Internet for All:
Gulf Coast Local Coordination Workshop

Harris County – The Office of Broadband

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Cross-Sector Collaboration
3. National Telecommunications and Information Administration
    - Overview of The Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program
    - FCC Map Overview
    - BEAD Challenge Overview
    - Digital Equity Act Programs
4. Texas State Grant Funding – Texas Broadband Availability Map
5. Telehealth Access and Initiatives Panel
6. Digital Access Challenges and Solutions
7. Digital Equity: How to Get Involved
8. Closing Remarks



Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

Internet for All: Gulf Coast Local Coordination Workshop

Kseniya Benderskaya, AVP
Community Development
March 9, 2023

The views expressed are my own and do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Federal Reserve System.

Federal Reserve System: Responsibilities

Monetary Policy





Supervision & Regulation

Payments System Oversight





Consumer Protection & Community Development

Community Development Function

The Federal Reserve's community development function promotes **economic growth** and **financial stability** for low- and moderate-income **(LMI) communities and individuals**.

The Federal Reserve Board's community development efforts focus on:

- Housing and neighborhood revitalization
- Small business and entrepreneurship
- Employment and workforce development
- Community development finance to spur investment in underserved communities

Key Challenges for Economic Growth in Low-income Communities

Our **research efforts, targeted initiatives, and outreach/awareness building** focus on the following types of challenges.

Social, infrastructure, and geographic barriers that make it more difficult for low-income individuals to access education, employment, credit, or to start a small business, and save for retirement.

Lack of coordination, incomplete approaches, and fragmentation across the existing resources that are intended to alleviate poverty or barriers to economic opportunity.

Our Targeted Initiatives Focus on Wicked Problems

"Wicked problems are messy, ill-defined, more complex than we fully grasp, and open to multiple interpretations based on one's point of view." - Atul Gawande

Wicked Problems, Systemic Thinking & Collaboration

- Multiple independent factors play into root causes
  - Each of these independent factors is a wicked problem in and of itself (such as racism)
- The causes, and solutions, are unique depending on individual perspectives and local dynamics
- There are no right or wrong solutions, only better or worse solutions ("moving the needle")

Wicked problems require systems strategies and a collaborative approach

Why is the digital divide a focal topic for the Fed?

- The Fed has been tasked with a dual mandate – to promote price stability and full employment
- As part of our mission to promote full employment, we work to understand challenges that limit economic opportunity
- In today's digital world, lack of broadband access, devices and lack of digital skills are challenges that truly limits a person's ability to participate fully in the economy

Advancing Digital Inclusion: Demonstration Projects





Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

For more information, visit us at:
https://www.dallasfed.org/cd/digital

To connect:
Kseniya.Benderskaya@dal.frb.org

THE BROADBAND EQUITY ACCESS AND DEPLOYMENT (BEAD) PROGRAM

FUNDED BY THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW

ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

JUNE 2022

BEAD program will provide ~$42.45B for infrastructure planning and implementation

Funding pool
$42.45B

A program to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where we need it to and increase adoption of high-speed Internet.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Entities eligible to apply for this program include:

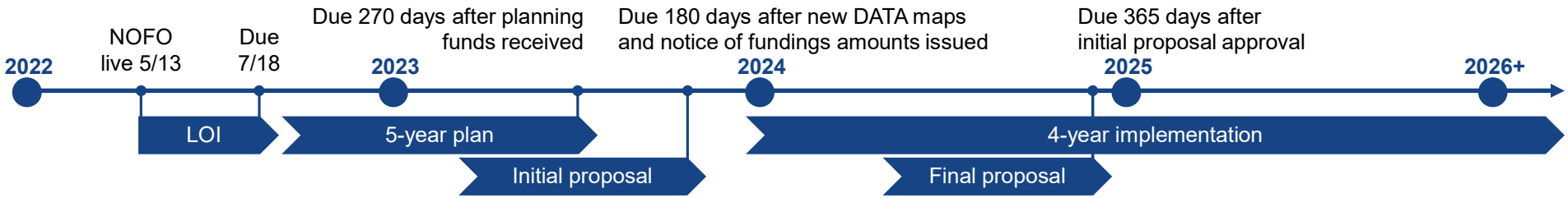
- All 50 States
- The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
- Other Territories: U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Example eligible uses of funds include:

- Planning for deployment of Internet
- Deploying or upgrading Internet
- Installing Internet in multi-tenant buildings
- Implementing adoption and digital equity programs
- Workforce and job training

ESTIMATED TIMELINE

Timeline approximate unless exact date specified



BEAD funding includes three components and is based on new FCC maps

Three components of funding:

Minimum allocation

$100M for each state, D.C., and Puerto Rico

$25M for U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

+

High-cost allocation

$$\frac{\text{\# unserved locations in high-cost areas in the Eligible Entity}}{\text{\# unserved locations in high-cost areas in the US}} \times \$4.245\text{B}$$

+

Remaining funds allocation

$$\frac{\text{\# unserved locations in the Eligible Entity}}{\text{\# unserved locations in the US}} \times \text{Remaining funds}^{1}$$

New FCC Broadband DATA Maps will be utilized to identify unserved locations

Eligible Entities shall develop a **challenge process** for stakeholders to challenge whether a location or community anchor institution is eligible for grant funds

Eligible Entities must **document the final list** of unserved locations, underserved locations, and eligible community anchor institutions

1. $41.6B – minimum initial allocation – high-cost allocation

BEAD funding will go to projects that expand reliable, high-speed Internet

Example uses of funds

- Deploying or upgrading high-speed Internet infrastructure
- Conducting data collection, broadband mapping, and planning to support program goals
- Installing or providing reduced-cost high-speed Internet in a multi-family residential building
- Supporting broadband adoption, including programs to provide affordable devices
- Investing in training and workforce development or other programs to support digital equity

Eligible Entities will select projects based on selection criteria including

- Amount of BEAD funds required
- Affordability to the consumer
- Subgrantee's record of compliance with federal labor laws
- Speed to project deployment
- Speed of network and other technical capabilities
- Other factors established by states

BEAD will prioritize Complete coverage of unserved locations and underserved locations (where funding permits), then CAIs



First, Eligible Entities must serve all unserved locations (incl. serving multi-tenant buildings)

- **Unserved locations** without reliable Internet and with download speeds <25 Mbps, upload speeds <3 Mbps, and latency < 100ms



Second, Eligible Entities must serve all underserved locations

- **Underserved locations** without reliable Internet and with download speeds <100 Mbps, upload speeds <20 Mbps, and latency <100 ms



Next, NTIA strongly urges Eligible Entities serve Eligible Community Anchor Institutions

- **Eligible Community Anchor Institutions** are entities (e.g., school, library, hospital) that facilitate greater use of high-speed Internet service by vulnerable populations and have download speed <1 Gbps
- **Other eligible uses** include affordability programs, cybersecurity training, workforce development., etc.
- If an Eligible Entity wants to use funds for other eligible uses instead of eligible Community Anchor Institutions, then it must provide a strong rationale

The BEAD Program will include a low-cost broadband service option for all Eligible Subscribers



Low-cost option is available to Eligible Subscribers

- **Eligible Subscriber** means any household that qualifies for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or a successor program

Please see the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website for more details on the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) (link)



Eligible Entities will define parameters for low-cost plans

Eligible Entities will define the parameters for low-cost plans while considering the following:

- Provider participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program or other household subsidies
- Expected cost to an Eligible Subscriber after subsidies
- Technical performance of the plan (e.g., Internet speed)



Description of an example low-cost plan

- **Cost:** ≤$30 incl. taxes and fees (≤$75 for tribal land residents)
- **Subsidies:** Can apply Affordable Connectivity Benefit subsidies
- **Speed:** ≥100 Mbps for downloads and ≥20 Mbps for uploads
- **Latency:** ≤100 ms
- **Extra fees:** No data caps or surcharges
- **Upgrades:** Can later upgrade to new low-cost offerings at no cost

Eligible Entities must conduct local coordination activities as part of plan development and implementation



Geographic coverage

Coordination must include Tribal, rural, suburban, and urban areas

Each political subdivision and Tribe must be given:

- Opportunity to submit a plan for Eligible Entity consideration
- Opportunity to comment on Eligible Entity proposals



Diverse stakeholders

Coordination must include a diverse group of stakeholders

Eligible Entities must ensure Tribal or Native entities are involved in developing plans (incl. via a formal Tribal consultation process)

Example stakeholders include state agencies, community anchor institutions, etc.



Outreach mechanisms

Coordination must include multiple mechanisms to ensure broad awareness and participation

Example mechanisms include listening sessions, public meetings, websites, social media, etc.



Transparency

Coordination must include clear procedures to ensure transparency

Examples include websites, periodic reports, in-person meetings, etc.



Un-/underserved and under-represented communities

Coordination must target un-/underserved, and underrepresented communities that have historically faced barriers in participating in federal programs

Examples include an advisory board with representatives, surveys to better understand needs, etc.

Initial Proposal | Initial Proposals are due within 180 days of the release of the Notice of Available Amounts

Timing	Content	Review	Approval
When the Notice of Available Amounts is issued, the Assistant Secretary will invite Eligible Entities to submit Initial Proposals Each Eligible Entity will have **180 days** to submit its Initial Proposal	Initial Proposal is the **first draft** of an Eligible Entity's Final Proposal for funding Draft should explain how the Eligible Entity plans to ensure access to a reliable, affordable, high-speed Internet connection Draft should describe **challenge process** for stakeholders to challenge whether a location is eligible for funds and process for **selecting subgrantees**	Prior to submission, each political subdivision and Tribal / Native entities must have opportunity to submit a plan for consideration and comment on the proposal Assistant Secretary will then begin the **iterative review process** in the order Initial Proposals are submitted Assistant Secretary decides if proposed use of funds: 1. Complies with statute 2. Is in the public interest 3. Effectuates the purposes of the statute	When the Assistant Secretary approves of the Initial Proposal, the Eligible Entity may receive **20% of its total allocation** for expenditures specifically approved in the initial proposal

DRAFT | PRE-DECISIONAL

FCC Maps Overview

The "Fabric" and Broadband Availability Data

*The map consists of two layers: the **Fabric**, which is the base layer of the map, and **broadband availability data**, collected from ISPs by the FCC. Both sets of data can be challenged by states, territories, and other entities, although through different processes and on different timelines.*

Fabric

What

The Fabric is a dataset of all structures in every state and territory where fixed broadband internet access service is or could be installed - Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs).

Who

FCC contracted with CostQuest to build and update the Fabric.

Updates

The Fabric is **updated twice a year, every year**. This update includes a complete refresh from CostQuest using updated data and challenges to the Fabric from states and stakeholders.

The Current Map

Version 1 of the Fabric is the base of the current public map. Version 2 of the Fabric is available to license holders to submit challenges, and for ISPs to submit their updated availability data.

Broadband Availability Data

What

Broadband availability data shows what broadband services, if any, are available at locations included in the Fabric, as reported by ISPs.

Who

This data is submitted to the FCC by (ISPs) during bi-annual FCC "Broadband Data Collection" periods.

Updates

This data can be updated consistently over time as challenges are resolved. Currently the FCC is updating it approximately twice per month.

The Current Map

Current broadband availability data from the FCC's first Broadband Data Collection period in summer of 2022 is publicly displayed on the map and being updated as challenges are adjudicated.

National Broadband Map

NBM Updates from Fall 2022

- September 12, 2022 - Bulk Fabric challenge process opened.
- November 18, 2022 - Public launch of the National Broadband Map and the FCC began accepting availability challenges.
- December 30, 2022 - Fabric Version 2 Released.
  - Bulk challenges submitted before Nov. 10, 2022 were reviewed for possible inclusion.
- December 31, 2022 - Second provider filing window opened (closes March 1, 2023).

Fabric Location Challenges

- March 15, 2023 is the target date for submitting Fabric challenges to have them be considered for version 3.
- Version 3 matters – it is likely the map you will be using as you begin your BEAD planning process and locations not shown on the map can not benefit from BEAD funding.
- Recent Public Notice (Jan. 25, 2023) has tips for how to approach Fabric challenges.

BEAD Challenge Process Overview

What is the BEAD Challenge Process?

Challenge Process

After submission of its Initial Proposal and before allocating BEAD funds received for the deployment of broadband networks to subgrantees, an Eligible Entity must **conduct a challenge process**.

Under this process, a unit of local government, nonprofit organization, or broadband service provider can challenge a determination made by the Eligible Entity in the Initial Proposal as to whether a particular location or community anchor institution within the jurisdiction of the Eligible Entity is eligible for the grant funds, including whether a particular location is **unserved or underserved**.

Eligible Entities must submit any successful challenges to NTIA for review and approval.

PROGRAM SEQUENCE

1. Eligible entity (EE) develops challenge process.
2. EE submits initial proposal.
3. NTIA reviews and approves challenge process.
4. EEs run approved challenge process.
5. EEs submit challenge results to NTIA.
6. NTIA reviews and validates challenge results.
7. NTIA communicates determination to EEs.
8. EEs publish final determinations.

Submission and Execution Timing

What version of the FCC's maps should the Eligible Entity use? Eligible Entities should update the data provided in their Initial Proposal to reflect the most recently published version of the National Broadband Map available as of the initiation of the challenge process.

When does the approval process occur? The Assistant Secretary may modify the challenge process proposed by the Eligible Entity as necessary and shall inform the Eligible Entity of any modifications required. Once an Eligible Entity makes any required modifications, the Assistant Secretary shall approve the challenge process, either in conjunction with, or prior to, approval of the Eligible Entity's Initial Proposal.

When must an Eligible Entity provide public notice of the challenge process results? At least 60 days before allocating grant funds for network deployment, an Eligible Entity must provide public notice of the final classification of each unserved location, underserved location, or Eligible Community Anchor Institution within the jurisdiction of the Eligible Entity.

Should Eligible Entities expect additional guidance from NTIA? NTIA is in the process of developing additional guidance to support Eligible Entities in developing, submitting, and conducting the BEAD challenge process.

DIGITAL EQUITY ACT PROGRAMS

FUNDED BY THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW
ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

INTERNET FOR ALL
INTERNETFORALL.GOV

MAY 2022

Digital Equity Act created three programs to promote digital equity and inclusion

Funding pool
$2.75B

Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed Internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.

PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS

The Digital Equity Act created three programs:

State Planning
- $60M formula funding program to develop digital equity plans

State Capacity
- $1.44B formula funding program to implement plans & promote digital inclusion

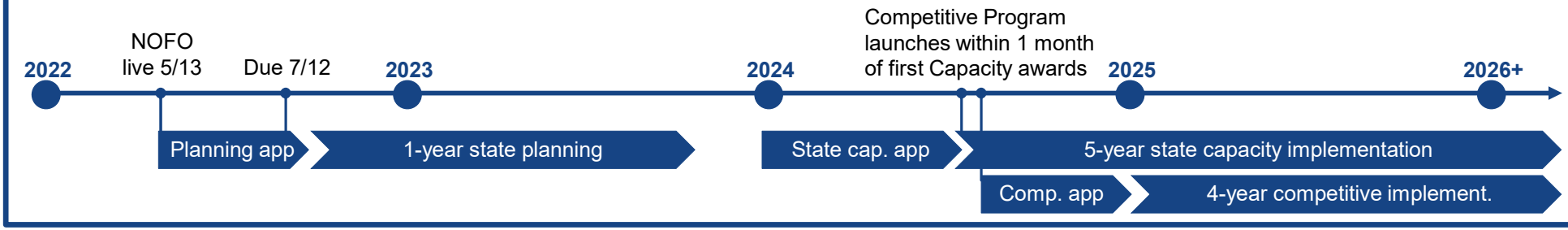
Competitive
- $1.25B to implement digital equity and inclusion activities

Example eligible uses of funds across three programs include:

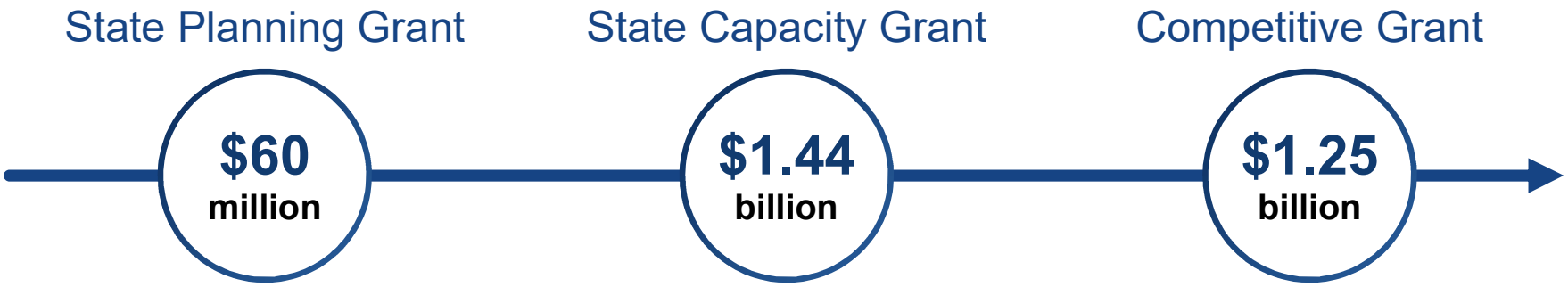
- Developing digital equity plans; states must develop a plan to be eligible for state capacity grants
- Making awards to other entities to help make digital equity plans
- Improving accessibility and inclusivity of public resources
- Implementing digital equity plans and related activities
- Providing digital literacy and digital skills education
- Facilitating the adoption of high-speed Internet

ESTIMATED TIMELINE

Timeline approximate unless exact date specified



The programs are sequential and participation in planning is essential to receive capacity (i.e., implementation) funds



	State Planning Grant	State Capacity Grant	Competitive Grant
Who	Open to **U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico**	Open to U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, that **completed the State Planning Program**	Open to **certain entities**, such as political subdivisions, Tribal entities, nonprofits, community anchor institutions, local educational agencies, and workforce development orgs
What	Grants will be used to **develop a State Digital Equity Plan**	Grants will be used to **implement State Digital Equity Plans**	Grants will be used to **develop and implement digital inclusion activities**

Other U.S. territories, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian orgs have a separate statutory set-aside and separate program requirements under the State Planning and Capacity Programs, as detailed on the next page

The Digital Equity Act focuses on addressing the needs of "covered populations" as defined by the statute

Covered Populations

Identity groups and communities disproportionally impacted by digital inequity

- Low-income households
- Aging populations
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- People with disabilities
- People with language barriers
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Rural inhabitants

Programs' funds can be used for different purposes



Uses of State Planning Grant funds

- **Developing** State Digital Equity **Plans**
- **Making subgrants** to other entities, such as community anchor institutions, municipalities, Indian Tribes, nonprofits, and other organizations, that help develop the Digital Equity Plan



Uses of State Capacity and Competitive Grant funds

- **Updating and implementing** State Digital Equity **Plans** (Capacity)
- Pursuing **digital inclusion activities**
- Facilitating **adoption** of high-speed Internet
- Implementing **training and workforce development programs**
- Making **equipment and software** for high-speed Internet services available
- Constructing or upgrading **public access computer centers**

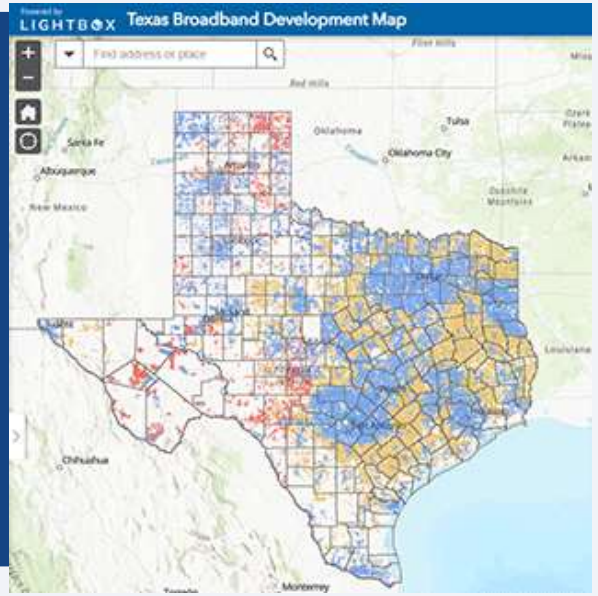
State Planning and Capacity funds will be allocated proportionally based on the State's population, share of members of covered populations, and relative lack of availability and adoption among residents

NTIA and the U.S. Census Bureau have collaborated to create the Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, which shows covered population totals for each state and other inputs into the funding formula

Texas BDO: State Funding – Broadband Map

TEXAS BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Greg Conte
Director – Texas Broadband Development Office



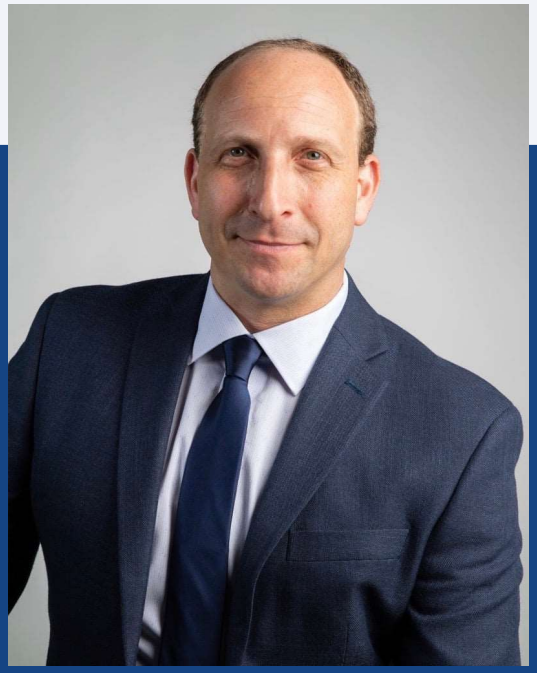
Break

We will resume in 20 minutes @ 10:20 AM

Telehealth Access and Initiatives Virtual Panel



Jamie Hughes, DNP, RN, NE-BC
Director of ACCESS



Alexey Gruber, MS
Director – Operations and Technology Services



Dr. Ericka Brown, MD, MBA, FACHE
Director of Community Health and Wellness Division

Harris County Public Health
Building a Healthy Community

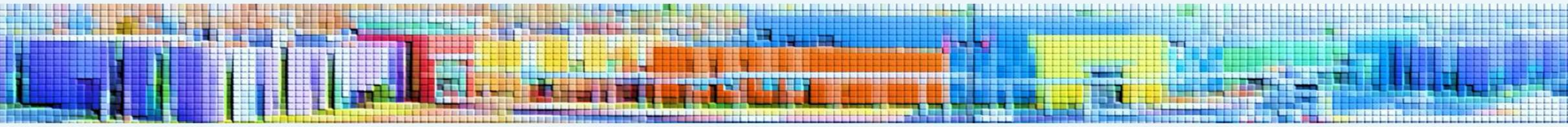
Digital Access Challenges



Laura Segura
Director of Donor & Community Engagement

Spring Branch Family Development Center

Laura Segura
Director of Donor &
Community Engagement



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Laura Segura
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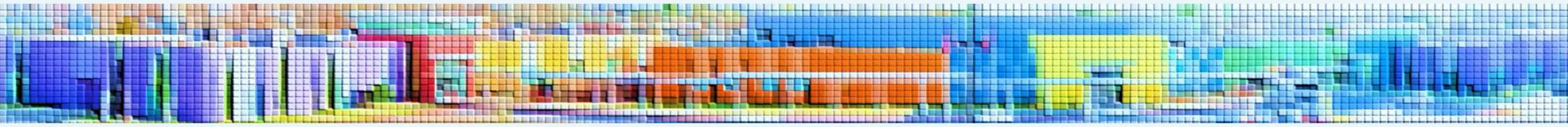
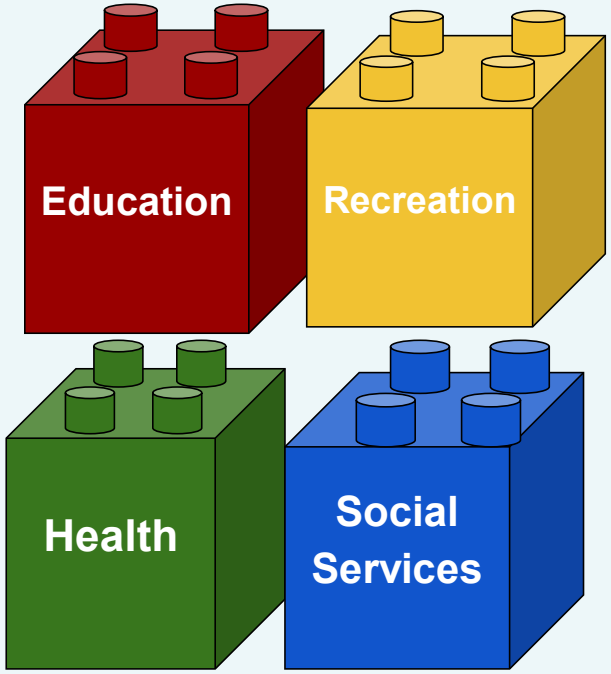


Focus Areas



SBFDC's Strategy



On-site Partners at SBFDC



SBFDC's Immediate Community: Pitner Road



1700 Apartments

6,000+ Residents

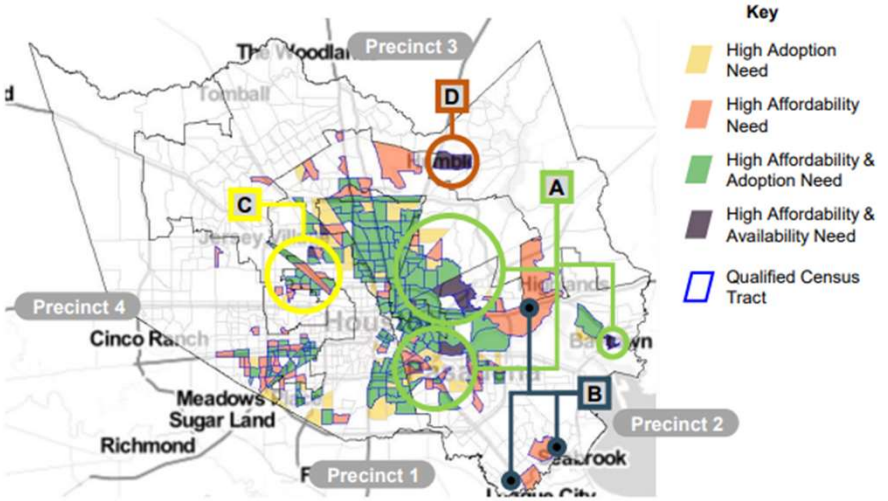
30% internet access in home

33% under 18

50.8% Minors under poverty level

Rollout: Notable insights and considerations for targeting project efforts

Figure 4: Affordability Needs & Qualified Census Tracts



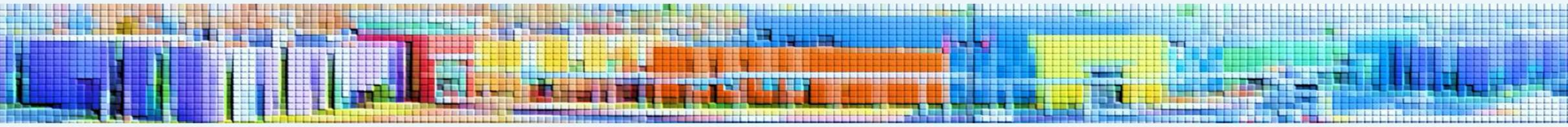
A. Affordability programs can be a crucial lifeline to QCTs where high plan costs and limited provider options (i.e., Baytown, Gates Prairie, Harrisburg) are access barriers residents

B. For QCTs where affordability is the primary barrier (i.e., Channelview, Webster, Clear Lake) nearby community centers can provide program information and on-site enrollment

C. In Northwest Houston, high variety in needs will require the County to coordinate middle mile expansion, private sector investment, digital literacy, and affordability programs

D. Affordability programs and using existing county fiber lines to support last-mile solutions can help areas such as Humble, where county fiber runs past QCTs with high need

From the Harris County Office of Broadband Strategic Plan, Page 28



Harris County Public Library Partnership

Digital Access Opportunity to Help Bridge the Digital Divide

March 2022-March 2023

Round 1

5G WiFi Hotspots

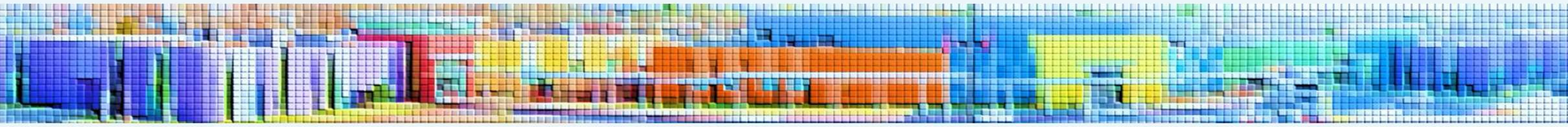
Chromebooks

Round 2

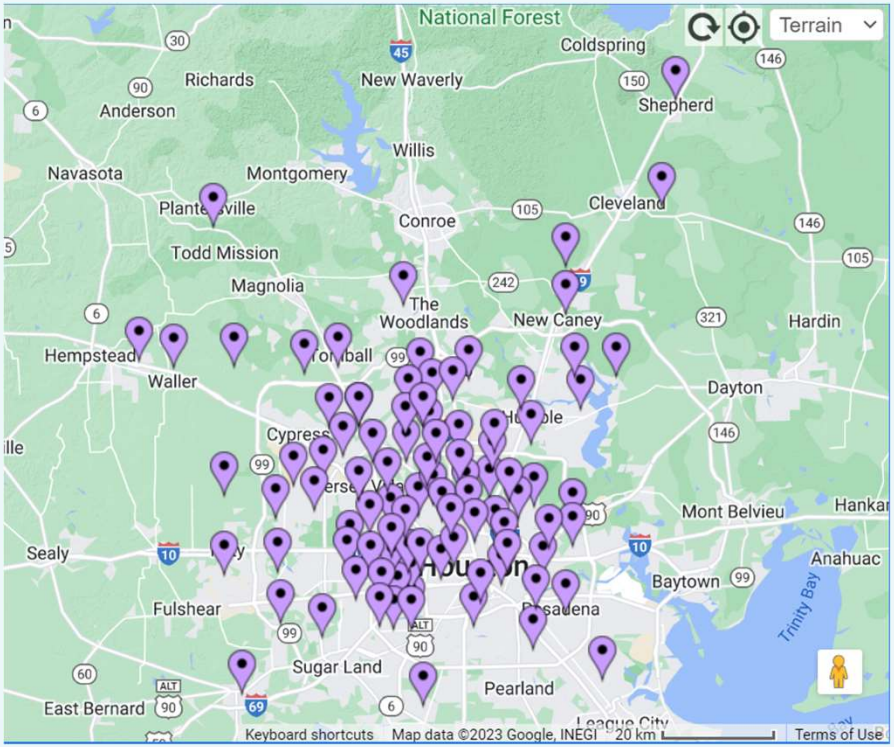
Chromebooks with WiFi integrated

HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY CONNECTED

- 2356 individuals served through SBFDC device checkouts
  - 2000 hotspots
  - 2356 Chromebooks
- Worked with on-site agencies to identify clients
- “Comadre Network” took off, developed extensive waiting list
- never publicized on social media, intentionally, to control flow



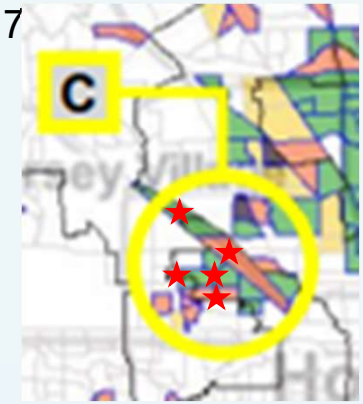
95 Zip Codes Served

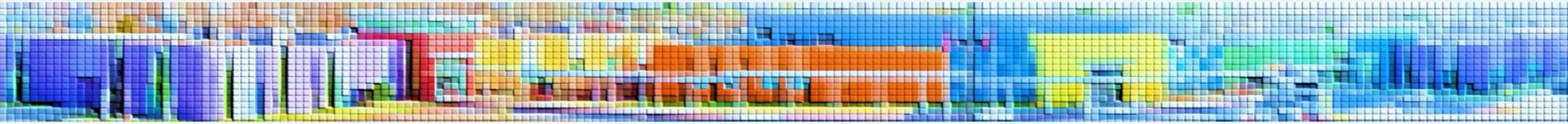


2356 individuals served

75% from 5 Zip Codes:

- 77080 (46.7%)
- 77055 (16.3%)
- 77092 (6.1%)
- 77040 (3.4%)
- 7



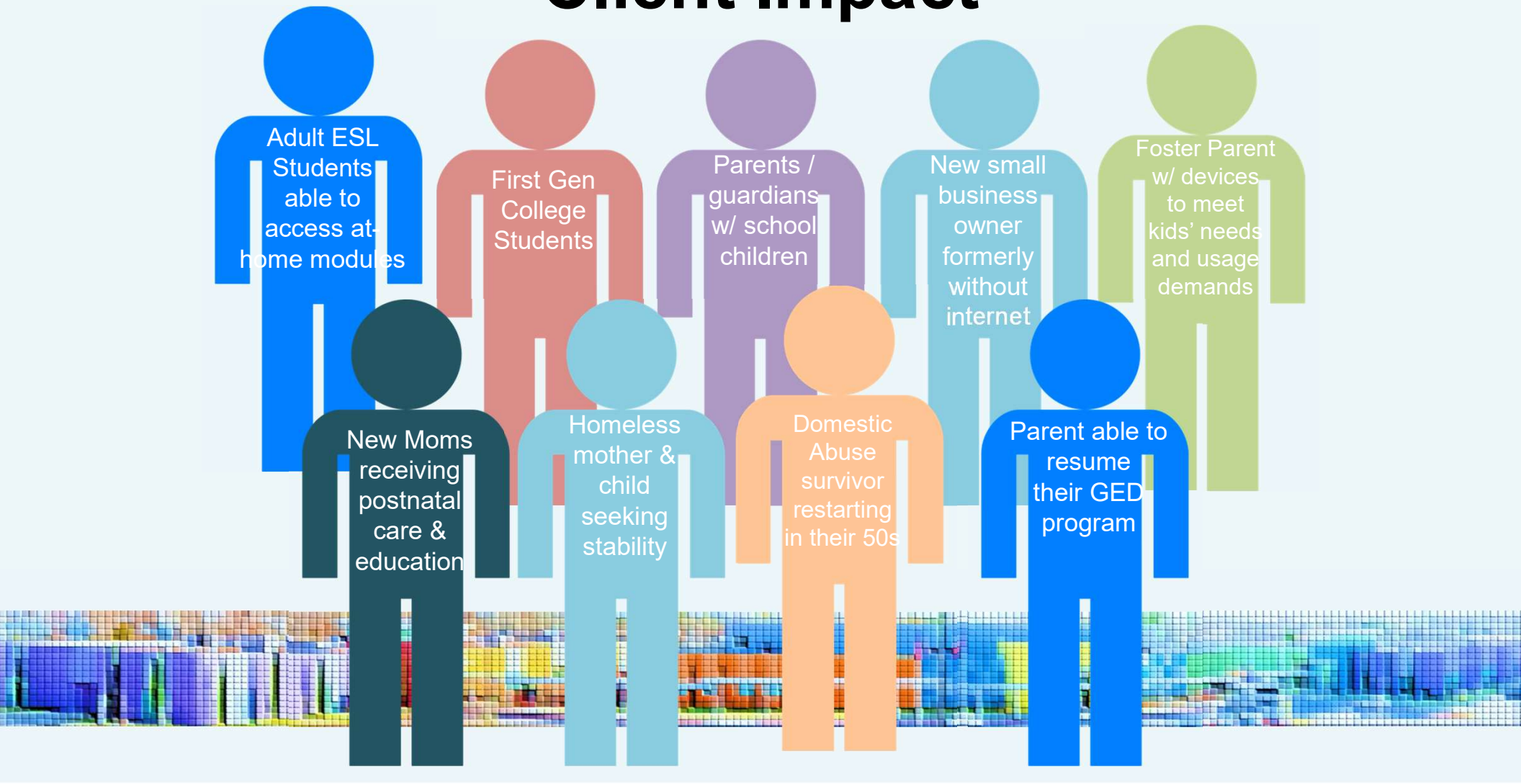


Realities

- Little prior tech experience / access
  - many depend on children to navigate
- Considerable segment is not only digitally illiterate, but cannot read or write
  - Internet / Computers have own language
- Economically strained;
  - $10/month is a high cost for many
  - devices can be ⅓-½ of monthly income or more; most need multiple devices because have larger families

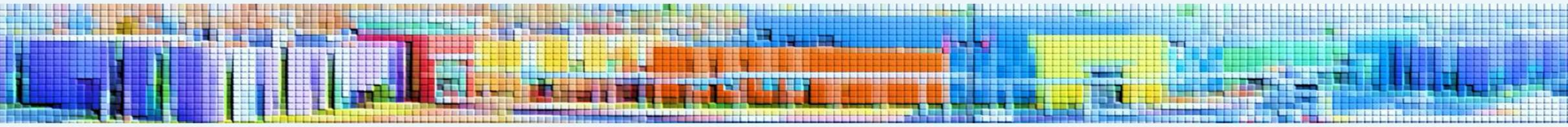


Client Impact



Takeaways

- Need input from the people trying to serve; know the audience
- Expand the impact at every point possible
  - think communally, even about single devices or access points (i.e. tethering ability for devices)
- need to go beyond social media and web-based communication
- need non-online options to enroll, if trying to reach people without internet access / devices
  - phone calling, setting appointments, paper forms
- Appreciate the CIPA filter (at least in our community)
- may have devices at school for children, but not always available year-round; rental fee and/or damage penalty often unaffordable



Internet access and an adequate device is no longer a “nice to have,” it’s a “need to have.”









Digital Access Solutions

HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

your pathway to knowledge

Ty Beauchamp
Division Director - Information Technology

Harris County Public Library System

- Bridging the digital divide and providing digital navigation services before the terms were coined
- Public PCs, digital literacy programming, technology assistants on staff
- Largest ECF distribution by a public library in the US



HARRISCOUNTY PUBLICLIBRARY
your pathway to knowledge

Three Pillars of Digital Equity

1. Internet Connectivity
2. Devices
3. Digital Literacy

HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
your pathway to knowledge

ECF Distribution: Round One

Guardrails came down with the barriers

System open for abuse

No one understood the program

HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
your pathway to knowledge

ECF Distribution: Round Two

Pair distributions with training sessions

Leverage scheduling platform

Switch vendors

HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
your pathway to knowledge

Lessons Learned

No one pillar survives without the others

Narrow and deep beats shallow and wide

Listen to the folks close to the ground

Equity is a process, not an event

HARRISCOUNTY PUBLICLIBRARY
your pathway to knowledge

Fireside Chat

Digital Equity:

How to Get Involved



Closing Remarks:
Next Steps