



ACP Next Steps: A Pathway to Affordable Broadband and Greater Digital Equity

Monday, April 29, 2024

Opening Remarks



Michelle Hamiel

Chief of Programs

Urban Libraries Council

Presentation



Michelle Simon

Director of Digital Inclusion

Pima County Office of Digital Inclusion



PIMA COUNTY
Office of Digital Inclusion

Michelle Simon
Director, Office of Digital Inclusion

connect  pima

Digital Inclusion & Infrastructure Action Plan

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) represents a significant investment in our country's infrastructure and ability to compete. The law covers five priority areas:

1. Rebuilding roads, bridges, and rails.
2. Clean water for all.
3. Closing the digital divide.
4. Climate resilience and environmental justice.
5. Job creation and economic growth.

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW



Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program
Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program
Digital Equity Act

CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



Pima County Public Library (PCPL) established the Connect Pima taskforce (August 2021) to address digital inequities in the community

PCPL and Pima County IT, as leads for the taskforce, created a united vision for digital equity and inclusion by partnering with City of Tucson and Towns of Marana, Oro Valley, and Sahuarita

County departments, local municipalities, Internet Service Providers, and community-based organizations participated in the creation of the Connect Pima strategic plan

WHAT IS CONNECT PIMA?



Connect Pima's mission *is to ensure that everyone in Pima County has affordable, reliable high-speed internet and the tools they need to successfully participate in our society and economy.*

Connect Pima uses a three-pronged approach to improve digital inclusion by guiding:

- ❑ The development of broadband infrastructure,
- ❑ The implementation of digital skill-building initiatives, and
- ❑ Increased access to devices and tools for connectivity throughout Pima County.

WHAT IS CONNECT PIMA?



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).*

This includes six elements:

1. Affordable, robust broadband internet service.
2. Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user.
3. Access to digital skill-building training.
4. Quality technical support.
5. Measures to ensure online privacy & cybersecurity.
6. Applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.

WHAT IS DIGITAL INCLUSION?



Data from The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) shows large swaths of Pima County and metro-Tucson with **broadband rates below** the Federal Communications Commission minimum standard.

According to a June 2021 report:

- 85% of Pima County households had broadband of some type.
- 12% had no internet access.
- 8% had no computer, smartphone or tablet.

Connect Pima: [Household Poverty and Internet Access by Block Group](#)

ACCESS IN PIMA COUNTY

Closing the Digital Divide: Expanding infrastructure in Pima County

The U.S. Commerce Department announced June 16, 2023, that Pima County will receive a \$30.3 million grant to expand high-speed internet infrastructure and increase internet access for residents in unserved or underserved areas.

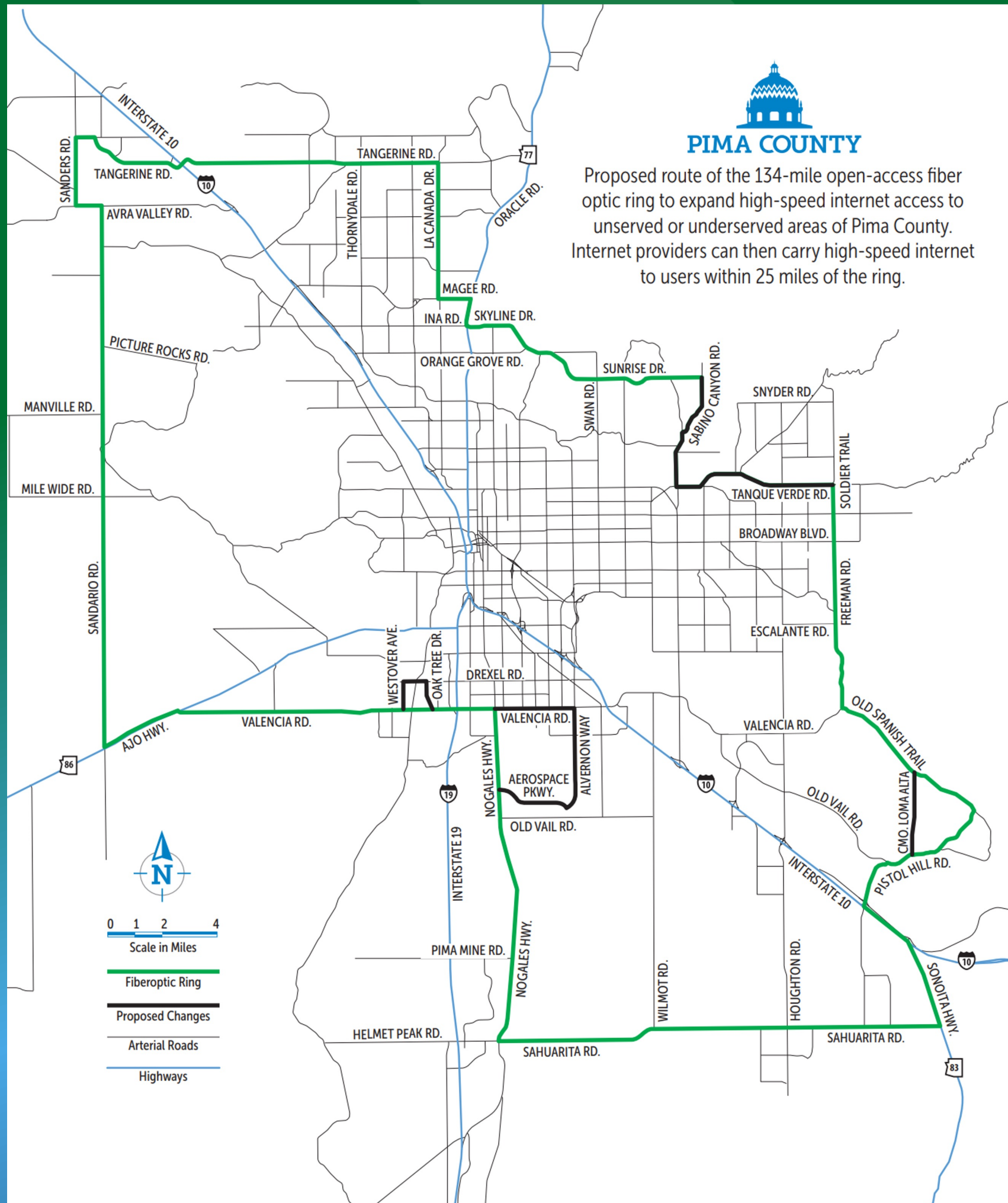
The five-year grant from the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) will fund the creation of a 134-mile open access fiber ring around the urban core of the county.

The grant requires the County and partners to contribute nearly \$13 million in local funds or in-kind contributions, bringing the total budget for the project to more than \$43 million.

ENABLING MIDDLE MILE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT AWARD



Proposed route of the 134-mile open-access fiber optic ring to expand high-speed internet access to unserved or underserved areas of Pima County. Internet providers can then carry high-speed internet to users within 25 miles of the ring.

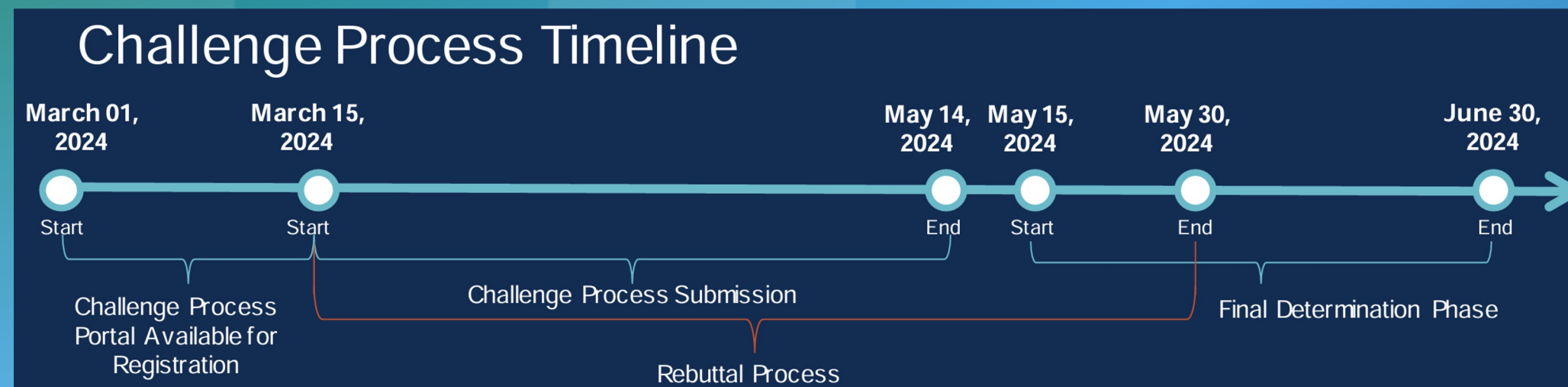


134-MILE FIBER RING

BEAD provides \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure, and adoption programs throughout the nation. Arizona received \$993.1M to implement their 5-year plan.

Arizona's plan includes:

- Confirming FCC data and map accuracy
- Identifying unserved and underserved areas for investment
- Technical support, monitoring, and mitigation activities



BROADBAND, EQUITY, ACCESS, AND DEPLOYMENT PROGRAM (BEAD)

Every state submitted BEAD 5-yr action plans and initial proposals

Plans must be approved by NTIA before a state can receive funding

Money allocated to states for building out fiber to the home (FTTH) in unserved and underserved areas

States are moving into their challenge processes now

Libraries, as community anchor institutions, can submit challenges regarding internet speeds

BROADBAND, EQUITY, ACCESS, AND DEPLOYMENT PROGRAM (BEAD)



Digital Equity Act Programs include:

- State Digital Equity Planning Grant (\$60M)
 - Monies for states, territories, and tribal governments to create a digital equity plan
 - Arizona's plan has been approved
- Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program
 - \$1.44 billion formula grant program for states, territories, and tribal governments (Applications due by May 28, 2024)
 - Arizona will receive more than \$16M to implement their digital equity plan
 - Funding will go towards implementation, subgrants, evaluation, and administrative costs
- Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program
 - \$1.25 billion grant program
 - Funds annual grant programs for five years to implement digital equity projects

DIGITAL EQUITY ACT

Improving Digital Equity in the Community

The success of digital equity and inclusion efforts depends on our ability to work together for the benefit of everyone.

Libraries can drive these efforts by:

- Convening groups (Advocacy, Partnerships) - local governments, community-based organizations, for-profit companies, utility companies, and internet service providers – to discuss and create digital equity and inclusion goals for the community.
- Identifying current assets (Service Innovation) – facilities, funding, infrastructure, training – to leverage in the pursuit of digital inclusion goals.
- Aligning digital equity and inclusion efforts (Data Collection/Research) to local, state, and national plans for workforce and economic development, prosperity and financial sustainability, and digital equity and broadband development.

NEXT STEPS



Presentation



Felton Thomas, Jr.
Executive Director
Cleveland Public Library

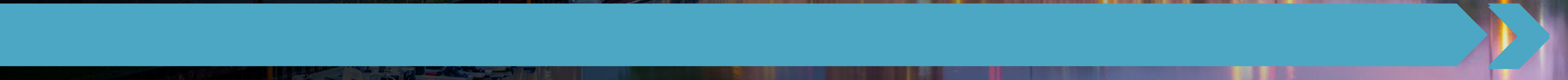


Joshua Edmonds
Chief Executive Officer
DigitalC

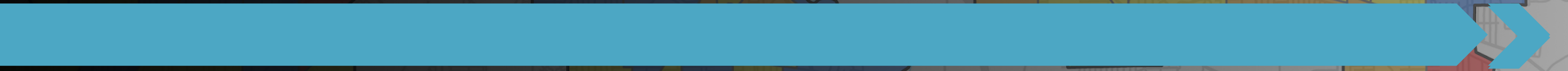
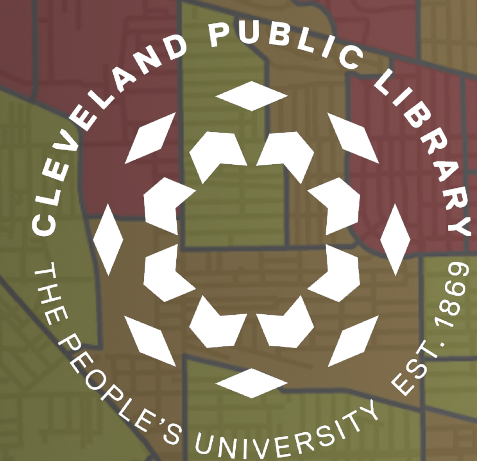


CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY X DIGITALC

PARTNERING TO CREATE A DIGITALLY EQUITABLE FUTURE >>



THE DIGITAL LAY OF "THE LAND" >>



“WORST-TO-FIRST”

DigitalC’s vision is to change the world one connection at a time by offering superior internet, accessible community space, and tailored digital skills training to ensure an equitable digital future.



BUILDING A NEXT-GENERATION COMMUNITY-BASED NETWORK

- Fiber-like speeds of **100/100 Mbps**
- Lightning-fast connectivity that's **accessible and affordable**
- Boasts high capacity, bypasses tree canopies, and offers flexibility for **rapid deployment**
- Scalable to adapt to the city's evolving needs, all while requiring **minimal maintenance**
- Offering **tailored digital skilling trainings** to residents
- This is the future of connectivity, and it's happening right here in **Cleveland**
- **Built by Cleveland, for Cleveland.**

THE LIBRARY'S ROLE IN CONNECTING CLEVELAND

- Provides **resources** such as computer labs, hotspot distribution, and space for training
- Provides **space** for community meetings
- Provides **leadership** on the DigitalC Board of Directors
- The value of the **library card**



BOLD ALLY IN SUPPORT OF DIGITALC / COMMUNITY-BASED NETWORKS

- Provided a Letter of Support to the Cleveland City Council
- With a focus on serving those who need it most, the partnership helped to diffuse objections created by lobbyists in opposition to DigitalC deploying a community-based network to compete in the market.



CONNECTED >>

CLEVELANDERS TO THE SUPERIOR INTERNET THEY DESERVE!





Q&A

Enter your questions into the chat box now.



THANK YOU!

mhamiel@urbanlibraries.org