

Digital Equity Community of Practice Meeting
September 24, 2026
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes and Transcript

The Digital Equity Community of Practice met virtually on Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. Engagement and Operations Analyst Ms. Amanda Lee welcomed attendees and then instructed attendees to introduce themselves in the Zoom Chat box with their name, job title, and affiliated organization.

Housekeeping & Agenda

Ms. Lee reviewed a few housekeeping items, meeting norms, and the agenda items. The ASL interpreters and Zoom closed captioning were available throughout the meeting. Ms. Lee also mentioned that the meeting's recording, minutes, and transcript will be posted on the Broadband for All (BB4All) portal. She then shared an overview of the meeting agenda.

Meeting Agenda Items:

- Community Feedback and Event Calendar
- CA Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Program Update
- Digital Inclusion Partnerships Update
- Digital Literacy Training Platforms
- Device Access and Individual Device Ownership Ecosystem
- Upcoming Grant Opportunities and Future Meetings

Agenda Item 1 – Community Feedback and Event Calendar

Ms. Lee highlighted community feedback gathered through voluntary registration survey responses. Results showed that 64% of respondents expressed interest in free digital literacy assessment and training resources, while 51% expressed interest in supporting the expansion of California's individual device ownership ecosystem. Ms. Lee also thanked attendees for submitting their community events and encouraged everyone to continue sharing upcoming events through the Digital Equity Ecosystem Event Calendar on the Broadband for All portal.

Questions

Ms. Lee moderated the Q&A session. Only one question came through the Q&A box.

- Maiten Mowreader-Utreras, City of San Diego

Agenda Item 2 – CA Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Program

Ms. Loi Nguyen shared the program's latest enrollment and implementation updates, noting that Connect to Communications was pending review, five additional internet service providers (ISPs) were pending in the onboarding and systems interface testing phase, and 13 providers were actively enrolling customers. As of September 14, the program had enrolled 22,591 new subscribers and processed 4,917 transfers, for a total of 27,516 subscribers. Ms. Nguyen also highlighted information on broadband-only versus bundled broadband plans. Following the presentation, Ms. Aracely Hernandez facilitated the Q&A and shared program resources with participants.

Questions

Ms. Aracely Hernandez moderated the Q&A session. Ms. Loi Nguyen proceeded to address questions from the audience. The following meeting attendees asked questions:

- Patrick Messac, East Bay Broadband Consortium
- Dr. Ron Suarez, Broadband Institute Foundation
- Kari Gray, Front Porch Communities
- Cinthia Medrano, East Bay Broadband Consortium
- Sery Tatpaporn, A.B.L.E Community Development Foundation

Agenda Item 3 – Digital Inclusion Partnerships Update

Mr. James Spencer, OBDL Administrative Manager, shared an update on Digital Inclusion Partnership, which included eligibility requirements, resources being free of charge, the ability to sign up for multiple services, referrals from multiple partners, and shortening the process to 24–48 hours for follow-ups. Mr. Spencer also reported a detailed chart summarizing the Digital Inclusion Partnerships, including 65 organizational sign-ups as of September 21. Lastly, he concluded by sharing the Digital Inclusion Partnership form for organizations interested in participating.

Questions

The following participants asked questions:

- Sery Tatpaporn, A.B.L.E Community Development Foundation
- Reese Peterson, Easterseals Southern California

- Jeffrey Hein, TechEMPOWER
- Sereyrotha Dip, United Cambodian Community
- Dr. Ron Suarez, Broadband Institute Foundation
- Rebecca Kauma, County of Los Angeles | Internal Services Department
- Sabrina Tam, North State Planning and Development Collective

Agenda Item 4 – Digital Literacy Training Platforms

Mr. Scott Adams, OBDL Deputy Director, introduced the Digital Literacy Training Platform panel, highlighting key initiatives and the role of digital literacy training in supporting the Broadband for All Action Plan efforts to advance digital inclusion and help close the digital divide.

Panelists

- Kat Zigmont, Senior Vice President, **California Emerging Tech Fund (CETF)**
- Theresa Sladek, Strategic Partnerships & Northstar Business Development Manager, **Northstar**
- Erin Lorandos, Philanthropy Associate, **Human-I-T**

Kat Zigmont, Senior Vice President, **California Emerging Tech Fund (CETF)** started off introducing **DigitalLearn**, a no-cost platform offering short, self-paced digital literacy courses in English and Spanish. The platform includes an initial assessment to recommend relevant courses and provides certificates upon course completion.

Theresa Sladek, Strategic Partnerships & Northstar Business Development Manager at **Northstar** highlighted digital literacy assessments which are instructor-led curricula, self-paced learning, learner management tools, and reporting resources. Training covers essential computer skills, software applications, internet and email use, cybersecurity, telehealth, career search skills, and other everyday technology topics. Northstar also offers opportunities for learners to demonstrate skills through digital badges and certificates after successfully completing assessments.

Erin Lorandos, Philanthropy Associate at **Human-I-T**, highlighted its AI 101: How to Use Basic AI Tools course, a free, self-paced program designed to introduce practical AI skills to adults without a technical background. The course includes 30 short video lessons, is available in English and Spanish, and can be accessed by smartphone or computer. Human-I-T's training incorporates knowledge checks, hands-on exercises, safe AI use, accessibility features, live support, and

certificates of completion. Training resources are also available to support organizations interested in delivering content within their own communities.

Overall, the panel highlighted accessible, no-cost digital literacy resources and flexible training approaches that organizations can use to support development in digital skills within the communities they serve.

Questions

The following participants asked questions:

- Elizabeth Vaughan, Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)
- Ana Mendoza-Santiago, OTAN
- Daniel Hernandez, Starting Over Inc
- Kem Brown, Love Action Int

Agenda Item 5 – Device Access and Individual Device Ownership Ecosystem

Mr. Adams introduced the Device Access and Individual Device Ownership Ecosystem panel, highlighting key initiatives that support device access, individual device ownership, and technical support services to expand access to essential digital tools and resources.

Panelists

- Kat Zigmont, Senior Vice President, **CETF**
- AJ Middleton, Senior Vice President of Impact, **Human-I-T**

AJ Middleton, Senior Vice President of Impact at **Human-I-T**, highlighted their approach to digital inclusion by providing devices, internet access, digital skills training, and technical support, while also refurbishing and reusing technology that might otherwise become electronic waste. Human-I-T also offers a range of new and refurbished computers and devices to meet different community needs, including laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, and desktops, with reduced-cost and subsidized options available based on eligibility, availability, and need. Devices are supported by a one-year hardware warranty, one year of free bilingual technical support in English and Spanish, and access to additional digital navigation services.

Kat Zigmont, Senior Vice President of **CETF**, highlighted the California Green Technology Initiative, which connects digital equity with environmental sustainability by refurbishing retired technology and increasing the supply of devices available to underserved Californians. This initiative encourages businesses and other organizations to donate retired computers to participating

nonprofit refurbishers, with CETF supporting efforts to provide refurbished devices to low-income households that have completed digital literacy training.

Overall, the panel highlighted a device ownership ecosystem that combines affordable technology, reuse and refurbishment, digital skills development, and ongoing technical support to expand access to digital resources.

Questions

The following participants asked questions:

- Sery Tatpaporn, A.B.L.E Community Development Foundation
- S. Michelle Blackwell, City of San Diego

Agenda Item 6 – Upcoming Grant Opportunities and Future Meetings

Ms. Aracely Hernandez provided a quick overview of upcoming funding and grant opportunities, beginning with a reminder of key application deadlines for several California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) programs, including the Tribal Technical Assistance Account, Broadband Adoption Account, and Broadband Public Housing Account. She also highlighted two federal funding opportunities: the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program with a new November 17, 2026 application deadline and the Native Entities Grant Program, also due November 17, 2026. Ms. Hernandez then introduced additional funding opportunities, including the CPUC Digital Divide Grant Program R4 due on October 30, 2026 and Anthropic's Claude Corps Grant program, with a new January 2027 (second cohort) application deadline. QR codes were provided throughout the presentation to direct attendees to additional program information and application resources.

Finally, Ms. Hernandez announced that the next Community of Practice meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 29, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. She concluded the meeting by sharing several ways for participants to stay connected with the California Department of Technology's Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, including a QR code to subscribe to Broadband for All email updates, a link to the Broadband for All portals, and contact information for future inquiries.

CDT Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy stayed to check for any final questions. Ms. Lee thanked participants and presenters for their engagement and partnership before adjourning the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Questions

The following participants asked questions:

- Kem Brown, Love Action Int
- Jasmine Griffis, Connections for Children

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

Transcript

Good morning, everyone. Good morning, and welcome to the September 24th Community of Practice meeting, where we aim to foster alignment, coordination, and collaboration within the statewide digital equity ecosystem. On behalf of the State of California and the Department of Technology, we thank you for being here. Please use the chat box to share your name, job title, and affiliated organization as more folks are coming in. Before we begin, a few housekeeping items. Next slide. Thank you. Presenters, please cue Ricki to advance your slides. Select side-by-side speaker mode for the best viewing experience when slides are shared and for visibility of the ASL interpreters. Closed captioning is available by selecting CC Closed Caption on your toolbar and select Show Subtitle. If you cannot find it, please click the icon with three dots for more options. Please note there is time allocated for questions. Chat will be off while the presenters are speaking, so that no questions are lost in the chat. Use the Q&A box to type in your questions. Chat will be available when prompted. Use the raise hand icon on Zoom or star 9 if you're calling in by phone and come off mute and video to participate. This meeting is being recorded. We will be posting the recording, slides, and transcripts of this meeting to the Broadband for All portal. Use the QR code listed on your screen or click on the link in the chat to access post-meeting materials from past events. Because of this, AI note-taking bots are not permitted and will be removed from the meeting. Next slide. Because we want to encourage bi-directional conversations and active participation, we wanted to state some baseline understandings here that only questions and comments on agenda items will be addressed. The chat will be monitored, and disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated. We don't think it's going to be a problem, but individuals with disruptive behaviors will be removed from the meeting. Next slide. We have a robust agenda today. We will begin with information on community feedback and event... the events calendar. We will hear updates on the California Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Program and Digital Inclusion Partnerships. Next, we will feature a panel on digital literacy training platforms. Then CDT will host a discussion with our digital inclusion partners, focusing on device access. To close out today's agenda, we will hear CDT-OBDL updates on upcoming grant opportunities and future meetings. Next slide. In our registration questions this month, we asked all of you if you would like free access to digital literacy assessment and training content. 64% of you said yes, and 27% of you chose unsure. Next slide. For the registration... for the next registration question, we

asked if you would like to participate in the expansion of the device ownership ecosystem. 53% of you selected yes, and 36% of you selected unsure. For those that are marked unsure for either question, we hope that this meeting will help clarify any questions you may have. Next slide. First, thank you to everyone who submitted their events as part of our registration this month. We also wanted to remind you that we have a Digital Equity Ecosystem events calendar on the Broadband for All portal. We encourage you to visit the submission form and complete your event details. Our team will review the submissions and add them to the public calendar within 5 business days. Next slide. Here is a screenshot of the submission form on the portal. We created this event calendar as a way to share information and events among our digital equity ecosystem, and we hope you will submit your events after this Community of Practice. Please reference the link in the chat to submit your event today. Next, I'm pleased to introduce Loi Nguyen. Public Utilities Regulatory Analyst at the California Public Utilities Commission, to provide updates on the California Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Program. Welcome, Loi! Thank you for joining us today, and I'll pass the mic over to you for your presentation and leave room for questions at the end. Over to you.

Thank you so much, Amanda. Good morning, everyone. I'm pleased to provide updates on the California Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot. Next slide, please. To date, we have received 19 advice letters. One is pending review. 5 are awaiting are in the completion of onboarding, system testing, or submission of marking materials for approval. And 13 providers are now offering broadband services and enrolling new customers. Next slide, please. As of September 14th, we have 27,516 subscribers that have enrolled in the pilot program. Of these, 18,251 or 60% are enrolled in the standalone broadband services, yeah, and 9,265, or 34%, are in the bundle broadband services. We continue to see growth in the pilot program. Subscribers, especially those new to the Lifeline Program, with 22,591, or 82%, are new. While 4,917, or 18%, have transferred from the core Lifeline Program into the pilot program. Next slide, please. And that concludes my presentation. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Thanks so much, Loi, for taking the time to join us again during our Community of Practice. Folks, we want to encourage you to use the chat features or unmute yourself if you do have any questions related specifically to the Lifeline Program. Patrick, I see you have your hand raised. Feel free to unmute yourself.

Hi, thank you so much for the update, and really encouraging to see enrollment continue to climb. Just one quick clarifying question. Are enrollments still being driven exclusively through the providers? I know at one point there was discussion about potentially looking at similar to ACP having

consumers be able to go through, kind of, the eligibility verification, and then bring that information to their provider. We'd love just an update as we try to keep consumers abreast of how they can access this benefit.

Right, as of right now, it's through, still through the provider, so if it changes, we will certainly provide that update. Thank you, Patrick.

And I do see Dr. Ron Suarez also raising. Go ahead and unmute yourself.

Yeah, I've raised this before. Why rent when you can own? In these sessions, we continually hear about how to provide people access to the providers who've created the digital divide versus community-owned infrastructure, networks, and I've never gotten an answer, but I would like to offer my time to anyone who wants to talk to me about how to do this, and this is occurring in New York City with many thousands of people owning their own internet infrastructure.

Thank you for the remarks, and it seems like you're interested in, making yourself available Dr. Ron so...

Yeah, and I put a link in the chat.

Thank you, Dr. Suarez. I think one of the things I think you're referring to and help me if I get this wrong. The infrastructure to get out to those places that are on or underserved, as defined by the Public Utilities Commission, and I think one of the things that...

No, no, no, no because if there's wires in front of your house, you're not necessarily listed as underserved, but if those wires cost too much money, and you can't afford them. You know, that's a problem.

Well, and thank you for that, we'd be happy to get a meeting, and also think that there's the California Broadband Council, which is a formal body that you know, takes these kind of comments as public comment. The Digital Equity Community of Practice is largely an implementation body, and again, thank you very much. My information will be sent to you if you want to have a conversation.

Okay, thanks.

I do see we have another comment or question in the chat. Cinthia, would you like to unmute yourself? You have a question regarding marketing plans by ISPs. Go ahead and read it. I understand that participating ISPs were supposed to share their marketing plan with the PUC. Will we be able to see how they're planning to market this benefit to their subscribers?

Hmm, that's a great que...

Sorry, thank you, Aracely. I was just able to unmute myself. But yes, that's pretty much it. From previous meetings, it was shared that ISPs had to submit a marketing plan to CPUC?

Yes, as part of the onboarding process and the requirement of the Lifeline Program itself, all providers, before they can start offering services, they provide marketing materials to the Lifeline Program for us to review, and review to ensure that the information is accurate. So it could be and to inform consumers of what is offering and who's supporting that program. I'm not sure it because these marketing materials are on the provider's website, regarding the pilot program, so I'm not sure if I answered your question or not. If you're looking for the actual material that would be sharing with you. Is that...?

Yeah, it would be great to see what ISPs are sharing with consumers. A lot of CBOs are creating their own general flyers to inform folks about this benefit, but it would really be helpful to, to see what individual ISP, especially for us in Alameda County, Comcast is one of the biggest providers, participating. It would be great if we can understand a little bit more about what they're sending out, how they're sharing the description for the process to apply.

What I can do is, if you want to share your information with me, I know with Comcast, and other providers provide on their website of FAQs, any advertisement of the Lifeline Pilot Program. So, I can send you the links, if you provide me with your email.

Yeah, I'll provide that for you, and then, I'm so sorry, I don't want to take more time, but just one additional question. In that marketing plan, do they also share if they are planning on sending all of their customers marketing materials?

Some providers will have... Some providers will do promotions, so send out promotional advertisement to consumers. Some will include advertisement on their billing cycles to their current consumers. Subscribers, so it varies. We don't have, like, a set of what they need to do, we just want to ensure that they do have marketing materials, and it will be, promoted out to... Oh, thank you, Kat. Promoted out to the consumers.

Okay, and it looks like we do have time for just one question. I do see, Sery has his hand raised, feel free to unmute yourself.

Yeah, good morning, my name is Sery Tatpaporn. I'm the President and CEO of the ABLE Community Development Foundation. We work with the unlimited

English-speaking population mainly the senior population in both Contra Costa County and Sacramento County. What I want to share is the issue that we experience with this population, the access issue. Because, because both, you know, there are the majority of them are low-income seniors, and they have to live with their family member, or some of them have, an old family member, they live alone, or they live, they share their apartment, or, I live in order with other people, and then they have. I lost a problem to access to internet, because everything has to be online these days. We help a lot of people to, you know, to get to, apply for those, services or whatever, but... but we experience many, many of them have problems, accessing problem. So, I just want to raise the issue and share the issue with you guys. Thank you.

Thank you, sir, for highlighting...

Aracely, I'd like to just respond to that and say thank you, sir, for that comment. We very much understand the digital equity barriers associated for, you know, lower-income, you know, aging individuals, and particularly, you know, folks that are, you know, have language barriers or are potentially living in, you know, certain living environments, and that's part of the whole focus of the State's Broadband for All Program and the related initiatives, is to address those, and we know that all those issues will be solved, but really appreciate you bringing the voice of, you know, the residents that you serve here, because I think there's a lot of Injured spirits here who are committed to helping to solve those issues.

***Thank you for answering our problem.*

Alright, well, thank you so much, everyone. We do need to move on to the next segment of our presentation. Thank you, Loi, for joining us and continuing to provide updates. We look forward to seeing you again next month.

Thank you.

Next, I am pleased to pass the mic over to Broadband Administrative Manager, James Spencer. Over to you, James.

Yeah, thank you, Amanda. I'm excited to share a Digital Inclusion Partnership update today. We can go to the next slide, please. So, as we get started here, there are a few reminders I want to highlight. You know, just a reminder that these resources and services are completely free to use. They are zero cost to organizations. Only government and non-profit organizations are eligible to utilize the resources. One organization can sign up for a number of services, which means we are referring you out, and you'll receive a follow-up from multiple partners. We have continued to work with our partners to shorten the time between when you sign up and when you are contacted. So, if you do sign

up, please be on the lookout for an email from the partners. Next slide, please. So, this is an overview of the data we are tracking, which helps reflect the effectiveness of the program, and the process from sign-up to utilization. We track total organizational sign-ups and break them down by tool or resource. So, as of the beginning of this week, 65 organizations have signed up, which is really encouraging. After organizations sign up, we review for duplicate requests and eligibility. That's kind of why the referrals don't necessarily match signups. After organizations are referred to digital inclusion partners, they can begin discussions and once in alignment, can start utilizing the free resources. So, as you review further down the table, you will see that, with device access, we have a lot of interest but haven't referred anyone out yet. That does help tee up the segment for later today, where there's gonna be some more engagement and information to share. For the digital equity refinement for the K-12 survey, that's on the way, and we were able to make some key referrals and connections there. And for the Digital Equity Aggregator, we are working to develop that, and once it's ready, everyone who wanted to participate, we will demo and show, you know, how you can integrate your data into it. Next slide, please. So, if your organization would like to take advantage of the free tools, trainings, and resources, this is the digital inclusion sign-up form you will need to complete. We have included the QR code here, and we will also put a link in the chat. It's a very simple process. Only takes about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. And within 48... about 24 to 48 hours after completing the form, you'll be referred to and contacted by one of our amazing digital inclusion partners to discuss next steps. So, these are available for the next year, so if you still want to sign up, you can do it on this form here. That does conclude my update. And we're now open for questions. Feel free to enter your questions in the chat or raise your hand.

Don't see any questions at the moment, James, but we do want to encourage folks to raise your hand or use the chat features or Q&A box if you do have any questions related to this segment. Alright, seeing none!

I do see a comment from Sery. Yeah, if you're interested in signing up, we did put a link, just above in the chat, and there's the QR code or it was on the slide previously, but feel free to use the link we put in the chat.

Yeah, just wanted to provide some context, because I know that some people new to this convening, and maybe, you know, others have been here for a while, but Digital Inclusion Partnerships that James mentioned were really developed to address a gap that occurred when the federal Digital Equity Capacity Grants were terminated. And so, in California, we have the California Advanced Service Fund adoption account. That provides funding, but not all entities receive that funding to do certain things, like make digital literacy training available, or to train digital navigators, or to provide, you know, remote

call center assistance to people to, you know, connect to low-cost internet offers. And so, these Digital Inclusion Partnerships that James talked about were a number of entities that went through a competitive process and entered into agreements with the Department of Technology and the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. You know, to develop these low-cost or no-cost partnerships with us to make these resources available to the ecosystem. That's kind of, you know, the context that we've mentioned. So, we didn't want to assume that everyone knows about these partnerships, but we do want to let everyone know some key facts about them, and that the system is working, and we want your feedback on how to better improve and get you connected with these folks.

Thank you, Scott, for sharing that additional context. I do see a question regarding the deadline to complete the Digital Inclusion Partnerships form.

Yeah, so no real deadline. We do have access to these services until about the end of the fiscal year next year, so about June/July of 2027.

It looks like Jeffrey Hein has a question.

Jeffrey, would you like to come off mute and ask that question?

Here, so maybe I can help on that one. So, Jeffrey asked if we file a CPUC Adoption Account application in January for that accounting built on the partner stack, Northstar, DigitalLift, Human-I-T, will CDT put that a letter of support, and how do you want? So, Jeffrey, typically we're not allowed to provide letters of support for entities who are applying for other grant programs. I'm happy to have an offline conversation with you. About how you can get connected to those folks and potentially, you know, use them as proof of concept, you know, when you're filing your application.

I do see two hands raised, Sereyrotha, sorry, I apologize if I'm mispronouncing your name.

Hi, thank you. For some reason, I can't unmute myself earlier, but thank you, Jen, for the information. So, my question is, how many languages are available on the resource and tool that you've been sharing?

I'm sorry, I was having a hard time hearing. Can you repeat it?

Oh yeah, so my question is, how many languages are available on the resource and tool that you provide?

So, each resource and tool is a little bit different in what's available, but typically it's at minimum, English and Spanish.

Oh, okay. Thank you.

We do see Dr. Ron Suarez raise his hand, as well as Rebecca. We'll take those two questions in that order.

Hi James. I'm filling out the form, and I see there's a checkbox for how to use basic AI tools. Does that include writing prompts?

You know, we're actually going to have a team in IT and a panel there, so I would request why don't you do you mind asking that question after the next panel?

Alright.

Thanks.

I'll turn it over to Rebecca, who has her hand raised.

Yeah, good morning, Rebecca Kauma, Director of Digital Equity for the County. I just want to uplift Rotha's question. I would say to whatever extent we're able to provide resources in other languages would be greatly appreciated. I know typically English and Spanish are the primary languages, but to her question, I would say if we're able to uplift the Khmer language, I think that would be greatly appreciated, as well in other languages that residents speak for accessibility and inclusion purposes. Thank you.

Thank you so much for that comment, Rebecca. And we do need to move on to the next segment. We have a really exciting panel, and I think we may be able to address a lot of those questions there as well.

Yeah, and I think one thing I wanted to say, Aracely, just before we move on, on the issue of language, you know, the, the states, committed to access and equity of language, you know, and that's embedded in the State Digital Equity Plan as we talked about on the Digital Inclusion Partnerships, we were, you know, wanting to provide a set of tools that, could be used for folks in lieu of, you know, the ability to create and generate their own meet the threshold of no-cost and low-cost, you know, partnership agreements with us. That these were the best resources, but we're looking for more opportunities and funding to be able to try to expand to those other languages, because we know how critical that is. So, Rebecca just wanted to kind of underscore and, you know, to say thank you for presenting us back to our, you know, core values.

Thank you so much for that.

Aracely Hernandez: Excellent. Thank you so much for that.

Would like to pass the mic over to Deputy Director Scott Adams to facilitate the panel.

Yeah, thank you so much, Amanda, and thanks to everybody here. So, as we talk about this panel that we're going to do right here is to feature three of the digital literacy, learning content and platform providers that we've entered into agreements with to provide free resources to the ecosystem and participating partners, you know, we talk a lot about the Broadband for All Action Plan and the State Digital Equity Plan, are, the third goal of those are saying that all California residents have access to planning and skills to enable digital inclusion. We know there's a diversity of the needs, but we think that, you know, between the California Emerging Technology Fund and, you know, Northstar and Human-I-T, that what they came to the table with on, you know, basic skills training and, you know, basic AI training that build an immediate need, not saying it feels all, but we wanted to highlight them and give them an opportunity to really clarify. You know, things about their, you know, digital literacy, you know, content and platforms, and so, I'm gonna hand it over to them to kind of talk through their offerings, and then we're gonna have about, maybe 10-15 minutes to, you know, have a conversation with each of them. So, I'm going to hand it over to Kat Zigmont, the Senior Vice President for California Emerging Technology Fund, to talk about the DigitalLearn's platform that's available to those of you who would like to utilize this.

Thank you so much. So, our Digital Learn platform is a completely free site. It is a sub-site of the Public Library Association's DigitalLearn, and we customize this site. When you enter the site for the first time, you will be prompted with a voluntary initial assessment, which would then provide you with recommendations for relevant courses based on the choices you made in that assessment. We currently have an offering that if you then take a certain number of classes from your recommended courses, then you would be able... you would basically receive a \$25 gift card upon completion, and we do have an after-survey so that we could get feedback from you on the courses, so we can continually improve the site. So that is currently running. Each of our courses are about 5 to 20 minutes, and they are from basic to moderate skill level, and directly after you complete a course, you get a certification of completion that you can use to verify that. Content is currently available in English and Spanish, and we are working to expand the languages to 5 other languages that are prevalent in California. Each of our courses contain multiple lessons. So, one course might have two to five lessons within that course. So, we have 31 courses.

In English, that includes 132 lessons, and similarly, we have 25 courses in Spanish, which incorporates 134 lessons. We do not recommend this site for trainers. However, what CETF does is we use the DigitalLearn platform to provide homework to our digital literacy classes. And then we can verify that folks have spent those hours on those classes, and that is how we get to a certain number of digital literacy hours that are often required for grant requirements. So, that's our Digital Learn platform. It is, again, free and available today. And if you go to the next slide here, I have...what the site looks like. It has just been redesigned. It has incredible accessibility and usability as well. So, I really hope you all use this resource. Thank you.

Thank you so much, Kat. Really appreciate CDT or CETF coming to the table to partner with us to make this available to folks. And so, the next person I want to introduce you to is Theresa Sladek from Northstar Digital Literacy to talk about the Northstar digital literacy assessment and training platform. They kind of came to the table and helped develop a partnership that was really modeled after something that they did with the state libraries during COVID. So, Theresa, handing it over to you.

All right, well, thank you, and hello, everyone. It's great to have all of you here. So, I'm Theresa Sladek, and Northstar Digital Literacy is a subscription that we're offering for free to the CDT. And so your organizations can use it. It's internet-based, so as long as you have the people have devices and internet connection, you can use it wherever you are. And each location, each of your organizations, would have a dedicated URL so that you can share that with your learners and with your staff. It includes assessments to test, you know, to see where, what knowledge someone has, and where there are opportunities to learn more. So, there are 18 different topics that each have their own assessment. And then there are two types of educational tools that let you, let people learn what they need to learn after they've taken the assessment. They can see their gaps there. It covers foundational, so, like, basic computer skills, like how to turn on a computer, how to use a mouse, how to send an email up through kind of mid-level office skills, like Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and then some other more specific skills, which I'll show you in a second. It's currently available, fully in English and Spanish. We are a non-profit, and so, as Scott said, you know, funding is an issue with translation for us. But we are trying some new ways, and so we've started to translate portions of it into other languages, and the first one we did was Somali. It's written at a grade 4 reading level to make it as accessible to as many people as we can, and there are multiple resources within the platform itself to help your staff and your administrators use Northstar and get started with it. Next slide, please. So, we have the assessments; people take the assessments to see what they already know and where there's the opportunity to learn more. And then there are the two types of education materials. There's curricula for instructors who want to teach a class. It's out of

the box, it includes all handouts, worksheets, answer sheets, even gives you the words to say and what to show. And then there's also self-paced online learning, so participants can go at their own speed on their own time, to learn these skills, and you get both of these, all of this with the subscription. And the learner management system lets learners see their progress, and what they've done, and their assessment scores. And then, of course, you have multiple reports to see individual progress, as well as kind of what your agency is doing, so you can show your community the great work you do, you can show your funders and use it for grant applications. Next slide, please. So here are the 18 different topics that we currently have. You can see they're starting really from the very beginning, the basic computers, even how to log in if people don't know that. And through essential software skills, and then those kind of more specific and or maybe more difficult skills, like career search skills, cybersecurity basics, accessing telehealth. All of this is included. And there will be a link in the chat soon that leads to the assessments. I... you can try out the assessments for free. I highly encourage you to do so to see if it's applicable to your, to the participants you're working with. And also, because I have yet to meet anyone who's passed all 18 assessments on the first try with 100%, so here's my challenge to y'all to give it a try. Next slide, please. And so, when someone takes an assessment, if they pass, passing score is 85%, They will get a digital badge, like a kind of a micro-credential that they can use on their resume and LinkedIn. If it's not proctored, meaning they just take the test, no one's watching them take it. If it is proctored, and one of your staff members is watching them take, and they take the assessment, and they pass, you can also give them a certificate, which we have found is extremely meaningful to people. They people are often afraid of computers when they have lower digital skills, and this helps them feel like they've really have learned something and accomplished something. So I think that is the last slide, but thank you for all for listening, and let me know if you have questions as we get to the Q&A part.

And thank you very much, to both of you, and I'm gonna ask one question of you before we go to Erin from Human-I-T. So, the goals of the State Digital Equity Plan, which, you know, while it was developed with federal funding, there was a state law that actually required us to develop the Digital Equity Plan and to implement that. And so, even though the funding went away. The mission to achieve digital equity did not, and so we still have a lot of great resources here, like the California Advanced Service Fund Adoption Account. CETF has some significant public benefit agreements with current beneficiaries of telecom mergers to help do a significant portion of funding to achieve the aims of the Digital Equity Plan. But in the Digital Equity Plan really the goal on the training, please, was, you know, focusing on the covered or vulnerable populations, and, really, three tiers of goals. The number one, increase the level of basic, you know, digital literacy skills, from basic to intermediate, and from intermediate to advanced. And so, these platforms here, would you say they're geared towards

supporting organizations who are serving community members to go from like zero to basic, or basic from intermediate. You know, Theresa, you finish last, so you go first, and then we'll kick it over to Kat.

Sounds good. Yes, I would say that they are for programs to help community members. Northstar would be from the basic skills, even a little bit of pre-beginning, digital literacy, like how if I am unfamiliar with a Western keyboard teaching people what's the difference between a number and, let's say, an uppercase letter, a lowercase letter, exclamation point, kind of those things needed to create a password, so very pre-beginning digital skills up through those mid-level, you know, kind of Word, Excel, PowerPoint skills that most office workers would use, not to advance, so we're not looking at Excel for someone in your finance department, for example, but...

It can be all things to all people, but it really fits a niche of, you know, the pre-basic up to the intermediate and the productivity, skills for, you know, career development. Kat, the same question for you.

Like Northstar, we are from no knowledge at all, so, you know, we have some introductory getting used to the internet, how to do web searches, how to open a Gmail account, basics of video conferencing, up to then Office Microsoft 365, and/or Google Suite Basics as well. We do not go into more advanced, but we do have how to use Google Maps, how to book an airline flight, so we have some practical usage as well, how to apply for health insurance benefits, etc. So, we really try to hone in on the needs of the community we're serving.

Got it. Thank you, and I see Elizabeth has a question in the chat. Elizabeth, we're going to get to that, but I want to pivot to Erin Lorandos from Human-I-T, because we really had to pivot. I mean, when we completed the Digital Equity Plan, so much has happened in the artificial intelligence space that we wanted to make sure that we had that, and Human-I-T came to the table with just some really great content that they could share with us to make available to you folks. So, Erin, can you tell us about Human-I-T's artificial intelligence training?

Absolutely. Thank you so much for the opportunity, and as my slides are coming up into the view. I'll just say in my previous jobs in the library world, I used both DigitalLearn and Northstar all the time, and plus one to everything that Kat and Theresa shared, they're great platforms. So, we are going to focus on our AI 101: How to Use Basic AI Tools course. We do also have the basic computer use software, but we're focusing on this one today. So, as you heard from our other presenters, our content is free, it is online, and it's self-paced, and it teaches practical AI use. So generative AI use to adults that don't have a technical background. It really is built to meet people who have not used AI before and help them gain that comfort and that confidence. Our curriculum is based on

30 short videos, all just a few minutes long, that present the ideas and then give the learner an opportunity to practice with some knowledge checks after each. Our content is also available in English and Spanish. However, on the next screen, when we talk about how a person gets into the content, I'm going to share a little tidbit on the language piece that I'd like to highlight. Our content is also accessible via smartphone or computer, acknowledging that not everyone has that technology, the technology options, you know, to always use the computer. Let's go to the next slide, and we'll go a little bit deeper. So, first I'd like to talk about how a learner will engage with the platform and how they'll move through the course content. So, we're going to follow those 6 steps across the top. So, the first thing that a learner will do is access our digital literacy curriculum via the CDT landing page. There is a link at the top for digital literacy training. Next, they will fill out a very short intake form that allows us to help them through the process, tracking their involvement with the program. And at that point, they have the option to pick either English or Spanish. However, I want to pause here and just highlight the commentary about language and the importance of offering different options. You can actually put another preferred language into that form at the time of registration. And similar to what other folks have shared, we are also a nonprofit and always working to expand our content availability to really make it useful for as many members of our community as we possibly can. So, that information helps us know where to go next as well. The next step in the process is the learner will be contacted by a digital navigator on our team that will send them unique login information. Now, this one, this information is based on the AI course, of course, and so when you're doing that intake form, if you're interested in this one specifically, you'll select that option, and then that's the course that you'll be put into. Learners that are meeting us at different spaces in their journey, you know, could also be put into a more basic course. Then the next step is the learner will access the course through that unique login information. And they'll receive a guided tour on how to use the platform. The next step is a self-assessment, rating their comfort and knowledge around this content. They're basically placing themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 with their comfort on various aspects. Once that happens, they dive in. They get to access those videos that I mentioned, those knowledge checks throughout the process, and then it's rinse and repeat until you're done with the course content. I do want to note one thing here. I know there was a question earlier about whether the AI content teaches, prompt generation and things like that, and yes, it does. There's some additional information below here that we'll see there to practice and submit your prompts that you created throughout the learning, and also the content that you got back out of the AI. And it's interesting to see how changing those prompts can change what you get back out. So, we really do encourage that hands-on practice throughout all of our learning. And then last but not least, upon completion of the program, you do receive a certificate. And again, plus one to the comment that Theresa made, it is just so gratifying to get that certificate and

be able to walk into a job interview or, you know, show that off. And again, you know, throughout my experience, I have seen that be a huge boom, you know, as people go through the process. So, our content really is built, you know, to meet people where they are, and built in a way that people will feel comfortable moving through the content on their own. Every single one of our videos has subtitles, and it also has adjustable playback speed, so if you would like to go a little bit slower, pause the video, repeat sections, that can, that can happen very easily. There is also a glossary of terms that can be accessed. And then, you know, so that people can be reminded of those, those terms as they're moving through the, the process. The concept of using AI safely is built in throughout our content as well, and it is definitely not, you know, one slide at the end where we say, oh, don't forget, be safe. You know, it really is built intentionally throughout the entire, the entire content. As I mentioned, you do get to practice typed prompts, voice prompts, and also image generation throughout this process. The next piece that I...

Can we...

like to... oh! Sorry?

We're running low on time, and I want to...

I'm sorry.

Okay, cool.

I will go a little faster. Digital navigation is available all day long, PST, 8:30 to 5, and learners outside of those hours can also get additional help if they need it. So, let's go ahead to the next slide. Just really quickly want to answer the questions that you posed to us. We use Moodle, as a platform for this. We do have those initial assessments. Our content is self-paced. We can provide people who are using this to train their trainers with additional support through our community engagement team. Again, English and Spanish, a certificate of completion, no cost, and it is ideal for everyone. We are happy to meet people where they are. And I do apologize for taking too much time, Scott. Thank you so much for letting me know.

No problem, thank you so much. It was all really helpful, because you led into, could we take the slides down, please? Let's do, like, I think we have about 5 minutes, maybe a little more, so, speed round, like, yes, no. So, number one, in the context of the partnership with CDT, is your platform free? They're content-free?

Yes.

Okay, because that's under our agreement. The...you have content that's available for organizations or instructor, it could be instructor-led, or it could be online, at a location, and in some cases, self-directed at home. Is that correct?

Yeah,

Yeah.

And you, all of you will assist training partners on how to utilize and then make these resources available to their clients, their patrons, their residents, is that correct?

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

So cool. Thank you, guys, just for the generosity of your partnerships with the state to support, you know, achieving digital equity. Want to open it up for questions. Sery, I see you've got a hand up. You want to go ahead and ask your question?

Yeah, and, your platform, name is Get Connected. Is that right?

Yes, Get Connected.

Yeah, I'm on your platform right now. It looks pretty good, so I'm very interested to get involved or sign up. And get my team to take a look at and I have 15 community health workers who proactively involved with the community, with their own ethnic group in both Bay, and in the Bay Area, mainly Contra Costa County and Sacramento County, so that looked pretty good, your platform. Thank you.

Thank you so much!

Sery, we're impressed with all of the content from our partners to help support you and team. Could you please drop in the sign-up form also? And folks, that's a way you can sign up for these things. I want to go back to Elizabeth Vaughan had a question in the chat about the training programs, and that for the essential computer skills. It's an internet-based training program. Does that work? We have folks who are familiar with that, so I'm imagining how that would play out. And so, I kind of teed it up when I asked you guys in the firing, or in the quickfire round that you can use the content for instructor-led classes. Is that correct?

That is true, and I love Elizabeth's question. We, because Northstar, we are part of Literacy Minnesota, so an adult basic education program, which was what informed a lot of the creation of the curriculum of Northstar for our own students, who are learning English, for example. And, yes, so you can use it on the internet as a self-paced, but we also have the instructor-led curricula, which I would recommend for people who are You know, just starting out, it's a little bit easier, and you can use the self-paced as kind of additional support once you, once they've worked with the instructor to learn how to get on that.

Got it. I have Kat and Erin.

Do you want to go first, Kat? Go ahead.

And remember, these are quick, we're running low on time, because we had to...

Totally. Yeah. Real quick. Yes, we understand it is hard to learn tech over tech, and our answer to that is our digital navigation. That connection with a human that can answer the questions that you have is really that through line, connecting, you know, the content to the learner. And that person is available to the learner throughout their journey to make sure that they're hitting their goals.

Similarly, with our DigitalLearn platform, we often have our digital navigators get people signed up during one of their synchronous digital literacy classes. Make sure they're comfortable, look through the content, and then the ability to do homework or use the platform on their own at, say, self-paced is not only an opportunity to learn, but it's an opportunity to practice. So, yes.

Yeah, thank you very much, and I think that just one follow-up from Elizabeth is so when we're talking about so, it's online-based curriculum for the self-paced or potentially instructor-led, but there's also, that, I think she said, it's available online as well as for instructors. Or do we model from an online program?

That's a great question.

Former. Not the latter, correct?

Right, we have the actual curriculum written with the words to say, what to present, when, everything kind of for you, as well as online, so you don't have to, you don't have to create anything if you don't want to in terms of the curriculum.

Alright. Same, same with DigitalLearn.

The DigitalLearn platform does not; we don't have introduction curricula, but we do introduce the trainers to the back end, so that they can utilize the back end and learn how to double-check hours of usage and keep an eye on their students.

Thank you. And Erin, you already answered that question, I believe, yeah. Well, I thank you, folks. I hope this has been informative for you all. We're very grateful. You know, California didn't want to give up when the federal funding went away, and there was no reason to, because we've got a great ecosystem, wonderful partners like you all and acknowledging we want to be able to meet people where they are, and that includes our partner organizations and residents. So just really appreciate this. The links in the chat. You want to sign up for these folks, we'll refer you over to them, and we'll all work as quickly as we can to get you connected to the resources and can understand if it may take a little time on your end to navigate that system. Okay, we have time for one more question. Kem?

Okay, my question is just that I just want clarification, because I'm extremely new to this. So, what you're saying is that we sign up through the California for ALL, so sign up through you guys with that one link that you post it up, and then you connect us with these resources here who presented today. Is that correct?

Yeah, I'm sorry.

Kem Brown: ...directly to them. You connect us with them, and that's what makes it free for us.

Exactly, yeah, exactly, because the legislature allocated funding for us to implement the Digital Equity Plan and be able to generate these partnerships.

Because as I was pulling up some of their sites, I seen that some of them were, like, no-to-low cost, and I was like, do we go directly to them, or do we go through you and then get connected?

Yeah, I would sign up through the Broadband for All portal.

Okay, perfect, thank you.

Thank you, Kem, and thank you, panelists. Just wonderful working with you, appreciate your time. Now we are going to shift our focus to devices. And, you know, we've referenced the Broadband for All Action Plan and the State Digital Equity Plan. There's the three main goals of that are shared amongst both, and

the second goal is ensuring that all California residents have access to affordable internet service and devices. And so, folks have indicated in the feedback that they'd like to get connected to resources that can provide free or low-cost devices to their clients and patrons that they serve that they would actually like to get involved in helping to expand the California individual device ecosystem ownership. The thing that I would say is, you know, in 2023, we did a survey when we developed the Digital Equity Plan, and that was in partnership with CETF and USC, and about 3% of the unconnected or unconnected said that the barrier to doing so it was because of the cost of a device. And so, what we've known is, here in California, you've got, you know the California Advanced Service Fund adoption account, you've got efforts that are funded by other things, but really, devices, new devices particularly, can be quite expensive. And so, what we are really highlighting is these two partnerships with Human-I-T and CETF on how we can address a very specific need for a segment of the population, by utilizing refurbished computers to provide device access. And so, AJ Middleton, the Senior Vice President of Impact at Human-I-T. I'm gonna give you about 3 minutes to kind of run through and tell people how you guys work and, in the context of our partnership, how they can leverage that to connect people to process.

Awesome, thank you, Scott, and pleasure to be here with you all and share a little bit more about the work that Human-I-T does. If we could go to the next slide, if possible? Whereas we wait to pull those up, I can share a little bit, and we can actually go to the next slide as well. You did hear from one of my colleagues, Erin, in the previous panel around our digital literacy work. Just to give some background to Human-I-T as a whole, we are a non-profit and social enterprise that really focuses on creating access to opportunity to individuals, both across the state of California as well as across the country. And we do that by providing devices, internet access, digital skills training, and technical support to those communities on the wrong side of the digital divide. And for today's conversation, we also support businesses and organizations to do good by diverting their technology away from landfills to protect our planet. So, if we can go to the next slide, I can tell you a little bit more about how we do that. This is a really cool graphic that shares a little bit about how we take in technology from partners all across the world and the country to that they're no longer using. So, we partner with corporations, cities, states, school districts, all the way down into individuals who have technology they're no longer using. They provide that to us, and then we take that into our system and provide corporate-level data standardization to ensure that all of those devices do not have any of that data on there. We then move through a process of inventorying and assessing the quality of those devices, and they fit one of three buckets for us. The first one I'll actually come to last. The resell technology, we take in all types of devices, so that's, things that you and I would not be able to use in our home, and we actually take those in, put them through the same process, and actually work to

resell those back out to the business community to support reuse, and then also support our ability to provide services to pair with the devices that goes in the hands of individuals who need access to them. For any device for the third bucket here that we cannot reuse for whatever reason, perhaps it's just too far broken, it's not something that can be refurbished. We make sure that it is responsibly recycled. And again, it ends, it does not end up in a landfill, it does not end up anywhere that it's not supposed to. But for today's conversation, the most important one is that top bucket here. We want to take in as many devices that we can possibly refurbish and then reuse, and then redistribute out to a variety of communities, whether that's students, veterans, other nonprofits, low-income families. Both here across the state, as I mentioned, as well as across the country. We then pair those with affordable access to low-cost internets, digital literacy training, and technical support, as I mentioned previously. If we can go to the next slide. A little bit about the devices that we do provide. We do recognize that people's needs are not one-size-fits-all, so there's on the other end of that, there's not a one-size-fits-all device for everyone. So, in recognition of that, we provide a variety of different devices, whether that's Chromebooks, Windows-based laptops, Apple computers, tablets, desktops, really anything that an individual may want to use and may be most beneficial for them, we have available and can provide in a variety of different ways. We support communities and distributing devices in really 3 different ways. So, one. We can work with you to distribute a resource of a low-cost technology option to your community. We would have that conversation on what's going to fit best with your community. We can drive them towards the Human-I-T store, which is store.humanit.org, where we provide affordable, low-cost devices at a variety of different ranges and a variety of different specs, as you see here. I'm not going to read those directly, but really, there's a variety of different options for anyone to accomplish whatever they may need. Second option is we can work with you as a part of a grant you may have, a program that you are running, where you may need 50, 100, 1,000 devices to distribute over the course of a month, a year, a couple of years, and we can have that conversation with you to understand what your needs are, what your community will find best, and then how we can make that work, whether that's through a variety of different funding options, perhaps you've received a grant that you need to go get devices for. We can find something that will fit, for what your device needs may be as a part of your greater program. The third option is Human-I-T ourselves. We do run a variety of different programs across the state that actually give devices for free to individuals whenever possible. So, if you are interested in that aspect of it as well. We would encourage you to reach out to us. When we have a match of a device and funding that may be able to fit what your needs are, we would actually be able to reach out to you and say, great, we have the 10, 15, 151 device, whatever you maybe needing, and we would work with you to get that to you in the easiest way. I will end with all of our devices do come with a year of hardware warranty. They do come with free technical support, that's

available in both English and Spanish, and then they provide access to our digital navigation team should you need any additional support in other services, whether that's internet, digital literacy training, or additional tech support. So, my request here would be, have a conversation with us. Tell us about what your needs are, and we can see what we can do to help fulfill those make something work. Or at least get you in our system to where when we do have a fit, we can reach out and fulfill that need.

Thank you so much, AJ. Appreciate it. There's a, thank you again. You can sign up on the Broadband for All, you know, sign up for them, and we can divert you over to AJ. There's actually been a bunch of you that have signed up. We have been holding off until we could have this initial conversation, and then, Kat's gonna tell us about the California Green Tech Initiative, which is another partnership that, CDT and, and CETF, or doing the Broadband Council members to expand the device ecosystem. So, I think we need to bring the slides back up, because Kat did have some content. Kat, I'm going to turn it over to you.

Thank you. So, as was demonstrated, the need for computing devices is a pain point in digital inclusion, and so we tried to think about a statewide strategy that might solve for that. The California Green Tech Initiative is in its second year, and it's here to not only meet digital equity needs, but also environmental sustainability, and getting those devices and training, for the internet into households that need it most. We what we did is we have a coalition of statewide refurbishers, such as Human-I-T. We really believe that statewide refurbishers are doing very good work on the ground, and we want to up-lift the work that they do. One of the biggest pain points for refurbishers is not getting enough donated devices to then be able to turn them around. So, our ultimate goals of the Green Tech Initiative are to decrease the volume of retired community, computing devices that are being sent overseas or being destroyed, and increase that supply chain to statewide refurbishes, so that they can do the great work of helping to close the digital divide and getting those computers into the hands of those that need them most. Next slide, please. So, how does the Green Tech Initiative work? Any business or entity who wants to donate, we welcome that. And we are actively recruiting corporate and state agencies alike to donate all of their refurbished devices. CETF typically then raises funds to buy those refurbished devices back from the refurbishers so that we can provide them to low-income households who have completed digital literacy training. And so, if you have devices that you want to donate, please email greentech@cetfund.org, and we'll help connect you with the right refurbisher for you. We really try to respect regional boundaries, although we have refurbishers who overlap all over the state, which is wonderful, and we're a great group that works together. In the aspect of working with CDT, CETF, CDT, and our coalition of refurbishers are working to increase these donated devices, as I said, solving for that big pain point, by conducting a series of webinars to

raise awareness about the use of refurbished devices. The environmental impact that you can have by donating your devices, and how those devices can then be reused by the community who needs it. This initiative is really a system-wide initiative that is bringing together, again, the community-based refurbishers from around the state, who are doing this great work.

Scott Adams: Thanks, Kat. Thanks, AJ. So, I think in the summary here, in the context of our partnership with Human-I-T, if your organization has immediate, device needs, you know, surplus equipment needs, refurbishing needs. Please sign up on the portal, and we'll refer you out to them. Like I said, we've kind of aggregated quite a bit, so don't be surprised. We have multiple partners, and we know, hopefully it's not hard when we refer, you know, your desire to leverage these services, the multiple partners, and having to, communicate with them all, but that's, connect with Human-I-T, and then Kat, and the Green Tech Initiative, and CETF. This is about taking that model on a large scale and see huge opportunity. Our team is working within the state government to encourage the utilization of a state process to disposition surplus equipment, working with state agencies to know how they can divert them to member organizations of, you know, this effort, and then get those out to you all in your residents. And so, Kat, the way that people can help on that is they can indicate they want to donate computers. They can indicate they want to receive and distribute computers. Or they can say, hey, there are people, my organization, that want to be a part of this. Is that correct?

That's correct, and we would also welcome any introductions to large agencies that you think are ripe to donate their devices as well. So yes.

Got it, and so when we think about it, you know, like we said, people can go to Human-I-T right away to start that station, but as we build this, they think Human IT is part of the California Green Tech Initiative, along with about 6 other regional refurbishers. And when we talk about webinars, you know that terms overused. I think you prefer the term, workshop, right? And when we're talking about this, we're looking at what are the different levels of way to increase supply. So, it's at the state government level, the local, the county and local level, the libraries, the schools, and then the private sector, right? Like, large corporations, other businesses that can really divert this and create a virtuous cycle of keeping equipment out of landfills. Getting it recycled and then getting those devices out to the folks who need them. That's so true.

Right. And you, you pinned, you pinned it right where you said, you know, there's an awareness issue, folks don't know that they can donate devices, and then they don't know how to donate devices. So, that's the first step, where there are barriers, or the perceived barriers, that we can walk them through. That we've already solved for working with other organizations and state agencies. So yes,

we want to raise the awareness of this as a great strategy, and then work towards getting those large-scale donations to the refurbishers.

Awesome, thank you. My team is telling me we're running low on time, but this is a Community of Practice, it belongs to all of us, and we want to make sure others have a chance. Let me see, S. Michelle Blackwell, your hand is raised. Do you want to unmute your mic and video and ask your question?

I just wanted to ask, we work with we're called Innovative City Youth, and we work with device management, so repairs and things like that, we work with Apple, so I was wondering if AJ and Kat, if you needed people, maybe not to donate computers, but if you needed geniuses, that's what Apple calls them, techs, to refurbish the Apple's wonderful, we love them, they have their own culture and community, but, we provide that, and if you needed that, we would love to partner with you and see I mean, most of our techs have 10 plus years, so we would love to get involved if that is an option. And also, do you work with Macs and PCs, or one or the other phones?

You asked a great question. So, I think the first thing, the one thing I didn't ask you, AJ, is that with the computers that you get out there that comes with a warranty and tech support, correct?

Correct. Yes.

And then, out of our agreement together, you're doing, like, remote digital navigation and tech support, too, as a way to partner with folks. So, I wanted to make sure you had a chance to clarify that about Human-I-T's value proposition and see if you got an answer for Michelle.

Yeah, definitely. So just to speak to that a little bit, Scott, so each device that we do provide does come with a tech support for free, so you can reach out to Human-I-T. There's a little sticker on the device, there's also something on our website. There's a variety of different ways that you can get ahold of us to get connected with a tech support representative, whether that's, hey, I have a problem, I have a question, or something's not working right. All of those, we would love to work with you to resolve. And then that can also get you connected to our digital navigation team for any additional support that may be needed. And then each device does come with a hardware warranty, so if something is truly not working correctly, you can work with us, we'll get that fixed, replaced, whatever may be needed, for the individual situation to speak to the individual question here, we do provide a variety of different devices. Macs are definitely one of those, definitely PCs, Chromebooks, there's a variety of different things that we do provide on our side. And we do have a full team that does the refurbishing, actually, out of, the city of Bell, in California, and they

do all of that work there, refurbishing the device, getting into working condition, and then actually distributing it to communities from that site. But I would be happy to see if there are ways to partner with additional support that may be needed. If you want to reach out to us directly, we'd be happy to start that conversation to see what we can make work.

Alright, thank you, AJ. Thank you, Michelle. Sery, I see you got a hand up. We got one time for one quick question. Is this a quick question or a comment? You were unmuted, and then you re-muted. There you go.

Yeah, I just want to share our major problem is the device. We don't have enough devices, but we have a lot of people who need the device. So, if any of you would be willing to work with us and give us the device and provide technical support, we would appreciate it, because the other thing, I'm currently served on the 18 Commission of the Sacramento County. There's over 340,000 seniors in the county. 27% are limited English speaking.

Absolutely. Thank you, Sery. And we know that, you know, seniors are a major focus of the state's Broadband for All and digital equity efforts. Thank you for underscoring and validating the tremendous need in this space. Kat, AJ, thank you, again folks, you can connect through them by signing up on the Broadband for All portal sign-up page. So, without further ado, I want to kick it over to Aracely Hernandez, my colleague, probably the most important part is to share information about upcoming grant opportunities, because we know that's important to you all. Aracely?

Yeah, thank you, Scott. All right, I'm happy to provide these ongoing updates. Next slide, please. So, in terms of upcoming deadlines, we do have the Tribal Technical Assistance Program with a deadline of October 1st. This is for California tribes with or without federal recognition to help improve voice and broadband communications. The other two grants, the Broadband Adoption Account as well as the Public Housing Account, both have a deadline of January 1st, so there's still some time there, but we do encourage applications to be submitted at any time on a rolling basis, and feel free to use the respective QR codes. For these, grant, and for more information there. Next slide, please. Next is the Digital Divide Grant Program. This does have a deadline coming up on October 30th. It's designed to support rural and urban public schools, and nonprofits. There's 3 grants that are available here for a total of \$200,000. One grant for \$100,000 for rural and urban public schools, and then two additional grants of up to \$50,000 each. For nonprofits, or CBOs. Again, encourage you all to use the QR code and the link here if you'd like more information. Next slide. Here we just have a quick update that was just announced this week. The Public Utilities Commission, did extend the deadline for the broadband infrastructure grant application. The original deadline was on October 1st. The new deadline is

now November 2nd, 2026. To give applicants time to review, eligibility data requirement and be program information. Again, more information is available directly on the Public Utilities Commission website. Next slide. Here we have ongoing reminders about the NTIA's Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. There's up to \$540 million in funding for broadband use and adoption projects, as well as infrastructure deployment. And this does have a November 17th deadline, coming up. Next slide, please. Another grant by the NTIA is the Native Entities Grant Program, also with the November 17th, deadline coming up, for grants ranging from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million, for broadband use, adoption, workforce and technology upgrades. And again, all these slides have respective QR codes and links for more information. Next slide, please. Last is the Anthropic Grant Program, which is designed to train and deploy young workers, over 18 years of age, while also equipping nonprofits with AI tools and systems. This is the second cohort with the January 2027 deadline. Again, we will be providing the links, along with the slides and recording, following this meeting, probably in the coming weeks, so please stay tuned for more information. And I will move on to the next slide, please. So we are, essentially wrapping up here. We would like to thank all of our presenters that joined us today to participate in the panels, to give us more information on the Lifeline program. And we do encourage you all to sign up for more resources and just more information, that we provide on a monthly basis during these community of Practice meetings, every month on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Our next meeting is scheduled on October 29th, again, Thursday, October 29th. Feel free to use the QR code to sign up. We will also be sending more information via email and encourage you all to go ahead and join us. Next slide, please. So again, the links to the October Community of Practice is in the chat. We will be providing more information as things evolve, but again, feel free to use the QR code here. We do encourage you all to sign up for our newsletters that are sent out on a monthly basis. And thank you all for your participation and definitely encourage you all to continue to join us on a monthly basis and reach out if you do have any additional questions as it relates to our digital inclusion program. Partners, and yes, today was a really great way to learn more about all the resources that are available to everyone. So, thank you all. And we do have a little bit of time if there is any questions. That's gone.

A great job of providing a lot of information, a lot of grant funding programs, and we want to definitely underscore to folks that, you know, capacity continues to be, you know, a concern, and that, you know, more than tools and resources, it's the support to do the work. And these are a series of programs that can potentially help do that. Aracely, Kem Brown has a question for you.

Yeah, I just was wondering for like the Community of Practice, the next upcoming dates, are there, like, different topics, or is it kind of the same presentation as today.

Yeah, we definitely have different agenda topics, different panel discussions, different subject matter experts that we've invited in the past. So, the agenda does evolve and change, and we do encourage you to sign up and provide any input, you know, as it relates to some of the questions that we ask when folks are registering. Anything else to add, Scott?

Yeah, Kem, and so, really, this is. In many ways, an implementation group to focus on continuing to achieve, you know, the non-infrastructure deployment goals, Broadband for All in the State Digital Equity Plan. So, really the Northstar's we try to focus on are Goals 2 and 3 of the Action Plan and the Digital Equity Plan, which are that all individuals have access to affordable home internet service and devices, and they have access to the skills. And training that they need. And collaboration and alignment is huge. What we would love is, if there's a topic that falls under that umbrella that you would like us to focus on in a future meeting, you can tell us now, or you can, you know, shoot us an email, too.

Okay, I can't think of anything now other than the work that I do is resident services, so I deal with a lot of affordable housing units, with a lot of families who I don't have that type of access. So, I don't know if you guys have anything under, resident service for affordable housing properties like, how you organize, or how you organize.

Well, I definitely think that from a, so, low-cost service offers, I mean, this is a place that comes together. There's a lot of folks that are committed to broadband adoption, so that's making sure that folks are aware of the low-cost and affordable options that are available where they live, and then leveraging or capitalizing on the Public Utilities Commission's Lifeline broadband pilot, which could help reduce the cost, there, and particularly, you know, I think looking at these folks, if those housing complexes have, computer labs, or you have You know, caseworkers or resource folks, you know, digital navigation skills is something that could be really helpful, to support your folks and potentially being able to leverage some of the Digital literacy training platforms things like that.

Okay, alright, thanks. And then, I would there was one thing, though. If you guys could bring someone who maybe could share how they have formed or organized any of the events surrounding digital literacy.

Oh, interesting. Okay, yeah, this is so, like, not a provider up here, but, like, a local regional provider. We've done that in the past, but this is a community of practice, so we can continue to do that, because we want to uplift the efforts

of the folks in the communities that are doing the real heavy lifting on this one. Thank you for reminding us of that.

Okay, thank you.

Okay, Aracely.

I don't see any other questions unless anyone else would like to chime in, unmute yourself and ask a question, or if you have any closing comments, we welcome that. Alright, not seeing any. Thank you all again for joining. We look forward to your ongoing participation and our next October meeting. So, stay tuned for more information and definitely sign up for our newsletter just to receive ongoing updates. Thank you all.