



#Oakland Undivided

MEDIA ALLIANCE



California COMMUNITY Foundation

GPSN CATALYZING EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION



Communities In Schools® Los Angeles

our VOICE communities for quality education

The Children's Partnership

HEALING AND JUSTICE CENTER

LYNWOOD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION EFF

nextgen california

DESTINATION CRENSHAW

30 YEARS COMMUNITY CLINIC ASSOCIATION CELEBRATING THREE DECADES OF ADVOCACY AND SERVICE



ABC Alliance for a Better Community

common sense media



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE LOS ANGELES HARBOR

USC Annenberg

School for Communication and Journalism Center on Communication Leadership and Policy

PIQE PARENT INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION SINCE 1987

ITUP Insure the Uninsured Project

the Y YMCA

ILSR

INSTITUTE FOR Local Self-Reliance

ARTS OF LA



Innovate Public Schools



Parent Organization Network Breaking Through Barriers

Families In Schools+



CALIFORNIA NATIVE VOTE PROJECT

MICHELSON CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

one INSTITUTE



OAKLAND THRIVES



LIGHTHOUSE Community Public Schools WHERE OAKLAND SHINES

INNERCITY STRUGGLE Building a Movement in the Eastside

CITIZEN SCHOOLS

hack the hood

Center for POWERFUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS A catalyst for equity, access and choice



everyoneon

THE GREENLINING INSTITUTE



KAPOR CENTER

NewStart Housing Corporation

DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



THE OAKLAND REACH

SELA COLLABORATIVE



WATTS OF POWER FOUNDATION

Parent Engagement Academy

COFEM CONSEJO DE FEDERACIONES MEXICANAS

GREATER SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Tech Exchange



FRESNO COALITION FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

LATINO EQUALITY ALLIANCE

ALIANZA LATINA POR LA IGUALDAD

UNITE LA Education Innovation Through Collaboration

United PARENTS & STUDENTS

TURN THE UTILITY REFORM NETWORK Lower bills. Livable planet.

paRa los niños for the children

C for AT The Center For Accessible Technology



February 26, 2024

Assemblymember Avelino Valencia, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 7 on Accountability and Oversight
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

CC: Assemblymembers Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Steve Bennett, Tasha Boerner, Mia Bonta, Isaac Bryan, Heath Flora, Gregg Hart, Jim Patterson, Sharon Quirk-Silva, and Jim Wood

Re: Safeguarding the \$1.5B Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative Investment in 2024

Dear Chair Valencia,

We, the undersigned organizations and leaders, **invite you to work alongside us to safeguard the \$1.5 billion allocation for the Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI) in the Governor's proposed budget.**

The middle mile is linked to the backbone of the internet, ensuring whole communities and regions can connect. Without a robust middle mile, last mile connections - those to homes, businesses, schools, libraries, clinics, etc. - range from impossible to impossibly expensive. There are myriad projects across the State already underway making use of this critical resource.

If the MMBI is completed as planned (which requires the \$1.5B in the Governor's proposed budget), California's MMBI will be a future-proof network supporting connectivity in every part of the State, in all kinds of communities - urban, rural, and tribal - for decades to come. Today, 1 in 5 Californians do not have fast, reliable, and affordable connectivity. The remaining pieces of the MMBI are critical to changing that reality.

The internet is essential as a vehicle for a community's economic growth and overall wellness. As referenced in the California Broadband Council Plan, this includes:

- **Individual benefits:** Broadband access enables individuals to work, study, communicate, apply for government services, operate home-based businesses, receive emergency information, and access health care.
- **Powering the state's critical systems:** Broadband powers the state's most critical systems, from its electrical grid to its water supply systems and its public safety and emergency response networks.
- **Enabling thriving businesses:** Broadband enables communities to build thriving economies by attracting talent and businesses. It powers California's advancement and success in industries from higher education to manufacturing and agriculture and in the service economy.

Previously allocated funding has provided for 80% of the MMBI network. By protecting the \$1.5 billion investment in the Governor's current proposed budget to fully complete it, the State protects the value of its existing, encumbered MMBI investments as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of other related Broadband for All programs. To delay the completion of the entire network risks depreciating the value of the existing infrastructure and limiting the State's return on investment. Moreover, the \$1.5 billion is a commitment to equity, giving the California Department of Technology the opportunity to prioritize historically marginalized communities and regions in completing the network, as is the legislative intent of the Federal dollars funding the MMBI.

As organizations and leaders that represent many of the most disconnected communities in California, we ask you to stand alongside us and call for the safeguarding of the critical \$1.5 billion investment in the MMBI. By coupling the federal dollars put to use in 2021 in SB156 with additional state dollars this year, the State can stand by its commitment to closing the digital divide. There is no time to waste.

Sincerely,

Organizations

- California Alliance for Digital Equity
- Digital Equity LA
- #OaklandUndivided
- California Community Foundation
- GPSN
- Healing and Justice Center
- Media Alliance
- The Children's Partnership
- Communities in Schools of Los Angeles (CISLA)
- Common Sense Media
- Lynwood Unified School District
- Destination Crenshaw
- Electronic Frontier Foundation
- NextGen California
- Our Voice: Communities for Quality Education
- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Los Angeles Harbor
- Institute for Local Self Reliance (ILSR)
- PIQE
- Alliance for a Better Community

Leaders

- Sheng Thao, Mayor, City of Oakland
- Emma Sharif, Mayor, City of Compton
- John Erickson, Mayor, City of West Hollywood
- Janani Ramachandran, Councilmember, City of Oakland, District 4
- Noel Gallo, Councilmember, City of Oakland, District 5
- Treva Reid, Councilmember, City of Oakland, District 7
- Sam Davis, Oakland Board of Education President
- Cindy Chavez, Santa Clara County Supervisor, District 2
- Al Rios, Councilmember, City of South Gate
- Eddie Martinez, Councilmember, City of Huntington Park
- Kyra Mungia, CEO, TRiO Plus

- USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy
- Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County
- Insure the Uninsured Project (ITUP)
- Community Coalition of the Antelope Valley
- Innovate Public Schools
- California Native Vote Project
- YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles
- Hack the Hood
- Arts for LA
- Michelson Center for Public Policy
- Families In Schools
- Parent Organization Network (PON)
- One Institute
- The Greenlining Institute
- A Place Called Home
- Oakland Thrives
- Watts of Power Foundation
- Center for Powerful Public Schools
- Citizen Schools
- InnerCity Struggle
- Lighthouse Community Public Schools
- EveryoneOn
- NAACP Oakland
- Kapor Center
- COFEM
- Newstart Housing Corp
- Tech Exchange
- Parent Engagement Academy
- Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Diversity in Leadership Institute
- United Parents and Students
- Rural County Representatives of California
- Oakland Youth Commission
- Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion
- Para Los Niños
- Latino Equality Alliance

- Center for Accessible Technology
- SELA Collaborative
- The Utility Reform Network (TURN)
- California State Association of
Counties
- UNITE-LA
- Access Humboldt
- The Oakland REACH