

A Handbook for the Effective Administration of State and Local Digital Equity Programs

Paul Garnett and Deborah Lathen



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Meet Paul and Deborah

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State and Local Leaders Have an Unprecedented Opportunity for Universal Broadband and Digital Equity



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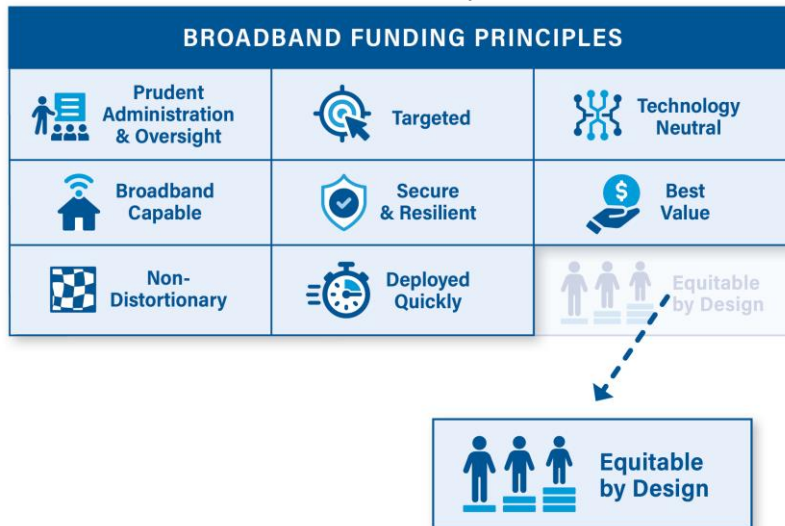
Historic Federal Commitment

FEDERAL ENTITY	PROGRAM	FUNDING AVAILABLE
FCC	Affordable Connectivity Program	\$14.2 Billion
	ACP Outreach Programs (National Competitive Outreach Program, Tribal Competitive Outreach Program)	\$80 Million
	ACP Pilot Programs (Your Home, Your Internet and Navigator Pilot Program)	\$10 Million
	Emergency Connectivity Fund	\$7.17 Billion
NTIA	Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program	\$42.45 Billion
	Digital Equity Grant Program	\$2.75 Billion
	State and Local Implementation Grant Program	\$121.5 Million
	Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program	\$2 Billion
U.S. TREASURY	ARPA Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds	\$350 Billion
	ARPA Capital Projects Fund	\$10 Billion
	Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund	\$2 Billion



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Best Practices Will Help Ensure Success



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Guiding Principles *Availability & Adoption*

5% of U.S. population
lacks access to 25/3
Mbps fixed broadband
networks

23% of U.S. adults
don't subscribe to
home broadband



Sources: FCC BDC (June 2022) and Pew Research Center (2021)

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Availability and Adoption Gaps Disproportionately Impact Certain Groups

Low-Income Households

Rural Households

Persons with Disabilities

High School Education or
Less

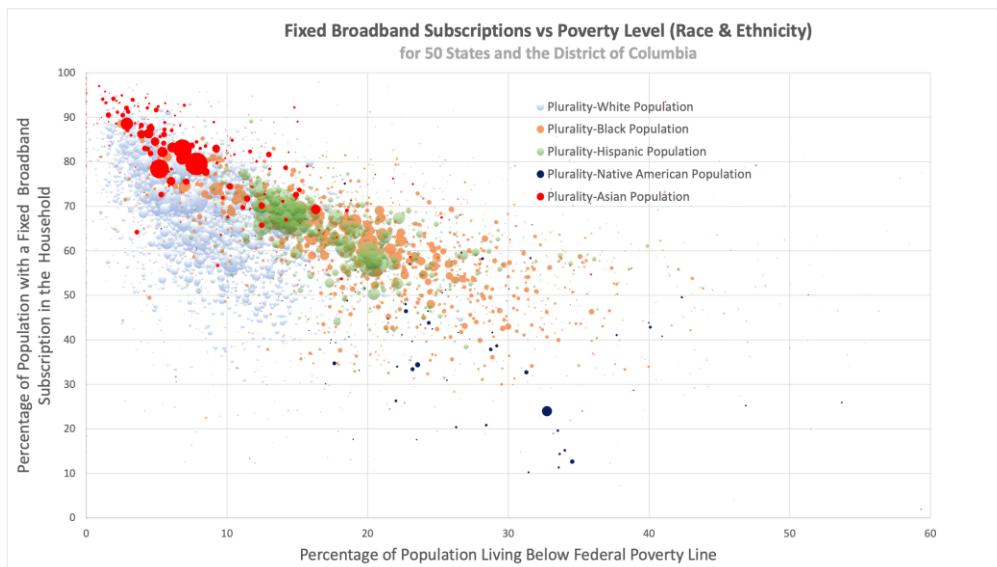
Aging Individuals

Certain Minority Groups



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Income Correlates Strongly to Broadband Adoption



Source: U.S. Census ACS 2021 5-year Average



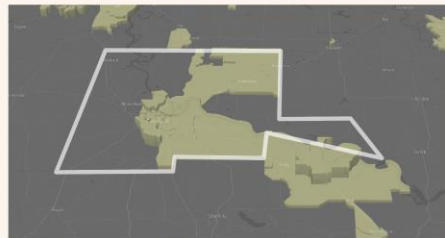
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Guiding Principles:
National statistics don't tell the whole story



Source: Vernonburg Group Digital Equity Map

COMPARISON OF BROADBAND ADOPTION



JEFFERSON COUNTY, ARKANSAS

Total Population: 67,260

POVERTY LEVEL: 15.09%

● African American Population Level >50%

BROADBAND SUBSCRIPTION RATE: 41%



SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, LOUISIANA

Total Population: 42,477

POVERTY LEVEL: 13.32%

● African American Population Level >50%

BROADBAND SUBSCRIPTION RATE: 69%

Digital Inequity is One of Today's
Greatest Challenges
Now is the Time to Meet that
Challenge

Affordable Connectivity
Program

Digital Skills Programs

Digital Navigators

Public-Private Partnerships



Digital Equity Plans Actionable Steps

- Step 1: Explicitly set digital equity as a primary objective of the Broadband Office
- Step 2: Maximize community outreach and inter-governmental coordination
- Step 3: Use data to identify and prioritize the communities in greatest need
- Step 4: Ensure that broadband is available to all households
- Step 5: Promote access to affordable broadband services and devices
- Step 6: Promote and establish digital skilling programs
- Step 7: Leverage community-led initiatives and public-private partnerships, such as digital navigators, to encourage awareness and adoption



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Oversight is Coming Your Way

- Fund recipients should ensure accountability and prepare for oversight from program administrators
- Program administrators are required to avoid waste, fraud, and abuse
- We can learn lessons from past broadband programs and projects that have not succeeded



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Thank You!

Scan the QR code to
view the Handbook:



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