

Greater Arizona Educational Leadership
AZBSN Arizona Broadband
Stakeholder Network

Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council
COVID-19 DIGITAL ACCESS TASK FORCE

COVID-19 Task Force

- J Greater Arizona Educational Leadership
- J Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council
- J Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network

In cooperation with:

- J State and Local Governments
- J Public Policy Makers
- J Rural Community Leaders
- J Economic Development
- J Education
- J Health Services
- J Public Safety
- J Libraries
- J Nonprofit Organizations
- J Broadband Service Providers and Technology Companies
- J Many Others

Contact

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Funding Request

AZBSN, the Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network is requesting financial support to implement the COVID-19 Task Force's short and long term tactical and strategic *Digital Access* recommendations and initiatives to address the unprecedented demand for *Internet and other digital access services and resources* in Arizona resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic's social and physical distancing requirements.

In 2020 the Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network, a collaborative project of the [Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council \(ATIC\)](#) and the [Greater Arizona Educational Leadership \(GAZEL\) organization](#) created the COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force. In November 2020 the Task Force published a [Comprehensive Statewide Digital Access Strategy Report](#).

The Report provides short and long term tactical and strategic recommendations and initiatives to address the needs of all Arizona citizens, especially students, parents, teachers, seniors, businesses and library patrons for Internet and other digital access services and resources.

The initiatives also address the need for Internet and other digital access services and resources to enable schools, universities, community colleges, homes, libraries, healthcare facilities, businesses and communities to support education, healthcare, community services, workforce and economic development, and more.

The report emphasizes the digital access needs in tribal, rural and other underserved communities and low-income neighborhoods in Arizona.



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About AZBSN and the COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force

About AZBSN

ATIC and GAZEL created the AZBSN, Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network to facilitate collaboration, coordination, information sharing and communication among public, private and nonprofit stakeholders engaged in initiatives to promote affordable and reliable Broadband Internet access in communities throughout Arizona. **AZBSN has become a primary organization for communication to stakeholders throughout the state.**

COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force

The Task Force has engaged over 50 Digital Access advocates including public and private leaders and industry experts to share information and collaborate on critical digital access recommendations and initiatives for Arizona. Participation in the Task Force includes representation across State and Local Government, Public Policy Makers, Rural Community Leaders, Economic Development, Education, Health Services, Public Safety, Libraries, Nonprofit Organizations, Telecommunication Service Providers, and Technology Companies.

Every Monday morning at 7:30 am 30-40 Task Force members meet for: federal, state and local community updates; digital access resource presentations and; information and resource sharing.

The Task Force is: **1)** identifying digital access needs; **2)** enabling communication, collaboration, coordination, and sharing of information and resources among key public, private and nonprofit digital access advocates; **3)** implementing a statewide digital access strategy including short and long term tactical and strategic recommendations and initiatives; **4)** facilitating project partnerships; **5)** providing federal, state and local government briefings and; identifying and advocating for funding to enable implementation of COVID-19 Digital Access projects.

Why the Task Force? What Is the Problem?

COVID-19 has created unprecedented demand for Internet and other digital access services and resources. Schools are working hard to convert to online and hybrid learning, businesses are closed or transitioning to online engagement with their customers while millions of employees are working from home and participating in online meetings with colleagues, clients and business partners. Libraries may be closed and often unable to provide Internet access to their patrons. Overwhelmed healthcare facilities committed to meeting demand and protecting patients and staff, are providing interaction with patients through telemedicine. Government services are transitioning to online citizen access. Many students can't participate in online learning, creating a major homework and overall learning gap for these students. People with existing serious health conditions and populations most in need of telemedicine such as the elderly, often cannot access telemedicine services. Many small businesses are unable to provide telework opportunities for their employees. Many people are isolated and unable to communicate with their friends, family, colleagues and, perhaps most importantly, their healthcare providers. These individuals are being left behind because they don't have access to affordable Internet and other digital access services and resources.

How You Can Help

AZBSN is requesting your support to continue coordination of the COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force and implementation of our short and long term tactical and strategic recommendations and initiatives to address the digital access needs in Arizona

With your tax deductible commitment to the Task Force through the Greater Arizona Educational Leadership 501(c)(3) organization, you will have the opportunity to tell your story, showcase your organization, and connect with public and private Digital Access advocates representing economic development, education, government, health services, public safety, libraries, telecom and technology companies, and more.

We are asking that you consider a \$2000 - \$10,000 (or more) commitment. Depending upon your level of support:

- Your logo, with a link to your website, **and a paragraph description of your organization**, will be prominently displayed on the AZBSN and Task Force web pages including Task Force meetings, webinars and events pages
- Your logo will be prominently displayed on the AZBSN and Task Force meeting and event web sites, with your contact information, and a link to your web site
- Acknowledgement of your support at AZBSN meetings and events
- Your company logo, with a link to your web site, on email newsletters, announcements
- Your logo on other collateral material such as AZBSN flier
- Sponsorship of Roundtables and Webinars

Digital Access – More Than Internet Access



The pandemic has illuminated the long-standing deficiencies in affordable broadband Internet access in Arizona. Many Arizona citizens, especially in tribal, rural and other underserved communities and low-income neighborhoods do not have affordable and equitable access to the Internet.

While we need to get everyone connected, we also need to ensure that all Arizona citizens have access to: **1)** Free or affordable Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user such as computers, laptops and smartphones, as well as other digital equipment such as routers, hotspots and web cameras; **2)** Access to digital literacy and web literacy skills assistance and training; **3)** Quality, real-time technical support to enable them to use the devices, Internet and applications effectively; **4)** Access to applications, digital

content and resources designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.

Schools, universities, community colleges, homes, libraries, healthcare facilities, businesses and communities also need equitable and affordable Internet and other digital access services and resources to enable them to support education, healthcare, community services, economic development, and more.

Statewide Digital Access Strategy Report

In November 2020 the Task Force published a [Comprehensive Statewide Digital Access Strategy Report](#). The Report provides short and long term tactical and strategic recommendations and initiatives to address the digital access needs of all Arizona citizens, especially students, parents, teachers, seniors, businesses and library patrons, as well as schools, universities, community colleges, homes, libraries, healthcare facilities, businesses and communities.

The Task Force initially formed four Planning Committees to address digital access challenges: (1) Education and Libraries, (2) Communities, (3) Technology and, (4) Funding and Resources. The results from these Committees and the overall Task Force are represented in the report.

The report, submitted on behalf of the more than 50 public and private digital access advocates participating in the statewide Task Force, is intended for public and private advocates and policy and decision-makers representing State and Local Government, Business and Industry, Rural Communities, Economic Development, Education, Healthcare, Public Safety, Libraries, Nonprofit Organizations, and Telecommunications and Technology Companies.

The report includes: **1)** An Executive Summary; **2)** About the AZBSN Task Force; **3)** Why This is Important - Unprecedented Demand for Digital Access; Digital Access Needs and Issues; **4)** Understanding Broadband Infrastructure Deployment - Issues, Challenges and Solutions; **5)** State of Arizona Broadband and Other Digital Access Initiatives; **6)** AZBSN Task Force Recommendations & Call to Action.

The recommendations include: **1)** Technology and Infrastructure; **2)** State and Community Digital Access Planning; **3)** Funding and Resources Support Strategies; **4)** State Broadband and Digital Inclusion Leadership, Policy and Regulation; **5)** Technical Support and Professional Development for Education and the Community; **6)** Public Access to Digital Resources; **7)** Educational Digital Content and Resource Sharing; **8)** Safe Operations of Schools, Libraries and Public Spaces in the COVID-19 Environment.

- **Technology and Infrastructure:** Recommendations that include strategies to provide affordable and equitable Broadband Internet access and devices for all Arizona citizens through actions such as: adopting a statewide definition of Broadband speeds of 100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload (100/10 Mbps); leveraging the use of Arizona's Research & Education Sun Corridor Network; and expanding Arizona's Smart Highway Corridors broadband infrastructure initiative.
- **State and Community Digital Access Planning:** Recommendations that include strategies and resources to support Arizona communities, organizations and education institutions in planning and securing funding for Digital Access and Broadband infrastructure initiatives through actions such as: state support for creation and development of local community Broadband Access Teams (BATs); maximizing the use of E-rate funding and; support for Broadband mapping.
- **Funding and Resources Support Strategies:** Recommendations that include strategies and resources to increase Arizona funding opportunities for Broadband development through actions such as: creating a new Broadband Development Authority; providing assistance for planning, research and development of grants; repurposing the Arizona Corporation Commission's Universal Service Fund to support Broadband and; developing a state strategy to access millions of dollars of Community Reinvestment Act Digital Equity/Digital Divide funding.

- **State Broadband and Digital Inclusion Leadership, Policy and Regulation:** Recommendations that include strategies and resources for State government to provide leadership and changes or adoption of policies and recommendations to accelerate broadband deployment in rural areas and other unserved or underserved communities through actions such as: establishing a State Broadband Office; removing barriers and providing incentives for private sector investment; initiatives to enable access telehealth and telemedicine resources and services in Arizona and; policies to enable electric cooperatives to provide middle mile and last mile Broadband to rural communities.
- **Technical Support and Professional Development for Education and the Community:** Recommendations that include strategies and resources to enable educators and all citizens to effectively use the Internet and devices through actions such as: providing professional development and training for educators and the public and developing strategies to sustain ongoing tech support and service desk support services for students and the public in general.
- **Public Access to Digital Resources:** Recommendations that include strategies and resources to enable easy public access to Digital Access resources such as the Connect Arizona portal that includes a statewide map of free or affordable Internet access options, and links to other digital inclusion resources such as professional development and technical support organizations.
- **Educational Digital Content and Resource Sharing:** Recommendations that include strategies and resources to provide easy public access to educational digital content and resources to support online instruction by actions to: provide access to Digital Resources and Digital Literacy services and resources such as digital curriculum, instructional videos, virtual labs, and informational resources.
- **Safe Operations of Schools, Libraries and Public Spaces in the COVID-19 Environment:** Recommendations to enable safe operations of schools, libraries and public spaces in alignment with CDC best practices and guidelines through actions such: as enabling safe school and library hygiene for public access computers in schools and libraries through the use of technologies such as IoT based Detection and Prevention technologies and; providing links to other resources, guidelines and other detection and prevention solutions

Why We Need your Support

Your support will enable us to:

- Coordinate regular Task Force informational, coordinating and planning meetings including: (1) federal, state and local community updates; (2) digital access resource presentations and; (3) information and resource sharing
- Develop, coordinate and support Action Teams/Committees to implement the Task Force initiatives and recommendations
- Distribute the report and schedule meetings with key government officials, key policy and decision makers, executive leadership organizations, and a broad array of digital inclusion stakeholders in Arizona such as schools, universities and community colleges, state and local government agencies, libraries, associations and nonprofit organizations, healthcare and telemedicine organizations, local communities, and economic development organizations to advocate for funding and implementation of Task Force recommendations
- Support State government, and other responsible organizations, in developing strategic and tactical plans and implementation strategies to carry out the Task Force recommendations.
- Update and expand AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Website
- Provide regular community, stakeholder, and citizen communications through newsletters, webinars, web sites, informational meetings, social media, etc.
- Continue to identify and engage potential partners and collaborators
- Develop and distribute a periodic AZBSN and Digital Access Task Force newsletter
- Present informational online webinars and networking events for the Task Force, other digital access advocates and the broader public
- Seek sponsors and grants to fund and support AZBSN and COVID-19 Task Force initiatives
- Develop an online Database: Resources, Needs, Contacts, etc.
- Support the [Connect Arizona Website and Interactive Map](#). The Task Force, in cooperation with the Arizona State Library, School Connect and Common Sense Media launched the **Connect Arizona Website** for user friendly access to free Wi-Fi hotspots and technical support resources in Arizona. The site also provides information on free and discounted resources to get connected and free technical support. **Thousands of people throughout Arizona have accessed this site.**

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SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Your Benefits	Platinum \$5000.00 +	Gold \$2000	Silver \$1000
Company logo, with a link to your web site, featured prominently on the AZBSN web site	x	x	
Your logo, with a link to your website, a brief description of your company and contact information , prominently displayed on AZBSN web pages	x		
Company name (no logo) with a link to your web site, listed prominently on the AZBSN web pages			x
Your logo, with a link to your website, prominently displayed on hundreds of email newsletters, announcements, etc.	x	x	
Your logo will appear on webinar welcome screens	x	x	
Participation in the Task Force and initiatives	x	x	x
Welcome participants and a company introduction at start of webinars or events	x		
Sponsorship acknowledgement by moderator at start of events or webinars	x	x	x
Thank you and link to your web site in after event follow-up emails	x		

Thanks for Considering This Request!

We will appreciate your financial support for the Arizona COVID-19 Digital Access Task as we implement digital access strategies and initiatives for tribal, rural and other underserved communities and low-income neighborhoods in Arizona. Please call, email, or see our website at www.arizonatele.org for more information.

Contact and How to Sign-up

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