

Greater Arizona Educational Leadership
AZBSN Arizona Broadband
Stakeholder Network
Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council
COVID-19 DIGITAL ACCESS TASK FORCE

Meeting Zoom Transcript

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Okay. Good morning, everybody. Let's go ahead and get started. Got lots to talk about today. Okay. So, first of all, let me see who's online? Do we have any new people who have joined us today don't see anybody new. So we're gonna move on. Okay, so agenda for today. First of all, I want to thank our sponsors as always CareFirst Healthplan Valley of the Sun United Way, satellite broadcasting, communications, Kajeet and Triad Wireless, thank you all for, for your support. don't have anybody new joining us today.

So our agenda is going to be a little bit different today. I've talked with Jeff and lots of stuff has been happening, they've finally announced the grant recipients and planning going on. And so we're going to devote a little more time for Jeff to do a little more extended update rather than just the brief 10 or 15 minutes that he usually does. So that's going to be a big part of our agenda today.

Just a reminder that I am on vacation until August, the 10th. We're going to skip a couple of our meetings. So there's no meeting next week on the 24th and on August the eighth. So just FYI. But I will send notices of our next our next meeting.

Moving on just a reminder, again, if you haven't done so please, please, please, please, please fill out our contact form. So that we can make sure we have your information and contact information.

Next thing is I'm experimenting with auto transcription transcription services. I don't know if any of you have had a chance to look at the transcription from the last meeting. So the one thing I will ask particularly for those who are doing any presentations, or updates, that you would just please announce who you are, and who you represent. Before you do your presentation. It'll make it easier from the transcription perspective. The transcription does not identify who the speakers are. So even if you have just comments and you want to add your name, please feel free to do that.

Next thing is we would like to work on getting a cybersecurity team going. And if any of you are interested in participating on that team, and are being a leader of that team, I know a couple of people have contacted me. Now let me make this clear we're not going to create our own entity on an ongoing basis, what we will do is try to put together a plan on how we can address the cybersecurity issues for digital inclusion, and then look at where is the best place and best home for that for that entity. So just want to make that clear.

A couple of things. I think you all know that Nicole has departed but will be back. I don't know if she's even online today. But will be back. Representing hopefully will be joining us again, and is representing NTIA. Mala can you or Cindy just talk about what her new role is going to be. I really haven't heard back from her after she's joined NTIA, but all I know is that she will be the Arizona liaison unless Jeff knows anything more. I think she's the coordinatour for the bead program in Arizona. I yet I haven't spoken with her in a couple of weeks. But it's great to have her she's very familiar. Excuse me with what we're doing here. And I know that they will train her and she's very smart on the peculiars of the bead program. And we're lucky to have her. Okay. Well, hopefully, we'll get her contact information and that she will participate in our task force as she has in the past. So since she has left the library, Mala, do you know Are you are you guys still looking for somebody to replace her if you've already found somebody? That's a Holly question. We still are looking as far as I know. But Holly, can you answer that question for you? Yes, we have that position. As I said last week, we've got the position posted nationally and within the state, and we have not received very many applications. So please help us spread the word. Okay. Thank you. On the state job line, Steve. Okay. We'll link to that in the chat. Yeah, and I did. I did the last time also Holly, but I'll say that again.

Robert Alvarado. Are you online today? I don't think so. So Robert was looking for some resources, some security, resources for the schools that the Chicanos Por La Causa operates, one of their schools was right near where that mass shooting took place. So they're now looking for some options to harden their schools and so forth. So if any of you do that, or know somebody who is good, please contact Robert.

Okay, moving on. Michelle, are you on? Michelle Simon. I'm here. So Michelle, you want to just give us a little update on you know, what's happening with Pima County and particularly, the relationship you have with Cox leave 120 Wi Fi Wi Fi hotspots that you've rolled out? Yeah, absolutely. So, Pima County, for anybody that is unfamiliar with us has since last August been working on a strategic plan for digital infrastructure and inclusion. That effort in order to align with the state is now called Connect Pima. And we actually have a website fema.gov/forward/slash/connect-Pima. And on that website, you'll see all kinds of information about the hotspots around town program. This is an application that we put forward to the emergency connectivity fund, to put hotspots in our community in places where people congregate. So there are Park, Boys and Girls Clubs, parking lots of some libraries. The CNCS you sound there's the Tucson house. So there's a lot of different locations in both the urban and rural areas of Pima County. And the first 70 of those hotspots rolled out at the end of June and are free to the public. The the library is paying the fees to Cox in order to make this happen. And the other 50 will roll out gradually between now and mid August. And so our hope is by implementing that is to create a bridge for people so that they will connect or come back to the library for information about the internet so we can help people connect to the affordable connectivity program. We've also worked with the city of Tucson to get fliers in the water bills. And we've also coordinated and I shouldn't say we Cindy, and her great effort with the digital inclusion subcommittee helped to put together three listening sessions in Pima County. And all of this is great news, particularly considering that Pima County is a partner with Cox in the most recent ACA grant application and award. So we will be building we will be working with cox communications to build out fiber infrastructure to alter Valley are the three points area as well as the sycamore spring, Corona de Tucson area. So there's a lot of great things happening in Pima County very excited about it.

Great. Thank you, Michelle. And you mentioned Cindy So Cindy, while I know you're online, you want to just talk. One thing that's really interesting about this project with Pima County is that they are

addressing both the infrastructure kinds of needs and connectivity needs, but also digital inclusion. And so Cindy is kind of leading that charge as Michelle noted on the digital inclusion side So Cindy, you want to just could do a quickie update on what's happening on that side?

Yeah, sure. Um, so yeah, like Michelle said we held listening sessions and a whole Sahuarita and the south side of Tucson. We got a lot of really interesting input we were collecting taking that and putting that putting that on, on the Microsoft Teams. site for Pima County. We have a really good group of people we've been collecting, you know, getting community organizations into our, into our committee meetings. And the next thing that we're going to plan is during Digital Inclusion week, which is in October, we're going to try to have a digital literacy Forum. I'm working with Michelle and my committee on that right now and sending out emails to get participation from people in the community to to fund, my concern is that people need to know people in the community aren't necessarily as aware as the rest of us of how digital lack of digital literacy really is impacting the community in terms of workforce and older adults staying connected and healthcare. So we want to create kind of an awareness within the community so that the so that we're getting community support for the digital literacy efforts that were mandated by the by this taskforce to create or expand in Pima County, so we're working really hard. And, and the other committees are as well, trying to understand access needs and, and getting ready to apply for broadband expansion monies and, and that sort of thing. So it's a really exciting time. And I'm, I'm really grateful to be part of it.

So, like I said, I think it's really interesting. And a good example of that. Planning needs to be more than just infrastructure, which we all know and connectivity, but to really look at the whole digital inclusion piece. So it's great. It's a great effort in Pima County. And Michelle, you've done a great job in leading that process. Thank you so much. We're grateful for everybody's participation. And I'm glad that many members of this team participate as well.

Okay, let's move on. What I'd like to do today is before we put Jeff on, Jeff, can you stay online or you're going to have to leave?

I'm going to have to leave. So

then we'll put you on next. And then we'll get to the other updates. Hopefully, we'll have time for that. But I think Jeff would just want to turn it over to you and to give us an update on on the grants and planning that's going on and so forth. So it's it's you're on. Again, let me just remind you, Jeff, please introduce yourself just so we have that captured in the in the chat and the transcripts.

Jeff Sobotka

Great. Hi, everyone. It's Jeff Sobotka. I'm the State broadband directour, Steve. Oh, man, I need you to stop sharing so I can throw some stuff up here. Okay, all right.

Let me know when you all can see that. Yep. Okay, cool. Caught the theme of this is it's time to grow. You know, we have been at this for a little while now, to say the least. We've all spent a lot of time talking about different stuff philosophising. In some cases, it's time to build infrastructure. And we're very excited about the Arizona broadband development grant. Because it builds the kind of infrastructure we in the state need, particularly in our most rural areas. As you all know, the service level in the metro Phoenix and Metro Tucson area is significantly better than most of the rest of the state. And I would argue 90% A lot of that has to do the fact that we've got carriers in the Phoenix area, both Cox Communications and lumen and others that have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in these

networks to build them out. They have upgraded them, and they've been great partners for the state. So when we look at the grant, remember, we're looking at the grant through the lens of where there's need. We're looking at the grant through the lens of called ROI return on investment, what are we getting for investment? Who's involved? Are these credible folks who are going to finish the job? And most importantly, what are the needs in those communities? Steve mentioned digital equity and that is something that we'll talk about a little bit at the end but this really is an infrastructure program. If we don't get the infrastructure, right, none of that other stuff matters. So let's take a look at some stats here real quick.

All right. Here, slide does not seem to be switching you know what I'm gonna take this stuff slideshow mode and Let's see where we're at here tell me what is this? Is this switching when I click here? Y'all seen the second slide? Yes, it's switched. Okay. All right, cool. Thanks. Okay. So in terms of statistics, I think it's important to understand that, that this is a very, very large grant. Because we have a large state, we had \$100 million available. And this is mandated by the folks and our legislature 75 to rural 25. Urban, we did stretch the definition of urban a little bit just because we felt that we didn't, quite frankly, we needed areas that would qualify. So we did as we selected Maricopa and Pima County's is the urban, we've got some excellent project in those in those communities. Of that we had 82 applications, I'm going to be honest with you, I was expecting about 14 and 14 of the 15 counties applied. Dillon county did not apply was Greenlee and you know, we're going to work with that on getting getting something out there of the applications \$440 million. So to give you some perspective of the demand here, and the future demand for future programs that we can talk about a little bit at the end of the winners, we had 20 winners that are going to be funded. And this was after an exhaustive search, we had a selection panel of seven folks, five different state agencies. All the winners were unanimously approved. And the process did take a lot of time for those of you who are aware, but we felt like we got the best 20 for this program. I will tell you that there were a lot of really good programs that did not get funded, that I fully expect to get funded with our next round of a federal funding through the bead program. 14 rural applications again, everything but Maricopa and Pima and six in Pima and Maricopa \$100 million total with \$112 million in matching funds, I think it's important to understand that we had companies like Cox and ello and others that put up quite a bit of money in matching funds. What makes this a much more secure program and something that we can we can sustain moving forward. Building something that's going to be out of business in two to three years is a really bad idea. I think it's worse than than building something to start with. So from our perspective, this is something we want to do different carriers, this is not a monopoly in the state. This is a very competitive state. We've had some great carriers who really stepped up. Companies like Valley Telecom, in southeastern Arizona really got outside of their comfort zone into some new areas, which we encourage Cox I can't say enough about the work that they've done, going as far south as Douglas and as far west as Wickenburg in this program. So these are these are carriers that are pushing the boundaries that understand that the state's growing or growing with us. And we had two tribally owned carriers, that one many of you are familiar with Iluvien. I know they've been on the call here today. They're going to be providing service in Ajo, Arizona, which is really exciting for the town of Idaho, chronically underserved area, and Eluvians, a solid company, we've had the opportunity to support with a couple of their USDA reconnect bids. We encourage that the other big winners to Tohono O'odham tribal utility on the Tohono O'odham lands in southern Arizona, they're going to be building out a fiber network in those areas, and laying the groundwork for some future growth. So we're very excited to work with our tribes. Alright, you guys see the map of the state of Arizona. Okay, this is gonna give you an idea of the distribution of the grants by county. I think it's

important to understand that we really did try to make sure that this is geographically balanced as well. You know, the big winner, if you will, the most would be Pima County with three. But we had several other counties they had to some of the ones that had won had pretty transformative projects. And we'll talk about that in a little bit, particularly Apache County. But if you look at the map, you can get a better idea of where we're at in terms of coverage, but also in terms of the different projects. The variants, everybody who applied for funding was funded at the level that they applied for, except for a couple. One, we ran into a conflict with some existing ERate stuff, and we had to downsize the project so we wouldn't be overbuilding each other, and the other one to get it out of the line was willing to take less money.

If you look to different projects, you've got multiple carriers, multiple counties, but one of the common denominators you're gonna fund is fiber, fiber and The middle mile fiber to the home. When I met with the White House broadband advisor a few months back, Lisa hone her comment to me was we're gonna put our thumb on the scale for fiber. And I take that seriously. We are big believers and looking at the federal guidance and not trying to book that, but trying to work with that. And I think that you'll fund that in digital equity and some of our other programs that are clear forthcoming. Some truly transformative projects, Yuma and San Luis is another one that I'd love to see happen. So great community down there. It's a border community, agriculture, trade. A lot of federal government activity, as you can imagine, border community. Those folks are going to get fibre to the premises and every address in that area connecting to a county wide Yuma middle mile network fully redundant in the ground, which will set the stage for expansion to other places, as this as this goes, again, these are all open access networks, so multiple carriers can use it. And we're excited about the program down in Yuma. I've always said Yuma as a sleeping giant. Yuma could be another El Paso with the right infrastructure. And I think we're going to start to see that we have some smaller stuff, particularly out in Graham County in Safford, Arizona, the city of Safford, which is a big tourist area was very interested in expanding their tourism base and their business base. One of the areas that we funded was a Wi Fi network with fiber backhaul that will connect the entire downtown Stafford and make it much more visitour friendly, business friendly and connect together. So yes, we have big, huge projects. And we'll talk about a couple of them here real quick. But there are some smaller projects that really fill a niche in what we're trying to do. So we're excited about this. One of the projects that we want to profile here, are y'all seeing the Apache County combat slide? Alright, so this is one that many of the folks on the call were involved with. And I think that I'm going to call this one a win for the for the task for Steve, the folks that ran this project, the folks that advocated for this project and ultimately applied came from your task force, and I think you should take it take a victory lap on this one to Apache County was incredibly underserved has been forever. It was also really divided. We provided two planning grants to different cities in Apache County in 2019. I strongly encouraged them to work together, unfortunately, I think it gets back to high school football or something. They had no intention of working together. That was a disaster. They came up with two very different plans, which were going nowhere because the other one wasn't. At that point, we reached out to the folks at the county level and said we all need to come up with a plan that works for all of Apache County. I don't know she's on today. But joy waiting really stepped up joy as a county wide elected official. She's the superintendent of public schools. So she's clearly not the broadband coordinatour. But I've never met anybody more willing to learn and get involved as joy away. Along with John Lucas and his team, another frequent attendee to this call. The comnet, which is a very well respected carrier in that part of the estate, in the county itself all got behind one plant. They ask questions, they work through it, they read the rules, and they put forth their

best program. Apache County is the poorest county in Arizona, I believe, is the third poorest in the United States of America. We're dealing with some really unique situations out there because they have some coal power plants that are incredibly inefficient. And due to environmental regulations, among other things, they're going to be closed. That is going to put a real monkey wrench into their employment in that part of the state, much like we saw with the Navajo Generation Station. So this was an area that needs broadband, they need it now and they need to start building on that. If you look at the grant itself, 9.7 to \$5 million 10 million was the maximum for rural so they got pretty darn close to that.

The communities Alpine contract Greer Nutri, so Springerville eager St. John's and Vernon is pretty extensive. And this is a very rural spread out community. This is something that I liked the fact that they utilized existing network to maximize the dollars they got to get fiber to those folks in those communities. I wanted to give a big shout out to Salt River Project SRP who stepped up and provided matching funds. They were in a coal communities call if you're interested in what's going on out there. It's fascinating. It's one of the most well attended calls I've been on in the state not just in terms of local and county officials but representatives from service Kelly and cinema By hiring, and others who have who have been big advocates for broadband 100% fiber to the home, again, fiber fiber fiber 80 miles of fiber are going to be built. And again, this is within existing middle mile network in place just to show you how rural this part of the status 11,000 Restaurant residents, 4162 homes and businesses and eight communities. Wow. I mean, in a rural county 11,000 residents, that's incredible. Apache County is going to utilize this to provide better government services to their residents. They're building a huge Wan. This will cut their costs dramatically. For those of you who have had to work through the different state procurement processes here, our rural counties pay way too much for their services. And this is going to cut that. So very excited about this program. Again, if Steve, I think that you need to take some credit for this. I mean, certainly Joy Whiting and others that have been instrumental in getting a patch you County from Hatfields and McCoys not talking to each other to having a fully funded grant, and have great broadband in two years. So congratulations.

Congratulations to joy. Yeah, joy, have you on the call? She has.

Last time I talked to join

him and go ahead. Oh, I was just gonna say yes, I am. I put a little something in the chat. But Jeff is 100%. Right. By circuit by just chance I was invited to attend this meeting. And if I had been on this taskforce listening and trying to figure out what to do, I would have never been able to connect people and do the things that happen. So Steve, thank you so much, Jeff subaqua as well. The first time I met him was on this meeting. Thank you, thank you. This is a big, big win for the task force, just like Jeff said. Thank you.

Joy. You know, we have a lot of elected officials I work with and I put you at the top of the list. I mean, very few are willing to get their hands dirty and get to work. And you certainly did. So thank you.

Thank you. Next up

is Mojave and Laplace counties. For those of you who spent any time out in that area, driving to Vegas driving to quartzite, for the gem mineral show different stuff that goes on it is very rural. One of the more interesting things I learned when I was my first meeting out there a couple years ago with the county commissioners was one of the commissioners had to step away to take a call from FEMA. And I

said, FEMA, and he said, Well, if they ever get the big one in California, this is where everyone's coming. So they go out of space and in La Paz County. This is a great grant, because it hits areas that quite frankly, this is to fund this program. At this level, you see 10 million at the top of the list of top of the presentation, it's important to understand that we call one of the really under the radar carriers here in Arizona, they provide fiber to the good chunk of the cell sites in northern Arizona, based out of Vegas, but more or less operate at a Qinglin 30 year old company, the kickin in \$30 million of their own money to this project. Okay, think about that. From a math perspective. Yeah, they're getting 10 million, but it's \$30 million to do, which is amazing work 2000 square miles of service, 662 miles of fiber optic cable 535 miles of middle mile, specifically, the middle mile network is going to connect places that don't get connected. They listed the northern point is meadview, Arizona, and the southern point is the very southern point of La Paz County. These are really rural areas. And quite frankly, no one was going to be building out there anytime soon, we kind of stepped up to make that happen. Last Mile solution again, fiber, one g IJJA bit minimum expanding the multi g IJJA bit service to houses in this area. These folks will have the same level if not better service than we have in the Phoenix area. And we'll be able to compete for these online jobs will be able to compete for you know, receive health care services and education that you just can't get today. So what it does, it really opens up rural Mojave and Laplace county of the world.

If you look at the slide, the list in Mojave County is extensive. You know, these are small towns that I've driven through probably half of them and I drive all over the place. I think it's important to understand that these are small towns getting fiber. If you look at the the fibers of Golden Valley chloride mute Vu yucca and North Kingman these are these are very, very rural areas. La Paz County, not only every single town that gets the middle mile and let's be honest, there aren't a ton of towns in the past County I think the population is 22,000. Somebody told me if I remember correctly, but Parker, which is a great little town right on the river, the Colorado River. Indian tribes are a great habit. Beautiful Casino. It's just a great area. boughs, McVeigh, Vicksburg so mom went in branded courts at Morgan Ehrenburg are positive and pally these are all connected with one grant, not just middle mile network but last mile network, the fiber to the premise. So what we're doing is we're laying network there'll be there'll be in these communities for the next 30 years. couldn't be more excited about this one also. This is one that quite honestly, we didn't have the initial push from the community, particularly in the pause. Spent a lot of time talking to different carriers. We have another carrier that's providing 10 g IJJA bit service and in Kingman city in Lake Havasu City, Allo, great company we've been working with for a while. They're also providing service in Yuma they're a little tapped out in terms of people and everything else, and they're gonna focus on what they do best. So we were looking for a new carrier, we come stepped up. They are, they have a great financial backer called searchlight capital at a New York. Many of you know, Archie pie from from the FCC, he's a partner over there, they've injected a bunch of money into wheat calm, and we come this is I don't think this is their last build. As big as this is, I think that they're gonna look to expand. So this is the scale of project that really gets me excited, because I mean, it takes care of two counties. And again, it's a public private partnership, in the sense that, yes, the carrier is doing the work receiving the money we operating it, that the county has been involved with the planning and everything else. We've had some some great elected officials involve a county commissioner, Jeanne Bishop, out in Mojave County has been very active in this a lot of this goes through her district, and having a champion in your counties, whether it's Joy Whiting, and Apache County, or Chairman Reyes down in Yuma or Chairman bishop in Mojave County really does help because it gets people active and Dawn. So these are the two that I wanted to talk about. I could certainly talk about any of them in more

detail. But these are two that I think are really transformative. Alright, what are we thinking about next? Many of you have heard about the IJJA. And this is a presentation for another day. The internet bill, excuse me, the internet infrastructure bill, specifically the bead program, the digital equity program, the middle mile program, and the tribal program. And I've talked to many of you about this, the bead program is really going to fit hand in glove with what we're doing here. I think what you're going to fund is that by laying the middle mile network in places and getting it closer to the communities, the B program is very focused on last mile network, I think it's important to understand that that a lot of these federal dollars come with with very, very specific restrictions. So when you talk about the bead program, and I joke with people because this does sound like Monopoly money at times, we're giving you about \$833 million to invest in Arizona. And I couldn't be more happy to do that. We're gonna have to add some staff here at the ACA, I think to help with that. And there are some folks that are very, very knowledgeable in the areas of mapping and federal grants and such and we're gonna we're gonna make some we're gonna make some inquiries, but we're also bringing on Ernest Young EY as a consult. Ey is very, very plugged into this program nationally, they're also working with Texas, Montana, there's several other states. So we sort of have our own little cohort within the states itself, where we can share data and information and, and make sure we get the most out of that.

Just FYI, you might want to just tell people, ey probably doesn't mean anything to many of the folks.

I'm sorry, Ernst and Young. We had a great experience working with KPMG on our middle mile program, we'll continue to work with them on that. We're going to be putting out an RFP here in the next few weeks to hire a neutral network operator to operate the state's assets to help monetize them and help grow them. But But EY focuses really on the IJJA and particularly the bead program. I think that this is something that we've talked about for a long time. Let's go a long way coming. The other the other program that really has kicked off last week it's been it was a busy week is the digital equity program. Our partner Dr. Erin - Carr Jordan, to ASU in the digital equity Institute. Are several folks on this call we're going to be working with with Erin are going to be very aggressive in their outreach to the communities. She has an amazing plan that we're going to put into place. And I'm excited about the opportunity to work with Erin , and come up with a plan for our communities. Let's talk about Apache County. That's a good example we just talked about, I think it's important to understand that in Apache County, you've got folks that have had less than 25. Three, you know, Netflix is buffered, it's just a different way of accessing the internet than you arrive, they're going to provide service at a significantly higher level. In doing that there are going to be needs are going to be opportunities to connect to that network to make the most of this connectivity. And I'm very excited that Erin will be leading this effort. From from a state perspective, we've got a year to get our plan together and get it out there. With a bead program I mentioned earlier, we're also looking at about a year. So a lot of programs will be funded a year from now, if you look at some of these middle mile networks, and some of these programs, there are areas that were not hit, the B program was very specific on last mile. So having these middle mile networks, if you look at you know, Yuma County, for example, we had a grant application for welcomed well was not was not quite able to get across the line. But well certainly could be funded by the bead program. And I could go down the list on that there are a lot of really good, great programs that just you know, when you have 82 applications, you can't fund everybody. With, you know, over \$100 million, we hopefully can't fund everybody. We'll fund out here pretty quick. But in conjunction with that the middle mile grant program, we're talking to several different folks about the best way to do that. Our perspective is we want big, transformative middle mile projects, just like we

went with some big projects here. That's what the Feds want. I've had many discussions with them. They don't just want a to b they want they want big stuff, tribal grants, we meet with our tribes, weekly. In fact, I've got another tribal meeting right after this. And they have access to \$2 billion. So all these come together and fit together around what we just did, by laying this infrastructure. And by laying the backbone infrastructure. i 17 i 19 i 40. Stay tuned for more on that. What we're doing is we're building out a redundant network that touches the folks in these small communities that had no ability to connect before. So I'm very proud of the work that our group has done. I'm proud of the folks that were on our evaluation committee, a couple of them, you know, here, and it's time to get to work, it's time to start putting shovels in the ground and get this thing built. So, Steve, I'll be happy to answer any questions for a few minutes if you'd like.

Sure. So Jeff, just as people have already said, you have just been phenomenal. From the day I met you, I think right after you took this job, that you were committed to bringing more money into this state, and to really get infrastructure developed. And you have just done a phenomenal job, particularly considering that for a long time you were the Lone Ranger. And so even though you have some additional staff, you've just done a phenomenal job. So thank you very much for all of your work. Sherka. You have your hand up. Yeah, Jeff, I just had a quick question. Does these grants also regulate what they're going to be charging the residents after it's built out? Or is it just going to be? Because I mean, I think that some of the issues the residents being able to afford it.

So we put a couple guardrails on that number one, you have to be participating in the ACP program. We thought that that's a minimum. Also, we did ask for what your rate schedule looks like, and particularly what low income plans you have. And that was factored into the selection. So probably the best example and , you know, the, the best program, I think, in the state of Arizona right now is Cox connect to compete in their sister programs, you know, \$10 a month for 100 megabits with a \$30 federal grant. You know, those folks aren't paying for that. And Cox is still able to find a way to make it work in those communities. Couple more grants Cox in Douglas Arizona, actually three, Douglas, Arizona, rural Pima County, and in Wickenburg, Arizona, so the citizens of those three areas are going to have access to great internet. I mean, you know, here in Phoenix, they're top notch provider, and in some cases, without charge. So yeah, that's absolutely something we looked at. There are folks that that are not that we're not as aggressive and I think it hurt them in their scores. But you'll fund that that a lot of the carriers that are involved here, you know, Altice is a good example. It says a very aggressive rate program for these new areas that will help and they're working with these programs all over cable providers. sparklight did an excellent job on theirs. So as we move into the BT program, shrink, I think that this would definitely be of interest. And something that we need to talk about is that we're really going to try to micro target some of these grants, it was very difficult to fund areas within called the urban core that that would qualify under the terms of the money we had, we're going to try to make these a lot smaller next time around, we all know there are neighborhoods that are not adequately serviced in Phoenix and Tucson. And we're really going to need help in funding those working with incumbent providers, maybe new providers to provide service in those areas. I think that I wouldn't call it a checkerboard. But if you definitely look at the maps of city, Phoenix city of Tucson, and you drill down, I don't mean just those two cities, you know, Glendale, and others, there are neighborhoods, and we're going to have to get help on on where to ask and through a series of mini RFPs. Connect those neighborhoods to so a lot of work will be done. And we'll certainly be working with you. I'm sure you've had an opportunity to talk to to Erin on the digital equity side. You know, the work that you've done

with Stan is amazing. And something that I would love to see a lot more of if we can if we can make that happen.

Cool. Cool. Thanks. Also, just a side question to the CoCs. To compete, do you know if they would develop some for the seniors for like telemedicine or that type of rate? Because I know that connect to compete is for you have to have kids in the house. But what are this? What would be out there for the senior citizens? That's not really your answer. But yeah.

I can't speak for Cox, but I know that they were looking at a second program, a sister program. For low income households without kids. I don't remember the name off top of my head. But we can certainly have some of those Cox get back to you if there's no one on the call.

There other questions for Jeff? Questions, comments? Okay, well, thank you, Jeff, you just did a great, great presentation this morning. But again, you've just done phenomenal work here in this state. And as I said, when you came on board, you were committed to bringing money into this state? And you certainly have have done that. So thank you for all your hard work.

Thanks, you know, obviously, couldn't do it alone. Sandeep, who I believe is on the call has been a huge help did a lot of the technical evaluation of the grants, which was important. We've got folks that worked on the committee to score the grants. This is a this is a huge effort for a lot of different people. So I'm just glad I can help. And, you know, again, thank you for everybody in the task force for raising awareness and helping us get this done. began, this is the first step of several and, you know, three years from now, I think we're gonna have a very different state in terms of connectivity. And I think we're going to be on a different level than some of these other states. Our strategy is a little different than some, but I believe that we're going to do really well. So

Thank you, Jeff. So I'm going to do again, a change to the agenda a little bit more. Well, before we do your update. We're going to actually since Erin is on the call. And Jeff has mentioned her several times. Erin Carr Jordan, do you want to kind of give us a little update to?

Erin-Carr Jordan

Sure, although I think Jeff covered most of it. And Cindy certainly alluded to some of the work that's happening with Adin and digital equity Institute is partnering, partnering with ADIN and several of the organizations whose representatives are here and are part of this group. To put together the digital inclusion Week activities. We are meeting tomorrow to talk about what that kickoff day will likely look like and how we can work collectively to amplify the work that all of the people are doing. And to make sure that we're able to increase awareness and subsequent use and address things like ACP. We're also partnering with Common Sense Media. I think I saw Elena's name pop up here, I think I did with Elena and Drew and common sense on an ACP campaign that we'll launch towards the end of this month around digital nav IJJA tours. We have selected our next two dates for the digital nav IJJA tour workshops and we'll be sending those out to this group. So if you are in the Tucson or Flagstaff area and are interested in participating in those, you have an open invitation to do so and we would love to have you so we'll get that information out as soon as possible. And I think Jeff, you know, sort of hit the nail on the head. We will be aggressively reaching out to folks in this group as we move forward with the digital equity needs assessment. And as we begin to meet with community members and leaders of community organizations and leaders from across all sectors. So I look forward to working more deeply

with all of you, and thank you in advance for all the great work that we'll be doing and the impact that will have on the state.

All right. I know do you have anything you want to add?

Elena Lowery

No, I think I think Erin got it, we're going to be launching an ad awareness campaign, and Phoenix is our pilot. And so as part of that, that's, you know, we're working with Erin 's team and the team at the Experience Center. So that they can be our nav IJJA tours as part of this program, because once we put it out there for the world to, to sign up for ACP, they're going to need help walking through it. And it's Erin 's team at the Experience Center that's going to be able to do that. So we're putting a plan together with them. The campaign launches in about 10 days. And so we're working with ad agencies on the materials where we're targeting very specific, mostly low income communities. We overlaid some maps with some of the school districts and some of the areas in South Phoenix Maryvale area, we're we're going to be like I said, target advertising. But I did want to say that it's great that Phoenix is the pilot for this because we hope with the help of Erin and folks, we hope to be able to scale this for other other communities, not just in Arizona, but across the country that could can do a program like this.

Okay. All righty. Anything else for Elena or Erin before we move on? Okay, so backing up again, then, Mala, do you have anything that you want to touch on today?

Mala

Really not too much. I just want to say that our telehealth pilot project is doing a soft launch this week. We this project is being done at arco and Arivaca libraries where the patrons can come in they can schedule an individual video meet with the doctour and and have a nurse practitioner or student nurses available there to help. We've also got backpack kids medical kids that have things like weigh scale, stethoscope, blood pressure cuff, pulse oximeter and stuff like that. So the students, student nurses with a mentor, sorry can help the patrons take their vitals, if that is needed. We're also going to planning on having Nutrition Wellness webinars and trainings. And they can be done in the parking lot with fold or tables and laptops. And or individually in the library. There's going to be a lot of material available, health related material available. And Wi Fi Of course, I'm really excited about the Allo project that is going to get way better Wi Fi than they have currently. But now they do have ERate going at the library and Wi Fi available. The equipment has been purchased tested, the privacy needs have been taken care of library disclaimers have been taken care of with the law with the legal documentation that we would like the patrons to sign before taking part in the program. The logistics most of the I would say most of the logistics has been taken care of not all because that's what the pilot is all about. And that's what the soft launch is all about. We're partnering with Pima County Health Department with the Southwest telehealth resource center that Janet major being a major driving force behind this. And yet Janet, you're on the call today. And outreach that Janet has been doing tirelessly on this. We're planning a big splash on Saturday, the first of October and lots of events being planned around that launch. That's going to happen so other than that I I yield my time back to you and to Mala and if he has any rate updates, okay, well, we'll get Mala in a minute. Holly, do you have anything that you want to add? Oh, I don't think so. Okay, again, Holly, just thank you so much. You're the State Library's just phenomenal the work you guys do. Really appreciate it. Thank you. Okay. Cindy, do you have anything else that you want to talk about?

Yeah, no, I don't not at this point. This is a fabulous meeting. It is so exciting. It's like watering a plant. And now it's it's amazing. Really good. Thank you.

You bet. And thank you, Cindy, for all the work that you do. Not only statewide, but also locally in Pima County and everywhere else, I think. Erin, do you have anything else that you want to add?

I do. Well, yes. Just yeah. Joy. Congratulations. That's it. Okay.

Okay, moving on. Janet, you have anything you want to talk about?

Janet Major

Good morning, everybody. I love that quote from Mala that Janet major is the major driving force. But I gotta tell you, it's all about Mala today, the mala and Janet show. And we've been very fortunate in the many years we've been working on this project that the stars are finally lining up and everything from the Arizona broadband development grants going to the communities that have pilots, how cool is that? But also, the fact is, there's been a lot of groundwork to play to make these things happen. So the telehealth in libraries isn't just an Arizona phenomenon. It's a national phenomenon. And in our state, there are nine pilot sites of the Navajo area, which is awesome. And then the two in southern Arizona and from doing demonstrations using a single phone line to now actually having bandwidth means that people who live in these communities have access to more services, you know, you'd never be able to do tele ophthalmology screening unless you have the bandwidth to send the huge images. So you know more bandwidth means more services. And the technology. Post bandwidth of course means access to telehealth and I'm very excited to be in Nashville this week and give a presentation on telehealth and libraries and networking with other folks to fund out what their libraries are doing and, and help share our resources as well as, of course promote to telehealth the big picture. I also wanted to share that also on Wednesday of this week, I'll be giving my a sneak preview actually of my annual presentation on telemedicine technology. This is something I've been doing for many, many years and we will be doing our 100 and fourth quarterly telemedicine council meeting. This is our legislatours and group members who have been our counsel since our program began 25 years ago and we used to meet in the joint legislative budget committee office and I can't wait till we can get together and and do that again and have lunch just as I can't wait until we do that, again, as at AIC, you know, meet at the state capitol and, and lunch with Mala would be really great. And I look forward to that. So the full ATA Technology Review will be during telehealth week Awareness Week, which is September 18, through 24th. And I'll put that in the chat. It's a great opportunity for all of us to promote telehealth and I'm very excited about having the opportunity to work on outreach and the the week of planning activities for digital inclusion week and with ndia. And with all the great folks that we've been networking with in the Arizona Digital Inclusion network. So thank you very much and I'd be happy to pump some stuff into chat.

Steve

I just want to remind people if you have any announcements, you know events coming up or whatever that you want to have included in the in my follow up to the meeting. Please put it in the chat make it easy for me so I can copy it and paste it and have the links would be really helpful. If you want to include even a brief description. Sometimes I have to go back and do some research to put a little more of a description on in in the email so we make it easier for me if you can provide me that information. Okay,

any questions or comments for Janet? If not moving on. Sophie, are you on? I am anything you want to before we get to my women. Kelly?

Milan, Kelly ADOE

Nope. Milan and Kelly can give updates if they have any.

Okay. Milan you still there? Oh, yes. Okay, so we're glad to see you again. Haven't seen you in a while. What do you got to tell us.

Thanks, Dave. Glad I can be here Milan with the Department of Education, just give you a quick ERate update. To date, the USAC group has done a much better job than typical. We've received statewide \$49 million worth of funding. Normally, they're way behind, we're typically looking for about 100 million a year. And usually this time of year, we're only about 25 million. So they're at a pace double their normal rate. So they're doing a good job this year. So we're at 49 million this year. Last year, we did about \$100 million. So we're doing well. The year before we were at 112 million. Our broadband programs are going well, we wrapped up the the Grand Canyon broadband build, which was \$6 million build. So the broadband school, the Grand Canyon school district now has broadband. So they're very, very pleased. We have the final mile projects with the Arizona Rural Schools Association. We have nine of those that are funded, two of them are complete. The other seven are in process in various stages. I just had to cancel our weekly project meetings for tomorrow, for several of them because of the triad, the company working on, I think four or five of the projects. They had a mini tornado take out a grain elevatour yesterday or day before he sent me pictures and it wiped out their antenna, which was set up next door to the grain elevatour. So they're scrambling to reinstall two new antennas in towers this week. So you need to cancel the final model project that makes for tomorrow. But those projects are on track.

Before you move on, from final mile, two things. One is that you just might want to remind people, if I'm not mistaken that all the funding for that project has come from the Department of Ed.

Yes, so far all that funding is we had \$1.5 million to do a proof of concept for that project, to show that we can expand broadband to homes and provide 100 meg connectivity and educational content for \$10 a month. So far all 1.5 million has come from with Department of Education. I've looked to the governor's office into the Department of Education for additional funding to expand that program to more rural homes. And we're waiting to see if any more funding comes through.

So that's one thing that we might want to look at, and also at ATIC is to do some advocacy. with you guys. I'm getting additional funding from the state for some of these projects.

That's been hugely successful, Steve. And the funny thing is that \$10 A month for the educational broadband, most people are opting for full bone broadband service. So they can do things other than just educational content. They want to watch Netflix at night. It's funny that once you provide internet connectivity, those rural areas, they're taking full advantage of it and wanting more than just educational content. So they're opting to, you know, pay the 30 to \$50 a month for full content availability instead of just the \$10 a month for educational content. So it's, I think, although we've done we have maybe just three or four they're doing that everyone else is doing the full commercial level access.

Okay, anything else Milan? Well, that's really that's really it, covered broadband E Rate and the final mile project.

Any any questions for Milan? Today, if not, Kelly, want to give us a quick update. Yes. Hi, good morning. My name is Kelly. I'm from the Office of Digital Teaching and Learning at the Department of Education. Good morning to everyone. Exciting news all around this morning. Hopefully I can continue with a little bit of that. So I have been speaking about two things recently in this meeting. And one of them is the cybersecurity the cyber resources grant from the Arizona Department of Homeland Security. And we did fund out last week that that grant the money and the funding was approved from the legislature which means all of the schools who applied for cyber resource grants have been approved. So we did notify them last week and now we are working with Department of Homeland Security to prioritize prioritize them so that they can start implementing those resources to those schools who have applied and that grant remains open. It is a rolling application and there is additional funding So more schools can apply and be approved for that moving forward. So I share that with this group intentionally as you work with schools. And this also does apply to, I believe, libraries, colleges as well. So this is open, and I will put the link into the chat so that it can be shared. And I did want to update everyone on that. Additionally, I want to provide one last update on the Cooperative State purchasing program. That is a program that is already in existence with the Department of Administration in Arizona. And, you know, the goal of this is to maximize the economies of scale. And we have an interest form right now that we are pushing out to schools to fund out who would be interested in participating in this and a lot of schools already do. And then the new branch of this includes the services for devices. So it's not just purchasing devices, the laptops, the computers, is the services that go with them. So there will be negotiating of new contracts for that. And so we know, you know, devices are expensive, but so are the services that come with them to maintain them, and to have the skills to be able to use them in the training. So we are trying to push this form out to get information from K 12. Because their needs are unique. And we want to know what it is that they need so that we can work with the state to negotiate those contracts. So I'll put all of those links into the chat. And those are my updates this morning.

Great. Thanks, Kelly. Again, you guys are doing great stuff to really appreciate it. Any questions for Kelly? going once going twice. Derek, I didn't see you or gave either of you online this morning.

Gabriel Lopez. Sun Corridor Network

Hi, Steve. Good morning, everyone. This is Gabriel Lopez. Sun Corridor Network. I'm sorry, no real update here. Just wanted to say, you know, obviously a congratulate big congratulations. And thank you to everyone for their advocacy and hard work to make this all happen. This is a bunch of really good news this morning. So thank you.

Okay, moving on. I don't think Wes you're online. But Rory, I don't know if I saw you this morning either. But Milan has already kind of give us an update on final mile. Rory, are you here? Because he's dealing with crisis at the moment. So that's all I have for today.

Steve

We will not be meeting next week, we will meet the following week. If there's anybody who would like to do a presentation for that next meeting, please let me know ASAP so that we can get that scheduled. I will try to do my usual overview. When I send out the meeting notice, however, I am on vacation, so I'm not going to spend as much time as I usually do. But besides that, anything else that anybody wants to share any announcements that people need to know about? going once going twice. So again, we will kibbutz if anybody wants to stay online. And kibitz, ask questions, share information or whatever. We'll

be online for a little bit and there's nobody there, then we'll end for sure. So with that, I'm going to stop sharing, and I'm going to stop the recording. And we'll see you all in a couple of weeks. Okay. Bye, everybody. So where are you on vacation? Steve? I am writing this week. I'm in Minnesota. I'm on a lake in Minnesota. It is a pardon. I'm not a fisherman. And actually, my wife and I are the only ones who are here today for the rest of the week. So we're probably not going to fish. But we'll probably be doing some swimming and sitting by the lake and enjoying the nice weather. So what's your weather there? You were you started to say it was 75 when we started this meeting, so it's somewhere around 75 degrees. Nice. Yeah. But it got hot yesterday. It got hot the last couple of days and got very humid. So anyway.

Joy Whiting

Steve, this is Joy Whiting Can you hear me? Sure can.

I just wanted to tell you personally, thank you so much. I the first time I ever showed up on this taskforce meeting. It was by invitation of Wes Brownfield. And I was embarrassed and humbled because I knew nothing about the broadband world. And you were the first person to let me just stay online before kibitzing and just ask you a bunch of questions and I was just imagining in your head thinking Come on, do I this is broadband 101 But you were so patient and so willing to help and it has and because of the connections that I have been able to meet on this task force your information and help, it has just been really, really great to finally see fruition of all the work. And I want you to personally know how much I appreciate you and everything you've done to organize this task force and help so much with everything.

Oh, thank you. I appreciate that. I always appreciate a recognition now and then. Okay, well Joy. You know, again, I think people have already said it. You've done phenomenal work for somebody who didn't know anything about broadband. But you did what you what was most important, which is bringing the community together and getting folks who didn't know broadband to come together, get a plan, get some funding and so forth. So congratulations to you.

Thank you so much. Again, there was a lot of players involved. Like Jeff said, SRP has been huge, so we really appreciate everything.

Okay. I'm gonna stop recording