



THE MICHELSON 20MM
FOUNDATION

“Race and Digital Inequity: The Impact on Poor Communities of Color”

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Miguel Leon 00:00

Welcome to this edition of our Connecting California series. My name is Miguel Leon senior program manager with the Michelson 20MM Foundation. Before we get started with today's important discussion, I would like to share a bit about the foundation. Founded by Dr. Gary K. Michelson and Alya Michelson, Michelson 20MM Foundation is dedicated to ensuring that everyone, particularly our most vulnerable populations, has the access to the equitable post secondary educational opportunities that lead to meaningful careers. We proudly operate at the cutting edge of higher education to help forward thinking innovators, nonprofits, and startups close the opportunity gap. Our Connecting California series is but one example, that launched a year ago as part of our Digital Equity initiative to increase awareness of the digital divide, and opportunities to close it. The series has hosted six events zeroing in on a range of themes, including the history of digital inequity, root causes, potential long term solutions, and even uplifted exemplars of public private partnerships, whose prosecutorial efforts are making a difference for communities and people in need. Today, we are proud to bring together some of the brightest minds and most forward thinking leaders in this work with Race and Digital Inequity: The Impact on Poor Communities of Color. Of all the topics we've covered for Connecting California series, today's is one of the most important. Racism is a complex issue, or some it is uncomfortable for others, it is a reminder of multi generational trauma and injustice. Undeniably, it is a subject, and a reality that cannot be ignored. Especially when talking about digital inequity. The lack of access to devices, broadband and digital literacy is too pervasive in poor communities of color to ignore the fact that race has unfortunately played a role, and why we as a nation, haven't solved this issue. Today, you'll hear from leading experts who have dedicated their careers to building racial equity via their digital equity efforts. Before we begin the discussion, Dr Gary K Michelson founder and co chair of the Michelson

20MM Foundation, And the Michelson Center for Public Policy, will be sharing remarks, and will introduce our keynote speakers. Dr. Michelson.

Gary Michelson 02:34

Good morning. Thank you Supervisor Mitchell, distinguished panelists, and you for joining us today for our seventh Digital Equity Conference. Over this last year we have tried to meaningfully explore the many facets of digital inequity, looking for remedies and sharing best practices. In our past conversations, two broad groups have been identified as underserved: rural communities, because there has not been sufficient population density slash potential customer base, in the eyes of the internet service providers to from a strictly business perspective, justify the upfront infrastructural costs of laying fiber optic cable and high orbiting satellites are inadequate to provide the quality of functionality required, and while limited nevertheless expensive. The second group are the people who reside in dense urban areas, but which are nevertheless digital deserts. So who lives there? Generally people have little means, and it would appear predominantly people of color. Now I for one have to suppose that these ISPs are equal opportunity money takers. So I'm not sure whether racism is a cause, or just de facto the result. Regardless, COVID has underscored what our panelists today have understood for a long time, that the most troubling elements of this part of the digital divide appear to be rooted in systemic racial injustices that have deep roots and are pervasive, and whether we are considering infrastructure deployment or policy interventions, this is the right time to be having a conversation about the role of racism in the digital divide. I'm excited to learn alongside with you today. Thank you everyone for joining us. It's now my pleasure to introduce LA County Supervisor Holly Mitchell, who has tirelessly fought for justice and equality for all Californians, especially its most vulnerable communities. Supervisor Mitchell, over to you.

Holly Mitchell 04:48

Good morning. I'm Supervisor Holly Mitchell, proudly representing the LA County Second District and I'm honored to help welcome you to the Connecting California series, hosted by the Michelson 20MM Foundation. Throughout my career I've fought to design programs and change policy to ensure equitable outcomes for our most overlooked communities. And so I'm excited that the Connecting California series has created this space for advocates, philanthropists and policymakers to wrap our heads around complex issues, and few issues are more important to the health and wellness of our communities than digital inequity. Digital inequities means that our communities, disproportionately black, Latinx and indigenous can't access the internet. It means that you can't access the digital world of learning and healthcare, that you can't work remotely or apply for most jobs and many public benefit programs. It impacts your ability, and the ability of your kids to keep up in school. For our students, it means you can't attend online classes or complete your homework and that means black, Latinx and indigenous students will disproportionately fall behind. While white students continue to learn and excel. It's a vicious cycle of exclusion. The same injustice that's impacted our communities in the form of segregation, redlining, and systemic racism. In LA County alone, more than 182,000 households don't have a computer, and nearly 365,000 households lack home internet service. Across the second district, the disparities are highest among black and Latin X populations. In some neighborhoods in my district, as many as 30% of the households lack an internet subscription in their home. We simply don't have a choice, we have to crush this digital divide, and we have to crush it expediently, like, yesterday. I offered a motion that passed unanimously last month, just hours after the Senate voted to adopt the bipartisan infrastructure deal. I'm really proud of that. My motion sought to ensure that equity is at the center of how federal and state dollars are spent on digital inclusion and demands an implementation plan at the county level to crush this divide in four months. We mean business. The digital divide is so

stark in my community that we are proactively invested in a digital divide demonstration project. We've engaged both our public and private partners to close the divide in our communities of Lynwood and Willowbrook. We intend to have this interdisciplinary approach and financial model for affordable broadband serve as a best practice for how to close the divide countywide. But frankly that's not enough. We need all of our partners to weigh in. The California Public Utilities Commission was recently granted authority to hold debate on how they can facilitate closing this divide. This will include discussion on how we allocate resources to both rural areas without broadband and dense urban centers that lack affordable internet options. The CPUC rulemaking is a complex and technical exercise that inherently favors the existing broadband sector. So we need the community, in your voice to balance the presence of private industry to ensure that the rulemaking favors our communities and accelerates our collective effort to crush this divide. So thanks again to the Michelson 20MM Foundation, and to all the partners involved, you all have galvanized philanthropy on this issue, and it's changed the course of the conversation already. Enjoy the rest of the conference, and let's be bold and courageous, because this issue can't wait for us to show up any other way.

Miguel Leon 09:10

Bold and courageous, indeed. Thank you Supervisor Mitchell for your leadership and your commitment to equity and justice. All of us at the Michelson 20MM Foundation are grateful for your work on this important issue and look forward to continuing to work with you to as you put it crush the digital divide. Speaking of bold and courageous for our panel discussion we've invited some of the most bold and courageous leaders in the digital equity space to share their thoughts with us today. With us we have Dr. Hernan Galperin, Associate Professor at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, an internationally recognized expert on internet policy and digital inequality. Dr Galperin's research uses surveys, field experiments and other quantitative methods to understand the determinants of broadband adoption and use as well as how they are linked to the mechanisms of social stratification. Also with us is Rebecca Kauma, who serves as economic and digital inclusion program manager for the city of Long Beach. In this role she leads the city's economic and digital inclusion initiatives to ensure that low income communities and communities of color in Long Beach, have the opportunities, resources and power they need to thrive economically. She does this through equitable, inclusive, and culturally competent practices, policies and systems change efforts. We also have Dr. Traci Morris, who is the Executive Director of the American Indian Policy Institute at Arizona State University. As a member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, Dr. Traci Morris is an expert in federal Indian policy, telecommunications, and digital culture. She has worked with Native American nations, tribal businesses, and Native American nonprofits. Additionally, Dr. Morris has advocated for digital inclusion at the Federal Communications Commission, and on Capitol Hill as one of the nation's leading experts on the impact of digital inequity in tribal communities. Moderating our panel today is DeAnne Cuellar. DeAnne is the Texas State Program Director for Older Adults Technology Services and brings over a decade of experience in tech equity planning, strategy formation and community organizing to her work. She serves as Mayor Ron Nirenberg's Digital Inclusion appointee to the city of San Antonio's Innovation and Technology Committee, and is a sought after advocate focused on fostering equitable internet access for all. This is truly a stellar panel. We are grateful for their leadership on this issue and happy to have them with us today. DeAnne, it's all yours.

DeAnne Cuellar 12:01

Thank you so much, Miguel. I'll give everybody an opportunity to turn on their cameras. Hi there. Thank you so much for joining us today. I have written up quite a few questions for this discussion, but I really do want it to be a discussion so please feel free to give the longer answer to any of these questions

today, but I'm going to start off today with a question I'd like to give everybody a chance to answer. To get started, to highlight the areas of your expertise on this panel today, I'd like to ask every panelist this two part question. Is there a particular story you are trying to tell today? And in solving the digital divide within poor communities of color, what is one thing that needs to resonate with as many people as possible today? And I'd like to start with Rebecca.

Rebecca Kauma 13:00

Thank you so much so again my name is Rebecca Kauma I'm the economic and digital inclusion program manager at the city of Long Beach. Thank you all for allowing me to be here today, and I'm so happy that you ask this question because I think it's important for us to look at this from a macro standpoint. And the first thing that I want to acknowledge and recognize, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic, is that the digital divide continues to disproportionately affect black and brown communities, not only in Los Angeles County, but also in Long Beach, and one of the things that I've learned to understand, with my work around racial equity, is understanding the history of this country and how the history has also impacted the digital divide. And so this is something that was mentioned as part of the introduction, in our country as many of people may know, does have deep roots, roots in institutional and systemic racism and oppression and we have to be able to acknowledge that, and the government, whether it's at the federal level, the state level, even at the local government level has played a significant role in creating and maintaining a lot of those inequities that we see not only racial inequities but also digital inequities, as well, and a perfect example of that is redlining, and I think the most important thing that I want to convey to this entire group here is, it's very important for us to first and foremost, acknowledge the root causes of why we have these digital inequities, and it's important for us to understand the why, as well. And so as we're looking at different digital inclusion strategies, solutions, best practices, we must be applying a racial equity lens as part of our work to truly be able to dismantle the institutional and systemic racism and oppression. So that is how I'll be framing my conversation today and I'm looking forward to hearing additional information from my colleagues.

DeAnne Cuellar 15:07

Thank you. Dr. Traci Morris?

Traci Morris 15:12

Hello everyone. Um, I think I will follow that up by saying that I think, in Indian Country it's a little bit different. Let me give just a smidge of background. So there's 574 federally recognized Indian nations in the country, and 334 reservations in 35 states. California has one of the highest populations of Indian Country, believe it or not, LA itself has actually, well this flip flops every census between New York and LA who has the highest urban Indian population, but one of the things to think about is that, in urban situations we're not clustering like other populations so it doesn't necessarily become redlining, so much as just simply indifference, complete indifference. Overarchingly Indian country does not have access to broadband in the same way, especially on rural reservation areas or reserve areas or renterias in California for example, and we don't always work with the state the same way because of sovereignty. Tribes are sovereign nations, and we are part of the family of governments with the United States. We need to be included at the table with cities and counties and towns and the federal government when we're talking about broadband inclusion in Indian country. Indian Country is just a term to encompass where our lands are. So when we think about these inequities, they are huge, I'm not saying it's not racism, I'm not sure on redlining, and maybe I'll convince you on that but I think because of the way our population works and where we locate it's a little different in that regard. But there are the issues of racism and colonialism and those sorts of things, but it's also just plain bang for

the buck, just like Dr Michelson was saying at the beginning. It costs more money to go to these places, and that's a big part of it. So you know with Indian country, I think the biggest message going back to your question, DeAnne, is, you know, digital inequities already existed before COVID and I think we all can agree on that on this panel, and COVID just exacerbated and accelerated what was already coming, and in some ways I think indigenous peoples and people of color were really the canary in the coal mine. It just made it so obvious, and in some instances it became, life and death, and that we certainly saw that in our tribal lands, and I can't speak to other communities but we saw that, there was no broadband, no infrastructure, no access to information for telehealth, no access to information about how the virus was spread. And therefore, we have to solve this issue and we need to have a seat at the table in solving this issue. Thanks.

DeAnne Cuellar 18:06

Thank you. Hernan?

Hernan Galperin 18:10

Thank you, DeAnne. Good morning or good afternoon everybody. Let me start by thanking the Michelson Foundation, Miguel, Dr Michelson, Everyone for putting this really important event together. I'm a researcher and I like to tell stories but start from questions, and the question I try to answer in a lot of my research is whether the traditional patterns of underinvestment in poor communities of color in transportation, in health clinics, in education, in many other areas that have been documented. Do they also exist for broadband, that is are poor communities of color also underserved in terms of broadband? And I use a combination of CPUC data, census data ,to try to answer this question, and to also understand what is the interaction between income, race, education, all the factors that factor in the choices that are being made by the ISP is in where and how they invest. And the short answer and the answer that unfortunately is what we find in our research, is a resounding yes that we see very clearly are the same patterns of underinvestment in other kinds of public infrastructure exist for broadband they exist in terms of having fewer ISPs, less competition in these communities, there's less investment in fiber which is the gold standard for broadband access, and I have a series of slides and graphs, where I can go more in detail in showing you that it is about income, it is about race, but what really matters is the combination of poverty and communities of color, that's where you find the largest deficit in terms of broadband infrastructure.

DeAnne Cuellar 20:23

Thank you for that. Rebecca, I wanted to circle back to you for this next question. How have you intentionally incorporated racial equity as part of your digital inclusion efforts at the city of Long Beach.

Rebecca Kauma 20:38

Yeah, thank you for that question. And the one thing that I want to start off with is putting a shared language and definition out there and this is how the city of Long Beach has defined racial equity. And for context at the city of Long Beach, we participated in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity. And this is an organization that provides training to different types of entities throughout the country who are interested in being able to advance racial equity in their institutions. So their definition focuses on when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and the one thing that I want to mention is that when you look at race, you'll be able to see all the different inequities that exist and even though here in the city we lead with race we understand that there are many other intersections that people bring to the table so this could include gender, socioeconomic status, and other indicators as well and the reason why we do put race at the forefront is that a racial equity lens does allow you to be able to

address all those other areas of oppression, when you're trying to solve for inequities. So I did want to put that context out there as we're looking at that. And the one thing that I love about racial equity is that it doesn't take a one size fits all approach. So it's important for us to understand that when we're working with different communities, they all have very unique challenges, barriers and lived experiences. So for me, I identify as black slash African American. So my experience is going to be different than those who may identify with Latinx population, or our Cambodian population which is the largest in Long Beach outside of Cambodia. So when we're talking about racial equity, it means that we're being intentional and being thoughtful and inclusive and all of our decisions, policies, practices and programs, and it intentionally means that we are focusing on communities that are most in need, and most impacted by the inequities that we're seeing. So some of our racial equity strategies that we've been implementing in the city of Long Beach include us looking at our data to figure out who was most impacted, similar to what was shared also making sure that we're including those that are most impacted as part of our decision making process. So for example we just recently developed the digital inclusion roadmap and this is our strategic plan, to be able to address the digital divide in Long Beach and it was imperative that communities that are disproportionately affected by the digital divide, have a seat at the table while we were creating that plan, and also are seen as experts as part of that process. So those are some of our strategies that we have been implementing and I do want to uplift that community ownership is key. So it's important for us to see the community has key decision makers as part of this process as we're beginning to design all of our equity strategies and solutions. So, I'm going to go ahead and share a couple of things in the chat and then I'll close out for this question. One of the things I'm going to share is our digital inclusion roadmap as I mentioned, and you'll be able to see how we incorporated the community's voices all throughout that document and how we incorporated art and storytelling as a way for them to share what is their vision for digital equity and inclusion in Long Beach. In addition, as I mentioned we utilize a racial equity lens. This is also a process that many individuals can utilize as they're developing digital inclusion strategies or any type of issue strategy, so I will share a link to a toolkit that we utilize when we're applying a racial equity lens to our work.

DeAnne Cuellar 24:36

Thank you Rebecca I appreciate so much how you answered that question and how you framed racial equity for this discussion today. Dr. Traci Morris, we heard of a couple of words in the openings: policies, rulemaking. From the grassroots to the Beltway you've led this work to close the digital divide within communities of color, and due to the pandemic, there's an array of programs that are popping up as solutions, but I want you to have an opportunity to talk about what other processes that are going on to close the digital divide, are thinking long term for communities of color.

Traci Morris 25:13

Thank you. So, yes we do work at the forefront of research and policy we are part of the Arizona State University. So, like my colleagues, we are definitely doing research, original research and such in this arena, and we are not a teaching unit so we're not teaching at the current moment any students, although we employ students, and we are fully indigenous staff. You know I've been working in the space as you alluded, a long time, as, as have you as well, we work together on these issues but, you know, all the work that we do at the American Indian Policy Institute and the work that I've done has always been rooted through one of the major organizations in Indian country and that is the National Congress of American Indians. They are the collective voice of the 574 tribes. They bring together resolutions, out to the federal government, they work with the federal government on the Tribal Budget every year because we are a lot of our tribal agencies are funded through the federal government. So, as a result of what has happened with COVID, what we've seen, the federal government side, I mean it

was really, it was difficult to not see the impact. I mean we all saw impacts but being at a university for example, I was hearing firsthand from students who'd lost all four grandparents in one weekend, kind of thing, and we were hearing that repeatedly those kinds of stories. Navajo Nation was shut down, and us being the only organization in the country that is researching, that is doing this work on tribal broadband from an academic perspective, we were tapped immediately to be on all of these calls and so what ended up happening, the long and short of it is, because we are tribal nations and we are part of the family of governments, and there is a trust responsibility through the treaty process, there's legislation, a myriad of legislation that has been directed at trying to bridge the digital divide in Indian country. There are some gaps. We have significant mapping issues. My colleague, I'm sure understands the difficulties with using census data, it's not very granular. There can be problems with smaller communities. Mapping is extremely problematic in Indian country as well. So when you have, we have that happening. And so that is one gap that we have to bridge, the other gap that we need to bridge is the idea of the middle mile. I mean, you can drop all satellites that you want, but if there's no middle mile there's still nothing to connect to. It is an interesting dilemma we're in. And the middle mile in Indian country and in rural areas, is, is really big and some folks don't get that. Y'all are California, you've got a lot of rural areas there, I know y'all get it there, right. So towards this we have a number of federal agencies that have, first federal agencies that have money and if, in fact I just closed a panel a few minutes ago, I hopped off that for this call, talking about, I was talking with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration which has \$1 billion for tribal broadband connectivity in their fund. Applications just closed for that but there were 5 billion in applications for the \$1 billion. So that shows you how big the gap is there. We also do a lot of work and with the USDA. Yes, the USDA has the Rural Utility program, that's what got telephone across our country. Now it's getting broadband across the country and they've been filling the gap for a very long time, and they have a series of robust programs that works in concert. We also have an office of Native Affairs and Policy at the Federal Communications Commission. Right now, they're implementing the emergency broadband benefit. Many communities are eligible for that but there is a tribal provision as well. And so we have a lot of programs, there's also been the 20 billion from Coronavirus that some of that is being used to do hotspots. I know various nations are creating permanent hotspots to fill the gaps now, as well as working with states in filling those gaps in rural areas. And then there is the 100 million from the Coronavirus projects fund, from American Rescue Plan of 2021. So there's been, there's a large infusion of money that we have, that we have, and then that's done including what we're hearing is 2 billion from the new infrastructure bill, but we have a lot of miles of middle miles to fill. We have, we still have issues with. I mean, we've had all these issues. One of the major issues is capacity. We don't have folks. We're such a small population, we don't have technically trained folks to even implement this, so you drop all this money in, and we've got, we still got that lack of technically trained folks, and so, there's a, it's creating capacity gaps now. But this is an unprecedented time and that was what we were just speaking with tribal leadership. This unprecedented time is, is hardening and it can do a lot to bridge that gap of the middle mile and I do see your question, the middle mile, is that so, cities are connected, your, your, your rural town might be connected but there may be miles in there that is not connected in terms of middle mile. Think of it this way: there's connections along almost all the major highways, but how do you get out to those rural smaller communities. That's where the disconnection is. So, we've got a lot of ground to cover, we have a tremendous, tremendous opportunity. And we are working with our colleagues, to, to help, to help tribes take advantage of this, provide the research they need, I look forward to reading more of my colleagues research because there's not many was doing broadband research. So I think that answers it in a really big nutshell, maybe a few nutshells.

DeAnne Cuellar 31:27

Thank you. No, I love it. Thank you so much for explaining the middle mile, there is a, there's a lot of technical technology jargon that comes along with working on this issue. So please feel free to explain some of that and thank you so much. I'm going to turn it over to Hernan now. I was, you know, researching for today and there's this video featuring your work where you said, social inequalities are one of the biggest challenges of our time. We know that people of color are much more likely to experience homelessness, I wanted to give you an opportunity to talk about one of the biggest key takeaways, you've learned from your work setting the digital divide and homeless populations.

Hernan Galperin 32:15

Thank you DeAnne for that question. We did a fairly large study among the homeless population in Los Angeles County, which unfortunately is for, I'm sure most of you are familiar but it's a population of 50,000 plus. I haven't caught up on the latest numbers but it's a very large population and there's a very interesting parallel that I want to make here that we like to use in our work because homelessness is not a stable condition. People are not homeless, they are experiencing homelessness. And for many is transit, unfortunately for many is not for many it's transit. People get in and out of homelessness. And it's, again, not a stable condition. And we like to think the same way and I think that COVID pandemic has shown us that connectivity is not a stable condition. People are connected at times, not connected at times. They have data caps that allow them to use so much broadband at times but then they run out of broadband and they can connect at perhaps the public library but only within certain hours. And so we really conceive and our work on homelessness has, in some ways satellite on the same way that we think of homelessness and we'd like to talk more about housing stability. We've seen the same patterns of connectivity instability among, not only the homeless population but also much of the low income population at large. In fact one of the questions we are currently asking, you know, in our recent surveys is not only are you connected or not at home but are you struggling to pay your bill? Did you have to make sacrifices to pay the bill? Have you had to disconnect for a few months because you couldn't pay for the bill? So we're trying to understand these patterns of affordability and think of the digital divide and I say this repeatedly, that is really the word device implies that they are connected or not connected, but really there's a gradation of connectivity situations and opportunities, and we ought to think more about how this gradation affects particularly low income and communities of color.

DeAnne Cuellar 34:59

Thank you so much Dr. Hernan. Rebecca, I've got a question for you. And then I'd like to take an opportunity to look at those slides we mentioned. We hear the term data driven pretty often nowadays: data, smart data, you know, can you tell us more about your work using data to drive solutions to close the digital divide within communities of color?

Rebecca Kauma 35:24

Sure, absolutely, I would like to provide an example of what we utilize as part of our Cares Act funding efforts. So the city of Long Beach last year was able to allocate \$1 million to digital inclusion through Cares Act. And this was federal funding that we received from the federal government to help provide direct relief to many different communities during the COVID 19 pandemic. And so with this funding with this \$1 million. I was able to work closely with communities and organizations to design different types of programs that would help address some of the key challenges and barriers communities were facing when trying to access and use the Internet and computers during the pandemic. So one of the programs that we designed was to administer free hotspots and computing devices to those that qualify. And it was very imperative to us to ensure that it was going to those that were most disproportionately hit by the COVID 19 pandemic, and that is also consistent with those that are

disproportionately already affected by the digital divide prior to the pandemic hitting, so we had to be able to track which communities we were reaching and utilizing equity indicators, as I mentioned earlier that disaggregate by race, ethnicity, gender, zip code, language and other relevant indicators that would best assess if these communities are most in need. So we were able to design a process that allowed us to collect these indicators, and literally track based on Long Beach residents disclosing their demographic information as they would submit applications for these free resources. And the one thing that I want to mention is it's very important for you to collect these equity indicators and to also disaggregate it because when you're aggregating data, it doesn't tell you the true story of who you're serving, and that's how we're able to be able to best assess if we're reaching communities most in need. So as a result when we were administering these devices we were able to learn at the conclusion, at the end of our program, that 90% of the communities that received our free hotspots and computing devices were of color, and that we were also able to serve communities that were disproportionately affected by Digital Divide based on zip code as well. So I do want to mention that it's important for us to look at the data as we're administering resources and services, and a couple of other things that I also wanted to mention as well that goes back into my initial point about applying a racial equity lens is also conducting a root cause analysis as part of your work. So it's very easy for us to look at data and draw our own assumptions and conclusions based on the data that we're looking at. So for example, one of the biggest data points that I like to look at is black ownership in the city of Long Beach. So, when we look at black ownership, you'll be able to see that we have the lowest rates in Long Beach and I think this is also consistent with LA County as well. And it's very easy for us to make an assumption as to why that is. But by conducting a root cause analysis you're able to pull back the layers almost like you're pulling back an onion, and see why that exists and understand the why behind the data and focus on solutions that get at that root. So for example, you'll be able to see that when you're looking at why black residents in Long Beach have the lowest rates of homeownership, a lot of that is due to the discrimination that many of them face when they're trying to apply for loans, and when you continue to peel, peel that back, you'll also be able to see that that's also a route of redlining as well. So it's important for us to look at data, not only based on the surface but also at the root level because that will allow us to design solutions that ultimately get at the inequities that we're seeing.

DeAnne Cuellar 39:31

Thank you so much. Dr. Hernan, I'd like to give you an opportunity to bring up those slides. And while you're doing that there's a question that I think you might be able to answer, parts of it in the chat. It's asking in your research in terms of underinvesting do you have a graph or table on the budget of local governments. A, and a breakdown, B, of how local taxes are used, where local taxes go towards and whether or not the community can vote for bills to steer these funds towards bridging the gap and the digital divide.

Hernan Galperin 40:12

Thank you DeAnne. Let me start, since you're seeing the slides, with, with the graphs. So what we did here was we take the data from the California Public Utility Commission, the CPUC, which tells us which ISP is serving which census blocks, and then we take the racial and income characteristics of those blocks and then we build these models and what we see in the panel or the graph on the left, is that as poverty increases the odds of there being more than one ISP, there being broadband competition, is going down fairly fast, so you can see the difference between those who are at the bottom 10% and at the top 10% and the few at the top 10% are almost twice as likely to be able to choose between two or more providers and of course, having the ability to choose means better service, potentially lower prices. So we see that more low income people of color live under basically a

monopoly regime for broadband. And the second one is the same one that tells us that fiber investment or the ability to buy fiber service which again is the gold standard for broadband provision is also lower as poverty increases at the census block level so again the bottom line is, if you're poor, you have a low, you have fewer choices for broadband. Now we do the same in the next one for race. That's the next one where we, we did the same for for race, in this case we take the share of black residents, and on the left you can see that there is the same pattern but not so steep, the decline, as the share of black residents increases. However, what we do in the, in the one on the right is that we split those census blocks between those who are low income, that is bottom 25% and the rest, and when we do that graph, separating low income Census Blocks and non low income Census Blocks, you see that, this is when the share of black residents really matters in terms of availability of broadband competition. So the bottom line is, there is an interaction, there's a combination or concentration factor that is particularly detrimental to low income communities of color. This is where the interaction exists between being not just communities of color, but in particular those that are low income and communities of color. And in the next one. We do the same for, this is a different study where we look at Hispanic households and here we're looking at the probability that students in K-12 students in households have the resources for remote learning. This is what we did during the pandemic so whether you have a broadband connection and a computer which is the minimal you need for remote learning, and you'll see that of course, the higher the income, the higher the odds of having those resources. However, split in between Hispanic and non Hispanic households, we see that at the same level of income, non Hispanic households have a higher probability of having those resources, so again there is not just it's not just a story of income. It's a story of a combination of both income and racial inequities. For the question. We don't have data on, on, I think municipal and local taxes and whether they're going to run better initiatives or not. What I would say in this regard is. I think we, we've seen more local communities, try to address this problem recently, and probably, of course, Rebecca can speak more to that but what I would say is, I think it's, it is encouraging to see more and more local governments, coming in and committing resources, I would highlight one of those efforts in Los Angeles which is the South Bay fiber network, which I'm not sure if Long Beach is part but I know many of the communities represented by Supervisor Mitchell are part of this. It's actually a middle mile network that's connecting a lot of the communities around Inglewood and Torrance, and all the areas on the South Bay and this is the kind of local effort that could go a long way in addressing this issue.

DeAnne Cuellar 45:37

Thank you so much. So I want to give it back to you, Dr. Traci Morris. At the beginning of the conversation I mentioned, you know from the grassroots to the Beltway, and that was my way of saying that when we talk about solutions, and you know building out the infrastructure to close digital divided, these are conversations that we're not just having with the panel today, there's a local, state and federal conversation that needs to take place. Can you talk a little bit more about the tribal solutions for deployment that you've worked on?

Traci Morris 46:08

Sure. Thank you. Yes, and, and it goes right to what we've already been talking about, about local solutions. Community centric solutions work, we know that, and whether it's rural or it's a city Aramis municipality or we know our own communities as why we know what those particularities are. And so with tribes, it's no different, and so being a part of that we, we actually design our own solutions on on tribal lands for example, when deploying a network that has to go through not only federal government review because remember we don't own our lands we can't collateralize our lands that land is held in trust for us, and we maintain it. So, part of that review is going to be federal review it's going to be tribal

review it's going to be historic and cultural preservation review before we'd ever say located tower we would review the spot and things like that so we, we are deploying our own networks because there are no providers of choice, there's not choice. There's not even providers in many of our communities. So, there is no competition so we provide our own networks. For example, here in Arizona where, where I'm at the healer River Indian Community which is adjacent to this large city of Phoenix is the provider of choice for its community. In other states, some of the some of the tribes are providing overlapping services for communities around them in Southern California. In, in and around Temecula, there's the Southern California Tribal Chairman's association which runs the tribal digital village, they are providing community connections all around, and some overlapping services if I'm not mistaken to surrounding communities so it's community based deployment with taking into account community requirements for anything cultural or anything like that, as well as what the community needs for in school or its library or whatnot, and I, like I say, those, those solutions I'm seeing work more and more in all sorts of communities.

DeAnne Cuellar 48:10

Thank you so much. I want to turn the conversation a little bit towards advocacy and I'd like to say that by saying that there is a question in the chat that says you know every time I open my bill, the price just, you know keeps getting higher and I get asked a lot about what people can do about the changes in the cost of their subscriptions of the services that they receive. But besides that and answering that question, there's another question about how come ISP is just don't release the map, why aren't they more public, where's the data, who do they serve and why is it so difficult to find out where the internet is and is not available? So I want to give you all each a chance to answer the question: What can communities do? How can they vocalize their concerns about how they are being met as a customer or not being met? And I'd like to start with Rebecca.

Rebecca Kauma 49:07

Sure, that's a great question, and it is very difficult navigating all of that different aspects with trying to work closely with an Internet service provider. And that is something that we as a city are trying to intentionally do is continue to evolve them as part of our conversations that we're having. We're very fortunate enough to have include them as part of our roadmap development process. The biggest challenge that I do want to mention when trying to navigate trying to access the internet, especially through an Internet service provider, that we have seen is also language access. So many of our residents in Long Beach speak another language other than English inside of their household. And we have seen that not all of the internet service providers provide those real time interpretation services for them to be able to communicate with an Internet service provider in their language. So it's very important for those that are trying to continue to advocate for whatever resources services they need to also work in alignment with community based organizations, and I feel like that has been very fruitful for us in Long Beach because these communities, organizations have the trust and relationships, and also provide our communities with the tools to be able to support their advocacy, and that is something that we have done too when trying to outreach with community members that are disproportionately affected by the digital divide. I think it's also important for individuals to continue to express what these challenges and barriers are, even with their elected officials continue to share where those pain points are with trying to access the Internet and computers, and where we can do better. Because of the pandemic, I'm excited to say there has been a lot of momentum that has been taking place not only at the county level here in Los Angeles but also at the state and federal level. So I think we can continue to push for some of these challenges and barriers that we're trying to address through those different

options as well, but I think we need to continue to work in alignment with community based organizations that can also help to push and drive those advocacy conversations as well.

DeAnne Cuellar 51:32

Dr. Hernan or Dr. Traci Morris, would you like to add to that?

Hernan Galperin 51:38

Sure, I can comment. Two things DeAnne, on your question on the data question, I'm quite familiar. There is an ongoing effort at the FCC to significantly improve the type of data, and the granularity of the data that the ISP is of will be required are required to report to the FCC. It's an ongoing effort it's a long effort, but but there's some money behind it. Fortunately, from Congress so that's gonna take time it's it's an imperfect system it's going to take time to address the problems. The one thing I think is still missing. There's a few things missing in that effort, and one that I'm particularly concerned, is that there is, there's currently no provision for the ISPs to inform and make public pricing. And I think we will have a much better sense of where services available will continue to be in the dark in terms of pricing, and I think that's a key component because we know that there's, there's affordability is perhaps the biggest factor in terms of preventing low income folks from from connecting. And to your question about advocacy, I would say there's, I think of it in the short term and in the medium and long term to address systemic change. So in the short term, I think what advocacy organizations are doing—but we need a lot more effort—is helping people sign up for existing low cost offers, and in our research, we asked people, low income folks, do they know about this offers? And typically two thirds of households that are low income that would qualify for the offers are unaware of this offers and the ISPs are not particularly eager to promote them. So there's a gap in terms of the availability of some solutions for low income falls and the fact that also for a number of language reasons and literacy reasons, all kinds of reasons, people are just not taking advantage enough of those offers, including EBB, which also is is three quarters of households are unaware of even EBB the federal effort. On the long term systemic change I think advocacy organizations are key to keep pushing for systemic change to the system. I think EBB, low cost offers are short term bandaids. We need much more systemic thinking and change, and of course advocacy organizations can can have an important role there.

DeAnne Cuellar 54:28

Thank you so much. Advocacy, Dr. Morris, do you want to add to that?

Traci Morris 54:34

Yeah, I'll add to advocacy and the idea of both, you know, on the advocacy level. I have to agree that these are short term fixes we're plugging holes in a leaky boat, as opposed to, as opposed to sustainable solutions at this point. I thin they'd like to tout a program like EBB but I don't think in the end it's going to impact our communities like it should. I certainly, I don't know about you all, but I've tried to fill one out for my dad, and I haven't been able to figure it out, and I work in this arena. I haven't been able to get him qualified, the provider, you know, put the information straight up there but the qualification part, and the kind of documentation you need if you're doing that on a public access computer, it's not safe, so I mean there's some issues with these programs that they are touting as solutions. And it's not going to be a long term solution of course. The EBB is only going to last till the money runs out, and then it makes it will presumably transition into a lower of sustainable program that's a lot less help on that. So, you know, we have issues with the advocacy part because we don't have the number of advocacy groups in Indian Country to go out there. We're trying to, we don't work directly with constituents, so we're trying to get information to Indian centers, and those sorts of folks

that are working or organizations that are working with the safety net programs for Indian Country, but there are language issues, absolutely. There are issues with the technology itself, it's not a solution. We need a sustainable solution in terms of the data itself. The data is very flawed. I think we understate that it is absolutely flawed, and we know specifically on tribal lands even the FCC acknowledges that the data is significantly flawed and overestimated in, and we know that that's because the data is proprietary, we asked the carriers on a forum to report what they serve, and if they serve one household in a zip code; they consider it served even if they're not serving it and that's a problem. I think we advocate at AAPI and certainly with tribal organizations like National Congress of American Indians, we advocate for independent data that's not coming from carriers because only then are we ever really going to get a handle on how significant the divide is, I think, personally. And you know towards all of this I think the one thing we've danced around is broadband access and affordability should be a social determinant of health, it should be in that category, period. If you don't have it, you don't even exist. You don't even exist in a lot of ways, you can't do taxes, you can't, you can't apply for school, you cannot apply for a job. I mean, you don't exist. And so I think if we started to include that data in social determinants of health, it would go a long ways towards the people we're missing, when we talk about this is my thoughts.

DeAnne Cuellar 57:47

Thank you so much for bringing up social determinants of health—that was my next question. You know earlier before I got on for today's panel. You know the Michelson Foundation published something that I read and they were talking about how Latinx communities were less likely based on the research to go online for health information or to submit online forms. So can you talk a little bit more about how the work that we need to do to make sure that the digital divide, you know, becomes a social determinant of health, that we talk about that more? Dr. Morris?

Traci Morris 58:28

You know I don't have an answer to how we make sure I think we've got to just be talking about it in public spaces like this to begin with. And then we've got to talk to, I guess, off the top of my head say talking to our local representatives and lawmakers but then we've got to be talking to the researchers in. I don't know the process to get it as a social determinant of health, but it's just starting to be talked about as one so I think that that's something. In all actuality, I would say we should define it for ourselves instead of let somebody define how we do it, but I don't have an answer for that.

DeAnne Cuellar 59:03

Yeah, you know, I'd like to give it to her Rebecca and let you talk about this in San Antonio on this day San Antonio and I was recently talking with elected leaders on social determinants of health, you know, 80% of the people we've lost due to the pandemic were older adults and you know that data we estimate, 40%+ plus, 42% or more didn't have access to the internet, he would you like to take a, you know, take a chance on this question Do you want to talk about social determinants of health and digital divide?

Rebecca Kauma 59:35

Absolutely. And thankfully, my background is in health administration slash public health. So, this is something that I've also just been trying to understand with the intersectionality of all of the different issue areas that come up. So I think the biggest thing for us to be able to understand is how the digital divide, ultimately impacts all of the different areas of our lives and I think that's where we're getting at with the social determinants of health. So when we talk about the social determinants of health that can

include everything from economic stability education, food access health care systems, and it's very very interesting to see how what especially with the COVID-19 pandemic how navigating accessing the Internet and computers, definitely shifts every single aspect of our lives. So for example, the digital divide, we saw a huge, huge shift with many students having to transition to doing school at home. And that also proposed many issues and barriers. We also saw many issues with individuals trying to access health care services. I know for example my provider did transition many of our appointments to online so we saw a huge increase in telehealth as well so I think it's important for us to understand that the digital divide does intersect in many different other issue areas, and you need to be able to understand the systems that are in play and not have a one sector approach to the issue. So for example when we're trying to craft solutions here in Long Beach to be able to advance digital equity and inclusion. I cannot just isolate the digital divide in one issue area you need to be able to understand all of the different systems so the healthcare system, the education system, the criminal justice system, and all of the inequities that exist in those systems because each of those systems overla. So I can't just look at digital inclusion without looking at education, I need to bring in those stakeholders and those communities that are affected there. I can't look at digital inclusion without also looking to see how it plays a role in our economic system. So it's important for us to understand the intersectionality of all of those systems, and ultimately look at solutions that have the option to be able to support and address multiple system inequities that exist so it is a lot. I think it definitely requires you bringing multiple cross sector partners to the table and understanding the intersectionality of how all of those come into play, and making sure you're focusing on a systems change approach while doing it.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:02:29

Thank you so much. We talk about systems level changes a lot. So I wanted to talk about systems level changes for a moment. I have this question. What does the world on the other side look like? I mean have you all as panelists thought about that, you have a moment to like look towards the future, your research is on the forefront today but it's being put into action. You know we're on the other side of the bridge or the bridge, if you took the bridge down it doesn't exist anymore, you know, we've closed as many tech equity gaps as we could. What does the future look like? Have you all imagined what your goals and actions look like? Dr. Hernan?

Hernan Galperin 1:03:20

Really interesting question. Thank you DeAnne. I think I am optimistic that the pandemic has really exposed some of the flaws in the system. Some of some of the inequities that could no longer be ignored. Think the pictures of the kids trying to do homework and and parking lots in the middle of freezing weather, and so many other stories like that. Just, just were not you could not ignore those those, those, those images and I think it, it did. Galvanize policymakers foundations philanthropy and advocates, and everybody around this issue so I think I think both Traci and Rebecca mentioned that there's a lot of funding coming into play already, and there's, hopefully more on the way with the infrastructure package and other other other sources of funding. Now this is my optimist that the part of me that optimist, the part of me that is a little more less optimistic is, I think we need to get it right this time, because we've had money come in in the billions of dollars for rural broadband and we've had money coming in for digital literacies. It's not the first time we do this, perhaps the, the sheer volume is is bigger, but we've done this before. And with underwhelming results. So I I'm optimistic but I'm concerned that we have to get it right this time. And I could go here for example with, with, in many ways with with Dr. Morris, saying that, let's think not just short term fixes to the leaking boat and EBB is one example of that, because in many ways, it is rewarding ISPs who are not competing, who are not investing, simply paying them the difference between what consumers can afford and what they want to

charge consumers so we are in many ways rewarding, private sector companies that really shouldn't be rewarded for what they're doing; they should really be held to their commitments to invest more in low income communities, in rural areas, and we should hold them to those standards. So again I'm optimistic, with so much energy coming into the space, but we need to get things right this time.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:06:15

Thank you. Dr. Traci Morris, optimisti? Have you thought about the other side?

Traci Morris 1:06:24

Um, no I found out how to get there. And I've got some plans but I haven't, I mean I have had more optimism. I guess I do have optimism because over the years that I've been doing this last 1314 years, I've been doing this, I have seen the changes, incremental albeit but changes that have been able to be made by being present in the policy sphere by doing the research that needs to be done. I, I have seen the changes, there's some of them are really small but some of them are big we I mean, we've got 1 billion for tribal broadband not including all the other broadband, that's out there right now. Now, granted, we have 5 billion in applications so that talks to the need, but the, but to see that happening, I mean I didn't think I didn't think in my lifetime I'd see somebody in a federal agency that that's indigenous, and it's hard for me to even talk about that in a way that I mean this is these are first for us in Indian country so I do have optimism. That being said, this is a big divide and it's, you know, that divide is physical in terms of land, you know, and so I think there's a lot that needs to be done because our population is so small, and have such specific specificity in terms of dealing with the federal government. And so I do think it's going to take time, a lot of time, I mean I think I'll work on it the rest of my life. I mean, I will, and hopefully I will train the next generation that's my real goal being at university is getting that next generation going. I honestly think that in some ways I really think this is a new and emerging field is digital and equity, whether it's the policy end of it, or the implementation of it or the research. I'm really starting to think about it is much something much more comprehensive than just broadband. And I don't know what that looks like yet but I'm putting a plan in place. So I have optimism. I think if I didn't, I couldn't do the work. So, but I don't know what it'll look like I don't know. I don't imagine I know I can get there but you know stuff always changes so I'm open.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:08:37

Agreed. Thank you so much, Rebecca. Are you thinking about what the future looks like?

Rebecca Kauma 1:08:42

Yeah absolutely and I like to think about it also in terms of what I've heard and what the community's vision is for digital equity and inclusion and that is something that we were trying to also share Intel as part of our roadmap development process. And some of these, you know visions that the community shared are just something so simple but it's so important and I want to uplift that I remember somebody shared that they just want to be able to walk to a place where they can be able to utilize the computer something that's blocking distance where they can just simply call their internet service provider and not have to worry about not having someone speaking their language. So some of these simple aspects that they have created as part of this vision, I think is something that I see as part of our greater digital equity strategy so I think it's about us continuing to understand how the community visions and sees digital equity and what we can continue to do to drive that that is something that I try and put up before because it's very easy to get lost in the weeds when you're constantly doing the work and forgetting what the community's needs and wants are. So that's something that I continue to lift. As I look at the collective vision for digital equity and inclusion and also recognizing that there are three components of

digital inclusion. So recognizing that obviously we need to continue to focus on broadband, but we also need to make sure that we're promoting computer literacy training as well and making sure that that's available in multiple languages, and then also focusing on the technology piece, And also making sure that we have technical support for all of those three aspects as well. So I think that should be also part of our collective vision as we're striving for digital equity inclusion.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:10:43

Thank you so much. Yeah, there's not a lot of good that we can point to that's come out of the pandemic and, you know, before the pandemic, you know, almost everybody that worked on this issue, knew of each other, or, you know, knew who we were, you know, across geographies, if there's one positive thing that I can say on this issue that's come out of the pandemic areas is the field is ever expanding and there's more and more advocates coming to the table and we've got a big quite a big issue, to work on so there's no shortage of work. We've got time for one more question for Round Robin and, you know, then we're going to get to these q&a and also please don't forget to look in the chat. There's so many great tools and resources that are being shared, it's wonderful to see that and then there's also lots of really positive feedback that's coming back for attending this event today. Um, the last question is, in that same article that I mentioned earlier, there was this phrase that also caught my attention. It said federal state investment in broadband infrastructure, opened the possibility for innovative approaches to connecting Black and Latino communities, despite progress vigilance is required as industry as lobbying to maintain its monopoly on what should be a public utility, and a human right. So I'm gonna start with Dr. And on public utility and human right.

Hernan Galperin 1:12:06

Yes, perhaps, lean on the the lobbying that he mentioned which is exactly what's happening that the industry loves the in many ways love this bills, and this funding come in the infrastructure bill and others, because it would pay for them to lay down infrastructure that they would own in, in places that they don't see the economic return. So, the government will just pay for them to do something that they would perhaps not doing on their own but it's really not. I mean I'm. I do get frustrated because of the although as I said the way in which some of this funding is being directed is, is, is an old recipe that has not really work to connect, low income communities of color, it just hasn't not been, it hasn't. I should perhaps I should nuance that say, it has not connected, folks, to the extent of the funding available because we'd spend billions of dollars, and for very little return in terms of truly affordable internet in places where it's most needed. So, so I do, again, my concern is, yes, lots of really good news on on funding but can we find community oriented community driven solutions that are not just more and more of the same old recipe.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:13:38

Thank you for that. Dr. Traci, would you like to add?

Traci Morris 1:13:41

Yeah, yeah, I want to follow up on that, and I think you're absolutely right. These are old subsidy models that have been tried and, you know they've been doing it forever and they haven't moved the needle, the way that they could have. One of the ways we're seeing some innovating funding models is happening in Indian country and that is with this \$1 billion from the Department of Commerce, that is earmarked to go directly to tribes instead of to carriers to support tribes so that hopefully is the new model or could be a replicated good new model, how they implement that we have yet to be seen and we then just got the applications in but that's new. So we're definitely hopeful in Indian country that that

that works and if that works, that may be a model for changing that and moving the needle. So, as far as, as human right. Absolutely, I mean absolutely but, you know, I think that's just way too simplistic waters a human right, too, but that's the monetize. So, you know, it's kind of, yeah but yeah but.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:14:50

Yeah, I agree. It's "Yeah but." Rebecca, would you like to add that question?

Rebecca Kauma 1:14:56

Nothing further to add. But I think the simple answer to your question is yes.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:15:04

Okay, great, well we've got quite a few questions from the people that are tuning in today. One of them is for you, Dr. Traci Morris, how is the federal landscape changing research on tribal broadband?

Traci Morris 1:15:21

Oh, you know, I think there's, you know, there is a need for more research in Indian country and there's a need more for more researchers and more folks going into this field of research I think that having a seat at the table, it like I think I was saying earlier is dramatic, all of this, and it's it's unprecedented, but we still don't have the capacity yet, you know, according to the old census were 2% of the population, I think it's for now, but I haven't read all the details, but if we're 2% of the population and less than point 1% of us get a higher degree and that doesn't include Master's or doctorate, and we don't have the capacity to be able to do the kind of research on our communities that we need. And there are issues to about data sovereignty and the proprietaries of tribal specific data as well so the federal landscape is changing but there's just not enough actual research on tribal communities because we are such a small population it skews the way that the statistics are done. That's why pew doesn't do studies about connectivity and tribal broadband that's why census is skewed because it's, you know, larger bait land based tribes with larger populations nothing under 50,000 We have many tribes that are three 510 1000 So, what we need is more researchers going into these fields we need our own folks in there and we need partners I terrific partners on my board that I work with. I cannot wait to reach out to our man and see what he's doing and see what we can partner on because I think there's lots of opportunity there as well, especially with California tribes. So, the Federal landscape is ever changing, but we need to drive more research on tribal broadband at our institute is it, we're the only ones doing it right now. So, if you know somebody out there somebody out there wants to go into tribal broadband research, look me up, please.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:17:19

Thank you so much. We haven't talked a whole lot about older adults I really like this question, thinking about the growing older adult population how our advocacy efforts for addressing the digital divide being integrated into age friendly efforts such as the master plan on aging and purposeful aging, Los Angeles. Do have a paneslit who would like to address that one?

Hernan Galperin 1:17:54

Well what I could provide DeAnne, is I was trying to look for some of the data that we have on older adults conductivity. And what is interesting is that, I think, or rather our data shows that even though older adults continue to be the least connected age group. They have jumped the most in terms of connectivity throughout the pandemic, which is rather, to be expected, they are the group that was most at risk for COVID and stayed at home and had to transition and had to learn to do so much of the daily

activities through a computer or tablet or smartphone. So we've seen a fairly large jump in the connectivity for this group, which is encouraging. Quite a bit of telehealth take up as well in this group, but they still lag and there's still more to be done and I know several organizations, including one that I worked quite closely with the CTF the California Emergent Technology fund is doing work in this population and just received a new grant, because a lot of the work with this population is not just provision of device and connectivity, it's literacy is really working with them to provide the services they need, we have to remember people don't get broadband, just to get broadband, they get bandwidth to be able to go online and participate in remote learning and telehealth, talk to the kids, grandkids, etc. So, and that needs to be a part of the effort to connect the older adult population.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:19:41

Thank you so much for that and I just dropped a link for everyone there's aging connected.org I encourage you all to visit the landing page for the organization I work for older adults technology services. We also have resources about older adults the intersection of technology. This, I'm not sure who did this question, who this is for, I think we're back I think you might be able to answer this one. It says schools and school districts have have provided provide or provided parents with meals during the pandemic. However, when it came to ISP, access, and I think you're asking payments and subsidies for internet services that those services were not available or scarce, you won't talk about that?

Rebecca Kauma 1:20:25

Yeah and I can't speak to which school district you're perhaps referring to since I don't have any context there so I will go ahead I did want to expand on the older adults question and then I can touch a little bit more about how we can be a lot more intentional with doing internet services outreach. So I did want to uplift that the computer literacy and digital literacy as a whole is very important especially for older adults, and just simply providing the technology and the connectivity is not enough in Long Beach, we saw that even when we were administering hotspots and computing devices. Many of our older adults still needed some additional assistance to have the confidence to be able to turn on their devices and utilize them for day to day tasks. So I do want to mention and this goes back to the equity perspective that you need to be able to understand the different unique needs that every community has. And I would say that just from our experience with working closely with older adults and the advocacy groups that support them, that we do need to be a lot more intentional by providing additional one on one support so that way they feel confident when utilizing their devices. And in regards to the next question that you asked. We definitely need to do a better job, I think, as multiple different entities that are engaged in this effort on finding different connecting points to be able to help individuals sign up for low cost, internet, especially in spaces where we know they'll be able to qualify. So we are very fortunate enough to have an organization called human IP. They're a nonprofit, digital inclusion organization that literally addresses the entire spectrum of digital inclusion everything from connecting residents to low cost, internet also providing low cost devices and also doing digital literacy training. And so it's important for us to ensure that we have different touch points, whether individuals are, for example, picking up their children from school is there an vigils there that can help them sign up for low cost, internet, even at laundry mats that was one of the areas that it could be a key outreach area to be able to connect individuals so I think we need to get a lot more strategic, with what types of community outreach opportunities are out there. We saw a lot of that creativity with the 2020 census especially because the COVID 19 pandemic shifts that. And a lot of our community partners had to get creative with how we're outreaching to communities so I'm hoping that we can use similar strategies to that as we continue to promote a low cost, Internet access and broadband adoption.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:23:21

Thank you so much. I really like this question because you know as someone who is born and raised in a community of color myself, art and storytelling is a big part of the work that we do. And I think this question could be answered by all three but I'm probably gonna start with Dr. Traci on this one, it's kind of long, give me a minute. It says, I really appreciate the mentions of art and storytelling as vital practices in community work. One thing that has been bugging me as a newer nonprofit staff member is, I look forward to conducting this interrogated research on my own. For example, studies and resources. I'm conflicted about using personal narratives from community members and clients. Do you have any advice for someone who both wants to one, discourage general assumption by potential donors and two, avoid using experiences too much?

Traci Morris 1:24:12

So we don't use testimony or direct stories at all. I work for a university, and that is a human subjects review issue, but I find that, I mean I can make general, I can tell General stories but data tells stories I can tell a story with data that is just I think just as effective. I don't use, so we don't use any personal testimony stories and all the work we have done. I think that it's much more personally for the work we're doing with our audience being specifically lawmakers tribal leaders. And then, academics, and such, and organizations, other community organizations, I feel that our, our work is best served if we are talking about data, lack of data. And if we are bringing to bear the stories that come out of the data as and, and I also do think a lot in terms of making sure that people can take away certain talking points, I always think specifically about talking points, facts about tribal sovereignty fence about the trust relationship. A few facts about the connectivity issues. Those go a lot longer away towards telling a story, I feel like that's how I run a IPI other organizations run very different but we're not a grassroots organization working with constituents on the ground we're working with lawmakers, we're working with researchers and academics and other organizations that need data so I think the question about storytelling is how we think about storytelling. There's a myriad of ways to do that and I also think about. It's about who your audience is as well. And it's also about respect for the individual at a certain point, too much of the personal narrative, especially in a negative way, can become poverty porn, and I don't do that, We don't do that. So, those are that's that's kind of my thoughts on it.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:26:10

Thank you. We have time for one more answer on this question. Dr. Hernan, would you like to add anything?

Hernan Galperin 1:26:17

Sure perhaps just briefly I'm going to put in the chat, something that we did but but really it was something that our partners did LA CAN which is a well known organization in Skid Row, we worked with them. And, you know, and in it, it as a way to to promote the work that they were doing on conductivity Skid Row they put together this bicycle with a card that help people charge their phones Skid Row one of the big problems as people can charge their phone because they don't live anywhere so they live on the streets rather so there's no way to charge the phone. So I think one is storytelling. This is sort of the performance if you will also have a performative intervention where they would go around with this card and just show how really, this, this type of intervention was needed. So, again, more than a testimonial this was more of a performance if you will, but but really it caught attention for a lot of folks so I encourage you to, to look and again, this is not something that we did, but they really all the credit goes to LA CAN, which put this together.

Rebecca Kauma 1:27:31

And if I may, I'd like to just quickly chime in because that question may have been directed to my piece actually. And I would say yeah definitely similar to what Dr. Morris has uplifted I definitely do believe it depends on who your audience is. So for us, we find storytelling as very very fundamental because the data alone that we get from the American Community Survey does not tell us anything all we're able to see is, you know, information based on the segregated data but it doesn't tell us what those key challenges and barriers are that are communities in Long Beach and I'm speaking in context of Long Beach, of what those communities are experiencing. So for us, we find that information to be very vital because that helps us conduct solutions that will get directly at those challenges and barriers that community members have shared with us, and we're very intentional as well as our approach by not looking at it from a deficit standpoint by making sure we're telling the story but we're also looking at what are some of the key assets that the community is also bringing to the table as well. So for us, through our audience is important for us to tell those stories because that also allows us to get additional funding, funding as well so that storytelling and art making, was definitely something that worked well for us, again it may not work well for other communities as has been expressed as part of this panel. And the one thing that I want to mention is that we have to be very intentional with it as well. So working closely with partners, allow us to do it in a space that will ultimately work resonate with a positive impact and not do more harm than good. So I just wanted to provide that context as well that definitely it depends on your audience and it has to work for your community. Some communities and those have worked well for.

DeAnne Cuellar 1:29:31

Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you so much to all the panelists, I'd like to turn it back over to Miguel.

Miguel Leon 1:29:41

Thank you so much, DeAnne, and thank you to all our speakers for the very insightful conversation. Just a heads up to everyone in the audience, you will get a follow-up email soon aggregating all the resources that were shared I counted easily over a dozen which is fantastic, really points to how fruitful our conversation was we heard everything from the importance of involving nonprofit organizations in your digital equity work to uplift that community voice. We heard about the need to classify broad access to broadband as a social determinants of health because of its intersectionality, and we heard about the importance and—reall—the need of more for more research, especially in tribal communities to get adequate data to fully tackle digital inequity. So thank you, thank you. "Race and Digital Inequity: The Impact on Poor Communities of Color" was presented by the Michelson 20MM Foundation in service of advancing digital equity for all students and families. I want to thank our foundation partners the California Community Foundation, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Southern California Grantmaker. We'll post the recording of today's discussion on our YouTube channel the Michelson 20MM Foundation by tomorrow. The video will include links in the description so that you may join the Connecting California LinkedIn group, a dedicated space to foster collaboration in California to advance digital equity and close the divide faster and together. If you or your organization want to become part of our digital equity work, please reach out to me personally at miguel@20mm.org. You can also think engaged by signing up for our newsletter at 20mm.org to receive news and updates about Connecting California as well as our other events and programs. Thank you so much again for taking the time to join us. Have a great rest of the day.