



County of Los Angeles
INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

1100 North Eastern Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90063

SELWYN HOLLINS
Director

"Trusted Partner and Provider of Choice"

Telephone: (323) 267-2101
FAX: (323) 264-7135

May 11, 2023

To: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey Horvath
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Selwyn Hollins 
Director

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 sixth 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
Department of Economic Development

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

**QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
May 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) is providing quarterly progress reports.

Report History

ISD has submitted five previous progress reports, which can be accessed via the following hyperlinks:

[1st Quarterly Progress Report \(February 7, 2022\)](#)

[2nd Quarterly Progress Report \(May 13, 2022\)](#)

[3rd Quarterly Progress Report \(August 11, 2022\)](#)

[4th Quarterly Progress Report \(November 10, 2022\)](#)

[5th Quarterly Progress Report \(February 10, 2023\)](#)

Current Updates

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

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

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
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)

On March 10, 2023, ISD was awarded a grant in the amount of \$700,000 from the ACP Outreach Grant Program administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In total, \$60 million in grants were awarded to 177 government agencies and community organizations throughout the nation. ISD was among only 15 entities that received grant amounts ranging from \$700,000 to \$750,000, the highest range of individual grant awards. This funding will help to expand the countywide ACP promotional campaign with in-person assistance at County libraries, community events, and large-scale enrollment events at major iconic venues.

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)

On March 21, 2022, a Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) was released to establish a shortlist of companies deemed qualified to deliver Community Wireless Networks. The solicitation required that respondents be able to provide high-speed, high quality broadband internet service to each subscriber residence using wireless technology, fiber or a combination of both.

On July 13, 2022, ISD released an addendum to the Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) clarifying that proposals for fiber-specific solutions are accepted and will be fairly considered. Additionally, references to “Community Wireless Networks” were changed to “Community Broadband Networks”. Notification of the addendum was widely distributed to registered vendors, industry sources, and via social media.

On September 13, 2022, the Board authorized ISD to award and execute Master Agreements with 9 pre-qualified companies.² The Board also authorized ISD to execute Master Agreements with new vendors as they become qualified. Two additional companies were pre-qualified and signed Master Agreements in April 2023.

The 11 pre-qualified companies with signed Master Agreements include:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Effective</u>
AT&T	September 2022
Deloitte Consulting, LLP	September 2022
ICCN	September 2022
Insight	September 2022
Motorola	September 2022
NetSync	September 2022
Kajeet	September 2022
Smartwave	September 2022
T-Mobile	September 2022
Charter Communications	April 2023
WeLink	April 2023

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.

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

² Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, [Adopted Board Letter: Request for Approval to Award and Execute Community Broadband Network Services Master Agreements, September 13, 2022](#)

4(c) Solicitation for Public-Private Partnerships

The County intends to enter public-private partnerships to deliver Community Broadband Network (CBN) demonstration projects within each of the 5 Supervisorial Districts. These projects will provide free and low-cost reliable high-speed internet in underserved communities impacted by digital divide. Projects are planned for East Los Angeles/Boyle Heights, South Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley, Southeast Los Angeles, and the Antelope Valley.

Service Requirements

The FCC recommends that broadband data transmissions achieve a minimum download speed of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) and upload speed of 3 Mbps (referred to as 25/3 Mbps). These recommended speeds are based on running one activity at a time, yet there are many situations that demand higher speed capacities. For example, when multiple users or devices are accessing the internet simultaneously for web browsing, streaming video, file downloads, video conferencing, and gaming. This is common in many households, particularly multigenerational living arrangements and households with multiple students who need to participate in remote learning at the same time.

All County CBN demonstration projects will require internet access speeds higher than the minimum recommended by the FCC. This is being done in consideration of potential household data capacity needs and to align with Federal and State grant funding guidelines. The private partner must ensure that each household receives internet service with a minimum download speed of 100 Mbps and upload speed of 20 Mbps (100/20 Mbps), with the ability to scale to symmetrical download and upload speeds of 100 Mbps (100/100 Mbps). Consistent with industry standards, network connectivity should be available 90 percent of the time at 95 percent of the residences in the defined service area. Additionally, there shall be no caps or limits on the data consumed by subscribers.

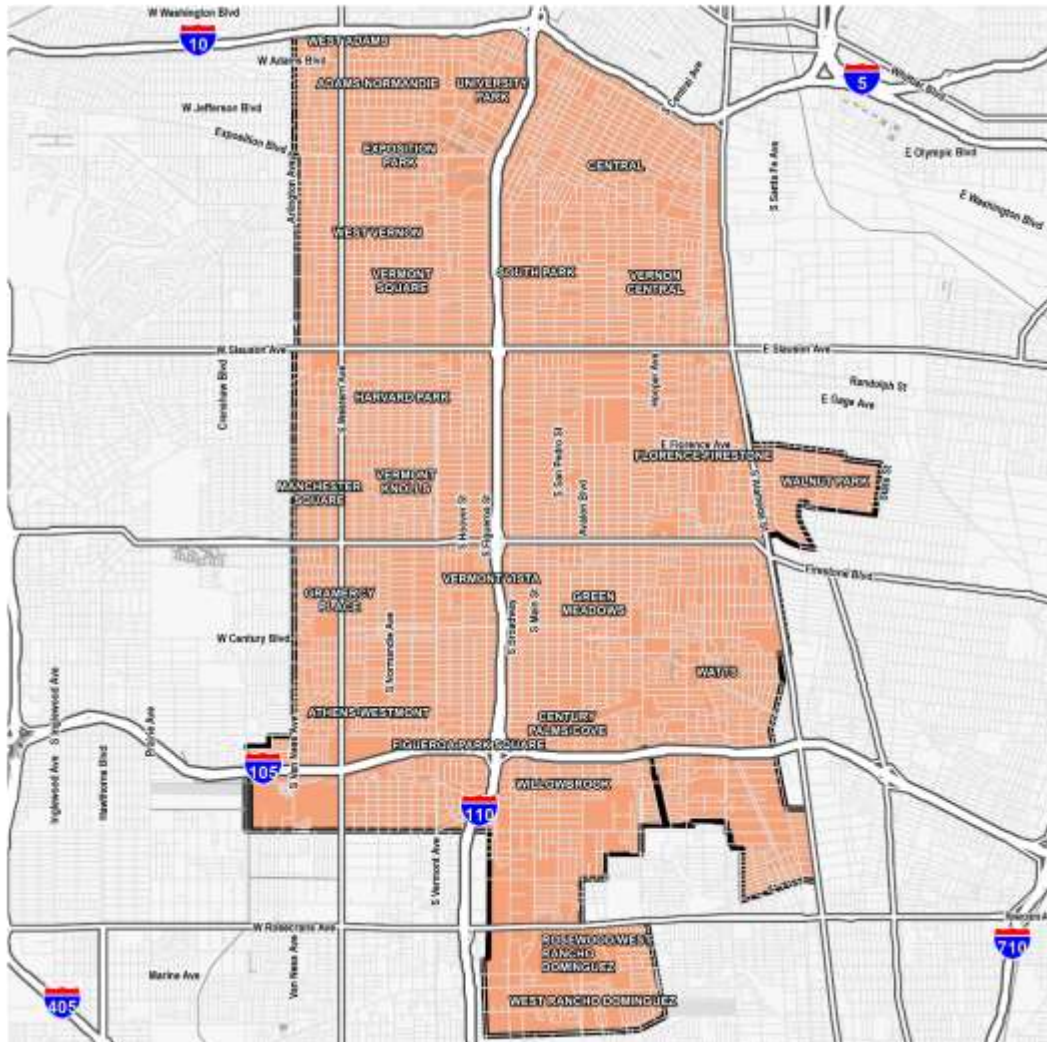
The private partner must also implement multilingual community outreach programs and advertising to help engage residents from various cultural backgrounds. This includes all of Los Angeles County's threshold languages: English, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese (oral: Mandarin and Cantonese; written: Simplified and Traditional), Farsi, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer/Cambodian, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese. Another expectation of the selected vendor is to have plans for encouraging participation among households that have residents with disabilities, as well as senior citizens who may experience challenges with computer usage and internet service access.

As part of the CBN demonstration projects, the Managed Service Provider will have access to certain vertical assets owned by the County, City of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County Office of Education (and associated 80 school districts) for placement of equipment to deliver broadband service. These assets include administrative buildings, public housing, libraries, schools, streetlight poles, and microwave and wireless towers. Such access and placement will be subject to applicable laws, regulations, infrastructure suitability and availability, and other factors at the County's sole discretion.

South Los Angeles – 43.67 Square Miles

Total Households – 190,878 (includes estimated 43,917 households with no internet)

Median Household Income - \$41,131



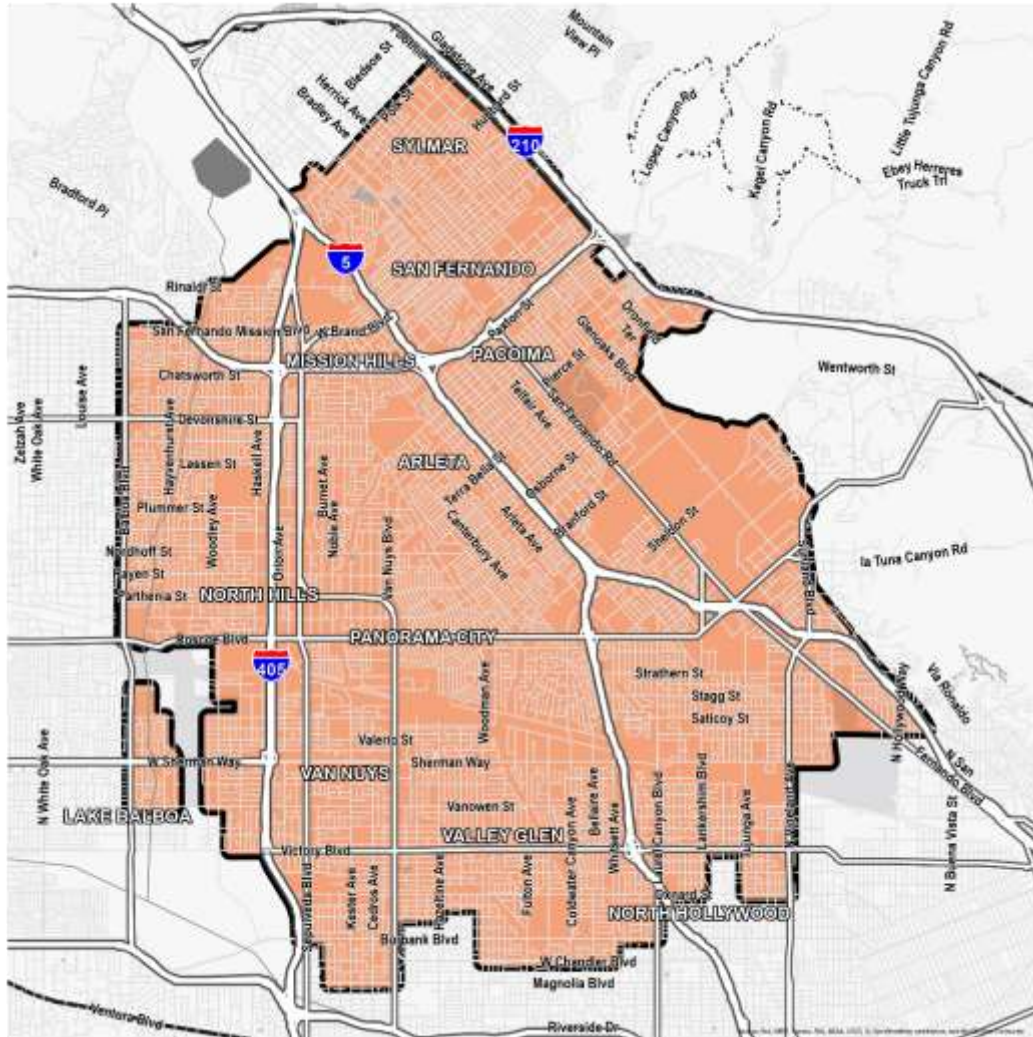
On April 27, 2023, ISD released a work order solicitation for the CBN demonstration project in San Fernando Valley. This project is coordinated with MOUs between the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, City of San Fernando, and Los Angeles County Office of Education. Only pre-qualified companies with a signed Master Agreement are eligible to submit a proposal for this project. This includes the existing 11 pre-qualified vendors and any additional vendors that are pre-qualified by the proposal deadline. Proposals are due by July 27, 2023.

The CBN demonstration project area is illustrated below:

San Fernando Valley – 59.25 Square Miles

Total Households – 186,275 (includes estimated 58,212 households with no internet)

Median Household Income - \$55,970



A CBN work order solicitation is being formalized for Southeast Los Angeles and will include five contiguous cities: Bell, Cudahy, Lynwood, Maywood, and South Gate. All of these cities have agreed to sign a MOU with the County. The solicitation is planned for release in May 2023.

Prospective locations continue to be assessed for a demonstration pilot in North Los Angeles County in collaboration with the City of Palmdale, City of Lancaster, and Community Coalition of the Antelope Valley. These entities are currently administering independent studies on broadband deployment strategies. ISD has provided data to support their efforts and will continue to work with them to ensure that any potential CBN demonstration project aligns with their longer-term objectives.

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

4(d) Funding for Community Broadband Network

On November 18, 2022, the FCC published the National Broadband Map that will be used to allocate federal funding from the \$42.5 billion Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program. This 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 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 representations on the current FCC map suggests that adequate internet services are available in 97% of Los Angeles County, which has significant eligibility implications for grant applications.

The California Public Utilities Commission (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 that identified priority areas to fund projects. Similar to the FCC map, the CPUC maps neglected the vast majority of Los Angeles County, including historically underserved communities in South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, Southeast Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, and the South Bay. Also neglected were Santa Catalina Island and underserved communities in the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale.

County 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.³ The motion also instructed the CEO Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to work with ISD to advocate in support of State and

³ Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, [Motion - Concern Over Broadband Infrastructure Grants Bypassing Los Angeles County](#)

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. The 5-signature letters were sent to the CPUC and FCC on January 26, 2023.⁴

On March 6, 2023, ISD launched a 3-week public awareness campaign for residents to submit feedback to the FCC and CPUC regarding maps that identify priority areas for broadband infrastructure investments. English and Spanish versions of the awareness message were aired on local television and radio stations as well as social media. The English version was also aired on television in Sacramento and San Francisco.

Hyperlinks: [Awareness Campaign Video](#) / [LA Unscripted Interview \(KTLA 5\)](#)

In response to collective concerns expressed by the Board of Supervisors, local and regional advocacy groups, and residents across the state, the CPUC released a revised version of the Federal Funding Account Public Map on April 7, 2023. The new map removed priority area designations, updated underlying data to better reflect unserved locations, and added additional socio-economic and disadvantage indicator layers. This is an important revision because the map will determine eligibility for competitive grants and the revised map is now more inclusive of historically underserved communities throughout Los Angeles County.

Proposed Rulemaking

On April 10, 2023, ISD submitted comments to the CPUC for consideration in its proposed rulemaking on competitive grants administered under the \$42.5 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program.⁵ The comments provided detailed recommendations on several items to ensure equitable funding allocations. In preparing these comments, ISD consulted with the CEO – Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, CEO - County Chief Information Officer, and County Counsel.

On May 1, 2023, ISD submitted comments to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in response to a Request for Comments on implementation of the Digital Equity Act of 2021. The Digital Equity Act is part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which includes \$60 million for state planning grants, \$1.44 billion for state digital equity capacity grants to implement state digital equity plans, and \$1.25 billion for competitive digital equity grants. The NTIA seeks broad input from all interested stakeholders, particularly on the capacity grant and competitive grant programs. The stated purpose of soliciting comments is to improve the number and quality of ideas to be considered in developing the Notices of Funding Opportunity for these grant programs. In responding to the NTIA's questions, ISD included recommendations on program eligibility requirements, prioritization, and metrics, as well as examples of the County's digital equity initiatives that should be specifically eligible in

⁴ Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, [5-Signature Letters to CPUC and FCC](#)

⁵ CPUC Rulemaking for Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, [Comments filed by County of Los Angeles, April 10, 2023](#)

for grant funding. In preparing these comments, ISD consulted with the County’s Department of Economic Opportunity, Department of Public Works, CEO – Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, and CEO - Chief Information Officer.

Funding for Digital Equity Initiatives

The following is a summary of current funding allocations for digital equity initiatives administered by ISD:

Funding Source	Project	Amount	Expiration
American Rescue Plan Act	Community Broadband Network Demonstration Projects	\$56,000,000	December 2026
American Rescue Plan Act	Delete The Divide Initiative	\$12,050,000	December 2026
California Advanced Services Fund Adoption Account Digital Literacy Grant	Digital Navigator Program	\$3,375,700	April 2025
County of Los Angeles	Countywide ACP Promotion Campaign	\$3,000,000	June 2023
ACP Outreach Grant Program	Countywide ACP Promotion Campaign	\$700,000	April 2025
Local Agency Technical Assistance Grant	Pre-construction Technical Support for Community Broadband Networks in South and East Los Angeles	\$320,000	September 2024
Total		\$75,445,700	

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 reports that Magellan Advisors has been selected to conduct a feasibility study for County-administered municipal broadband services in the eight communities of need as identified using the County's Equity Tool. Magellan has completed the broadband market analysis of the 71 census tracts within the eight communities and is completing an asset inventory of the current publicly and privately owned broadband assets 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 eight communities. Information from the market analysis, asset inventory and high-level design will be used to evaluate various service models for deploying broadband services, as each has different funding requirements, rates of return and risk profiles.

The CEO projects that the feasibility study, comprised of a pro forma financial projection and broadband feasibility analysis for County-administered broadband services, will be completed by the next quarterly progress report.

Additional Updates

CPUC Grant Award

On April 27, 2023, the CPUC awarded several grants from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Broadband Adoption Account. ISD was the recipient of a grant totaling \$3,375,700 to establish a Digital Navigators Program. Digital Navigators are a community-centered approach to improving broadband adoption and digital literacy. The navigators will be trusted guides and skilled support technicians trained to help families connect to and confidently use the internet, find affordable devices, and apply for subsidies to offset the costs for internet services and computer devices. They will also assist with related training or tutoring and serve a critical role in the successful deployment of the County's CBN demonstration projects.

Director of Digital Equity

In September 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".⁶ 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.

ISD 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

⁶ Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, [Statement of Proceedings for the Regular Meeting, September 13, 2022](#)

County. The official recruitment began in February 2023 and selection interviews were held in April 2023. A conditional job offer has been accepted by the highest ranked candidate. The final review process is in progress and an appointment to the position is anticipated in June 2023.

Delete The Divide Internship Program

In September 2022, ISD began hiring local residents for the Delete The Divide Internship Program. As of the date of this report, more than 80 interns have been hired. Proactive efforts are underway to employ as many as 200 interns by Summer 2023.

The internship positions start at \$18.99 per hour with flexible work schedules of 25 hours per week for up to two years. Applicants must be age 16 or older and reside in Los Angeles County within an underserved community impacted by the digital divide. Eligibility does not require any prior work experience or educational achievement, however the majority of the existing interns have earned a college degree or are currently enrolled in post-secondary education.

ISD provides interns with hands-on technical work experience and opportunities to participate in various professional Information Technology (IT) certificate programs. Individuals with professional IT certificates have significant advantages as job candidates and higher earning potential than non-certified professionals in the technology sector. The interns also participate in mentoring, specialized training, professional networking, conferences, and corporate tours. Additionally, interns regularly support constituents by providing information to residents and small businesses at community outreach events.

In December 2022, the State of California Division of Apprenticeship Standards approved the Delete The Divide internship as a pre-apprenticeship program. This designation facilitates the ability of interns to further their professional growth with registered IT apprenticeships nationwide as well as qualify for entry-level positions in the technology industry.

Digital Assistants at County Libraries

In April 2023, ISD partnered with the County Library to support digital equity and inclusion in underserved communities where 20% or more of the households lack internet service. Delete The Divide interns are currently assigned to 20 County libraries. Their responsibilities are to assist constituents and small businesses with computer needs, including information about the ACP, obtaining free or low-cost computer equipment, digital literacy training, online safety, and basic troubleshooting. All interns wear a Delete The Divide polo shirt and identification badge, and are equipped with a laptop, headset, and reference materials.

The initial hours of intern support are limited, but the goal is to hire more interns to ensure that digital assistance is available during all library business hours throughout the week. The library locations are as follows:

County Library	Address	City	Zip Code	SD*
Baldwin Park	4181 Baldwin Park Blvd.	Baldwin Park	91706	1
East LA	4837 E 3rd St.	Los Angeles	90022	1
El Camino	4264 E. Whittier Blvd.	Los Angeles	90023	1
South El Monte	1430 North Central Ave.	South El Monte	91733	1
Sunkist	840 N. Puente Ave.	La Puente	91746	1
AC Bilbrew	150 E. El Segundo Blvd.	Los Angeles	90061	2
East Rancho Dominguez	4420 E. Rose St.	East Rancho Dominguez	90221	2
Florence	7307 S. Compton Ave.	Los Angeles	90001	2
View Park Bebe Moore Campbell	3854 W. 54th St.	Los Angeles	90043	2
Willowbrook	11737 Wilmington Ave.	Los Angeles	90059	2
Woodcrest	1340 W. 106th St.	Los Angeles	90044	2
San Fernando	217 N. Maclay Ave.	San Fernando	91340	3
Bell Gardens	7110 S. Garfield Ave.	Bell Gardens	90201	4
Huntington Park	6518 Miles Ave.	Huntington Park	90255	4
Leland R. Weaver	4035 Tweedy Blvd.	South Gate	90280	4
Norwalk	12350 Imperial Hwy.	Norwalk	90650	4
Pico Rivera	9001 Mines Ave.	Pico Rivera	90660	4
Duarte	1301 Buena Vista St.	Duarte	91010	5
Lake Los Angeles	16921 E. Avenue O., #A	Palmdale	93591	5
Lancaster	601 W. Lancaster Blvd.	Lancaster	93534	5

* Supervisorial District