



County of Los Angeles
INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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February 10, 2023

To: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
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QUARTERLY UPDATE – INVESTMENTS TO ACCELERATE DIGITAL EQUITY

On November 16, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a motion to invest in immediate- and longer-term efforts to facilitate affordable and reliable high-speed internet services to underserved communities impacted by the digital divide (Board Agenda Item 19). The motion designated the Internal Services Department (ISD) as the lead department responsible for coordinating the County's efforts on all community broadband infrastructure and residential service initiatives to close the digital divide. The motion also included several directives and instructed the ISD Director to report back to the Board with quarterly progress updates.

Attached for your review is the fifth quarterly update.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (323) 267-2101.

SH:sh

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Department of Public Works

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
INVESTMENTS TO ACCELERATE DIGITAL EQUITY**

**QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
February 2023**

On November 16, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a motion to invest in immediate and longer-term efforts to provide affordable and reliable high-speed internet services to underserved communities impacted by the digital divide.¹ As directed in the motion, the Internal Services Department (ISD) has submitted quarterly progress reports dated February 2, 2022², May 13, 2022³, August 11, 2022⁴, and November 10, 2022.⁵ This is the fifth quarterly progress report.

Directive #1: Establish the County’s lead department.	
Directive	Status
a. Designate the Internal Services Department (ISD) as the lead department responsible for ensuring the County’s efforts on all community broadband infrastructure and residential service initiatives to close the Digital Divide are coordinated and aligned under the County’s Digital Divide Action Team, which is comprised of representatives from all County Departments and the Chief Executive Officer’s Chief Information Office (CIO).	Completed
Directive #2: Conduct a Countywide campaign on financial subsidy programs.	
Directive	Status
a. Instruct the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in consultation with ISD, to identify funding for a countywide promotional campaign to inform and educate constituents about financial subsidy programs that will assist with the costs of computers and internet service.	Completed

¹ [Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Statement of Proceedings for the Regular Meeting, November 16, 2021](#)

² [1st ISD Quarterly Update - Investments to Accelerate Digital Equity, February 7, 2022](#)

³ [2nd ISD Quarterly Update - Investments to Accelerate Digital Equity, May 13, 2022](#)

⁴ [3rd ISD Quarterly Update - Investments to Accelerate Digital Equity, August 11, 2022](#)

⁵ [4th ISD Quarterly Update - Investments to Accelerate Digital Equity, November 10, 2022](#)

Directive #2: Conduct a Countywide campaign on financial subsidy programs.	
Directive	Status
b. Instruct ISD through the Delete The Divide initiative to coordinate the countywide promotional campaign and subsidy programs, specifically the Federal Emergency Broadband Benefit. Additionally, the campaign should encourage the participation of all County Departments and, as appropriate, collaborations with internet service providers, telecommunication companies, school districts, regional consortia, community-based organizations, non-profits, and ethnic and hyper-local media. Outreach must be conducted in the County’s multiple threshold languages.	Completed <i>Phase 1: EBB promotion</i> Ongoing <i>Phase 2: ACP Promotion</i>

2(b) Phase 2 Promotional Campaign: Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

ACP Enrollment Events

On December 10, 2022, ISD partnered with the County Library to host ACP Enrollment and Laptop Giveaway events at 7 libraries across the County. Each library was located in an area where a significant number of households in the surrounding communities lack internet service. More than 1,000 people attended the events and 828 households were successfully enrolled with in-person assistance from ISD staff and trained volunteers organized by the California Emerging Technology Fund. Hundreds of new enrollees received a free laptop with one year of technical support services. The laptop recipients also completed a questionnaire about their current household demographics and internet experiences, and agreed to be contacted in the future for follow-up surveys. Additionally, a few internet services providers were on site to discuss their ACP service plans, including AT&T, Charter, Frontier, Sonic, and Verizon.

The 7 library locations included:

East Los Angeles Library, 4837 E. 3rd Street, Los Angeles, 90022

Gardena Mayme Dear Library, 1731 W. Gardena Boulevard, Gardena, 90247

Huntington Park Library, 6518 Miles Avenue, Huntington Park, 90255

San Fernando Library, 217 N. Maclay Avenue, San Fernando, 91340

San Gabriel Library, 500 S. Del Mar Avenue, San Gabriel, 91776

West Hollywood Library, 625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, 90069

Willowbrook Library, 11737 Wilmington Avenue, Los Angeles, 90059

ACP Grant Application

On January 6, 2023, ISD submitted an application for the new Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant Program administered by the FCC (the filing deadline was January 9, 2023). Grant awards will range from \$50,000 to \$1 million for projects that facilitate the promotion of ACP and increase awareness of and participation in the ACP among eligible households. Assistance with the ACP process can be done remotely, such as explaining the enrollment process to eligible households. However, the grant requires that assisting individuals with completing and submitting an ACP application must be done in-person.

ISD requested a \$1 million grant to expand countywide outreach efforts through in-person assistance that is strategically designed to engage thousands of ACP-eligible households. The proposed project will provide in-person assistance at County libraries, local community events, and large-scale ACP enrollment events at major iconic venues. Most County libraries are open 6 days per week, which provides a convenient and accessible location within the local community for individuals to walk-in and/or schedule an appointment to receive ACP assistance. Community events have also proven to be effective at reaching target populations based on ISD’s previous and current promotional efforts. Large enrollment events at major iconic venues (e.g., stadiums and arenas) will provide in-person support for massive numbers of people. Collectively, these initiatives will ensure convenient and direct access to constituents, and generate interest and conversations among constituents to further ACP awareness.

Grant awards are expected to be announced on or before March 10, 2023. The funding must be expended within two years.

Directive #3: Expand and/or enter into new agreements with the County’s existing broadband and/or carrier agreements for public access and use.	
Directive	Status
a. Instruct and authorize ISD to negotiate agreements with assistance from County Counsel and input from the CEO, with internet service providers and telecommunication companies and if the proposed agreement can be shown by ISD to be in the County’s best interest, return to the Board for approval to execute new agreements or amend existing agreements.	Ongoing

3(a) Negotiate Agreements with Internet Service Providers

ISD continues to receive interest from regional internet service providers and telecommunication companies willing to work with the County of Los Angeles to enhance broadband infrastructure. However, for business reasons, they have decided not to participate in the competitive solicitation process per Directive 4(b). These companies have presented fiber and wireless solutions to deliver low-cost, high-speed internet services to underserved communities ranging from no capital investments from the

County to network lease options. As of the date of this report, ISD has not received written proposals from any company or negotiated agreements.

Directive #4: Provide options for internet solutions, including cost estimates and timeline, that meet the digital needs of our most vulnerable residents: affordability, sustainability, and connectivity to high-speed, quality service.	
Directive	Status
a. Authorize ISD to amend its agreement, as needed, with the contractor that assisted in the development of its report to the Board in response to Item 45G of the August 31, 2021, Agenda to perform additional analysis for the options identified in the aforementioned report and provide program development services for future solicitations.	Completed
b. Instruct ISD to administer a competitive solicitation to acquire a Managed Service Provider to coordinate and manage the implementation of the Community Broadband Network. The scope of work should include, but not be limited to, project management, infrastructure design, system integrations, performance requirements, equipment testing and maintenance, administration of resources, and customer support services.	Completed

4(b) Solicitation for Managed Service Provider(s)

As reported in the Quarterly Progress Report dated November 10, 2022, the Board authorized ISD to award and execute master agreements with 9 pre-qualified companies: ICCN, Insight, Kajeet, Smartwave, NetSync, AT&T, T-Mobile, Motorola, and Deloitte Consulting, LLP.⁶ Each agreement is for an initial 5-year term, with five 1-year extension options, for a maximum total term of 10 years. Additionally, the Board authorized ISD to execute master agreements with new vendors as they become qualified.

The qualification process is open ended such that vendors can submit statements of qualifications at any time through September 13, 2027. Should any additional vendor submit a response to the RFSQ, the company will be subject to the RFSQ requirements and evaluation process to determine whether or not it will be recommended for pre-qualification. This process is not an indication or assurance that any pre-qualified company will be selected as a Managed Service Provider.

ISD has received additional responses to the RFSQ, which are currently being evaluated for prequalification.

⁶ Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, [Adopted Board Letter: Request for Approval to Award and Execute Community Broadband Network Services Master Agreements, September 13, 2022](#)

Directive #4: Provide options for internet solutions, including cost estimates and timeline, that meet the digital needs of our most vulnerable residents: affordability, sustainability, and connectivity to high-speed, quality service.	
Directive	Status
c. Instruct ISD to administer a competitive solicitation and negotiate agreements for public-private partnerships to construct and configure the Community Broadband Network.	In Progress

4(c) Solicitation for Public-Private Partnerships

On January 24, 2023, ISD released a competitive work order solicitation for Community Broadband Network demonstration pilot areas in East Los Angeles/Boyle Heights and South Los Angeles.⁷ A work order solicitation for the San Fernando Valley is planned for release in February 2023. These three pilot locations can be viewed on the County’s Delete The Divide website: <https://www.deletethedivide.org/cbn-projects/>.

A demonstration pilot area is being formalized for Southeast Los Angeles. The County has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the cities of Bell, Cudahy, Maywood, and South Gate. The MOU is an agreement to deploy our competitive advantages (including assets and operations) to bring new public connectivity infrastructure to communities and achieve alignment on projects and funding opportunities. The cities of Bell Gardens, Huntington Park and Lynwood are currently assessing the opportunity to participate in the demonstration pilot.

Prospective locations are being evaluated for a demonstration pilot in unincorporated areas in North Los Angeles County in collaboration with the Community Coalition of the Antelope Valley and support from the respective town councils.

Directive #4: Provide options for internet solutions, including cost estimates and timeline, that meet the digital needs of our most vulnerable residents: affordability, sustainability, and connectivity to high-speed, quality service.	
Directive	Status
d. Instruct CEO, in consultation with ISD and [Department of Public Works], to identify funding from Federal, State and/or County sources to support a five (5) year proof of concept model for a Community Broadband Network. Under the coordination of ISD, this pilot will utilize public-private partnerships and a Managed Service Provider for the deployment of a fully functional network of Citizen Broadband Radio Service and/or millimeter wave technologies to deliver reliable high-speed internet service to 12,500 households in digital divide target areas.	In Progress

⁷ [Community Broadband Network Services - Work Order Solicitation #ITS-110602-WOS-1](#)

4(d) Funding for Community Broadband Network

ISD's Quarterly Progress Report dated August 11, 2022 included a review of available funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and State of California. The major grants of interest to the County of Los Angeles are competitive with varying filling periods and criteria. As new grant opportunities become available, the County will need to be efficient in its administrative review and approval processes to ensure the timely submission of grant applications. The County will also need dedicated program staff to oversee grant applications, project deployment and grant management compliance.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, more than 415,000 households lack internet service in Los Angeles County. Based on this data, ISD developed an interactive map that illustrates the census tracts where the highest percentages of these households are located.⁸

Recently, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) published separate maps of proposed grant funding priorities for broadband infrastructure projects. Based on the current priority criteria, Los Angeles County will be extremely disadvantaged in competing for our fair share of available funds. It was anticipated that Los Angeles County would be well positioned to receive tens of millions of dollars. Now, the majority of cities and communities that are adversely impacted by the digital divide may not be eligible for these grant funding opportunities.

Federal National Broadband Map

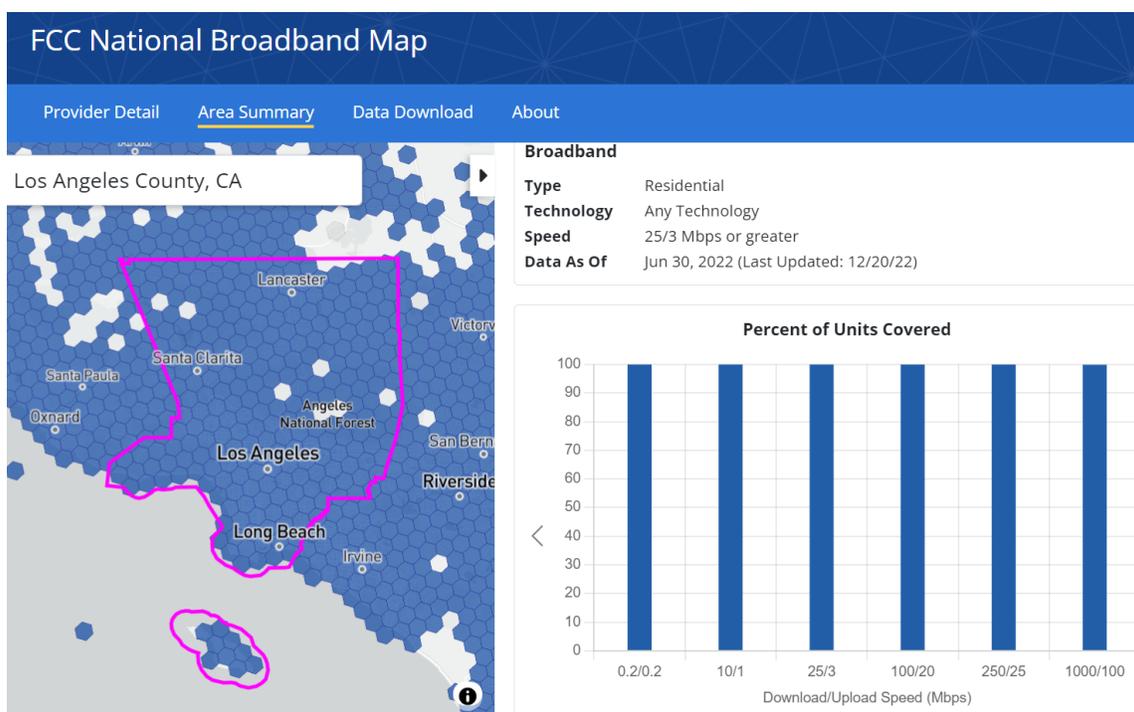
On November 18, 2022, the FCC released the *pre-production draft* of its new National Broadband Map.⁹ The map displays where internet services are available and not available across the United States. This map is based on data reported by Internet Service Providers to the FCC.

The National Broadband Map will be used to allocate \$42 billion in federal funds to states and territories to help expand access to affordable high-speed internet. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires the National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA) to use this map to allocate federal funding for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program. The BEAD program is a competitive grant process that will distribute funds based on a preference for unserved and underserved locations. Generally, unserved locations have no broadband service at all or broadband service offering speeds below 25 Mbps downstream/3 Mbps upstream. Underserved locations are areas that lack broadband service offering speeds of 100 Mbps downstream/20 Mbps upstream. The BEAD program may give additional consideration to other factors.

⁸ [Los Angeles County Digital Divide Map](#)

⁹ [FCC National Broadband Map \(Los Angeles County\)](#)

The representations on the current map suggest that adequate internet services are available in **97%** of Los Angeles County, which has eligibility implications for BEAD grants.



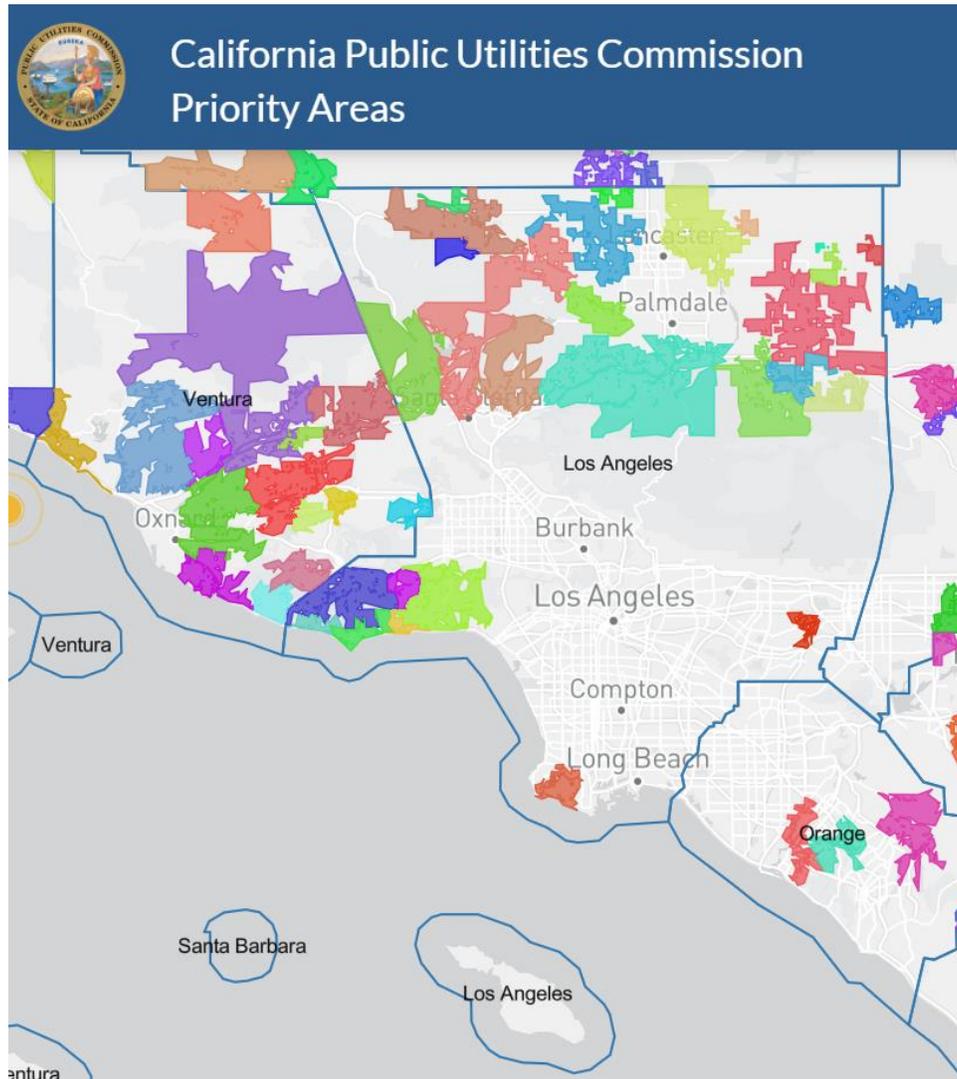
California Last-Mile Priority Areas

The CPUC administers the Federal Funding Account that provides \$2 billion in grants for last-mile broadband infrastructure projects. On January 3, 2023, the CPUC published maps for priority areas to fund projects that connect unserved and underserved Californians with high-speed broadband service. The CPUC defines an unserved location as lacking access to reliable broadband speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) downstream/3 Mbps upstream. The CPUC has not yet adopted a definition of an underserved location for the Federal Funding Account.

The Priority Areas Public Map is to be used by grant applicants to plan last-mile broadband grant proposals.¹⁰ The map uses different colors to identify areas eligible to apply, but otherwise do not represent anything specific. In Los Angeles County, priority areas include most of North County, mountainous terrain, and some cities (such as Malibu, Calabasas, Rolling Hills, Rancho Palos Verdes, and Walnut). The vast majority of the County are not considered priority areas, including most low-income, high-density communities impacted by the digital divide (areas without colors on the map below). Communities that will not be eligible for these infrastructure grants include historically underserved communities in South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, Southeast Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, and the South Bay. Also excluded

¹⁰ [CPUC Map of Priority Areas](#)

are Santa Catalina Island and underserved communities in the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale.



Board Actions

On January 24, 2023, the Board approved a motion to send 5-signature letters to federal and State officials expressing concern about their current priority areas for broadband infrastructure grants, which neglect most of the historically underserved communities in Los Angeles County that are adversely impacted by the digital divide. The motion also instructs the CEO Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to work with ISD to advocate in support of State and federal legislation and regulations that provide funding for the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure and reliable, affordable networks to bridge the digital divide by increasing access to high-speed internet.

Directive #4: Provide options for internet solutions, including cost estimates and timeline, that meet the digital needs of our most vulnerable residents: affordability, sustainability, and connectivity to high-speed, quality service.	
Directive	Status
e. Delegate authority to the CEO to hire a consultant to conduct a financial and technical feasibility study for a County-administered municipal broadband service. The study should assess capital costs and consumer pricing models that will enable reliable high-speed internet access for households in digital divide target areas. The study should also consider existing County assets and licensing agreements as well as the utilization of public and private fiber optic and wireless network infrastructures that can be included in the County-administered strategy.	In Progress

4(e) Feasibility Study for County-Administered Broadband Service

The CEO has selected Magellan Advisors to conduct a feasibility study for County-administered municipal broadband services in the 8 communities of need as identified using the County’s Equity Tool:

Community	Total households	Households w/o Internet	Households w/o computer	SVI	JENI	JESI	COVID impact
Unincorporated East LA	30,723	8,488 27.6%	4,277 13.9%	High-Highest	Moderate - Highest	Low - Highest	High-Highest
Los Angeles - Westlake	22,662	7,244 32.0%	2,498 11.0%	Moderate - Highest	Moderate - Highest	Moderate - Highest	Moderate - Highest
Los Angeles - Pico Union	12,515	3,835 30.6%	1,355 10.8%	Highest	Low - High	Low - High	Highest
City of Long Beach	11,259	3,196 28.4%	1,409 12.5%	Highest	Moderate - Highest	High - Highest	Highest
Los Angeles - Panorama City	15,191	3,142 20.7%	1,960 12.9%	High	High	Lowest	High
Los Angeles - Watts	10,512	3,088 29.4%	1,299 12.4%	Highest	Moderate - Highest	Low - Highest	Highest
Los Angeles - Crenshaw	5,570	1,501 26.9%	613 11.0%	Low - Highest	Low - Highest	Low - Highest	Low - Highest
City of Lancaster	4,248	1,457 34.3%	1,187 27.9%	High	Highest	Highest	High

Note:

SVI - Social Vulnerability Index based on 15 census variables grouped in four themes; socioeconomic status, household composition, minority status and language, housing and transportation.

JENI - Justice Equity Need Index used to assess areas most negatively impacted by criminalization and detention-first policies.

JESI - Justice Equity Service Index used to identify needs for justice-related community-based supports and services in low to highest service areas to inform where to shift investments and capacity-building supports towards equity and justice.

Magellan is completing a market analysis that includes an assessment of the needs of each of the 8 communities – from both a residential and small and at home business perspective, and a gap analysis to delineate well-served, underserved and unserved areas within each of the 8 designated communities, which will identify indicated areas that have a need for broadband but currently lack the necessary infrastructure or market competition. This market analysis is planned to be completed by the end of March 2023.

Concurrently, Magellan is developing an asset inventory of the current publicly and privately owned broadband assets in the public right-of-way, including conduit, fiber, antennas, poles, towers, abandoned facilities, active facilities, and other infrastructure to determine their usefulness for expanding broadband within the region. This asset inventory will be used to develop a high-level design for broadband services in each of the 8 communities. Information from the Market Analysis, Asset Inventory and High-Level Design will be utilized to evaluate various service models for deploying broadband services, as each has different funding requirements, rates of return and risk profiles.

Director of Digital Equity

On September 13, 2022, the Board approved a motion titled “Deepening the County’s Commitment to Equitable Deployment of Enhanced Regional Broadband Infrastructure – Establishing an Intergovernmental Broadband Coordinating Committee”.¹¹ This motion is an instruction to establish an Intergovernmental Broadband Coordinating Committee (IBCC) and hire a new Director of Digital Equity as the convener of the IBCC.

The motion included a directive that the ISD Director and Director of Digital Equity report back in 30 days on an equitable process to ensure that pilot broadband infrastructure projects are introduced in each Supervisorial District. Additionally, the report was to include a plan to identify and expand resources available to the County for rural broadband in unserved communities by leveraging funding at the Federal and State level being released under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The Director of Digital Equity position could not be filled in time for the 30-day report back, so ISD was given approval to proceed with the report. The report was submitted to the Board on November 8, 2022.¹²

ISD has obtained an executive search firm to recruit the Director of Digital Equity. In January 2023, the firm began contacting local and regional stakeholders for inputs on recruitment, including each Board office and representatives from community service organizations, advocacy groups, broadband consortia, and Council of Governments in Los Angeles County. The official recruitment will begin in late February 2023.

¹¹ [Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Statement of Proceedings for the Regular Meeting, September 13, 2022](#)

¹² [ISD Report Back on Supporting Digital Equity Throughout the County, November 8, 2022](#)