



CONVERSATIONS WITH MUNICIPAL LEADERS:
Digital Equity in Cities



About the National League of Cities

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the voice of America’s cities, towns and villages, representing more than 200 million people. NLC works to strengthen local leadership, influence federal policy and drive innovative solutions.

About the Centri Tech Foundation

Centri Tech Foundation and its affiliate Centri Tech believe digital advancement is a civil right. Along with a network of community development and affordable housing partners, we seek to connect low-income Americans to high-quality home internet service and position them for digital workforce opportunities. A sustainable future, one where everyone can fulfill their aspirations and thrive, requires an inclusive digital economy. To that end, we provide integrated solutions for connectivity and leverage investments in technology access and adoption to advance the standard of living and improve lives for all. Visit www.centritechfdn.org.

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FOREWORD

Since early 2020, the United States Congress has appropriated unprecedented levels of federal resources for broadband connectivity through legislation responding to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act. The passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, a historic federal investment in our nation's infrastructure that includes \$65 billion for broadband and digital equity, will now provide a further boost to connectivity. This is a moment we cannot afford to waste.

In March 2020, when nearly all activity pivoted online, the need for high-speed internet and devices in the home became urgent and undeniable. K-12 students were sent home to learn virtually, but without access to high-speed internet and a laptop they could not connect with their schools; people in need of a doctor could not access care without a telehealth connection. Nearly 10 million workers lost their jobs, while essential workers had to choose between keeping a job or staying home to care for their children and families.¹ Now, as economic recovery moves to the forefront of policy efforts, building a digitally connected nation is imperative. This moment is not just about trenching fiber optic cable under streets or installing mesh networks; it is about achieving and ensuring digital equity for our country as a whole. Digital access is a civil right.

Federal officials mandated with implementing large-scale legislation to enable transformative economic investment often miss the mark by leaving critical city voices out of the decision-making process. We do not want that to happen here.

The National League of Cities (NLC) and Centri Tech Foundation (CTF) hosted a series of small group convenings with municipal leaders to focus the attention of government policymakers on broadband's critical importance, and to identify how cities are providing connectivity and what barriers they face in reaching all residents.

This report captures the innovative efforts of leaders from 22 U.S. cities, towns and villages to provide digital access to their communities since the onset of the pandemic and identifies the tools and resources they need to ensure success. By generously sharing their time and expertise with NLC and CTF to inform this report, these municipal leaders are adding their voices to a broader call for decisionmakers to maximize the value of these historic federal investments and ensure a connected future for all communities, rural and urban.

We hope this report and the insights captured from municipal leaders will provide guidance and encouragement to cities seeking to solve issues around digital equity. We also hope it will help federal officials embrace their partnerships with local governments, especially in this moment of opportunity as we collectively work to close the digital divide and promote digital equity.

NLC and CTF will use what we have learned from these visionary leaders to create new tools and resources to help cities provide digital access to all residents and advance a federal policy agenda that lifts up local authority and locally directed resource allocation for broadband infrastructure.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report captures the combined perspectives and experiences of 22 U.S. cities, towns and villages working to achieve digital equity.* It identifies the systemic barriers communities must address in their efforts to foster digital equity, particularly for those acutely impacted by persistent racial and economic disparities; shares actions communities are already taking to help remove these barriers; and captures the resources needed to provide digital access.

Digital equity is key to enabling communities to realize strong economic futures. To get there, cities, towns and villages will need to be active participants in the solutions.

* See the Appendix for the pre-convening survey city leaders completed to inform the salon discussions.

Key takeaways from conversations with municipal leaders represented in this report show:

Cities face systemic challenges to providing digital access, affordability and skills

Enabling digital adoption and achieving digital equity requires cities to investigate causes of the digital divide:

- ◆ Access or availability of reliable internet and hardware
- ◆ Affordability of services and devices
- ◆ Skills to fully use and benefit from available technology

Cities are taking action to address barriers to digital equity

Cities are proactively taking action. Their experiences offer insights and models for other cities to achieve digital equity. Municipal activities include:

- ◆ Defining cities' digital access, affordability and skills challenges
- ◆ Addressing the difficulty of measuring infrastructure availability and broadband adoption

- ◆ Fostering competition through municipal broadband or INETs they own or manage
- ◆ Financing and prioritizing broadband by leveraging public-private partnerships
- ◆ Addressing capacity and staffing challenges by restructuring municipal offices and hiring digital inclusion experts

Cities need cross-sector support to achieve digital equity

In summary, cities would benefit from efforts to:

- ◆ Advocate for Congress to ensure that local voices are heard
- ◆ Leverage competition and communicate with industry
- ◆ Expand awareness of how to secure resources, including funding, and leveraging public, private and nonprofit partnerships
- ◆ Develop research and gather data
- ◆ Provide digital skills, including training for older adults, low-income populations and communities of color, as well as upskilling the local workforce to spur economic recovery.

Introduction



The National League of Cities (NLC) and Centri Tech Foundation (CTF) partnered to ensure the voices of city leaders are heard as federal policymakers coalesce around broadband deployment and adoption. To support this goal, between May and August 2021, NLC and CTF co-hosted a series of virtual salon discussions and one-on-one meetings focused on digital equity and municipalities' efforts to address the digital divide and its impact on communities. The partners convened a diverse mix of large, mid-sized and rural municipal leaders and senior staff. The discussions created an opportunity for participants to connect with and gain insights from their peers in municipal government. A total of 22 U.S. cities, towns

and villages participated, including mayors, council members, chiefs of staff, digital equity and inclusion leaders and others. The participants represented every region of the U.S. and provided both urban and rural perspectives.

The convenors recorded the discussions, without attribution, consistent with the Chatham House Rule. Any representative observations in this report that are attributed to a participant are not direct quotes, and unless attributed to a particular person, none of the comments or ideas in this report should be taken as reflecting the views or endorsement of any specific participant or that participant's employer.

DEFINITIONS

Throughout the discussions, participants used certain terms interchangeably. Within the context of this report, terms related to digital equity are attributed the following meanings:

- ◆ **Digital Equity:** A condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning and access to essential services.²
- ◆ **Digital Inclusion:** Refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).³
- ◆ **Broadband Adoption:** Daily access to the internet at speeds, quality and capacity necessary to accomplish common tasks and digital skills necessary to participate online on a personal device and secure convenient network.⁴

Key takeaways

Achieving digital equity requires cities to address three critical barriers: access, affordability and skills. Three key takeaways that emerged from the salon discussions illustrate the current environment for municipal leaders seeking to close the digital divide in their communities:

1. **Cities face systemic challenges to provide digital access, affordability and skills.**
2. **Cities are taking action to address systemic barriers to digital equity.**
3. **Cities need cross-sector support to achieve digital equity.**

Three main causes of the digital divide

- ◆ **Accessibility or Availability:** Broadband at speeds and quality needed to accomplish common tasks is not accessible or available to residents because the service does not exist, the speeds or quality are inadequate, or devices to use the internet are not available.
- ◆ **Affordability:** Cost of devices and broadband subscription service is not within reach.
- ◆ **Skills:** Many people do not have the necessary digital skills or literacy to successfully use technology for daily activities or to navigate the internet for access to services.



Cities face systemic challenges to providing digital access, affordability and skills

Access to broadband is a persistent challenge in both urban and rural areas, for a wide variety of reasons.⁵ Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, broadband has become even more essential to education, health, wealth and civic engagement. In our conversations with local leaders, we consistently heard that addressing digital equity was a priority on par with providing clean water, public safety and reliable transportation.

However, persistent gaps prevent historically underserved communities such as older adults, low-income residents, Black, Indigenous and people of color, immigrants and other historically under-resourced populations from fully participating in a digital society. Local leaders highlighted a number of systemic challenges they and their residents face in closing these gaps.

Access challenges

Cities said that challenges to broadband access prevent some residents from connecting to broadband. To be considered “accessible,” broadband must be made available at sufficient quality and speed necessary to support common tasks, such as virtual learning, telehealth and access to essential city services. It must function

effectively and reliably for multiple users in the same household. But municipal leaders confirm that broadband infrastructure is not always accessible or available to residents, either because the service does not exist, the speed and/or quality are inadequate, or the devices needed to use the internet are not available. They also spoke of the high costs of building and maintaining broadband infrastructure in certain urban areas, as well as in many rural areas, as a major barrier to access.

Although access was an issue prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic required cities to deliver education online and demanded students participate in distance learning from home. This created barriers in municipalities with limited or no broadband infrastructure. In urban areas that have seemingly solved issues of broadband access, pockets of poor infrastructure still prevented some students from effectively engaging in online learning. With hospitals and healthcare providers focused on urgent COVID-19 pandemic cases, patients seeking medical care were required to use telehealth services; however, even if infrastructure existed, speeds were not always fast enough for a patient to engage in telehealth services with their health care providers. Residents of affordable housing in multi-family dwelling units were

often unable to connect to vital services because the building owner or developer had not contracted or planned for the infrastructure needed to bring broadband to the building.

Local leaders also noted challenges in assessing which households had in-home broadband service at the start of the pandemic. The unavailability or inaccuracy of broadband mapping data hampered cities' efforts because they were not able to discern who was underserved or unserved by currently available broadband.

Affordability challenges

Most municipal leaders cited affordability as a systemic barrier to getting certain members of their communities to adopt or regularly use the internet in their daily lives, saying residents simply could not afford the cost of subscription services. Several participants pointed to a lack of competition as one of the key factors impacting pricing.

Moreover, even with various low-cost or discount broadband programs offered by providers and government subsidized programs available to qualifying low-income households, affordability was still considered to be a major adoption barrier. Affordability perpetuates a “vicious cycle,” because not having internet access prevented people from applying for employment that may have made it possible for them to afford it.

“Some residents could not afford the internet. There is no social equity when it comes to access to the internet. Those without access have been punished. There is an assumption that everyone has a computer and internet accessible to them at home. This was a disconnect when residents wanted to apply for employment. This creates a huge barrier.” – Salon Participant

In addition, participants noted that low-cost or subsidized broadband fee programs, such as the federal Emergency Broadband Benefit, by themselves, are not enough to solve the affordability gap, because “affordability challenges often represent both a skills challenge and an affordability challenge.” These programs do not address the underlying root causes of poverty that result in people not being able to afford the internet in the first place, and the high costs of devices, computers, software upgrades and cybersecurity add to the affordability challenge. A Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis found that 9 out of 10 low-income households rely on the monthly Child Tax Credit payment to cover utilities, including the internet.⁶



Skills challenges

Even when broadband is accessible and affordable, as city leaders noted, some residents still do not adopt broadband because, in part, they do not have the digital skills or the training to navigate the internet successfully. Skills barriers include digital literacy and the lack of technical support designed to assist people with accessing and using the internet in their homes or for their jobs. Although broadband subsidies and low-cost packages were helpful, they did not resolve the skills problem. Even when service and devices were made affordable, adoption remained a real challenge.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated pre-existing challenges to engagement and to achieving broadband adoption among historically under-resourced populations.

Low-income people, older adult residents, unhoused persons, new Americans, immigrants and residents speaking English as a second language are particularly likely to experience acute gaps in connectivity and need support learning to navigate technology and online services.⁷

In particular, participants noted that older adults face special challenges. Not only do some not have the digital skills or proficiency to operate the service or the device, but they also may not necessarily believe the internet is “relevant” to their needs. Increasingly, data is showing that technology is vital to the wellbeing of older adults, and the pandemic has revealed both its necessity and value as a tool to disrupt social isolation, enable telehealth services and support older residents aging in place.⁸

A photograph of three young children in a classroom setting, focused on their work at computer desks. The child in the foreground is a young girl with dark hair, looking intently at a computer screen. Behind her, two other children, a boy and a girl, are also working at their desks. The background is slightly blurred, showing a classroom environment with a globe and colorful posters on the wall.

Cities are taking action to promote digital equity

The second takeaway that surfaced from discussions with municipal leaders was that cities are taking a variety of actions on their own to address digital equity in their communities. The cities' self-reliance was evident, even as policymakers grappled with federal regulatory and financial solutions.

Taking action to address access challenges

Participants cited a number of tactics they had implemented to solve infrastructure challenges, from investment in municipally owned infrastructure, to incentives or enforcement of development requirements.

Infrastructure investments

Building infrastructure was the most common action municipal leaders took to address broadband access challenges. Investments ranged from establishing conduit networks to expanding public Wi-Fi in parts of the city or creating city-run broadband service. Cities' primary goal in building their own infrastructure solutions was to bring broadband affordability within reach by spurring competition to drive down the cost of internet service. Some cities are building their own infrastructure, which they will own themselves; others are contracting with major broadband carriers to build the network that the city makes available to multiple providers.⁹

One participant shared their city's experience building out a fiber network using an open-

source internet networking framework (an "INET"), which a major broadband provider owns, and the city operates as the service provider. The city's objective is to lease the fiber and fuel competition while generating funding for the community.

Although many municipalities prefer wired broadband, including fiber, wireless options are on the table as well. One municipal leader indicated that while wireless options had been "difficult to discuss" prior to the pandemic "after the pandemic, wireless alternatives happened organically." They are now exploring wireless opportunities with a wireless technology leader.

Wi-Fi expansion was high on municipal leaders' wish lists. One participant shared their city's experience using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars for a Wi-Fi expansion and potential citywide help desk and refurbishing center.

Some municipal leaders, however, indicated they were not interested in municipal broadband, or that the upfront costs were prohibitive. They preferred other means to drive down prices or create competition; some indicated that state law preempted their legal authority to pursue municipal broadband.

Municipal authority

Cities are using legal rights and policy levers to increase access to the internet. A few participants shared how they leveraged franchise agreements to encourage network

expansion or improve internet service. Some participants explained how they have employed contract performance terms in legal agreements to hold developers accountable for providing affordable broadband in new development. Others shared how they encouraged multiple dwelling unit (MDU) developers to take advantage of various incentives offered to supply broadband throughout their buildings. One leader shared how their city used its convening authority to engage a working group of community stakeholders to address infrastructure and related connectivity challenges and to inform local policy.



Taking action to address affordability challenges

Although the challenge of access to broadband may be addressed, in part, by federal investments in infrastructure, the majority of this funding is not directly targeted at municipalities, so the challenge of affordability will persist. Cities understand this and have stepped into the void since the onset of the pandemic to attempt to address the reality that many of their residents simply cannot afford or prioritize the cost of service and devices. The urgency to accelerate economic recovery and help the unemployed and underemployed find work demands sustainable solutions for affordability.

Affordable access to service

The chief barrier to broadband adoption is the cost of internet service. A 2020 analysis found that the U.S. has the highest monthly internet prices, compared to other North American, European and Asian locations. This trend has remained constant for cable, DSL and fiber internet service.¹⁰ The average price for monthly internet plans in the U.S. is \$35.53 for DSL, \$66.13 for cable and \$79.92 for fiber.¹¹ This has been noted by digital equity groups, such as the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, and cities themselves.¹² As recently as October 2021, the City of Philadelphia released new data showing that 90% of broadband users consider a monthly cost of \$20 or more to be too expensive for home broadband service.¹³ A November 2021 report by Education Superhighway found that 18 million U.S.



households with access to the internet can't afford to connect.¹⁴

City leaders noted that providing or partnering with community organizations to provide affordable and free home internet connections was an effective way to get unserved or underserved households online.

Affordable access to devices

Broadband affordability is a major barrier to adoption. Internet service providers' low-cost broadband plans and federal subsidies like the Emergency Broadband Benefit address broadband subscription affordability on multiple levels. However, not all residents are aware of these discount programs, and these efforts generally do not include access to an affordable laptop, desktop computer or tablet. Cities have stepped into this gap to ensure that broadband devices are both affordable and available, with many distributing free hotspots and devices to households for temporary loan.

Distribution of devices was a notable challenge for many communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants shared some of the ways that they directly engaged the community to determine who needed devices and how to distribute devices to these residents directly, in collaboration with local community-based organizations, rather than waiting for industry partners or federal programs to make devices available to residents.

Cities, towns and villages are engaged in a variety of creative practices to find residents in need and get them devices. These have included hands-on programs, like going door-to-door to survey residents about needs, dropping off devices directly to those households and creating large-scale distribution programs for seniors living in public housing. Cities also partnered with local organizations, such as library systems, to connect residents to devices.¹⁵



Taking action using public-private partnerships

Most participants mentioned public-private partnerships as both a solution and a challenge to their digital equity efforts. Many cities lauded the use of partnerships to address broadband access and infrastructure buildout, affordable broadband programs and devices and skills and training challenges.

Collaborations that cities are leveraging include the following partnerships:

- ◆ Schools and local libraries
- ◆ Private sector (e.g., broadband, telecom, technology and electric utility companies)
- ◆ Philanthropic organizations and community foundations
- ◆ Pursuing grants from federal, state and local governments and authorities (e.g., grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation and a local housing authority), in partnership with others

Local leaders found, however, that partnerships and external funding could be challenging to locate and leverage, with many city officials uncertain about where or how to seek further financial support or technical assistance for their connectivity efforts. In particular, cities were not fully aware of available federal resources, such as those included in emergency federal legislation.

Taking action to address capacity challenges

Capacity and staffing limitations impact cities' ability to achieve digital equity. They often lack dedicated digital inclusion staff or staff with relevant experience, such as data scientists and program evaluation experts. Establishing a new fiber network or digital equity program also represents a substantial new investment of staff time and resources. A number of municipal leaders indicated that their communities were reallocating existing staff to run resident technical support or device distribution or seeking grant funding to create and staff more ambitious projects. In some cases, cities are actively creating new permanent positions for digital inclusion leadership and staff.

Cities need cross-sector support to achieve digital equity

The local leaders we spoke to were clear that while they have taken steps to promote digital equity within their communities, they need more resources and partnerships from federal, state and local government, industry, philanthropy and nonprofit organizations.

As federal agencies work to implement the provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, cities say they need assistance:

- ◆ Advocating for Congress to amplify local concerns
- ◆ Leveraging competition and communicating with industry to meet their residents' customized needs
- ◆ Securing funding and leveraging public-private partnerships to address digital equity challenges
- ◆ Obtaining research, data and staff to accurately measure access and adoption
- ◆ Building digital literacy skills, training residents and upskilling the local workforce

Advocating for Congress to amplify local concerns

Municipal leaders observed that federal programs are frequently developed with little to no consultation with cities, towns and villages. Therefore, they do not necessarily address local needs. Cities want to make sure that Congress actively invites and incorporates local feedback in federal decision making, and

that federal agencies consider cities as they move to implement new funding for infrastructure via their states. They feel the federal government is not listening and urgently desire to work together to enhance the impact of their collective voices. Communication with residents and local leaders about community needs will enable federal policymakers to customize solutions, rather than make decisions in a vacuum.

Participants recognized that the private sector has very effective lobbying strategies that municipalities lack. Local leaders showed an interest in collaborating more with other communities to push for locally driven federal broadband policy. In particular, participants expressed an interest in ensuring that federal policies met the needs of both urban and rural communities, since resources needed by these communities are very different. One rural participant noted that library-based connectivity programs were a poor fit for their community, which would require residents to walk multiple miles to get to any library branch in an area without public transit.

Leveraging competition and communicating with industry

Cities said they need additional assistance in their interactions with the telecommunications industry. Local leaders want to foster competition among broadband providers and ensure that privately-owned broadband deployments supported by federal subsidy programs adequately address specific locally defined needs. City officials also expressed interest in collaborating and communicating more effectively with their industry partners, sharing data with them, and establishing industry liaisons to facilitate direct conversations about specific local needs. Many felt, however, that they needed additional support or information to effectively advocate for their communities in these interactions.

Securing resources, funding and leveraging public-private partnerships

Cities, towns and villages are eager to leverage public-private and nonprofit partnerships and to pursue grant funding to augment local resources and overcome digital equity challenges. City leaders cited their need for more useful support, expressing their desire for timely notice of available financial

resources, such as through a central funding clearinghouse to direct resources to appropriate community-based organizations. They also acknowledged the necessity of broadening their networks and relationships to increase their ability to leverage public, private and nonprofit partnerships.

“The facts show that as a city, we are financially strapped, yet, as an organization, we possess creativity, dynamism, and drive. We would like to have access to resources that will enable us to become a Smart City.” – Salon Participant

Obtaining research, data and staff

An important take-away from municipal leaders is that cities need an affordable and effective means to capture data to measure where broadband infrastructure and service exists, at what performance speeds, and at what cost to consumers and businesses. Most local mapping efforts consisted of mapping Wi-Fi, along with anecdotal or survey-based observations of household connectivity. Cities noted that while the Federal Communications Commission’s efforts to improve national broadband maps are a start, local and inclusive research about real user experiences is essential. It costs money to do this research well.

Municipal leaders are interested in existing research and data that could assist them in local efforts to achieve digital equity. Some participants stated they are already well-informed and have the most up-to-date information, while others felt they were lagging behind in their understanding of broadband opportunities. Regardless of whether they felt informed, most participants wanted more information sharing, measurement frameworks and programmatic design models. Notably, these require experts, such as data scientists and program evaluation specialists, with appropriate research and other technical skills to assist with data gathering and analysis.

Participants suggested the following research and data sharing ideas to help cities:

- ◆ Engaging hard-to-reach communities via tools that support local outreach
- ◆ Making existing research open source
- ◆ Providing municipalities access to existing publications
- ◆ Providing access to existing survey tools to engage citizens and collect primary data on their real needs and how best to address them

Building digital literacy skills, training residents and upskilling the local workforce

Alongside solving for access and affordability, cities need solutions for providing digital skills, training and technical support to residents, so they can successfully use broadband technology. Some municipal leaders confirmed that older adults have been the focus of digital skills training to enable them to use the internet safely, to effectively communicate with their loved ones, to access government services, to attend virtual worship services and to communicate with medical providers via a telehealth connection.

To remove barriers associated with skills challenges, municipal leaders would like help educating and training communities experiencing significant gaps in digital access: notably, seniors, the unhoused and immigrant communities. They also recognize the importance of expanding digital literacy training more broadly and combining such initiatives with workforce training programs and upskilling to ensure a stronger economic future. Improving digital literacy and building residents’ digital competence overall is a critical step toward accessing better opportunities, education, and careers and improving quality of life for residents, their families and their communities.

Conclusion

It is clear from our conversations with cities, towns and villages that every community has the potential to improve digital equity. We offer these observations to federal, state and local leaders seeking to connect their residents to the digital economy:

Digital equity must become a leadership priority across all government offices and agencies.

Broadband cannot be relegated to a single staffer or assigned solely to a department. Cities that adopt a mindset of digital equity and address broadband at a leadership level invest necessary budget, staff and political energy in the issue. Digital equity needs to be considered a core local issue, on par with traditional matters like public safety, housing and transportation.

Cities, towns and villages cannot and should not be expected to tackle this challenge alone.

Our participants valued talking with one another and sharing common experiences and questions. Communities also need strong partners in federal and state governments, the private sector and nonprofit organizations. The support needed is not just financial — local leaders repeatedly emphasize the need for networking, education, technical assistance and advocacy on behalf of their communities.

The work needed to digitally advance is never truly done.

Savvy cities must not only tackle current connectivity challenges, but also prepare for advances in technology and infrastructure or skills needs. While some communities or leaders are further along in this work than others, every local official and every community needs to address existing inequities and prevent stagnation.



We must leverage the momentum of this moment.

The COVID-19 pandemic emergency has created a sea change in funding levels and political willingness to work for digital equity. Cities and their partners must not let this energy go to waste. As federal agencies work to implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and state and local officials plan expenditures of American Rescue Plan Act resources, we must all work together to ensure that those efforts are as effective and locally driven as possible.

We hope the information compiled in this report helps policymakers consider the voices of municipalities and invest in a way that addresses cities' connectivity needs, that makes broadband accessible and affordable and that provides training and support needed for residents to experience the social and economic benefits of full digital participation. NLC and Centri Tech Foundation greatly appreciate the time and insights many local leaders contributed to this report.

APPENDIX:

Digital Equity Salon Pre-Convening Survey

To inform the salon discussions, participants completed this pre-convening survey.

Dear Participant,

The National League of Cities and Centri Tech Foundation are co-hosting a series of salon discussions focused on digital equity and the experience of municipalities to address the digital divide and its impact on communities. As a local leader who has been invited to participate in one of these convenings, we would like to ask you a few questions to better understand how you and your city are approaching this issue. Your answers will inform our meeting agenda and enable us to build a robust conversation around the real experiences of attendees.

Thank you in advance for responding to this survey.

1. Name
2. Title
3. City
4. State
5. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance defines digital equity as
“a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy. Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning and access to essential services.”

When you think of “digital equity” in the context of your city, what does the term mean to you?

6. In what ways has the digital divide impacted your residents?
7. Has your city identified addressing digital equity as a priority? Yes or No

8. Where does digital equity rank among other city priorities? 0-Lowest Priority / 100 Highest Priority
9. What would help you to promote digital equity as a priority? (Optional)
10. Has your city completed either a digital equity survey and/or a digital equity plan? Yes or No
IF YES - Is the digital equity plan publicly available? Yes or No
IF YES - Please provide the URL for the survey or report
11. Do you have a staff person(s) dedicated to these issues? Yes or No
IF YES - Is the digital equity plan publicly available? Yes or No
IF YES - What is the name, title and e-mail address of that person(s)?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.





Endnotes

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