

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HOLLY J. MITCHELL  
AND HILDA L. SOLIS**

October 5, 2021

**Recognizing “Digital Inclusion Week: Pathways to Digital Empowerment” in Los Angeles County**

Since the evolution of technology has progressed to the point where society relies heavily on virtual forums for day-to-day tasks, the disparities in health, wealth, and opportunity among under-connected communities have become more prominent. COVID-19 has turned the floodlights on digital inequality in rural, tribal, and urban communities across the United States. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of how the world functioned turned to online platforms to stay safe, but not everyone had that choice, or luxury. Moreover, the [World Economic Forum reported in June of 2021](#) that one third of the world’s children have experienced significant loss of learning during the pandemic.

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance defines “digital equity” as “a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.” When our digital divide stops our youth from accessing a quality education, it is also a knowledge divide. When it stands in the way of accessing necessary medical care, it is a health and wellness

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MITCHELL \_\_\_\_\_

KUEHL \_\_\_\_\_

HAHN \_\_\_\_\_

BARGER \_\_\_\_\_

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

divide. And when it stands in the way of accessing necessary workforce retraining and competing for jobs, it is an opportunity divide. When families simply cannot afford available broadband options, they are experiencing technological poverty. In Los Angeles County (County) more than 182,000 households do not have a computer and nearly 365,000 households lack internet service. Across the Second Supervisorial District, the disparities are highest among Black and Latinx populations with over 20% of households lacking a broadband connection in some neighborhoods.

On August 10, 2021, the County Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously approved the motion "[Accelerating Efforts to Crush the Digital Divide](#)", which instructed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to invest up to \$500,000 of American Rescue Plan funds towards the creation of a block-by-block financial analysis for expanding affordable and reliable internet services to communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the Digital Divide. This analysis is ongoing in areas with low connectivity to determine what resources are needed to connect all County residents to the internet.

To further accelerate crushing the Digital Divide, the County should recognize the week of Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>- Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup> as [Digital Inclusion Week \(DIW\) 2021: Pathways to Digital Empowerment](#). All County departments, employees, and residents should commit to taking action to empower under-connected communities and focus services to achieve digital equity. Responding to the urgency of eliminating the Digital Divide, DIW aims to raise awareness of solutions addressing home internet access, personal devices, and local technology training and support programs. DIW organizes social media and outreach campaigns, encourages community activation through "Device Donation Drives", "Internet Enrollment Events" and even "Resumé Rallies." Through our County services and infrastructure, we should all work together to ensure digital equity is achieved for communities of concern.

**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Recognize "[Digital Inclusion Week \(DIW\): Pathways to Digital Empowerment](#)" from October 4 – October 8, 2021 in Los Angeles County (County).

2. Authorize the Director of the Internal Services Department (ISD) to solicit donations or other gifts in any amount, subject to County budgetary guidelines and practices, on behalf of the Delete the Divide Initiative to benefit constituents and communities adversely impacted by the digital divide.
3. Encourage the participation in [L.A. Digital Equity Action League's](#) meetings during DIW to provide meaningful community-centered feedback on current needs and gaps in County broadband infrastructure and affordability.
4. Direct the Chief Executive Officer to utilize the provided social media kits to promote and advocate for DIW on County communication channels.

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