, or WIC, as some examples. And there's also some income-based requirements. They're

really dependent on the household size, and they're aligned with the current Lifeline eligibility requirements. The subsidy amounts here include $20 per month for standalone fixed broadband, or $30 per month for a bundled service with broadband and voice. And then there's a $39 one-time reimbursement for new connections, per household. So, as more details continue to be worked out, and as we learn more, we're happy to share out, and report out during these briefings, and, just really excited to see how things continue to evolve, with the Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Program. But in the meantime, if you would like to read the full ruling, please use the QR code here on the right-hand corner to access the full document. Next slide, please. So here, in line with the Broadband for All Portal, or excuse me, in line for the Broadband for All Action Plan, we developed a portal which serves as a central repository, where tools were developed or procured. This is essentially a source of information to support the ecosystem, and so we wanted to make sure that everyone was aware of these additional resources that are available. The first that I wanted to highlight is the Affordable Service Program. It does provide low-income home internet services, some device offers, and they are searchable by zip code, so it's very easy to navigate. The next one is the Funding Opportunities Finder. It does include grants that are available for broadband deployment, for adoption, as well as digital literacy planning and implementation. And the last one is the Digital Equity Resource Finder. It is a database of Digital Equity resources, to support practitioners across the state with devices, with technical assistance, some digital literacy training, or public computers, that are available across the board. So, these are searchable by county and also by the type of service that's available. So essentially, we are doing what we can with the existing resources that are available. We wanted to provide this information to the larger ecosystem, and we wanted to continue to build out the Broadband for All portal. And as we do that, of course, we would like to get your input on what other tools or information that would be of use, for folks, and so I'll definitely turn it over to Shawn for the next portion here, where we're going to survey you all in another poll.

Actually, we're gonna, folks, just add to the chat if there are any other resources. I know we kind of started this conversation in the last section, but if there's any tools that would be useful to be added to the portal, please feel free to add them to the chat. And just wanted to highlight that links to those resources that Aracely just mentioned have been added in the chat as well, so if you're interested in that grant funding finder, that link is right in there, or into the Digital

Equity Resource Finder that link is in there as well. If there's any ideas, feel free to add.

Shawn, a couple things I wanted to jump in here, is as Patrick kind of noted prior to this section, there's a great deal of excitement, I think, within the Digital Equity ecosystem that the Public Utilities Commission voted to approve a 3-year Standalone Broadband Pilot. That was just on, August 28th, and as excited as we are, we wanted to share the cliff notes of what was kind of in the ruling and decision, we want to let you know it's going to take some time for them to stand that up, so I want to make sure you're clear about it, but given that you're the subject matter experts, if you haven't read the ruling, we want to direct that and just know we're as excited as you are to work with PUC on that when it's the appropriate time. And then, kind of like Aracely and Shawn said, we were going to do a poll here, but we're realizing we're running a little late. We would love to maybe spend a little time, as Shawn mentioned, hearing from you in the chat, or just hearing from some folks, is that, the Broadband Action Plan really directed CDT to develop this Broadband for All Portal, not to take over, or, just replace or, supplant other information there, but to create a place where folks, if needed, could find a one-stop shop and be referred out to other information, so when we're talking about tools or resources or information, we'd really like to, we have a committed staff that wants to serve the ecosystem, so any additional ideas, we'd love to hear from you on what you'd like to see.

Eduardo, I love that suggestion you put in the chat. Any chance you want to come off mute and, and share that? Shawn, you want to read Eduardo's comment.

Sure. Eduardo talked about making a California map resource, showing who is who, and what kind of programming they're doing. Whether it can be offered virtual, in person, some details on the program, what languages it's offered in.

Luke, did you say Eduardo wanted to come off mute?

Sorry, it wasn't letting me come off mute. There you go. Okay, I remember talking in conversations about the survey leading to the resource of the ecosystem, and then eventually creating a California map that was easier for partners or community members to be able to go and say, hey, this is this is my region, I click here in a county or whatever. It gives me all the who's who, who's providing what, in whatever category, whether it's adoption, digital literacy, technical assistance, devices, etc. and then in what language. And if it is digital

literacy, are they doing virtual or in person. And so that was a conversation. I know it's a big ask of the team, but I think several of us are willing to be able to help with that.

Thanks so much, Eduardo. And as we all kind of found, the team did put together the Digital Equity Resource Finder with the information that we were able to gather during the planning process, through the Digital Goods Ecosystem mapping tool. And so there's, I'm not even sure it's a beta, it's an alpha version up on the Broadband for All Portal but the team just yesterday was talking through how could we fairly quickly turn around and revise the tool to, and then conform the back and front end of the Resource Finder so that it had more of the functionality that you're talking about. So, appreciate you bringing that up and volunteering. We'd like to put together maybe a small group to figure out how we can get that up and running because that was one of the ideas we were thinking about.

Nice, Corey.

Great. Any other comments, any other questions, any other suggestions? Alright. Scott, do you want to kind of talk about next steps? Alright.

I'm wondering, did it look, it looked like someone came off.

Someone come off mute, looking to speak?

Hi, yes, thank you so much. I wrote this question on the chat, but one account that wasn't mentioned earlier was the Regional Broadband Consortium Account. And I'm wondering if you have any information about that. We understand that the last time this was opened was in 2022 and a lot of consortiums are coming to the end of that period, so just curious if you can share anything. I'm part of the East Bay and we don't have a consortium at all, and would like to know when that window might open.

Thanks, Cinthia. We'll take that question back to the CPUC, and see if we or they might be able to provide some information either at the next Broadband Council meeting or at the next stakeholder meeting, okay?

Great. Alright. Ricki, maybe we want to bring the slides back up? Great, thanks.

Okay, well, we just want to say thank you so much for folks. We've been hearing from folks about the value and benefits of getting together, and I hesitate to speak for my team, but I know that, for me, it's been inspiring to be back with

you all here. I think absences has been felt. So, just number one, we want to thank you all, and reiterate the points we made, that while the Digital Equity Act programs may have been terminated. Our mission, our partnership, our ecosystem, and our goals have not changed, and we just need to come back stronger, and I think more committed and more aligned than ever. Think that you're all amazing folks for your commitment to closing the digital divide. You've given us some absolutely amazing ideas that we want to follow up with, and take action on, and just in terms of next steps, wanted to share with you that the next California Broadband Council meeting will be on October 24th. It's going to be a good meeting. We're gonna do a year in review. Some folks have asked about the infrastructure, so it'll talk about both the MMBI progress, the action plan progress, and PUC will talk about a lot of the progress they've made on their programs, and we may have a Member Showcase to highlight some areas where state members of the Broadband Council can partner and work together on some of these new developments. And then we're looking to come back in the late fall, sort of late October, early November, to provide an update on what we can take action on based on the input that you guys have provided here today. And so, I think this is it? Is that true? Do we have another slide? So, please, if you don't get the Broadband for All Email Update, this QR code will take you there. You can go to the Broadband for All Portal at this address, the general contact for the entire staff is Broadband for All. Some people, I've given you my email in the chat, but really just have to tell you that it's been great to see all of you and to be back together again, and you have put wind in our collective sails, and look forward to moving forward with you all.