

A decorative graphic at the top of the page featuring a network of blue lines and nodes on a dark blue background.

# Draft Digital Equity Action Plan

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**Build consensus that high-quality, reliable, and affordable broadband is an essential public service that contributes toward greater equity.**

- Standardize the definition of broadband to the state mandated 100/20 Mbps.
- Support policy and legislative initiatives that mandate affordability and service performance standards that improve the reliability and performance of the service including minimum broadband speeds, latency, and jitter.

**SUPPORTING ACTIONS**

Action	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Advocate and adopt a definition of “broadband” for the region that reflects the goal in the Governor’s Executive Order 73-20 of 100/20 Mbps and addresses future demands, reliability, and other service level standards (e.g, latency, jitter). Help to inform state definition of broadband and service level standards.	Near-term	SANDAG, Taskforce, Southern California Transformation, California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF)
Develop a standard definition for “unserved” and “underserved” households and/or census blocks. Help to inform state definition of “unserved” and “underserved” households.	Near-term	SANDAG, Taskforce, Southern California Transformation, CETF
Prepare a map of unserved and underserved areas to target investments in areas of greatest need.	Near-term	SANDAG
Identify political champions and digital equity leaders in the region and state.	Near-term	SANDAG, Taskforce, Southern California Transformation, CETF, Broadband Consortia
Incorporate digital equity and broadband deployment into the SANDAG annual legislative program.	Near-term	SANDAG
Encourage SANDAG member agencies (e.g., local jurisdictions, transit agencies) to incorporate digital equity and broadband deployment into their annual legislative programs.	Continuous	Member agencies
Track and actively participate in federal and state legislation and California Public Utilities Commission	Continuous	SANDAG, Taskforce

(CPUC) rulemakings related to broadband affordability and performance. Inform and encourage Digital Divide Taskforce members and member agencies to actively participate in relevant legislation and rulemakings.		
Conduct an Economic Impact Analysis of Universal Broadband to demonstrate and promote the potential impact of a fully connected region.	Near-term	SANDAG

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### Incorporate broadband into regional and local plans.

- Standardize the incorporation of broadband into regional and local development projects.
- Develop and encourage local adoption of regionally consistent broadband supportive policies and streamlined permitting practices with priority to unserved, underserved, tribal, and low-income communities.

## SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Action	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Encourage local agencies to adopt a resolution committing to bridge the digital divide.	Near-term	Local Jurisdictions
Identify regional or local policies, practices or legislation that may inhibit broadband deployment in the region. Determine steps needed to mitigate policy barriers.	Near-term	SANDAG
Integrate digital equity into existing and future SANDAG funding programs (e.g., Smart Growth Incentive Program, Housing Grant Program).	Near-term	SANDAG
Integrate broadband into regional transportation plans (e.g., Interregional Tribal Transportation Strategy and Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plans (CMCPs)).	Near-term	SANDAG, Caltrans, Tribal Governments
Integrate broadband into local agency plans and programs (e.g., Community Plans, General Plans, Climate Action Plans).	Continuous	Local Jurisdictions
<p>Establish a work group to develop regional permitting standards and guidelines that expedite broadband infrastructure development in unserved and underserved communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate local efforts with state initiatives (GoBiz) to streamline local land use approvals and permitting of broadband infrastructure.</li> <li>• Develop standard agreement templates to streamline permitting processes (e.g., master encroachment permit, digital permitting).</li> </ul>	Near-term	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions

Complete a Broadband Master Plan to inventory public fiber infrastructure, identify gaps, and develop a strategy & implementation plan and funding strategy for building out a regional broadband network that would connect public facilities in each of the jurisdictions within the San Diego region:

- Consider opportunities for municipal broadband deployment to expand broadband service to public facilities including mobility hubs, libraries, parks, community anchor institutions, etc.
- Develop guidance for local jurisdictions on contracting with broadband service providers (e.g., construction requirements, service/affordability standards, maintenance standards, term, insurance, etc.).

Near-term

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## DRIVE THE EXPANSION OF A RESILIENT, RELIABLE, AND REDUNDANT OPEN ACCESS MIDDLE-MILE FIBER NETWORK.

- Leverage existing public infrastructure through public and private partnerships (state, county, and local agencies, SDG&E, Transportation Agencies, ISPs).
- Develop policies and standardized agreements for sharing conduit, fiber, and infrastructure assets.

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Action	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Track and actively participate in CPUC rulemakings and other state initiatives (California Broadband Council, Middle Mile Advisory Committee, California Advanced Services Fund, SB 156, SB4, AB14) to support deployment of a statewide open access middle mile, last mile broadband infrastructure, and programming for digital adoption and literacy.	Continuous	SANDAG
Pilot a dig once project to deploy conduit and fiber as part of State Route 67 Pavement Rehabilitation Project. Help to inform state dig once policies and practices.	Near-term	SANDAG, Caltrans, County of San Diego, Internet Service Providers (ISPs)
Develop a map of strategic projects that can be leveraged to expand broadband infrastructure (Dig Once).	Near-term	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions, Tribal Governments, SDG&E
Implement a Dig Once policy to install conduit and fiber as part of SANDAG-funded projects.	Near-term	SANDAG
Support jurisdictions and tribal governments with inventorying local infrastructure assets that can be made available for broadband infrastructure deployment. Provide templates for sharing/leasing assets.	Near-term	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions, Tribal Governments



Develop and implement a regional fiber sharing agreement template for public and private partners.	Near-term	SANDAG, Caltrans, Member agencies, Tribal Governments, ISPs
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### **Build collaborative partnerships with ISPs to connect middle-mile expansion with last mile deployment in hard-to-reach areas.**

- Ensure accountability and transparency in delivering affordable and high-quality broadband.

### **SUPPORTING ACTIONS**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
Pursue projects to expand service in unserved and underserved rural areas (e.g, Statewide Rural Connectivity Project).	Continuous	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions, Tribal Governments, ISPs
Pursue projects to expand last mile connectivity in underserved urban areas (e.g., Promize Zone Initiative).	Continuous	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions, ISPs
Establish a work group and develop a strategy for providing internet service to residents of all public housing properties in the region.	Near-term	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions, Southern California Transforamtion, San Diego Housing Commission, CETF, ISPs
Develop guidance for local jurisdictions on contracting with broadband service providers (e.g., construction requirements, service/affordability standards, maintenance standards, term, insurance, etc.).	Near-term	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions
Prequalify ISPs as partners for grants and other digital equity projects through a competitive process (Request For Partnerships). Require partners to provide household level data that will support planning for deployment in unserved and underserved areas.	Near-term	SANDAG, ISPs



<p>Coordinate and convene public safety organizations to discuss broadband needs for public safety and disaster preparedness, response, resiliency, recovery, and mitigation capabilities.</p>	<p>Continuous</p>	<p>SANDAG</p>
<p>Coordinate and convene public health organizations to discuss broadband needs for telehealth capabilities, emergency response systems, etc.</p>	<p>Near-term</p>	<p>SANDAG</p>

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**Strengthen partnerships with and between public agencies, community-based organizations, libraries, and educational and research institutions.**

- Coordinate initiatives and share best practices to expand digital literacy and adoption.
- Expand and implement coordinated outreach and public education activities that raise awareness and build support for digital equity.
- Develop technical assistance, shared resources, and software applications to advance digital equity and inclusion, including accessible content.

**SUPPORTING ACTIONS**

Action	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Convene the Digital Divide Taskforce, as needed, to share best practices, resources, and lessons learned and coordinate on regional digital divide initiatives .	Continuous	SANDAG, Taskforce
Convene community-based organizations (e.g., SANDAG Social Equity Working Group) to coordinate and advance initiatives that increase broadband adoption, digital literacy and device ownership. Report back to the Taskforce on a regular basis.	Continuous	SANDAG, Community-Based Organizations
Review existing digital literacy curriculums for seniors, adults and students. Determine gaps, opportunities for improvements, and encourage integration of curriculums into community-based organizations offerings, schools, libraries, etc.	Near-term	San Diego Futures Foundation
Inventory community-based organizations, libraries, schools, foundations, etc. that promote and offer programs that advance digital literacy. Increase the number of organizations that offer digital equity programming.	Near-term	SANDAG, City of San Diego, San Diego Futures Foundation, Library Friends of San Diego County
Identify funding resources (federal, state, local, private) to build capacity for organizations to fund community-based digital equity solutions.	Continuous	SANDAG, City of San Diego

<p>Coordinate and convene tribal stakeholders to expand digital literacy programs and services in tribal areas.</p>	<p>Continuous</p>	<p>SANDAG, Tribal Governments</p>
<p>Develop and share communications materials to raise awareness, cross promote, and build support for digital equity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a toolkit of resources for taskforce members with newsletter content, speaking points, graphics, one pagers, and sample social media posts.</li> <li>• Engage media through press releases and story pitches when relevant projects reach key milestones, or new local and regional policies are adopted to enhance digital equity.</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous</p>	<p>SANDAG, Taskforce</p>
<p>Identify and promote the use of digital accessibility tools for people with disabilities to use technology in partnership with regional stakeholders (e.g. Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, City of San Diego's Accessibility Advisory Board):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop standard policy and processes to improve the accessibility of SANDAG work products, website, etc. Encourage Taskforce and member agencies to adopt and promote digital accessibility standards.</li> <li>• Share resources and standards on digital accessibility tools with Digital Divide Taskforce and member agencies.</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous</p>	<p>SANDAG, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, City of San Diego's Accessibility Advisory Board, Taskforce</p>
<p>Work through public housing organizations and other public services to promote enrollment in broadband service subsidy programs and related digital equity services.</p>	<p>Continuous</p>	<p>Public Housing Providers, Local Jurisdictions</p>
<p>Create a regional portal for resources and information on digital equity data and programming including subsidies for broadband service, as well as programs for digital literacy, accessibility and device ownership. Ensure that 211 is promoting information on digital equity resources.</p>	<p>Near-term</p>	<p>County of San Diego, 211 San Diego</p>



### Advocate for better public data and greater transparency around household-level service availability, performance, and cost.

- Expand and improve public broadband data availability and mapping resources to educate stakeholders and inform decision-making.

#### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Action	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Track and actively participate in legislation and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) rulemakings to advocate for more granular and accurate broadband data. Advocate for improved Federal Communications Commission's Form 477 reporting. Encourage Taskforce and member agencies to actively participate.	Continuous	SANDAG, Taskforce, Member agencies
Conduct a regional survey to establish a baseline for broadband adoption in the region. Develop a plan for regular surveying to measure progress on broadband adoption.	Near-term	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions, Tribal Governments, Community-Based Organizations
Publish, maintain and update interactive data portal to track and monitor progress on broadband access and adoption.	Continuous	SANDAG



## Advocate for and seek sustainable funding for digital equity programming.

- Increase broadband availability in underserved areas, broadband affordability in low-income households, and advance digital literacy and broadband adoption.

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Action	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Incorporate digital equity into SANDAG funding programs and work with partners to establish funding for digital divide programs locally.	Near-term	SANDAG
Advocate for and apply for state and federal funding to expand broadband infrastructure and services in the Southern California.	Continuous	SANDAG, Member Agencies, Taskforce, Broadband Consortia
Support legislation to establish sustainable funding for subsidized broadband in areas of greatest need including low-income households, public housing, and anchor institutions.	Continuous	SANDAG, Taskforce
Identify and promote grant funding opportunities. Seek partnerships to assist local jurisdictions, CBOs, and tribes with digital equity initiatives.	Continuous	SANDAG, Local Jurisdictions, Tribal Governments, Community-Based Organizations
Work with community based organizations to establish partnerships and a prioritized list of digital equity projects that are ready to go for funding applications.	Near-term	SANDAG, Community-Based Organizations
Track federal, state, and local grant opportunities to expand broadband services and advance broadband	Continuous	SANDAG, Taskforce

adoption in the region. Support Taskforce members with grant applications (Letter of support, data, etc.):

- Planning or technical studies/assessments
- Digital Literacy
- Subsidized broadband subscriptions

Equipment (computers, hotspots, etc

Engage with active philanthropy organizations to identify areas of shared interest and potential sources of funding to support digital equity programs and services.

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