



## Broadband Internet Access & Advocacy Is Critical to Our Daily Lives

### ***What is digital equity?***

According to the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), digital equity is when all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy.

Making sure everyone in Los Angeles County has access to fast, reliable, and affordable broadband internet and a way to connect is a path to equity and greater quality of life for the entire region. Right now, a significant portion of people in L.A. County can't connect to internet-dependent services from their homes – 11% are completely unconnected while an additional 8% can only access the internet from a smartphone. Services like telehealth for medical appointments, videoconferences for work, and virtual programming for educational advancement are out of reach.

Historic disinvestment in low-income communities of color has resulted in inequitable broadband infrastructure deployment across L.A. County. This creates a divide where internet service is either inaccessible to households and businesses or the available options are either too expensive or unreliable.

A recent study by USC found that even public programs meant to increase internet adoption through affordable service plans and subsidies, like the Emergency Broadband Benefit program, are failing to reach households that need them most, as many are unaware of the offerings or deterred by their complex application processes.

### ***How we can address the digital divide***

What's needed is a multifaceted approach that brings high-quality affordable or free broadband service, digital literacy, and appropriate devices to every community in Los Angeles County.

The Los Angeles Digital Equity Action League (LA DEAL), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) designated Regional Broadband Consortium for L.A. County, is committed to eliminating the digital divide by addressing all of these challenges. LA DEAL is a collaborative, community-driven consortium that is working to assess and tackle broadband gaps that exist in communities across L.A. County communities.

### ***What's needed***

Working toward digital equity in L.A. County is an intentional strategy to focus resources and investments that eliminate historical barriers – such as digital redlining – and advances racial and social justice.

### ***What you can do***

Decision-makers at the federal, state, and local level are engaged in several efforts to address barriers to digital equity. For them to make the best decisions, it's critical for organizations to help community voices be heard. To create sustainable and lasting changes, it takes those with lived experience and advocates to raise awareness about the issues of digital equity in your community. Now, more than ever, local, state, and federal policy and decision-makers are using your input through formal verbal and written public comments and informal conversations and written communications to inform historic investments in broadband initiatives.

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) are shaping and carrying out digital connectivity policy at the federal level. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the California Broadband Council, and the California Department of Technology (CDT) are responsible for state-level digital communications policy and investments and its implementation.

Lawmakers in the State Legislature and leaders of local municipalities also play a key role in addressing digital equity issues. Additionally, organization leaders can join LA DEAL's taskforces to stay up to date on news and opportunities to advocate for digital equity issues.





## Where we're at

Decision-makers at the local, state, and federal levels are all making progress toward achieving digital equity, but there is still more to do.

Federal: The FCC is currently engaged in a process to get better, more granular data with which to make more informed decisions on how best to close the digital divide. The NTIA also [recently issued a call for comments](#) on federal broadband programs.

**Do:** Respond to NTIA's [call for comments](#) on digital discrimination

State: Work is ongoing to build the physical infrastructure that makes digital connectivity for all possible. The state's planned open-access "Middle Mile" network will connect cities to a backbone network and enable "Last Mile" projects to more affordably connect high-speed internet to homes, businesses, and community institutions.

Learn more and provide public comments on the state's [Last Mile and Middle Mile](#), [Local Agency Technical Assistance](#), California Advanced Services Fund Account proceedings, and [California's Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative](#).

**Do:** Sign up for [Middle Mile Broadband Initiative Updates](#)

**Do:** Learn more about grants available for local agencies [\[link to LATA resources\]](#)

Local: Recently, Los Angeles County Supervisors [passed a motion to accelerate local investments](#) to address barriers to digital equity and issued a [community wireless network program and fiber-to-the-home \(FTTH\) feasibility study](#).

The County will be releasing a Request For Proposals to fund Digital Navigator programs.

The City of Los Angeles also issued a [report on the status of a \\$10M wireless network pilot](#).

**Do:** Join an [LA DEAL Task Force](#)

## Learn more

Addressing digital equity issues requires an informed, multi-faceted approach. To learn more, visit:

- The [California Community Foundation's Digital Equity Initiative](#) for additional background and resources,
- [LA DEAL](#) to join a Taskforce and learn of funding opportunities for local governments and organizations; and
- The Center for Accessible Technology's [AT Coalition Training page](#) for webinars on a variety of digital equity topics
- [LA DEAL's legislative tracker](#)
- [Step-by-step guide to providing public comment](#) to the California Public Utilities Commission
- Technical Assistance Program to provide CPUC public comment (CCF is finalizing this link. should be complete by 4/11.)