**February 8, 2022 Meeting - Seattle Community Technology Advisory Board**

Topics covered included: Digital Equity in Telecom Forum; Digital Equity Legislation update; Technology Matching Fund overview.

**This meeting was held:** February 8, 2022; 6:00-8:00 p.m., via Webex

**Attending:  (All via Webex)**

**Board Members:** Camille Malonzo, Rene Peters, Nicole Espy, Femi Adebayo, Lassana Magassa, Brandon Lindsey, Leah Shin, Tyrone Grandison,

**Public:** Dewi Ali (Equity in Education Coalition), Dorene Cornwell, Coleman Entringer, Kristen Hoffman, Jordan Wolff, Annie Shaw, Meira Jough, Eryk Waligora, Adrian MacDonald, Steven LeMay, Harte Daniels, Carl Done (T-Mobile), Azmeena Hasham (Verizon), Robert Bass (AT&T), Patrick O'Brien (T-Mobile), Lauren K Paolini, Dr. Angela Hemingway (T-Mobile), Elizabeth Iaukea, Bob Fletcher (Verizon), Sean Ardussi, Greta Knappenberger (Verizon), Michelle, Laura Rattner, Ryan Carroll, Kate Nolan, Carolyn Cole, Aisha Davis (Verizon), Cat Howell, Phillip Meng, Andy Katz, Darryl, Devin Miller, Ernie Rasmussen, Mark DeLoura, Jessica Zinda, Jordan Wolff, Kai Neaner, Kathleen Carson, Koki Sato, Lauren K Paolini, Lily, Marisol Tapia, Scott Shawcroft, Vicky Yuki, Carl Hiltbrunner, Kristen Hoffman

**Staff:** Sara Nelson (City Council), Jim Loter, David Keyes, Alice Lawson, Cara Vallier, Tara Zaremba, Vinh Tang, Delia Burke, Meira Jough, Kate Nolan, Katie Wilton, Cass Magnuski

**62 In Attendance**

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thank you all for joining us. Welcome, everyone, to the February meeting of the Community Technology Advisory Board. Looks like we have a full house! Happy February. Happy Special Election. Ballots due today. Make sure you get those ballots in before 8:00 p.m. We begin our meeting, as always, with an acknowledgement that we are on the traditional land of the First People of Seattle, the Duwamish People, past and present. We honor the land itself, and the Duwamish Tribe. We encourage all participants tonight to learn about the original inhabitants of the land where they reside, and the impact of settler colonization that contributed to the removal of indigenous people. We urge everyone to participate in action, identified by community-based organizations in your area. Also, happy Black History Month, everyone. It is a great day to acknowledge that history, celebrate it in communities, and to actually support those communities.

As we look at the intersections of digital equity and community, we are excited to host a great meeting for you all tonight, featuring a panel of representatives from some of our community's major telecom providers, talking about digital equity programs, organized and hosted by our own Digital Equity Committee. And so, before we get into it, we're going to take care of some of our board business. So, while board members are going to do some approval of minutes and the agenda, and an accomplishment memo, I'm going to ask all participants to just add your name and project information if you would like to, in the chat.

So, first up, can we please get a motion from a board member to approve the minutes from the January 2022 meeting?

**Brandon Lindsey:**   I move to accept the minutes.

**Leah Shin:**   I second the motion.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thank you, Brandon and Leah. All those who approve? Any abstentions? This motion passes.

The second item of business is to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting. Can I please get a motion from a board member?

**Femi Adebayo:**  This is Femi. I move to approve.

**Ty Grandison:**   Second.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Can I please get all of the yeas? Abstentions or nays? Being none, this passes. Awesome. Our last thing is we're going through an approval of the 2021 accomplishments that we reviewed during our December meeting. Rene Peters walked us through. We will add it to the meeting minutes. All board members should have gotten this document. Any questions from board members on the accomplishment memo? Can I please get a motion from a board member to approve the memo, that we will then send out to the stakeholders? <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LrRIHRZ4ZJrn-l-AVIpnsDCC1cesabVowk87_C0ekdY/edit?usp=sharing>

**Leah Shin:**   So moved.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Leah. Can I please get a second?

**Femi Adebayo:**  I second.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Femi. All yeas? All nays and abstentions? This motion passes. Thank you, everyone. And now we're onto the  show. I'm going to pass this over to the co-chair of the Digital Equity Committee, Coleman Entringer.

**DIGITAL EQUITY IN TELECOM FORUM**

**Coleman Entringer:**  Thank you. Hi, everybody. I'm Coleman Entringer, and I'm on the Digital Equity Committee. I'll just give a brief introduction about the forum that we're going to do today, and then I'll try to dedicate most of the time to our representatives from the telecom companies that we have gathered here. Just for some brief background, CTAB, as a whole, the Community Technology Advisory Board deals with anything under the purview of technology relating to the City, and really tried to advise the City and provide perspective and a viewpoint on the issues that might arise under that view. Underneath that, we have a number of committees, one of which being the Digital Equity Committee. We are concerned about the equal access in use of technology within our communities, which brings us to where we're at today. The community recognizes that telecommunications are pivotal, and essential to the everyday functioning of our lives. And as such, we want to make sure that we allocate time for the community to ask questions, and be able to interact with representatives of some of our largest telecom providers.

Today, we have representatives gathered from AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile, and our forum format today is basically going to be a brief, five-minute introduction from each of these representatives to describe a little bit about the programs that they have, and how their business relates to digital equity within Seattle. And then, we're going to have a 20-minute period of moderated questions compiled by the Digital Equity Committee and from the community curated by us. And then, lastly, we're going to have an open forum of community question components, where we will open it up to the floor, and allow questions to be answered by everybody.

So, without further ado, I'll go ahead and kick it off. And I think we just want to go alphabetical and then we'll switch it up when everybody starts doing questions, so that we don't have the same people starting every time. Shall we start with AT&T? And then we'll move down the line.

**Robert Bass:**   Sure. Good evening, everybody. I'm Bob Bass from AT&T, and I have the responsibility for external and legislative affairs for the Pacific Northwest, based here in Seattle. We're really looking forward to the discussion tonight. I'll keep my comments really brief so we can cut more time out for discussion and questions. I think everybody here tonight understands the tremendous benefits to anyone who has access to the internet and how that access is essential to participating in everyday life, whether it's participating in the economy, managing your health, managing your family, your job, your work, your search for work or any of those things. In essence, the discussion tonight should really be how do all Americans get access to connectivity that they need to have an equal chance to compete in this society. There were a number of things that were on the list to discuss, but a couple of things I will briefly talk about are the Emergency Broadband Fund, and the Portable Connectivity Program, which are two top of mind programs that Washingtonians and folks in Seattle have taken advantage of. Since those programs launched, AT&T across the country has helped to make broadband more affordable for millions of households participating in both programs obviously right through the end of the year. It is one of one 600 unique providers that AT&T has participated in this voluntary program. We're really proud to serve those Washington-eligible households the affordable connectivity program. In Washington, we do that through our wireless products, our wireless broadband through our AT&T services and through our Cricket service offerings. And as everyone knows, when EBD launched at the end of the year, those EBD participants and providers who participated, were automatically transferred over. I know there was a question about granular subscriber information. Subscriber information is proprietary, so I can't give you those granular subscriber counts. But I think everybody on here knows that the State of Washington had about 150,000 households that participated. And I think those with a Seattle zip code is somewhere in the neighborhood of 15,000 households. But AT&T continues to serve a portion of those and we're really proud to be a part of this. We are a company that has served those ACP-eligible households, as I said through our AT&T prepaid services and our Cricket wireless services. Now in other states, the local exchange carrier, which is a 21-state footprint, one of the things that I think is an amazing announcement that we had yesterday, was in those states where we are a fibre provider, we relaunched our Access to AT&T, which is a broadband service that enables ACP-eligible households to get higher megabits of broadband with no data cap, which is up from what the previous program was. It was 10 megabits at a cost of $10. So, now with 100 megabits and no data cap, it's $30. So, if you are an ACP-eligible customer, you've just gotten free service, 100 megabit service.

I know the other providers are proud to be part of the program, and really proud to be able to participate tonight. I really thank everybody for taking the time to join, and those others that are participating tonight in presenting. I really look forward to questions and being able to answer more specific things. We will have more time for discussion and questions.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Great. We appreciate that introduction from AT&T. Moving alphabetically, we want to go to T-Mobile.

**Dr. Angela Hemingway:**   Since we only have five minutes, again in the interest of time, we'll just go ahead and hope right in. Just again, really quickly, as Robert indicated, there were a lot of questions that came to us, and so we wanted to put a few thoughts together, echoing again some of the thoughts that Robert just shared with you. We brought a team from T-Mobile here today. I am Dr. Angela Hemingway. I'm an education adviser here at T-Mobile. I brought Carl Done, who is a senior manager, and then a couple of account managers, as well. Ryan Carroll and Pat O'Brien are on the line as well, to be able to answer some questions.

With that, I'm going to go ahead and pass it over to Carl first, to briefly talk about some of the work we are currently doing in the community.

**Carl Done:**   Thanks, Dr. Hemingway. Given that our time is really short, I'm just going to hit a couple of bullets here. Number one, it's really an honor to be part of this agenda tonight. You might not be aware that T-Mobile is headquartered right here in Bellevue across the lake. We're really proud of our involvement in the community. I just wanted to give you a couple of highlights.

At the core of what we are as a company is this inclusive diversity as part of our DNA. I really want to say thank you for partnering with us and being in synergy in that way. In addition to things like the Seattle Pride Parade, and other events that we do, we do quarterly community give-back and public service programs. We even have some new announcements. We were the first telecom last week to announce -- and by the way, it's not just telecom, but cable and wireless -- to be 100 percent net green energy. And in honor of this historical month, we gave a $2.5 million donation to historically Black colleges this week for Black History Month.

At the bottom right-hand side, see the highlight there? We are really approaching the community for digital inclusion, internet connectivity for all. K-12, we ended up partnering here in the State of Washington with over seven percent of the school districts to get them special programs, including the City of Seattle, the library programs, including the City of Seattle; and a number of nonprofits. I hear that some of you have some questions about how we can partner more there. I'm looking forward to entertaining some of those doing the Q&A. We are probably seven out of the ten biggest nonprofits in the City of Seattle housing authorities and City and County departments. We keep a very wholistic, let's approach the problem in partnership with all of these different agencies. So, looking forward to some Q&A. I'll knock it back to Dr. Hemingway.

**Dr. Angela Hemingway:**   Thank you so much. Just a couple of other quick highlights. As Robert mentioned, we are participating in ACP. He also referenced the statistic that's out there about the number of Washingtonians, as well as the zip code availability, and I dropped that into the chat <https://www.usac.org/about/emergency-broadband-benefit-program/emergency-broadband-benefit-program-enrollments-and-claims-tracker/> so you can see that there and be able to double-check those numbers. We are participating with Assurance Wireless and with Metro by T-Mobile. I will drop those into the chat as soon as we finish presenting. And then we also can follow up with some flyers. Ryan can do that, if you're interested.

In addition, another equity program that we run that is a real passion project for me is called Project 10Million. In this particular presentation, I wanted to provide some hyperlinks that show some of the benefits, especially to K-12 students to have access to connectivity. <https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/project-10-million>  So, again, this will be available, and all of those links are active to very recent research papers. Project 10Million just at really high level, is T-Mobile's commitment to connect 10 million students over five years, and it's a $10.7 billion commitment that provides a student with a free hotspot and free 100 gigs of data. Again, happy to send flyers over if you're interested in learning more about this program. And just to give a brief overview of what 100 gigs of data per year can provide for a student, we wanted to make sure we had some information on that, as well.

With that, we wanted to spend just the last minute, Coleman -- I know you're timing us -- the last minute just briefly highlighting some of our network advancements that we've made recently. So, I'm going to pass it back to Carl Done.

**Carl Done:**   Thanks, Dr. Hemingway. I'll be very brief here. The bottom line is wow and double-wow. For those of you who are not aware, we have really merged the two networks together, Spring and T-Mobile, significant geographic coverage. Some stats at a national level: we are very, very fast, faster than the other carriers, taking a layer cake approach, bigger footprint, bigger capacity. One of the specific questions that was asked of us in the prep for this forum, was, hey, as you're shutting down parts of the old stuff, like the 3G, has that impacted our ability to go out there with digital equity. The answer is no. Just the opposite. It has enhanced our ability. Because 3G was never the core of any connectivity programs, Like Project 10Million, or the Covid Relief Program, and stuff like that. 3G did not have the performance or the bandwidth or the capacity. 4G and 5G do. That's what everything is focused on. So, as we shut down some of the older spectrum stuff, the older networks, we're really super-charging our 4G and 5G experience.

All things being local, here are a couple of bullet points on how we're doing here locally: The capacity and coverage has been phenomenal. One of the reasons we have partnered with the school and the libraries -- that stuff on the right there is a 5G footprint. The lighter color is the low band 5G; the darker colors are what is called ultra-precocity, where you're going to get two, three, four, 600 megabits of data performance. So, extreme coverage. The vast majority of Seattle's population is now covered by ultra-precocity, so we are up to the challenge to connect the community.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Great. Thank you! And now, lastly, let's go to Verizon for their introduction.

**Azmeena Hasham:**  Let me start by thanking CTAB, particularly the Digital Equity Committee, for the work that you do and for the leadership. This is important work, obviously, and you're putting your volunteer time into this. So, many, many thanks for that. My name is Azmeena Hasham. I lead the public policy and community engagement for Verizon.

I want to begin by setting the stage for what we mean by digital equity. At Verizon, we have a business plan that is centered around our social impact. It is called Citizen Verizon. It is not only about a few people who manage the plan, but everybody in our company is associated with that plan. Everyone has a role to play, and that is made very, very clear. In terms of our brand, our impact, our volunteerism, everything is around this plan, and we focus on three key areas: digital inclusion, climate protection, and human prosperity. And we have many programs that are built around those three key pillars. I have sent out some materials and programs that are available locally, so that they can be searched. One of the take-aways that I really want from this meeting is for you to know that there are programs available that are geared for students, for small business, and for skills development that are available immediately. Coleman has the information; he has the brochures; he has the links and will be circulating those.

In particular, our schools program envisages what the future of education will look like. And it's really geared around our schools where we provide connectivity and  STEM education. There are, today, 511 of Will schools. They include middle schools and high schools. And the programming is developed in concert with leaders in the field, such as Arizona State University Discovery Education and uses AR in the next generation of technology to make science real for students. We have a program for (unintelligible) development. Again, we can customize it, and it is a way to level up for small businesses. So that is another program that we'll share with you. Along with that program is a skills development program for adults who are looking for a new opportunity, who are looking for opportunities that will provide family-sustaining jobs. The program is called Verizon Skills Forward. It is given in conjunction with South Seattle College. It runs on a 12-week cycle and provides all kinds of certifications for high demand skills in the technical space. So, again, I encourage you to look at those.

In terms of our 5G network, I am so excited about 5G. I think this is the first time we have been able to get a technology and carriers who are coming into the field who are providing real competition. It is going to change the landscape of cost, availability, and choice. And I think that is incredibly important for bridging the digital divide. So, we're really, really excited about that.

In terms of the specific questions around affordable connectivity, yes, we are participating in it. Again, Coleman has the link for our site. 3G is going to be sunset. We're going to sunset it at the end of the year. But you are eligible for free upgrades, free device upgrades. So, please look into that. And we have a number of digital equity plans. The information is all available, and we will be sharing that with you.

With that, I will hand it back over so that we can take specific questions.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Perfect! We appreciate the introductions from all of our representatives gathered here. With that, we'll go ahead and enter into the moderated question portion of the forum. We did have a couple of questions that I think all of the representatives covered to the extent that they planned on covering them. What I gathered around the specific questions around the number of enrollees, and about the cap. So, I'll go ahead and push that question to later and we can recover it if we want. And then, I also want to reiterate that we will be sharing all of the materials that were shared with us today. With that said, I'll go ahead and go down our question list here.

The first one is that public sector organizations are setting up Digital Navigator programs. Do you have or plan to have similar guidance and support in the communities that use your products? And, what form would that take if you are doing it or if you plan on doing it? We started at the beginning of the alphabet last time, so I'll just go the other way. Let's start with Verizon.

**Azmeena Hasham:**  We take a very broad approach to digital inclusion. For us, digital inclusion is not just access, but it is affordability; it is application. By application, we mean it is skills, accessibility. It is the ability to gain application access and be able to use them. And then, finally, advocacy. In the application piece and affordability piece, we feel that Digital Navigators play a huge role. It's selecting the best programs, and really deep-diving into families to understand what is missing. What are the skills that are missing? Can families turn on their WiFi? Do they know what to do when their internet goes down? Digital Navigation is really key as a component to deliver that service. Because if we are talking about 100 percent digital inclusion, that is a piece we cannot afford to miss. And so I am very pleased to say that as part of Seattle's Technology Matching Fund, we were able to provide funding for a Digital Navigator project that is up and running. I've heard that it is expanding, as well. So, yes, I do feel that it is a key component. We play a part. We provide the information to the Digital Navigators to be able to incorporate into their programming as a wholistic part of the offering. So, it doesn't favor one carrier, but it gives that broad understanding of what is available. And it looks at the skills needed, as well, to use the internet.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Perfect! Moving down the line to T-Mobile, same question.

**Dr. Angela Hemingway:**   I wanted to compliment Azmeena on her very concise and exceptional answer, and just piggyback on that a little bit. The vision of T-Mobile -- and we've been working very closely with districts, and we recognize that we need to partner with  them because they are key components in the outreach efforts to parents. Of course, parents trust their local school district to serve as that primary spot for these Digital Navigator type programs. We connected about three million students during the pandemic, and as a result, we have deep connections into quite a number of districts, and so we've been leveraging that particular approach to ensure that we partnering with the districts, with the parents, and of course, with the students to ensure that, as Azmeena said so eloquently. Parents have the capacity to do everything, from turn on the device to connect to the WiFi, and then, of course, participate in anything from telehealth clear through student learning, as well. So, thank you very much. Great question.

**Robert Bass:**   We've also seen that the nonprofits in the community are playing a bigger role, from being a consultant, an advocate for how we can act.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Great. And then, lastly, AT&T. Same question.

**Robert Bass:**   We appreciate the question. Azmeena mentioned on the front side, there are really three things: access, affordability, and a device to connect to a network. We have used a multi-pronged approach just like other carriers. Over the past year, we have worked with 135,000 public schools, private K-12 schools, colleges, universities. And we've worked with a number nonprofits to address the student side of the equation, getting access to the magic number we see nationally, 17 million students that suffer from access problems. Our AT&T Foundation has a focus of two primary things. One is the homework gap, and two is the digital divide. So, in the AT&T Foundation the focus of our community giving and the work that we do, I've focused on those two areas, and have been over the last two years, particularly since the pandemic exposed such inequalities and how the internet reaches people in the United States. On the digital divide side, similar to the other carriers, we have worked on a number of levels. Last week, we announced a deal or an agreement with Interconnection, which is in Fremont. We've (unintelligible) with Digitunity. We just got offered 2,000 free or low-cost computers plus digital literacy training and technical support. We have set up our AT&T Connected Learning platform. We have partnered nationally with Human IT, which will distribute refurbished devices. One of the things I'm looking for in this market is for nonprofits where we can deliver up to 200 refurbished devices to you. You can take my information that I have provided tonight, and send me a note, and I can talk with you and see if your particular nonprofit can get those refurbished devices to you at no cost. But those are just a couple of the ways on that piece of it to address some of those. It's an ongoing, everyday issue that we work to improve upon every day, but those are some of the frontline programs that we're focusing on right now.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Good to hear. We appreciate all of those answers. I did want to make a quick note. I see a lot of good questions in the comments, which we really appreciate, getting that community feedback. I just want to note, though, that we will get to the questions and comments in the community section of the forum. So, I'll just hold onto those questions for now. And I also wanted to note for the people on the Digital Equity Committee that I'm trying to go down through all of our core questions, but feel free to add in, if you would like to, at any point. With that said, I'll go ahead and go to our next question: What is your position on the proposed State digital equity bill, H.B. 1723? If not in support, are there elements that you do support. Please explain your reasoning and such. I'll just go the other way around the carousel. We will start with AT&T this time.

**Robert Bass:**   Sure. Good question. On H.B. 1723, our team in Olympia, although they're working remotely, has weighed in on this bill. Obviously, digital equity is something that everybody that is here tonight agrees with. There were a couple of things that we mentioned to the bill's sponsor. There was some language in a particular section of the bill which dictated the programs and the discounts that the wireless carriers can provide. Unfortunately, that would be preempted by federal law, the regulation of rates for wireless carriers is covered under the Telecommunication Act of 1996, Section 332. We just mentioned that there are programs that, as far as dictating for instance what the rates could be for an eligible wireless broadband consumer in the State of Washington is unfortunately preempted by federal law. We just noted that, but we have full support for the program and what they're trying to accomplish. We just noted for the bill's sponsor to make sure that there were not inconsistencies.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Great. And moving on to T-Mobile?

**Carl Done:**  Honesty being the best policy, and being the sales manager for the Pacific Northwest, I'm not part of the regulatory affairs team. I'm going to punt. I don't know anything about it. I'm sure our regulatory affairs people are on point with this. I'm going to have to not give a comment.

**Coleman Entringer:**  No problem. Good policy. I'll move on to Verizon.

**Azmeena Hasham:**   I don't work on state legislation, but I have seen the bill, because I'm very interested in digital equity. And I think H.B. 1723 is a really good bill in general. I'm fully supportive of it. But I think I share the same concerns that Bob Bass expressed. There is the mandate which I don't think would stand, and I think that that needs to be addressed on pricing and discounts. I think that is probably the key issue. I also think a wider approach: It's not just the federal regulation for wireless carriers that is the issue. For me, the issue right now is that we are going through so much change in this industry. I keep saying that 2022 is going to change the equation for digital inclusion. And the reason is that 5G, one of the technologies that has been introduced, with three large carriers coming in and changing the equation, you also have satellite communications coming on. The satellites, their performance is better than I expected, honestly, for internet access. And to encourage the competition in this industry, I think it's really important that we weigh very carefully how we mandate discount pricing regulations here in Washington State. So, we need to avoid a patchwork that might be harmful in the near future. These are some exciting things happening and the industry is changing.

**Coleman Entringer:**  I appreciate those responses, and I'll go ahead and move on to our next question. We've talked a lot about low-income programs and other programs dealing with digital equity. We are wondering what are the challenges you have seen when implementing these programs? And give us some explanation around that. I'll start with T-Mobile this time just to keep it fair.

**Dr. Angela Hemingway:**   I'll go ahead and jump in on that one. Thank you very much. With programs such as Project 10Million, I think some of the challenges that we've had are a number of them. First of all, as we all remember when the pandemic first hit, there was a bit of chaos. And, as a result, there was no way for schools to get their arms around who was connected, and who was not. So, we've definitely seen some implementation issues, simply getting the devices out to the children, to the families. And now, I think another thing that we're recognizing that is a larger issue, and I think it's probably true of all of the carriers, is how do we measure or differentiate between a child needing a connection, and a child using the connection. So, for example, you could give Angela an algebra textbook because I'm in algebra class, and I can take that textbook home, and I need it for my class. But I could never open that book, and I'm not using the book, and I'm making a choice not to participate in the educational system. And I'm struggling, or perhaps even failing algebra, or at risk of dropping out. So, I think as we are beginning to work with districts, as the pandemic comes to a close, and the digital equity lens still remains in place, thinking about how do we help work with districts, with students, as well as parents to understand that usage may not equate need, and that there is perhaps a larger issue going on when a child chooses not to use a device, just as they may choose not to use a textbook. So, I think implementation certainly was an issue during the pandemic, and now we're working through some of the usage and need discussions. Carl, did you have anything to add to that?

**Carl Done:**  Other than usage, it's finding the right resource from various institutions. Because it's not just a K-12 issue. Connectivity -- and this apples to some questions in the chat -- what is our definition of equity? A baseline is just does everybody have equal access. Can everybody find a path to get connected. This is really nice because now we're finding that if you go to a private school, the private school gives you hotspots, or the public school did, and you can still go to the library and check out a hotspot. Is there a community group, maybe the City, or a community center where I can get a device? So, what we're finding now is we're trying to do more broad awareness of what are an individual's resources. The other part is all access is not created equal. So, just because you are given a hotspot and a plan that gives you 10 gigs and speed, is that adequate? Or a limited amount of data, is that adequate? And the institutional-provided plans, and all of us have government sales keys, that shows in the school district or the library, nonprofits. We give a better deal to those institutions than Joe Consumer can get by walking into a retail store. How do we get the institutions to participate more so that they can get a better deal, a better program, and a better connectivity experience for the participant?

**Coleman Entringer:**  Thank you for that response. And we'll go to AT&T for our next question.

**Robert Bass:**   The biggest issues we face, whether it's this issue or any other societal problem is that we have needs that are greater than can be solved. Within that, it's trying to make sure that we reach out to as many groups as possible, and that we don't have people who are eligible, available, can't get a device, and making sure that they are used appropriately. But more importantly, it's getting the reach to everybody. The needs are greater than the resources. And it's also refining the plans to make sure that we can deliver those devices, we can deliver the plans, and do the things that we need to do. it's really just a matter of all of us being able to dig in, work a little harder, reach out to more groups, have more community partners, find some of those folks that may have fallen through the cracks through one of the agencies that they deal with, whether it's a school district, a nonprofit, community agency, a neighbor. In that sense, that's where the biggest challenge is. One, making sure we find someone who has a need. That's the biggest challenge.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then, lastly, going to Verizon with the same question.

**Azmeena Hasham:**   One of the things we had to do was really scale up to meet the overnight change in education, and education from home. There were structural things that we found that were very, very important. One of those is anchor institutions addressed in H.B. 1723. And that's how do you contract, how do you build, how do you know who has the device. Anchor institutions play a big role and are also there to be able to serve the community that needs that service. We talked about digital navigation and just understanding what's available to you, and then how to connect and how to use it. Community-based organizations play a huge role. It is very difficult otherwise to know what are the pockets in your own City that are not getting the services. The City teams like the Digital Equity team in Seattle and community organizations that they work with and we work with, and others that we had to discover, those are really, really key. And then, there's the whole question of once you have the devices in place, how do you continue to support those families, those individuals, those communities. Those are all structural things that we really need to think about as we address digital equity, as well.

**Coleman Entringer:**  It looks like we have a few minutes left in our moderated time. So, I'll just move on to one more question, and then I'm going to circle back just to reiterate those quantitative questions that we have pre-circulated. I'll go ahead and ask our next question that kind of builds off of what we asked before. What drawbacks do you see, and which are the ways that your programs are designed, that you discussed earlier? We'll start with T-Mobile.

**Dr. Angela Hemingway:**   Thank you, Coleman. I think one of the drawbacks we saw with EVB that perhaps is going to play out similarly with ACP is the complexity of the sign-up process. We found that individuals who are unconnected or under-connected struggled to get through the national verifier, where in many cases, they had to be online; they had to be able to take pictures and upload documentation. And once that was done, they had to then select their carrier and go through another similar process. We did petition the FCC to see if they could streamline or simplify that process, but I think all of the carriers know that was not approved. So, the complexity that is behind ACP is certainly challenging to get individuals signed up. There is an effort to make sure that the marketing and awareness that would go behind the availability of a program like that, all of the carriers are incredibly aware that we have to make sure that the end user knows that this program is available to them. So, again, as has been mentioned multiple times, working through schools, universities, nonprofits, community organizations to help get the word out about that particular program is absolutely critical. Thank you.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then, moving on to AT&T.

**Carl Done:**   The biggest issue we had was the national verifier web site. Generally, with those programs, unfortunately the administrative process sometimes defeats the purpose of trying to provide the service. So, I would say that I think that all of us can do more to get the word out. And again, we are doing it through a number of channels, to assist in the ease of that, putting out more press, more statements, getting things out on social media, making our stores aware, putting signage in the stores. As I mentioned, AT&T prepaid services or our Cricket Wireless portfolio. It's tough to argue against something that was stood up as fast as it was by the federal government. Let's give them credit for putting together an amazing program in a short period of time. We've had this need for a long time, and the pandemic surely exposed this. And I think it's just a matter of us rolling up our sleeves. ACP has been in place since the 21st of December. Knock on wood; we're maybe hoping to get to the other side of the severe illness that's coming from this pandemic and we can socialize more and get the word out in different ways that we are able to do it today because we've lost some of our communications through the pandemic, as well.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then, lastly, Verizon.

**Azmeena Hasham:**   I would take a slightly different approach. I've mentioned 5G and its impact. With the infrastructure bill, and particularly the money that has been set aside for broadband, we are going to get an unprecedented amount of money to narrow the digital divide. Not only that, the ACP connectivity program is going to address the affordability issue. So, we have technology, we have assets, we have competition. So, I think we are in a really good place right now to be able to address the digital divide. The question, then, is how are we going to make sure that those who need it the most get it. And certainly, the lessons that we learned during the time of Covid, and what are the structural issues that we need to address that must be carried on. I do think that partnering with community-based organizations is probably one of the most important things that that we can do. And then, we are nationally companies, and sometimes we tend to have a very broad outlook, but we need to get more localized. we need to know what is happening in the City of Seattle. What is happening in the neighborhood in Seattle? What is happening in a particular community group in Seattle? And then find solutions that can help them, help us address what they need. So, I think that's where the challenge lies.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Great. So that brings us to the end of our moderated questions section. In the interest of having your input, I'll go ahead and move on to the questions, roughly chronologically, in the chat. I do, again, want to invite any Digital Equity Committee members. Please feel free. I do want to note on the quantitative questions that the DEI Committee had pre-circulated, if any of the representatives have any data on that, feel free to post in the chat, or to otherwise bring up the questions, How many users are enrolled in your low-income service programs in Seattle, nationwide, and any breakdowns in demographics that you might have in that data? With that said, I'll go ahead and go into the questions that I see posted in the chat. Scrolling to the top, if you are working with any community partners, which community partners are you working with, and how are you going about that? A little bit of specificity around that. I'll go ahead and start this round with AT&T.

**Robert Bass:** For community partners, I've mentioned that locally we have recently started working with Interconnection. I could mention any number of school districts throughout the area. We've worked closely with the United Way of King County, not necessarily student-related, but more in the population base that the agencies who work with United Way of King County to help assist with access. Back in November, we gave them a batch of devices for them to get caseworkers out into king County to be able to do assessments and get people signed up for the benefits that may not have been previously available to them. We gave the license to United Way of King County to head out and do those sign-ups for people to get services, to get benefits and things that may have slipped through the cracks for homeless populations throughout King County. We could spend a lot of time talking about those programs, but really, it's just a matter of who haven't we really worked with.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then, going on to Verizon.

**Azmeena Hasham:**   I think for us it's the same thing. We work with so many organizations and we have a lot of local community partners. One of the things that I really believe in and that I think is very important is community-based learning. We have a number of partners here. Solid Ground, El Centro de la Raza, organizations like that who can really deliver programming. So, not just access but also programming. That is really about community. I'm a big believer in those. There used to be a time when we used to build swimming pools for our communities and helped everyone learn to swim because it was an essential skill. I believe that community labs are extremely important, and we have to get those built out for both adults and children to narrow that achievement gap, that homework achievement gap. We have to have facilities to help with that. Those are the things that we focus on a lot. I named a couple of partners, but we have a range of partners because we have a broad definition of digital inclusion that goes beyond devices which we must have, access, which we must have. But we need the skills. We need the access to opportunity. Our programming is there for (unintelligible), as well.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then, lastly, T-Mobile?

**Carl Done:**   We are very proud of our partner engagement. Many of these partners, of course, work with all three of us cellular carriers. As I mentioned before, all of the major school districts in the state, we delivered over 40,000 hotspots during Covid to different school districts and libraries. We delivered and also helped them to deploy it. Now, we're also seeing the next generation delivered to community and health organizations, nonprofit service for mental health and surgical help and outreach help, as people are being more restricted to their homes. So, it's a great joy. At the end of the day, to be honest with you, we, collectively, all of these carriers are helping to serve the community. We get to wake up in the morning with a smile on our faces because we're not just selling stuff. We're not just selling internet connectivity; we're helping peoples' lives. We love being able to do that for the community every day, T-Mobile, as you know, we've probably got 10, 15, 20,000 employees here in the Seattle area. May live and work right here in Seattle, as well. So, we love giving back to the community we work. Our list of partners, just nonprofits, is over 100 in King County alone. So, if you're not on that list, we're glad to have you.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And that actually leads really well into our next point. I know that David Keyes mentioned this. If we could just go really quick in the same order, about how community organizations could best connect with you if they wanted to go along with these partnerships that you were talking about earlier. So AT&T

**Robert Bass:**  AT&T has a team that works in the State of Washington, and we do consistent outreach to different nonprofits. We have our employee resource group sitting at AT&T. We have 12 employee resource groups that operate in various forms in the community and different parts of the community. They help find groups for us. Just at a base level, you guys have my contact information, if there's anybody out there who wants to reach out to me. [rb3794@att.com](mailto:rb3794@att.com) 425-786-8816. You can send me an email, and we will have somebody talk with you, sit down, learn a little more about the program to see if there's a way to help. That's the way we do our community giving, and we've got a very long, very historic philanthropic history at AT&T. We're very active, whether it's on the local level for community budgets, or through the AT&T foundations. There are a lot of avenues, so anybody who has my email address from tonight, send me a note or call and we can talk.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then, Verizon?

**Azmeena Hasham:**   Similarly, we have a foundation. We have a huge budget of $3 billion. But I have to keep it real. The applications are very competitive. They have to align with the priorities that I laid out earlier, which is digital inclusion and what we mean by it, which is a broad definition. Our focus is really tech skills development and digital inclusion STEM education. First, you have to align with those priorities. But I have to say, even given the budget that we have, it is a very competitive process. We see thousands and thousands of applications, and so I don't want to set the expectation at all, but if you are out there, and you are hearing this, you can approach us and you may get something. But it really is a very competitive process. [azmeena.hasham@verizon.com](mailto:azmeena.hasham@verizon.com)

**Coleman Entringer:**  Great. And then lastly, T-Mobile.

**Carl Done:**    As I mentioned before, the community involvement we've already got with most of these nonprofits. Our contact information is in the chat. [carl.done@t-mobile.com](mailto:carl.done@t-mobile.com)  425-281-6282  Feel free to reach out. The amount of money that all of the carriers are putting into this initiative, our Project 10Million is a $10.7 billion commitment. When we merged Sprint and T-Mobile, the government was asking what can you do to give back to the community. We said we've got a great idea. Free public internet for students in need. Free and reduced lunch program participants, you are eligible, period. It's interesting that we're talking about connectivity and it's interesting that the focus now is on wireless connectivity. It's no longer -- a couple of years ago, this wouldn't hold against cable and telephone. Now it's wireless, because of the ability to reach last mile, it's another five miles out, and ten miles, and 20 miles! Wireless is reaching far, far more people than we were ever able to do. As my partners here have said, 5G is part of that, because it gives better range and standard capacity, more users, greater speeds. It is the future. And the faster we adopt that, the faster we're going to be able to connect people.

**Coleman Entringer:**  So, moving on to the next question, going down the line of chat questions, what minimum upload speeds can people expect on your subsidized plans? I'll go ahead and start this question with Verizon.

**Azmeena Hasham:**   That's a very good question. So, with 5G, obviously, it changes the whole equation. Currently, people are getting upload speeds of 20 Mbps. Download speeds are from 100 Mbps all the way to a gig, a full gig. On 4G, we could pretty much reach 25 download speeds, which is what the FCC requires for viable internet access. Obviously, in crowded areas, you will see that drop down. it does depend to some extent on where you live. We are seeing surprisingly good speeds on wireless, and I think it is a viable access. I just got 15 download and 11 upload on 5G in the middle of Ballard. That's in the chat. The speeds on 5G are ten times faster than 4G.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then next, we want to go to T-Mobile next.

**Dr. Angela Hemingway:**   I dropped our speeds in the chat for you.

**Carl Done:**  Thanks. It's all about which technology you're on, 4G versus 5G. But also how congested the network is in that area. When we did the OSTI model, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction program with them during the start of Covid, we found that 87 percent of our Washington population were able to get that 25/5 minimum requirement. That is now almost two years old. The numbers continue to get better; the geographic coverage is better; we had the Spring network and bolted on to that. Our 5G is mid-band 5G, so it's going to be a greater geographic range. We are now in 60 to 70 percent of the State, and probably about 80 to 90 percent of the City of Seattle proper. And I'm going to guess -- this is not a commitment -- I've got some charts here are are showing that the average up speed in Washington, that's the whole, not just Seattle was 43 Mbps in upload and an average of 217 download. That's low band, big band, the whole enchilada.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then, moving on to AT&T.

**Robert Bass:**  The plans that we offer, whether it's through our Cricket wireless product or AT&T prepaid, it's going to be our 5G network. And it is unlimited. As far as daily usage, the speeds again are going to vary, depending on congestion where you are. But it's going to be your typical AT&T use experience of what you get. My friends from Verizon and T-Mobile have done a lot of work on their networks. AT&T is no different in investing in the State of Washington. Since I've been in Washington since 2012 we've spent between $500 million and $800 million in our modern network in the State of Washington. Nationally, we spend between $22 billion and $24 billion. It's a lot of money that gets put into these networks, because if we don't provide that through-put, that connectivity, that reliability, there are two companies on here tonight that want to make us customers. So, it's incumbent upon us to provide whatever plan you are on to have the best speeds available. Again, it's going to matter where you are. We are feverishly rolling out our approach to 5G, which is covering low band, mid band, high band spectrum, and getting it out there as fast as possible to compete against those other companies and provide the best connectivity for our customers.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And it looks like we have a follow-up question to that one we just asked, from Harte. I'll throw that out there and we'll go again in the same order. It says we talked a lot about 5G. Since 5G requires a new device, how can we ensure that we're making this affordable for the demographic that we're targeting? I'll throw that back to you, starting with Verizon.

**Azmeena Hasham:**   So, what does 5G bring? It's not just for mobile, it's also for home, and it's for business internet. What you need is a router. On one end, it's picking up the wireless signal, and on the other end, it's providing WiFi to the house. And then, on your mobile device, you obviously have to have a 5G antenna. Keep in mind that these services are just coming to market. We launched our 5G network at scale on January 19, so it's about three weeks old. Already, what you see if you are a Verizon customer and you get a 5G home internet, your cost of internet drops by 50 percent. You have to look at it more holistically, and you start to see those savings coming in and what competition is really doing. I think as we move forward you will see more devices becoming available. I know even on the mobile side, we have partnered with a provider, with a vendor, who can provide smart devices at a cheaper price point. All of that work needs to happen. It has started, but I think that as we look at how we move forward, to me the most powerful thing about this is the competitive environment for home internet and business internet has changed, and will bring the price down.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Great. And moving on to T-Mobile. I know you've posted to the chat about this, but address it, as well.

**Dr. Angela Hemingway:**   Sure, Coleman. And I was focused primarily on the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), and the devices, including cell phones or tablets that were included with those. I'm not sure that that was the focus of the question, but we can send information because we think at T-Mobile that it's absolutely critical to provide devices, if possible, at no cost. So, again, our Project 10Million provides free hotspots. We participated in EBP, providing both free tablets and free hotspots. And you'll see that our ACP programs also are allowing for free phones. So, it is critical that we participate. We are actively trying to close this digital divide, and as was noted in the chat, oftentimes, individuals can't afford that device. ACP is allowing carriers to have a device subsidy of up to $100, so there is that component built into ACP, as well. Carl, did you have something to add more specific to our home internet?

**Carl Done:**  No. I'm with you on the whole internet option, as well, because of the excess capacity network. 5G now, as far as mobile devices, more and more it's becoming the replacement for cable for your home internet, but for mobile devices, things like hotspots, we continue to see those prices decrease. Part of it is competition for chips has slowed things down a little bit. We were hoping to have 5G hotspots last summer for $100. Didn't happen. Maybe it will happen this year. But the price decrease has been dramatic.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And going to AT&T.

**Robert Bass:**  I will just echo the other comments. There's a device subsidy. We can see the cost of devices going down. But again, all customers, whether we're all trying to bridge the digital divide or find digital equity for consumers, we're in a hyper-competitive marketplace where we're trying to help customers to achieve their objectives. So I think you'll see plenty of promotions and deals that will bring prices down in addition to just the typical supply chain issues that will work their way out. I know all carriers ran into problems over the past year or so. And I think, one, there's a subsidy for it; two there are many lower priced options, and those will get better as each day passes.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Perfect! And it look like we're almost at the top of time here. Do we have time for one more question, Camille, or do we want to stop?

**Camille Malonzo:**  Go for it.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Okay. I'll just go to the next on my list here from Dorene Cornwell. Do any of the presenters have a position on the Right to Repair Bill. I believe that's Bill 1810, but don't quote me on that. I'll go ahead and pass that off to T-Mobile to start.

**Carl Done:**  Well, I personally -- and I'm not speaking for T-Mobile -- I like the idea. I am frustrated by not having that right to repair. How that gets implemented, I don't know whether T-Mobile as a company has a stance on that. We'll get back to you with our regulatory folks and see if they have had a chance to cue that up. We are not part of that scope.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Going on to AT&T next?

**Robert Bass:**  The issue is I think we all support that. AT&T is a wireless carrier like T-Mobile and Verizon. From AT&T's perspective, we have customers who buy devices and have them as part of their plan. We want to make sure that that device is protected and it's repaired the way it should be. I'm not saying that an unauthorized repair shop will do it incorrectly, but devices are really dictated by the original equipment manufacturers who provide those devices for us to sell. There have been programs that have been taken place. I think somebody mentioned a certification process for repair shops to be able to join and be certified in that space. I know that Apple announced that they're going to make the tools and schematics available to future phones and their I-Phone portfolio. The only issue that we raise is that it's clear that if you have a really old device, it becomes an equity issue because you have somebody who has a very old version of an I-Phone and can't afford to go get it repaired by going to an Apple-authorized dealer. It could be a Samsung or any other Android device in some of those places. It's been our position that we think that that should be available for, for instance, not an Apple shop to fix that phone because it is so far out in the device eco-system. It's eight years old and it doesn't make sense that you're still protecting that. But I understand where the original manufacturers are coming from. Those were some of the issues that we raised, just for people to be aware that if you didn't want to have somebody's device kit damaged, when they've still got two years left of paying for that phone.

**Coleman Entringer:**  And then Verizon to round us off.

**Azmeena Hasham:**   i think I agree with everything that Bob has said. It's only them who drives what happens with the device. They drive the decisions on that. Similar to what Bob said, we raised some of the issues, especially for those people who have older devices, or can't even make it to a certified repair store. We need to build in some flexibility and allow for those kinds of situations, as well. And I think that those situations happen more often than not. So, we need to be able to handle those, as well.

**Coleman Entringer:**  Thanks. I really appreciate all of those responses. It does look like we're out of time. I would like to thank everybody involved in the forum today, so all of our DEI Committee members for all of the help that you've all given in putting this together, as well as the community for coming out and asking your questions, and for being involved. We really appreciate you all being here. And then, lastly, our presenters, Dr. Hemingway, Carl Done, and Bob Bass. We really appreciate you coming out. It was great to hear from you. And that concludes our forum for today. I know we've still got a kind of active chat, so feel free to participate if you want to. Thank you all.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thank you, Coleman. Thank you to our panel and Digital Equity Committee. We're actually going to continue. Our next agenda item is actually our break-out sessions. So, if you have a pressing question for our panelists, or -- if we were in our Municipal Tower conference room, this would be the time to strike up conversations with the person next to you. I think I've randomly assigned some folks to break-out sessions, and hopefully, there are representatives still around to answer your questions there. So, we're going to start, and folks can start a conversation there. We will have some stragglers left behind in the main chat because they will be asking some follow-up questions for the minutes. Thanks.

**BREAK-OUT SESSIONS**

**COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**Camille Malonzo:**   Hello, everyone. Welcome back! Thank you all for the continued conversation. We're going to continue on with our agenda for tonight, which is Committee Updates from our two committees. We're going to head to Privacy and Cybersecurity for an update. Nicole and Eryk?

**PRIVACY AND CYBERSECURITY COMMITTEE**

**Nicole Espy:**   I'll give an update and Eryk will cover other topics. For our first meeting of the year, we tried to set some year-wide intentions. We had a great conversation with Omari Stringer from the Seattle Privacy Office about some new programs, especially around the topic of data ethics. I will allow him to communicate more about that, but our conversations were really great, and we look forward to working with the Privacy Office on that topic. We also continued our conversation on the Surveillance Ordinance about an update on the status of Group 4a review of the SIRs as well as the upcoming Group 4b surveillance technologies under review. And then, we were also hoping to come up with new ideas to approach our work and to have greater impact. Eryk, do you have an update?

I think Eryk Waligora shared the Washington State Department of Licensing had a major hack recently, where a lot of personal information was exposed in that department. So, cybersecurity continues to be a major issue for a lot of our local City and State entities. So, please look into that and think about some of our previous conversations about what hacking and what sort of legislation is lacking in that field, as well as what sort of tools and technologies can be employed to better protect individual privacy. That's it.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Nicole, for that update. The Surveillance Ordinance, is that -- will Group 4b be this year. Is that something the committee will be working on this year?

**Nicole Espy:**   Yes. I think the drafts are due in March, and then there's an internal review, so that delays it a number of weeks after March. So, yes, this year, hopefully in the first half of the year. At least as of our conversation a couple of weeks ago.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Nicole. And for folks who want to get connected with the Privacy and Cybersecurity Committee, how can people reach you?

**Nicole Espy:**   I put the email into the chat. [ctabprivacy@gmail.com](mailto:ctabprivacy@gmail.com)

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Nicole. And then, handing it over to the Digital Equity Committee with Coleman Entringer and Harte Daniels.

**DIGITAL EQUITY COMMITTEE**

**Coleman Entringer:**  I don't think we have too many updates to report. Our last meeting was a working session, ironing out what kind of questions and the moderation for our telecom forum. I'm happy to report that was well played out today. Other than that, we will just be looking at setting up other speaker engagements and community engagement in our committee. I'll put our email distribution contact into chat, if you're not already on our distribution list. [meira.jough@seattle.gov](mailto:meira.jough@seattle.gov)

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thank you, Coleman. Great job, Digital Equity Committee for tonight's panel. Nest on our agenda is an update on the Digital Equity legislation from David Keyes.

**DIGITAL EQUITY LEGISLATION**

**David Keyes:**   I'm just going to do a brief one, and then turn it over to Meira Jough to talk about this year's matching fund grants. I'll do a quick share screen. I see that Ernie Rasmussen is on from the Washington State Broadband Office, too. So, feel free to chime in here. We mentioned this a little bit earlier, but this bill that's been proposed, H.B. 1723, is now in its second substitute version. H.B. 1723 has five or six components of a broadband assistance program that some of the providers mentioned a discount on services for low-income residents. Kind of a Washington Lifeline for broadband and voice; an anchor institution that would give discounted rates. It has some parallels to some of the federal programs, but extends it to the low-income housing providers, nonprofits, and others. The Digital Equity Opportunity Program, an update of the former Community Tech Opportunity Program, that would be home implementation grants, the Digital Equity Grant for Regional Planning, this mirrors and is a nice dove-tail to sum up what will be federal funds coming to the State for State digital inclusion planning. And then, that digital equity forum that Ernie Rasmussen and folks with the Broadband Office in the State Commerce Department started up this year to have an advisory council. This would make that more permanent and also adds the ability to pay folks with limited experience to participate in the forum. And then this Digital Equity account which sort of sets up the structure for federal and state money to be able to go to these different programs within what is being proposed here. This passed out of the initial committee, went through Appropriations, passed out of there, and is expected to come probably to the House next week or so. It's in committee now. So, presumably, that comes through. So, that's the snapshot of where this bill is. I can send this out and post this. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber-1723&Year=2021> There are a couple of links on this Right to Repair legislation, 1801, that creates a commission about the repairability and would create this repairability score. And then 5715 revises the definition of broadband for the State. I see a question about the opportunity to comment. If you go to this page here, you can follow the bill and you can, in addition, comment there, but I would expect that there would be more need and opportunity when it actually comes to the whole House for a vote, and then goes over to the Senate side. One piece about it is that it is conditioned on getting the funding in the omnibus bill that covers a whole range of city and State services. If it doesn't get funding added to it, there's nothing the bill specifically in funding. If that money doesn't get added to the omnibus bill then this whole proposal, even if it's passes, becomes null and void. So, that was another condition that was added to it in the second round. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1723&Year=2021&Initiative=false>

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thank you, David. That would be a great opportunity for CTAB to comment. Maybe that's something that we could talk about in the committees. Now I'll invite Meira to talk about the Technology Matching Fund.

**Meira Jough:**   Thank you, Camille. Hi. I'm going to share my screen. I'm Meira Jough, the digital equity adviser for the Tech Matching Fund grants for the Seattle Information Technology department. I'm going to talk a little bit about what the City is doing for digital equity, but also give an overview of the Tech Matching Fund grants.

Seattle is working for digital equity to ensure that all residents and neighborhoods have information technology capacity needed for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services. Different panelists talked a little bit about the elements of digital equity. Digital equity components include internet, both affordable and sufficient, digital skills and tech support in cultural context, devices for all users, and applications and services that are accessible. We know, from Seattle IT's 2018 Technology Access and Adoption, that five percent of Seattle households do not have internet access. The digital divide disproportionately affects racial/ethnic minorities, low-income residents, household with a member living with a disability, and those whose primary language is not English. The Technology Matching Fund grants $320,000 annually to community-based digital equity projects. We fund community-based solutions through an open and competitive grant cycle. We work with trusted community partners who bring their ideas on how to support digital equity in their communities. In 2020, City Council adopted, and the Mayor signed, the Internet for All resolution, Res 31956. The strategy outlined the City's commitment to enabling all Seattle residents access and adopts broadband internet service that is reliable and affordable. In addition to Internet for All advocacy efforts, another $300,000 was added to the 2021 Technology Matching Fund grants, and additional $300,000 was added to the 2022 Technology Matching Fund grants, and an additional $50,000 was allocated to fund a Digital Navigator cohort pilot in 2022. So, the City will support a cohort of community-based organizations working together to provide Digital Navigator services across the City. And our hope is that this cohort model will grow community capacity through coordinated services and shared resources. And in addition to that grant funding, there was also $99,000 in grants to the Seattle Public Library to distribute hotspots.

In 2021, the Technology Matching Fund grants awarded will serve 14,000 residents from the following prioritized populations. BIPOC, low-income, and refugees, people with limited English proficiencies, unemployed, youth, the insecurely housed, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA. I encouraged everyone, if you're not familiar with the Tech Matching Fund, to visit the City's Tech Matching Fund to learn about the fund, but also the projects that were funded in 2021. There is a description and a list, and it's just a fantastic list of organizations.

Who is eligible to apply? Nonprofit organizations, neighborhood groups, parent-teacher-student associations, business groups, community-based organizations. Who is not eligible to apply? Individuals, for-profit businesses, religious organizations, major institutions, government agencies, hospitals, universities, schools, groups and organizations outside the City of Seattle. And if you are a group of people who need a fiscal agent, there are fiscal agents who are available in the community to support your applications.

The timeline for 2022: We will start accepting applications on March 14, with an application deadline of May 13. We will work with an external review panel to evaluate and score grant applications. In past years, CTAB has been a great supporter of the Technology Matching Fund by sharing the opportunity with networks, and also by participating on the review panel. We would like your help to ensure that we have diverse opinions and perspectives on the review panel, and also transparency in funding. A little information for prospective reviewers, technically, there are about 40 to 60 applications submitted. Each reviewer scores 15 applications, depending on the number of applications. The review process will be online using our new grant management system, and the total commitment is eight to 15 hours. And of course, if you are a reviewer, you can recuse yourself if there is a conflict of interest. So, please let me know if you are interested in participating, even if you're deeply involved with the community, we still would like you to join our panel. We hope to solicit reviewers in March and confirm the review panel in April. And the review period will be May 16 to June 10, and then we hope to announce awards on June 21. In June, we'll bring successful grants to CTAB with the hope that CTAB will recommend that the City fund these projects, and then the Chief Technology Officer will make the final decision in funding.

So, thank you all for your past, present, and future support for TMF, and let's continue to fund community-led initiatives. And I am open to any questions from panelists or anyone.

**Brandon Lindsey:**   I'm a CTAB board member. I think that TMF reviewing the applications and being a part of it has been a great way to see all of the projects that are happening in Seattle, and to get a good sense of the nonprofits and all of the great work they're doing for the City. I really enjoyed it, and I would encourage anybody and everybody to take part.

**Rene Peters:**  Sorry that I missed that call to speak, but definitely, taking part in TMF reviewing process is one of the most rewarding parts of my board involvement over the past couple of years. And, as Brandon said, getting such a deep appreciation for the different ways that these amazing organizations find ways to help all of these different communities and areas of the community and populations that really need it, and not just being able to delineate where the funds go, but also to be able to give pointed feedback on how to make some of those organizations' approaches better in years to come. It's just really rewarding work, and being able to see the end result and to think about all of the different ways that that money will go to use. It's having a deep appreciation with having read each application, you learn about the schedule and the planning that the organizations plan to embark on, the curriculum for education, for instance, that they would go through in their programs. It's really fantastic to get an in-depth appreciation for how much work they put in, and just all of the ways that that money spreads impact across the Seattle area. It's lovely.

**Meira Jough:**   Thank you. I see some questions in the chat. Harte, you said seniors. I think seniors are among the targeted communities. Seniors does not equal disabled. We are including that category, that demographic category, in the next round. So we should be able to report on that. Also, the Office on Aging did receive a grant to fund a pilot program, so that's really exciting. They will be working specifically with older adults.

And then the question from Laura is will we be scheduling a webinar on the grants? Yes. There will be webinars available after the grants go live, and those dates will be on the web site.

And then Kristin asked, do you happen to know if the timeline for 2023 would be the same spring timeline? We had a little bit of a late start this year. I recently joined Seattle IT, and so hopefully, next year the grant cycle will happen earlier in the year. So, we are definitely trying to get this grant cycle launched this year, and then hopefully we can get a jump on 2023. Any other questions?

**Camille Malonzo:**   The TMF review is one of the most inspiring parts of CTAB. Oh, one more question. For folks who are interested in joining the review panel, how can people get in touch?

**Meira Jough:**   I will put my contact information in the chat. [meira.jough@seattle.gov](mailto:meira.jough@seattle.gov)

**Ernie Rasmussen:**   Hi, everybody. Thank you for the opportunity to join with you tonight. My question is, continuing to be a part of this, as myself, as part of the State Broadband Office, the Digital Equity manager for the State Broadband Office, and the work that we're doing alongside David Keyes, and across the State to conduct a digital equity forum. I was thrilled that I was able to spend a little bit of time in the breakout room with Ms. Dorene Cornwell, and to hear a bit about her and that's so incredibly important to the work that we're doing, and to find space for her and her voice and from her community on multiple levels. I just want to say thanks for conducting this, and for being a part of it. I want to say thank you to David for throwing me up there as perhaps a resource for 1723. I'm more than happy to answer questions if I can along the way. But asking to be able to come back and continue to listen in, and just learn from the voices at this table.

**David Keyes:**   Ernie, glad to have you here, and we appreciate it. Just for folks on the board and community here heard before, Ernie is a great resource as well. I'm sure you will be hearing more from him. He serves as the connective tissue for us between the City and communities across the State. So, we appreciate that and appreciate your being here.

**Camille Malonzo:**   I'm sure that Ernie will continue to be engaged with CTAB. We'll also communicate offline, as well. So, we're almost a time. We try to be on time for every CTAB agenda. We have five minutes left for public. Folks who have public comment, you have the floor. Thank you, Meira for the overview of TMF. Please, everyone, if you are interested in becoming a reviewer for the TMF this year, definitely her contact information is [meira.jough@seattle.gov](mailto:meira.jough@seattle.gov)  .With no comment, we will adjourn a minute early. Thank you so much to Digital Equity, to our panelists. Have a great one. See you all in March. Thank you!

**ADJOURNMENT 8:00 PM**