CITY OF
LONG BEACH

June 2021

DIGITAL INCLUSION Roadmap

Digital Inclusion Community Event

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Long Beach Public Library
Long Beach Senior Arts Colony
United Cambodian Community (UCC)
YMCA of Greater Long Beach (Community Development)

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Office of State Senator Lena Gonzalez
Pacific Gateway
Southeast Community Development Corporation
United Cambodian Community (UCC)
Verizon
YMCA of Greater Long Beach (Community Development)

Pueblo Planning
Digital Inclusion Roadmap Development and Graphic Design

PUEBLO

"On some occasions I have to pick and choose one of my kids. Which is not providing education for them. I literally have to say from 45 minutes to an hour it is going to be one of the boys' turn.... because it [Internet] is not a sufficient connection because it will break down or reboot the whole situation.... We are paying for a service and that service is not being delivered as usual."

Ms. Gomes, Long Beach Community Member

INTRODUCTION

One of our largest tasks as a society, now immersed in technology as an essential part of life, is to examine the technology impacts in every facet of life. The digital divide, a partition between those Long Beach community members who have access to technology and the Internet and those who do not, deeply impacts an individual's ability to equitably participate in society, democracy and economy. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified the essential roles technology and the Internet play in our lives and the detrimental impacts it has when parts of our communities cannot fully access and use them.

The City of Long Beach (City) has created a Digital Inclusion Roadmap (Roadmap) with community members and local cross-sector partners. Under the facilitation of McCormick L.A., the cross-sector partners engaged in a robust strategic planning process to develop a vision statement, goals, objectives and strategies to ensure that everyone in Long Beach has equitable access and use of the Internet, technology devices and computer literacy training. Centering this strategic planning process through an equity lens and utilizing a Collective Impact Approach, the Roadmap reflects a wide breadth of collaborative thought and community member needs. The City, in partnership with Pueblo Planning, engaged with four local community partners including Centro CHA, Long Beach Forward, United Cambodian Community and Community Development YMCA of Greater Long Beach and more than 170 community members in community-friendly settings to deeply understand the challenges, barriers, needs and vision they have regarding how to address the digital divide. From these community conversations, those who experience digital inequities need technology and the Internet to connect with those they love and to participate in basic day-to-day life activities such as pursuing education, applying for a job or seeking social and healthcare services. The most common barriers faced for community members in Long Beach is the affordability and quality of Broadband Internet services provided by the major Internet service providers (ISPs), English language fluency and literacy and utilizing public sources of reliable Internet and electricity outlets.

There are a myriad of community-shared strategies that would help advance digital inclusion and create more equitable access and usage. Many community members uplifted strategies that prioritize free high-quality, reliable Internet services, free computers, free public Wi-Fi that is accessible in varying public places such as transit spots and parks and one-on-one community literacy tutoring at trusted community-friendly spaces.

The City continues a path of creating a community where no one is left behind due to lack of access and usage to the Internet and technology. Ensuring digital equity for all communities in Long Beach enhances the individual lives of Long Beach community members and uplifts the entire City. The City can continue to build upon strong digital inclusion efforts to center the voices of community members and reduce the digital divide.

DIGITAL INCLUSION INITIATIVE

OVERVIEW

The City's Digital Inclusion Initiative (Initiative), strives to ensure that everyone has equitable access or use of digital inclusion resources and services regardless of background, neighborhood or identity.

VISION

Every individual in Long Beach, regardless of background, neighborhood or identity has high quality, accessible, technology resources and services to be civically engaged and socially and economically empowered.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

The City's Initiative focuses on the entire spectrum of digital inclusion. The key focus areas include capacity, connectivity and technology.

Capacity

- Leadership and capacity building
- Multilingual computer literacy training and support
- Technology jobs and internship opportunities
- Job preparedness and computer literacy skills development

Connectivity

- High-speed, quality in-home Internet services and support
- Quality cell phone data plans
- Citywide fiber network infrastructure
- City-provided public Wi-Fi

Technology

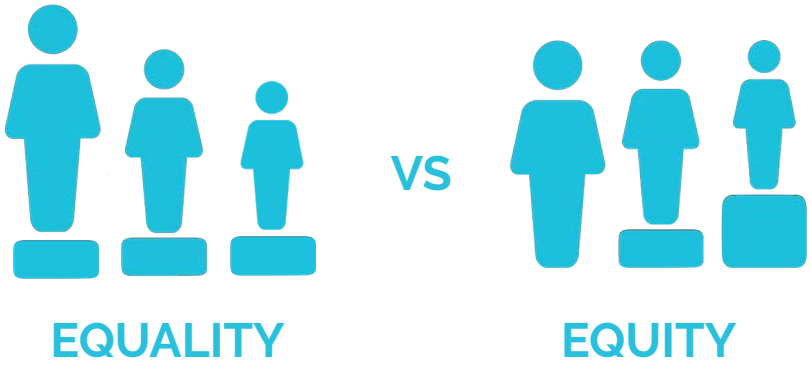
- Quality, Internet-enabled computers and support
- Free City-provided community computer labs and support

DIGITAL DIVIDE

The gap between communities that have equitable access and use of computer literacy training, the Internet and computers and those who don't.

DIGITAL EQUITY

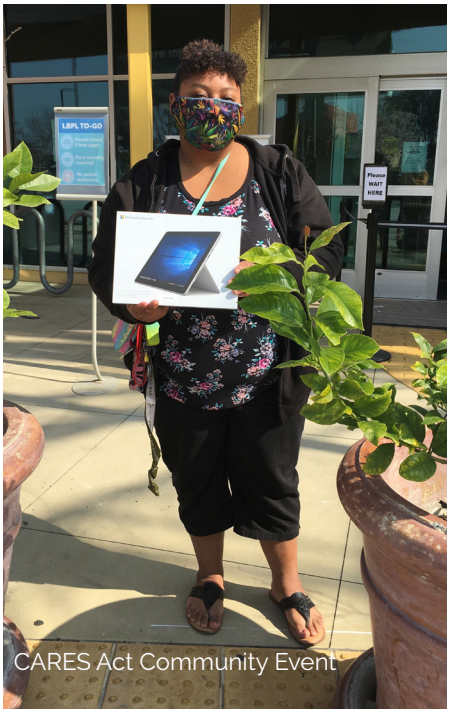
Digital equity is when everyone has access and use of computer literacy training, the Internet and technology devices to be successful in society, democracy and the economy regardless of their background, neighborhood or identity.



DIGITAL INCLUSION

Digital inclusion means proactively ensuring everyone has access and use of computer literacy training, the Internet, technology devices and other digital inclusion resources and services.[1]

CARES Act Community Event



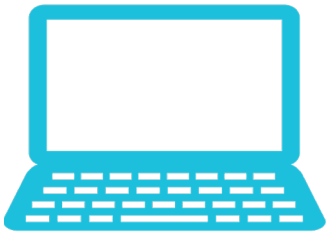
CARES Act Community Event

WHAT COMMUNITIES ARE AFFECTED BY THE DIGITAL DIVIDE?[2]

Even though most people in Long Beach have access to computers and Internet subscriptions, some communities do not have access.

INTERNET ACCESS CITYWIDE

8.2% of Long Beach households are without an Internet subscription.



COMPUTER ACCESS CITYWIDE

5.3% of Long Beach households are without computer access.

COMPUTER ACCESS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

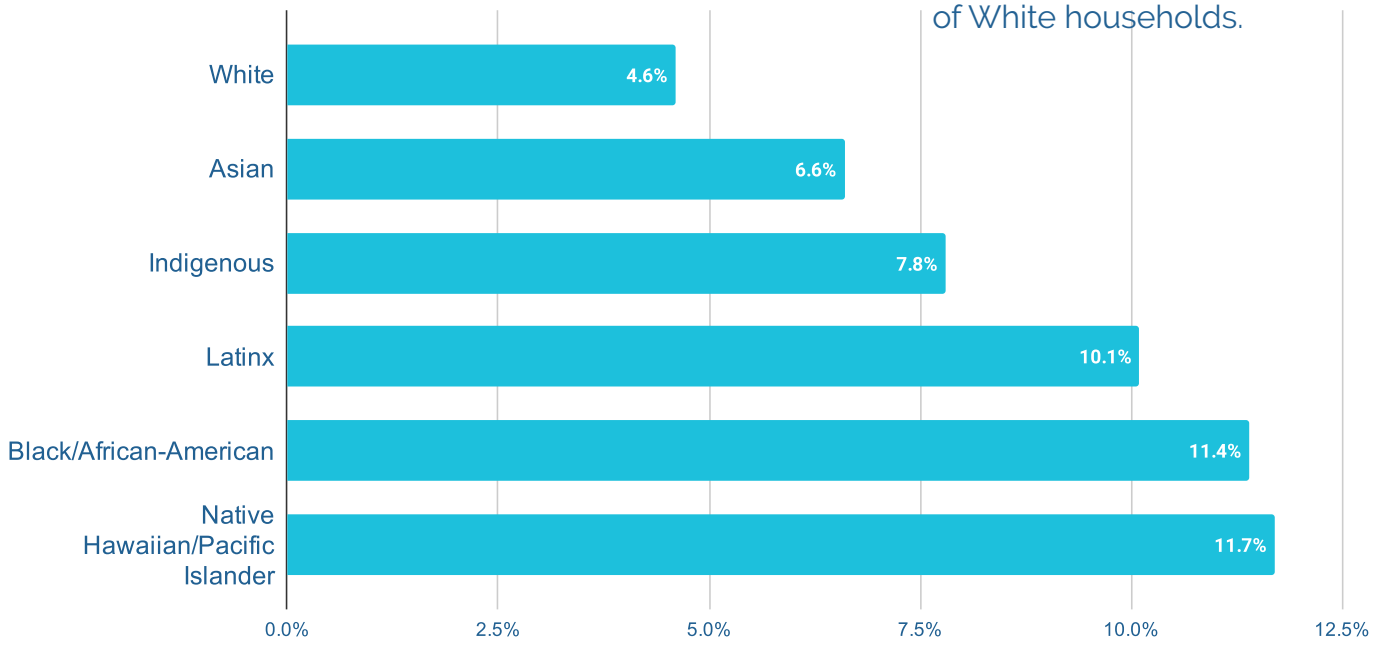
8.0% of **Black/African-American households** in Long Beach are without computer access. Twice the rate of White households at **3.6%.**

COMPUTER ACCESS BY AGE

Older adults (65 years and older) in Long Beach are without computer access at higher rates at **15.3%.**

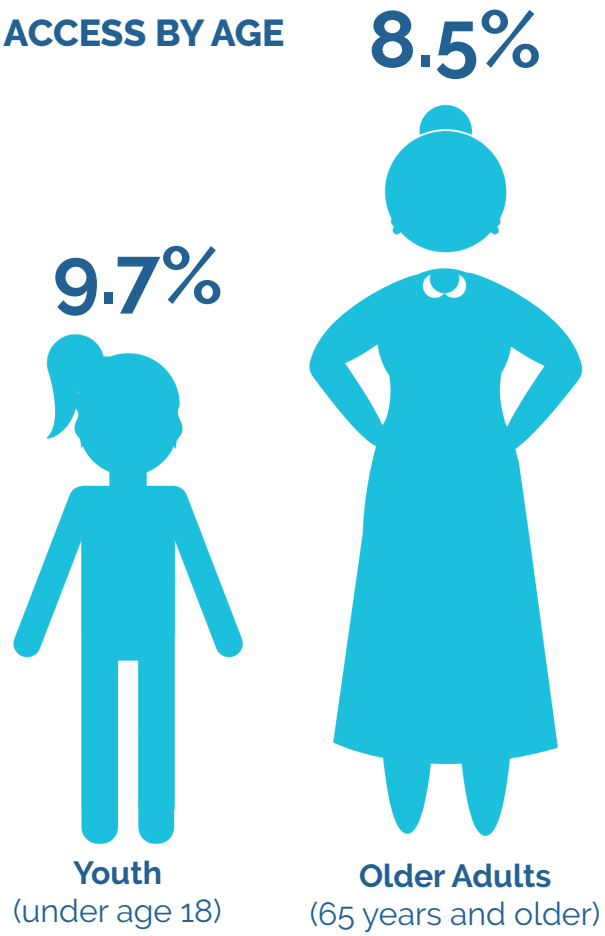
INTERNET ACCESS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Households of color in Long Beach are without an Internet subscription at twice the rate of White households.



INTERNET ACCESS BY AGE

Older adults and youth in Long Beach are without an Internet subscription at higher rates.



Lilia Ocampo, Community Member Interviewed

DIGITAL REDLINING AND ROOT CAUSES

According to the University of Southern California (USC) Annenberg's report on "Trends in Broadband Competition in Los Angeles County 2015-2016," in 2016, 99.5% of Long Beach residents had access to a Broadband Internet service provider (ISP) which means about 2,200 of Long Beach residents are not served by an ISP. In 2016, 85% of Long Beach residents were served by at least two Broadband ISPs, which indicates approximately 30,000 more Long Beach residents lived in a monopoly Broadband area in 2016 compared to just one year prior. As indicated in the City's Analysis and Recommendations for Advancing Digital Inclusion in Long Beach Report,

"This trend is troubling, generally, given that competition typically suggests better quality of service and lower pricing. Even more concerning, however, is that the communities that lost at least one Broadband provider between 2015 and 2016 are predominantly African American and tend to experience high rates of poverty. Without competition, these communities are vulnerable to being forced to pay higher prices for Broadband access, while receiving poorer quality service."

Low-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color do not have equal access to Broadband and upgrade services. This intentional practice of non-deployment of Broadband infrastructure is known as digital redlining. Digital redlining is an important institutional root cause to address because it is an underlying factor of the digital divide. The City is continuing to address institutional and systemic barriers as it implements digital inclusion efforts. For example, the City is expanding its fiber municipal network through the development and implementation of the Citywide Fiber Network Infrastructure Plan. This public-private partnership of increasing fiber will improve wired/wireless connectivity, advance City business and operational needs, enhance public safety needs and digital inclusion efforts.

In December 2020, California State Senator Lena A. Gonzalez (D-Long Beach) introduced Senate Bill 4, the Broadband for All Act. If enacted, this legislation would deploy high quality Broadband infrastructure to bring high-speed Internet service to underserved areas throughout the State.

APPROACH TO ADVANCING DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

COLLECTIVE IMPACT APPROACH

A Collective Impact Approach brings together the community and cross-sector partners in a structured format to solve a complex problem such as a digital divide and achieve social change for instance advancing digital equity and inclusion. It starts with a common agenda. The community and cross-sector partners convene together to collectively define the problem and create a shared vision to solve it. The collaboration establishes shared measurement and ensures the development of measurable objectives and performance indicators that are tracked through continuous improvement. It also fosters mutually reinforcing activities and coordinates collective programming and systems change efforts to maximize results. It encourages continuous communication and builds trust and relationships among all participants. It is important to have staff dedicated to orchestrating the workings of the collaboration as a strong backbone.[3]

Five Conditions of Collective Impact

Common Agenda

- Common understanding of the problem
- Shared vision for change

Shared Measurement

- Collecting data and measuring results
- Focus on performance management
- Shared accountability

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

- Differentiated approaches
- Coordination through joint plan of action

Continuous Communication

- Consistent and open communication
- Focus on building trust

Backbone Support

- Seperate organization(s) with staff
- Resources and skills to convene and coordinate participating organizations

PRINCIPLES OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- Design and implement the initiative with a priority placed on equity
- Include community members in the collaborative
- Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners
- Use data to continuously learn, adapt and improve
- Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills
- Focus on program and system strategies
- Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust and respect across participants
- Customize for local context

EQUITY LENS

An equity lens means that the City is thoughtful and inclusive in all decisions including programs, policies, practices, systems and budgets. An equity lens was and will continue to be integrated into the planning, development, implementation, evaluation and governance of the Roadmap. Examples of how an equity lens was incorporated into the Roadmap are listed below:

Addressing the systemic and institutional barriers that are creating the digital inequities.

Including community members most affected by the digital divide in the governance, planning, development and implementation of the Roadmap.

Disaggregating data by subpopulations/characteristics to identify communities and/or neighborhoods with the greatest digital inequities.

Conducting a root cause analysis to understand what historical and current factors, institutional and systemic barriers are influencing the digital inequities.

Identifying data gaps and obtaining better data through the community's lived experiences and expertise.

Uplifting communities who are historically underserved, marginalized and most affected by the digital divide.

Incorporating an equitable and inclusive community outreach and engagement process that draws upon the assets, knowledge and lived experiences of communities.

Developing and implementing strategies that prioritize communities and/or neighborhoods most in need.

Developing and implementing strategies that focus on programmatic, process, systems and policy change.

DIGITAL INCLUSION ROADMAP DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The Roadmap is a blueprint for ensuring that everyone in Long Beach has equitable access and use of computer literacy training, the Internet, technology devices and other digital inclusion resources and services. The foundation of the Roadmap includes a vision statement, goals, objectives and strategies. Two major components of the Roadmap development included stakeholder and community engagement.

DIGITAL INCLUSION STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

City staff and McCormick L.A. (consultant) convened a 50-person multidisciplinary Digital Inclusion Stakeholder Committee (Committee) from August 2019 through October 2020 who consulted the development of the Roadmap. The Committee provided strategic guidance, vision and oversight on the development of the vision, goals, objectives and strategies that will advance digital equity and inclusion for all in Long Beach. The Committee included cross-sector partners that reflected the entire spectrum of digital inclusion. These cross-sector partners included:

- City departments
- Community-based organizations
- Community members
- Digital inclusion non-profits
- Funders
- Higher education institutions
- Internet service providers (ISPs)
- K-12 education institutions
- Long Beach Housing Authority
- Long Beach Public Library
- Private technology companies
- Workforce development organizations

DIGITAL INCLUSION STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific roles and responsibilities for the Committee included:

- Providing strategic guidance, vision and oversight on the development of the Roadmap
- Developing a vision, goals, objectives, performance indicators and strategies that are data-driven, equity-centered and focused on inclusion
- Identifying digital inclusion strategies once the Roadmap has been developed that one's organization can implement and/or support during the implementation phase
- Providing support with promoting the Initiative and raising awareness regarding citywide digital inclusion efforts
- Serving as a champion of the Roadmap in one's organization or community
- Attendance at the five Committee meetings
- Reviewing materials prior to the meetings and coming prepared to engage in dialogue and practice active listening
- Sending an alternate from one's organization if the representative is not able to attend the Committee meetings

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Developed a Common Agenda

(August 2019)
The Committee co-created a draft vision statement and draft goals in each working group (capacity, connectivity and technology). The Committee established a common understanding of the digital divide and a shared common agenda for digital equity.

Engaged in Asset Mapping

(October 2019)
The Committee refined the draft vision statement and goals. The Committee engaged in asset mapping and identified current assets, initiatives, programs, projects, resources, services and tools for the Roadmap.

Stakeholder Committee Meeting

Developed a Shared Measurement System
(November 2019)
The Committee co-created SMART objectives (e.g. specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) for each goal. The objectives will be used as a baseline to collect data and measure results.

Refined Draft Strategies
(March 2020)
City staff prepared strategies that focused on programmatic, process, systems and policy change. The Committee refined the draft objectives and strategies for the Roadmap.

Review Community Input and Assess Draft Strategies
(October 2020)
The Committee participated in an interactive virtual Digital Inclusion Stakeholder Workshop (Stakeholder Workshop) for the Committee. The Stakeholder Workshop took place after all the community engagement activities for the Roadmap had been completed. During the Stakeholder Workshop, the cross-sector partners had an opportunity to review the community input, feedback and strategies prioritized by community members for the Roadmap. It was crucial to assess how the COVID-19 pandemic would impact future digital inclusion efforts as part of the Stakeholder Workshop agenda items. During the Stakeholder Workshop, the cross-sector partners used an online collaborative tool to have a dialogue and respond to the following questions:

- How can the community's prioritized strategies be successfully implemented? Think about the specifics (e.g. resources, funding, personnel, partnerships) needed for implementation.
- What specific challenges and barriers do we need to anticipate with implementing the strategies? How can we best address the challenges and barriers?
- What other strategies should be prioritized that haven't been identified by the community or stakeholders?
- Should any strategies be modified because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS BEST PRACTICES

- Hired a third-party neutral facilitator to help guide the Roadmap development process
- Provided roles, responsibilities, expectations and time commitment upfront to

Stakeholder Committee Meeting

cross-sector partners
- Reviewed roles, responsibilities, expectations and time commitment during the first Committee meeting
- Established meeting agreements and reviewed them each Committee meeting as a reminder
- Clarified digital inclusion shared language and definitions
- Prepared meeting agendas that were sent out before each Committee meeting
- Defined and established clear meeting goals/ deliverables
- Set-up meeting room in a collaborative format (e.g. rectangle boardroom) to foster power-sharing
- Incorporated an asset-based approach that uplifts current digital inclusion efforts by cross-sector partners
- Provided complimentary food and beverages for cross-sector partners and community ambassadors (before the pandemic)
- Used collaborative tools for brainstorming (e.g. flipchart paper, sticky notes, markers)
- Shared meeting notes and next steps in a follow-up emails

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

City staff contracted with Pueblo Planning (Consultant) to develop and implement community engagement activities for the Roadmap. To engage community members who are most impacted by the digital divide in Long Beach, collaborating with local trusted community partners was imperative.

Community Engagement Audience

Through initial analysis of the digital divide in Long Beach, the following communities below were identified as being most impacted by limited or no access and use of the Internet and computers. These communities were prioritized during the community engagement activities for the Roadmap.

- Asian/Pacific Islander community
- Black/African-American community
- Latinx community
- LGBTQ+ community
- Older adult community
- People with different abilities community
- Small business owners of color community
- Youth (under the age of 18) community

Stakeholder Committee Meeting

Spectrum of Community Engagement

For the community engagement process, City staff and the Consultant used the Spectrum of Community Engagement (Spectrum).[4] They strived to implement the community engagement activities on the collaborative or empowerment side of the Spectrum. The goal of "collaborate" on the Spectrum is to partner with community members in each aspect of the decision-making process and the promise to community members is to "look to them for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible." The goal of "empower" on the Spectrum is to "to place final decision making in the hands of community members" and the promise to the community is to "implement what they decide." It was imperative during the community engagement process to co-create digital inclusion strategies with community members.

Community Engagement Approach

As designed by the Consultant, the community engagement approach intentionally uplifted community members as experts in digital inclusion through power-sharing. The community engagement approach acknowledged that historically and currently marginalized communities are typically left out of government decision-making processes because of institutional and systemic racism and oppression. The community engagement approach met community members in Long Beach where they are while using art-making and storytelling as a way for community members to share their lived experiences, knowledge and vision for what kind of community they want to live in and one that would best serve their needs.

Local Trusted Community Partners

To ensure an equitable, inclusive and culturally competent community engagement process, City staff and the Consultant partnered with four local community partners who have trust, credibility and existing relationships with the community engagement audience. The community partners provided ongoing technical assistance during all phases of the community engagement process and they were compensated for

Spectrum of Community Engagement

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balance and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decisions including hte development of alternative and identification of the preferred solutions.	To place final decision-making in the hands of public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input informed and influenced decisions.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input informed and informed and influenced decisions.	We will co-create and co-produce solutions with you. You will be a true partner in making and implementing decisions for your community. Your advice and recommendations will be incorporated.	We will support your decisions and work to implement solutions. Yo are part of the solutions

their efforts. These community partners included:

- **Centro CHA:** Increase the quality source of programs and services that are dedicated to improving the social and economic development of low-income youth and families in Long Beach.
- **Long Beach Forward:** Create a healthy Long Beach with low-income communities of color by building community knowledge, leadership, and power.
- **United Cambodian Community:** Elevate the Cambodian community through local engagement and leadership that embodies Cambodian cultural values.
- **YMCA of Greater Long Beach Community Development:** Support the YMCA of Greater Long Beach Mission by reaching out and involving the lowest income communities in Long Beach with the highest quality innovative programs that teach values, build skills, and create community leaders.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

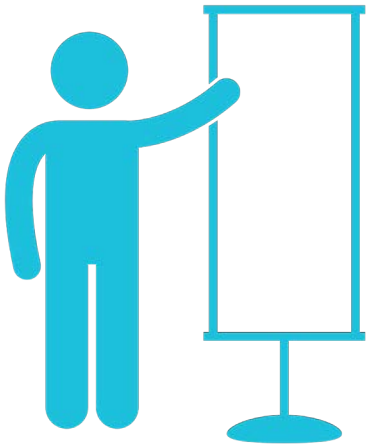
City staff and the Consultant worked closely with the four community partners to implement the following community engagement activities.

Help, Education, & Service for the Hispanic Community of Long Beach
CHA
Centro CHA, Inc.
LONG BEACH
Community
Hispanic
Association

LONG BEACH FORWARD
Community. Power. Justice.

United Cambodian Community
សហគមន៍ខ្មែរ

the YMCA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
YMCA of Greater Long Beach



Meeting community members where they are gathering

62 community members engaged

Digital Inclusion Community Pop-Ups

City staff and the Consultant implemented three Digital Inclusion Community Pop-Ups (Community Pop-Ups) at three locations where community members were already gathering. The Community Pop-Ups engaged community members in 5-10-minute conversations about digital inclusion. The Community Pop-Up tool was visually appealing which intrigued community members and served as a great conversation starter.

Digital Inclusion Community Pop-Up Locations:

- Long Beach Senior Arts Colony
  (200 E Anaheim Street, Long Beach, CA 90813)
- Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library
  (5870 Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90805)
- Billie Jean King Main Library
  (200 W Broadway, Long Beach, CA 90802)

Digital Inclusion Community Pop-Up Engagement Questions:

- I want to use the Internet and computer for_____.
- How are you accessing day-to-day activities and are you using the Internet and computer to do so?

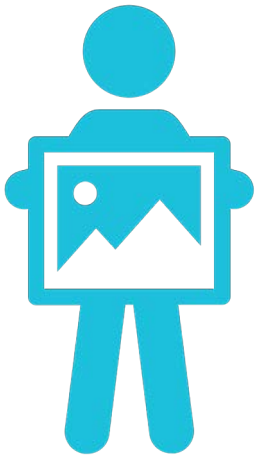
Community Pop-up at Billie Jean King Main Library

Community Workshop at United Cambodian Community

Digital Inclusion Community Workshops

City staff and the Consultant implemented two Digital Inclusion Community Workshops (Community Workshops) in trusted spaces in collaboration with the community partners (e.g. Centro CHA, United Cambodian Community). The Community Workshops were participatory design-based where community members (approximately 25 community members per Community Workshop), had the opportunity to:

- Co-define the digital divide: facilitated a process to allow community members to share their point of view and experience that the Consultant addressed through the co-development of the Community Workshops strategy.
- Co-ideate strategies for digital inclusion: explored a variety of possible solutions through generating large and diverse solutions that allowed the community members to step beyond the obvious and explore a range of ideas.



Connecting with community members in trusted spaces
55 community members engaged

During the Community Workshops, the community members engaged in art-making first and then shared their lived experiences with the collective group. Urban planner James Rojas, the creator of the "Place It" Model, has been at the forefront of developing this approach. Considering community members and residents as urban designers, Rojas' approach has become a popular equitable community engagement tool. Additionally, the Consultant's art-making process is

not static. The Community Workshops' art-making activities and materials were developed and gathered to correspond with the specific needs of the community members (e.g. sight, mobility, language, literacy, etc.). Long Beach community members received a $10 gift card for participating in the Community Workshops.

The following questions were asked during the Community Workshops:

- What would you like to use the Internet and computer for (e.g. homework, pay bills, etc.)?
- How are you currently using the Internet and computers (e.g. doing homework, paying bills, etc.) and what can be done to make the process and experience easier to access and use?
- What is currently working for you?
- What challenges and barriers are you currently facing that makes accessing and using the Internet and computers difficult?

Digital Inclusion Community Interviews

City staff and the Consultant implemented Digital Inclusion Community Interviews (Community Interviews) in partnership with the community partners (e.g. Long Beach Forward, YMCA of Greater Long Beach Community Development). This was an alternative to the Community

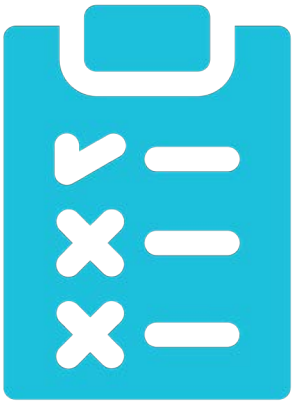
Community Workshop at Centro CHA

Engaging in one-on-one storytelling with community members
10 community members engaged

Workshops which were cancelled due to COVID-19. The team conducted one-on-one 30-minute virtual Community Interviews with ten community members currently impacted by the digital divide. These storytelling sessions were recorded and curated with photos of the community members to uplift their personal narratives and lived experiences for the Roadmap. The Consultant captured the photos of each community member while observing physical distancing outside of their home or location of choice. As community members expressed specific gaps and needs from the digital divide, the Consultant connected them with resources to help meet their needs such as low-cost Internet services and computers. Each community member received a $20 gift card for participating in the 30-minute interview.

Digital Inclusion Community Survey

City staff and the Consultant implemented the Digital Inclusion Community Survey (Community Survey) to get the community's input on specific strategies for the Roadmap. The four community partners (e.g. Centro CHA, Long Beach Forward, United Cambodian Community, YMCA of Greater Long Beach) conducted virtual and/or over-the-phone one-hour Community Surveys with twelve community members (e.g. twelve participants from each community partner) to get their input on prioritizing strategies for the Roadmap. The Community Survey was available in English, Khmer, Spanish and Tagalog. Each community member received a $20 gift card for participating in the survey.



Prioritizing the ideas, knowledge and lived experiences of community members
48 community members engaged

The following questions were asked during the Community Survey:

- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, how were you accessing and/or using the Internet and computers?
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, how are you currently accessing and/or using the Internet and computers? For example, do you need to use the Internet and computers to complete essential day-to-day tasks?
- If you are experiencing Internet and/or computer issues, who do you reach out to for assistance?
- What services and resources could make using the Internet and computer easier?

Digital Inclusion Community-based Organization (CBO) Workshop

City staff and the Consultant facilitated an interactive dialogue with the community partners through the Digital Inclusion Community-Based Organization Workshop (CBO Workshop). During the CBO Workshop, the community partners had the opportunity to review the draft Roadmap and ensure that the document effectively captures the voices, lived experiences and expertise of community members.

Juanita Wilson, Community Member Interviewed

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN LONG BEACH

COMMUNITY PROFILE

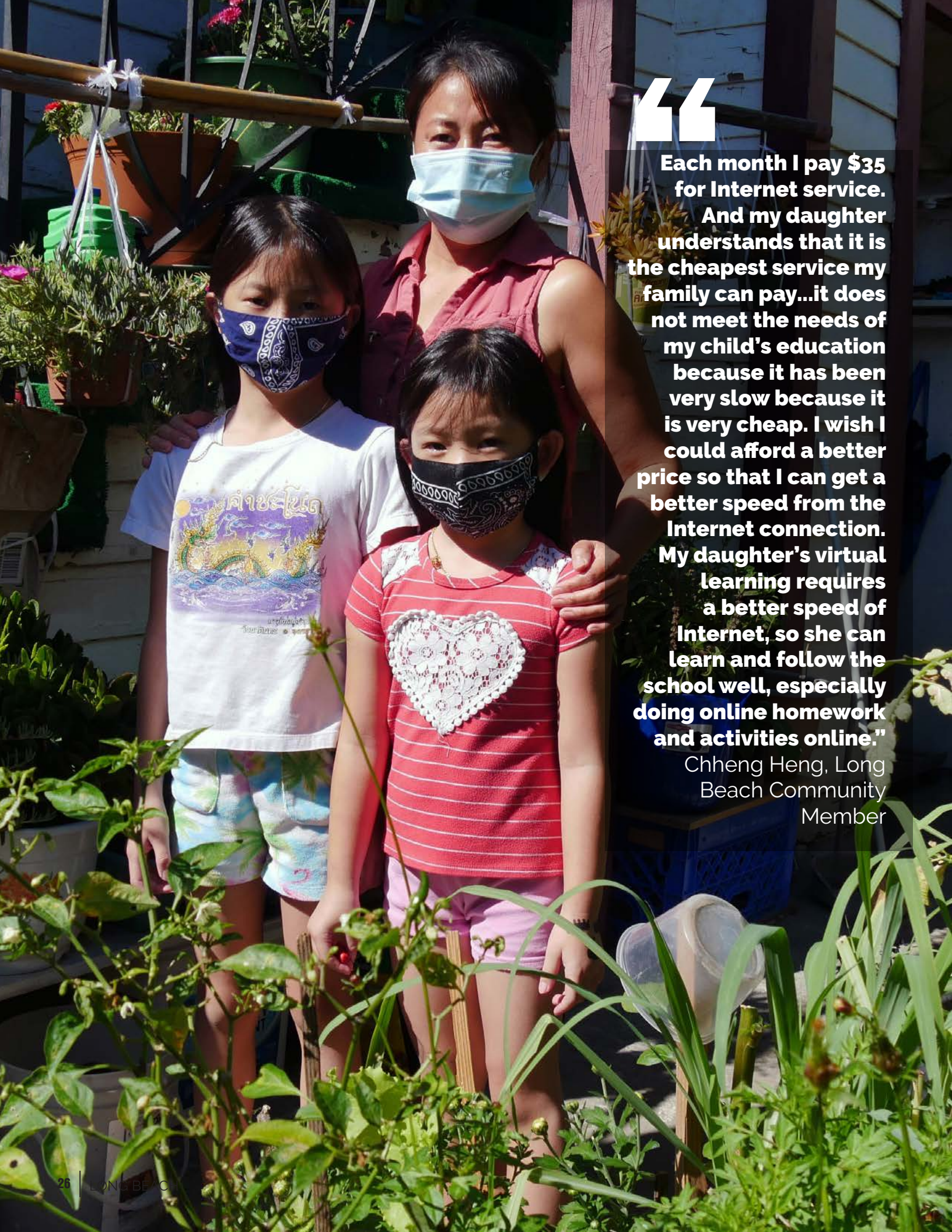
Many community members who participated in the Community Survey shared that before COVID-19, they rarely used or did not use the Internet. However, once COVID-19 hit the United States, many individuals who did not use the Internet previously, now need access and use to complete day-to-day activities.

However, community members having trouble connecting to the Internet are also figuring out ways to troubleshoot issues. To troubleshoot, many community members shared that they only have a smart-phone to access the Internet. In addition, they mentioned that they often turn to friends, neighbors and younger family members for support on connecting and/or navigating the Internet. A few community members brought up that when they tried to call ISPs to help resolve issues, that they had very negative experiences. As a result, they avoid calling their ISP.

As individuals are required to conduct more of their daily activities online, the cost of Internet services has become a major burden for many community members. Community members who already were having trouble paying for services such as Broadband are facing many financial issues due to loss of employment, and illness or death of a family member. One community member mentioned that their son was unable to pay their ISP, Spectrum, for two months because their son lost his job and the father passed away. As a result, they had to pay $294 to reactivate the account, which they did ultimately pay. However, they are finding it very difficult to continually pay the cost of Broadband access.

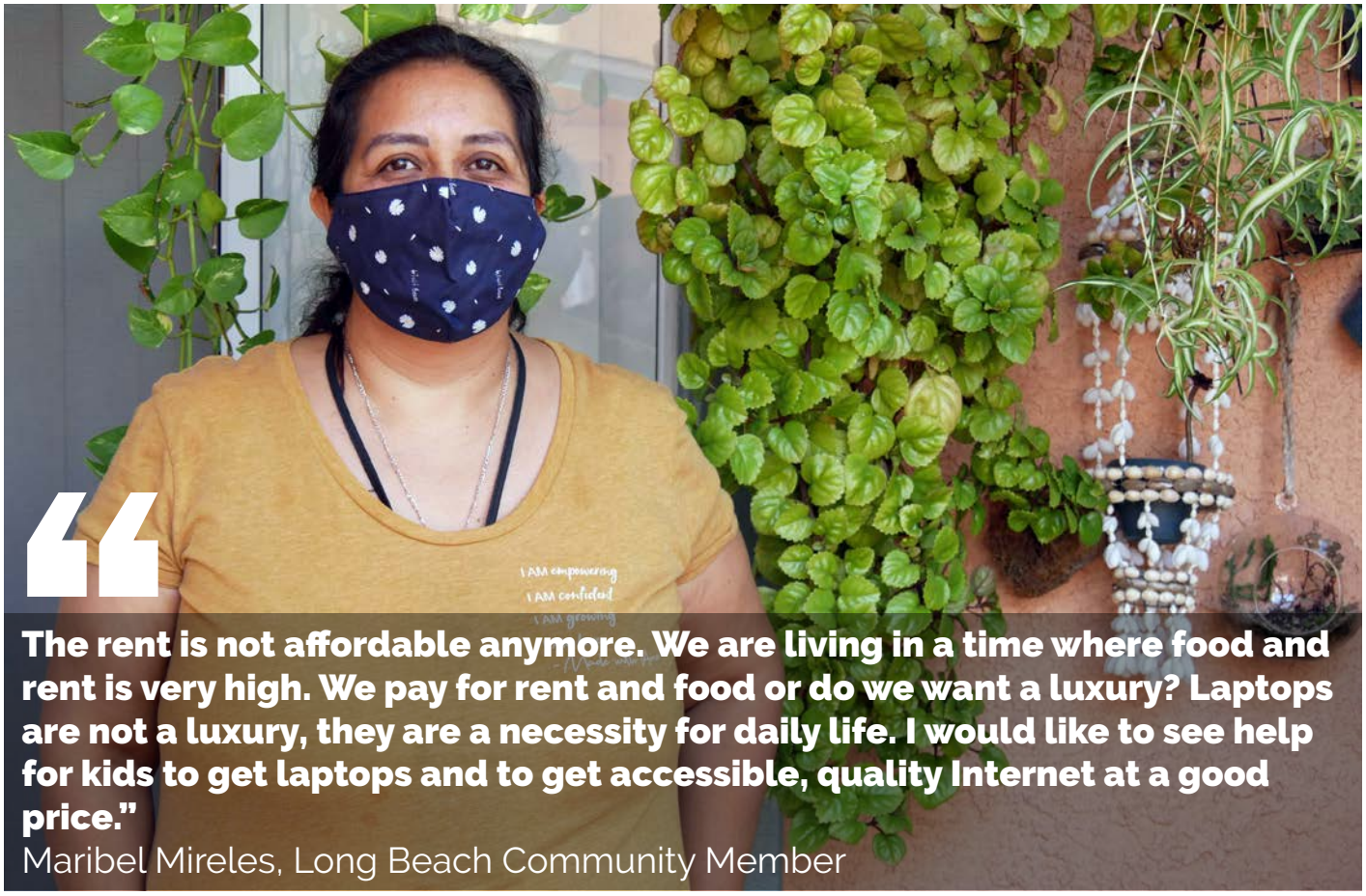
The pandemic has hit students in a unique way as they are having to navigate attending school completely online. Even though many students have been provided with Chromebooks and hotspots, Internet reliability is a major issue impacting their ability to be fully present and prepared at school.

> **"Because of limited knowledge of communicating with others in English, it is so hard to receive the service. When the school or any others send me a message in English, I have to go and ask someone else to help me interpret it from English into my language so that I can understand. So, this is something challenging to me in terms of language access. If the information on the Internet is in my language, I would understand both of them, and it is easier to learn and navigate technology if the information is in my language."**
>
> Chheng Heng, Long Beach Community Member



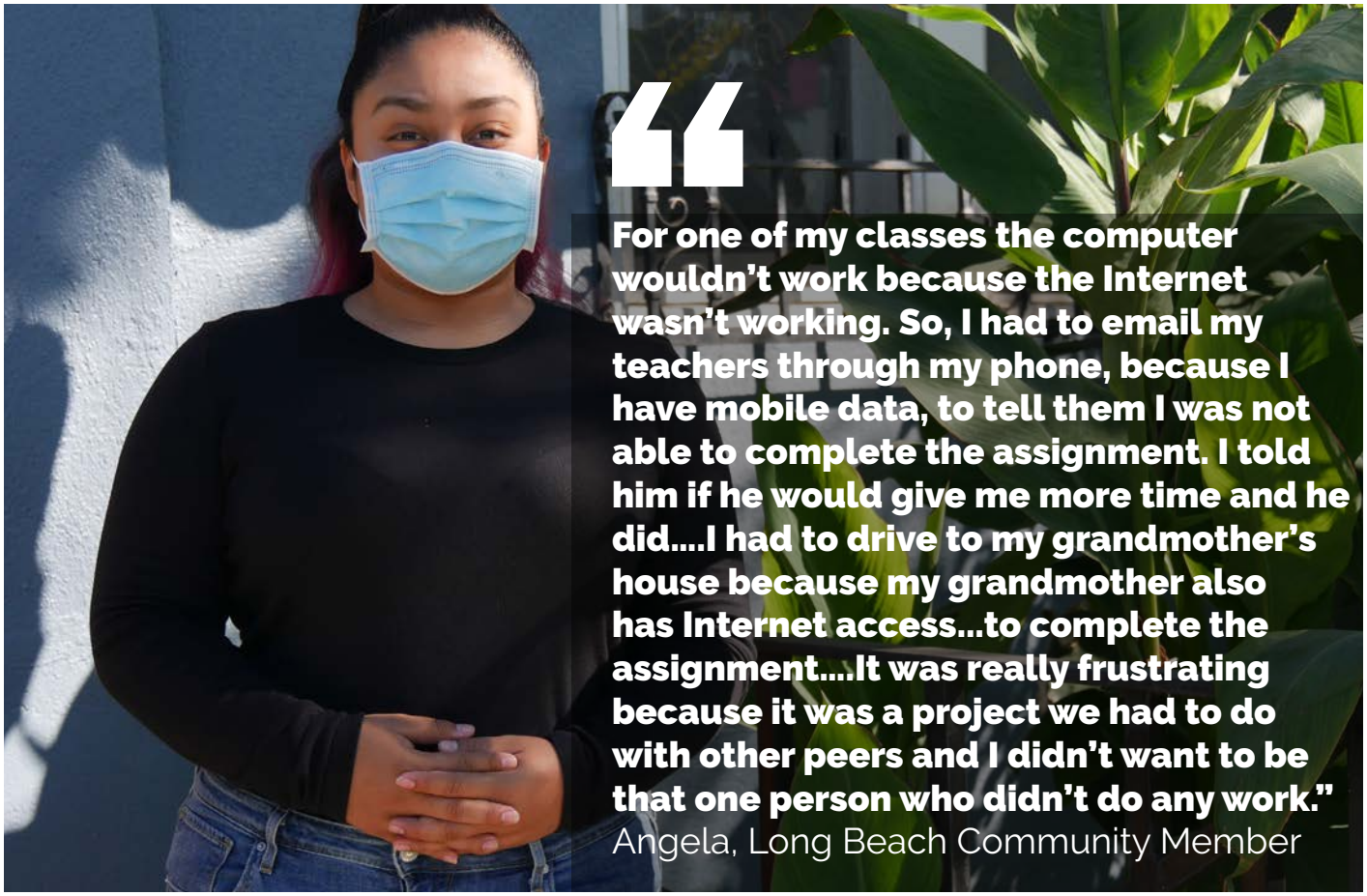
"Each month I pay $35 for Internet service. And my daughter understands that it is the cheapest service my family can pay...it does not meet the needs of my child's education because it has been very slow because it is very cheap. I wish I could afford a better price so that I can get a better speed from the Internet connection. My daughter's virtual learning requires a better speed of Internet, so she can learn and follow the school well, especially doing online homework and activities online."

Chheng Heng, Long Beach Community Member



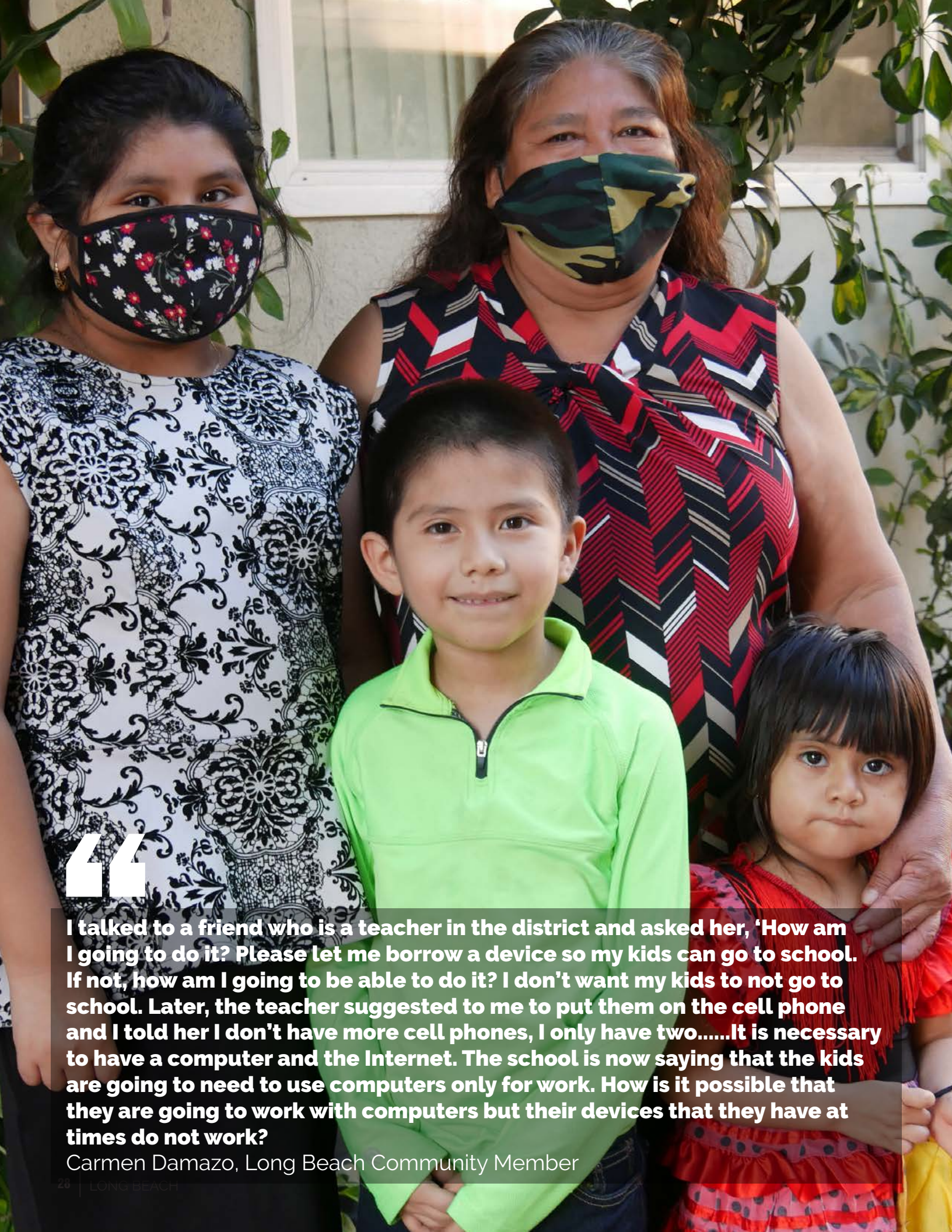
"The rent is not affordable anymore. We are living in a time where food and rent is very high. We pay for rent and food or do we want a luxury? Laptops are not a luxury, they are a necessity for daily life. I would like to see help for kids to get laptops and to get accessible, quality Internet at a good price."

Maribel Mireles, Long Beach Community Member



"For one of my classes the computer wouldn't work because the Internet wasn't working. So, I had to email my teachers through my phone, because I have mobile data, to tell them I was not able to complete the assignment. I told him if he would give me more time and he did....I had to drive to my grandmother's house because my grandmother also has Internet access...to complete the assignment....It was really frustrating because it was a project we had to do with other peers and I didn't want to be that one person who didn't do any work."

Angela, Long Beach Community Member



I talked to a friend who is a teacher in the district and asked her, 'How am I going to do it? Please let me borrow a device so my kids can go to school. If not, how am I going to be able to do it? I don't want my kids to not go to school. Later, the teacher suggested to me to put them on the cell phone and I told her I don't have more cell phones, I only have two.....It is necessary to have a computer and the Internet. The school is now saying that the kids are going to need to use computers only for work. How is it possible that they are going to work with computers but their devices that they have at times do not work?

Carmen Damazo, Long Beach Community Member

KEY FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During the community engagement process, City staff and the Consultant engaged with a variety of community members who both had access and use of the Internet and computers and those who did not. The community members that had access and use of the Internet and computers, could connect to the Internet through them. The second most utilized technology devices were tablets. Tablets were valued for their portability and size, over more cumbersome laptops and desktop computers.

MOST COMMON USES OF THE INTERNET AND COMPUTERS

Community members shared that they primarily use the Internet and computer to stay in touch with friends and family via email and social media. They commonly use the text and video features. Other common uses included:

- Going to school and completing homework
- Conducting research and reference
- Searching for community resources and services (e.g. housing assistance, financial resources, healthcare services)
- Reading the news and watching entertainment (e.g. using YouTube to change to their primary language)
- Looking for job opportunities
- Looking for transit routes and times

MOST COMMON LOCATIONS FOR ACCESSING AND USING THE INTERNET AND COMPUTERS

Community members highlighted that they primarily access the Internet at public libraries, Starbucks or at home. However, those that access the Internet at home, reported significant struggles with reliability and slow speeds. Additionally, many noted the phone is their immediate way to access the Internet. However, their access is limited because they must carefully watch their data usage to prevent large utility bills.

MOST COMMON DESIRED LOCATIONS FOR ACCESSING AND USING THE INTERNET AND COMPUTERS

Community members described where they currently access the Internet and computer and specific locations where they wish they had additional access. Most community members that were engaged and have a technology device are gaining Internet access at their home (with very poor and slow speeds) or at a public library. The most common desired locations include providing free public Wi-Fi at public parks, on public transportation, transit stops and shopping centers. With public libraries and community-based organizations closed due to the Safer at Home Order, a significant number of community members are cut off from accessing the Internet and computers in community-friendly spaces they normally relied upon to gain service.

MOST COMMON CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS FOR ACCESSING AND USING THE INTERNET AND COMPUTERS

The most common challenges and barriers for community members facing the digital divide were quite diverse and demonstrate that multifaceted digital inclusion strategies will

be needed to advance digital inclusion in Long Beach. Highlighted are the following top challenges and barriers to accessing the Internet and computers, as identified by community members.

High Costs

Most community members uplifted that strained financial resources, the cost of the Internet services, and the cost of data phone plans were the underlying challenges and barriers to being able to access the Internet. Many raised they lack the financial resources to pay for Broadband services. They also highlighted that even reduced pricing/low-cost services provided by ISPs are not affordable. This issue will be further exacerbated due to the Safer at Home Order and the economic crisis prompted by COVID-19.

Poor Quality Broadband

For community members who currently have access and use of the Internet and computers at home, the quality and reliability of their Broadband is poor. They experience slow Internet speeds with frequent disconnections, particularly when using it to communicate with others.

Community Workshop at United Cambodian Community

Literacy and English Fluency Barriers

Literacy levels and fluency in English were other noted challenges and barriers that make Internet and computer access and usage difficult. Community members that have limited English literacy and fluency and expressed that they are comfortable getting online, mainly use YouTube and the translation feature to translate content into their native language.

Lack of Access to Electricity

Many community members who are experiencing homelessness shared that limited access to power prevents them from relying on phones for Internet usage. They often charge their phones at the Long Beach Public Library or coffee shops and use their Wi-Fi. However, Internet access is lost when public libraries or coffee shops are closed, and they cannot find a place to charge.

Lack of Consumer Protection

Many community members highlighted that ISPs are the cause of their inability to access the Internet. Community members shared that problems with ISPs have been a major challenge and barrier to accessing reliable and affordable Internet services (Spectrum and Frontier were noted most in conversations). They reach out to their ISP to fix technical issues with their Internet and that it either sometimes takes weeks to fix or the issue goes unresolved. Additionally, low-price introductory Internet service plans incrementally go up in price and are therefore not affordable in the long-term.

Poor Public Wi-Fi

Many community members acknowledged they wish they could have better access to Wi-Fi in public spaces. Some mentioned they get Wi-Fi in some public parks, but the signal is very weak.

Lack of Institutional Access

Limited open hours at public libraries, recreation centers and community-based organizations was one of the largest factors reported that limits individual's Internet access.

Lack of Internet and Computer Literacy

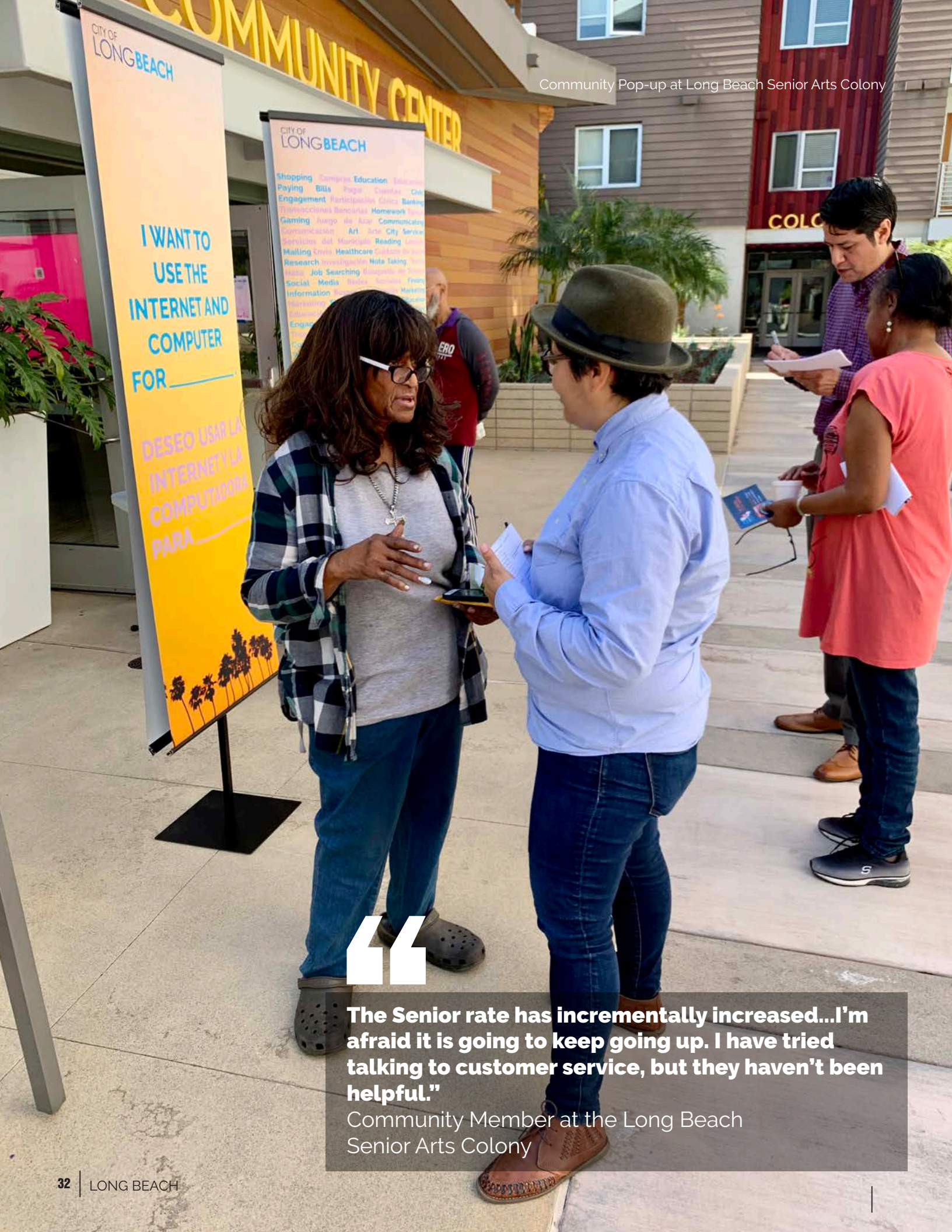
Lack of Internet and computer literacy was mentioned as a barrier specifically by older adults.

Lack of Internet Security

Many community members shared a fear of being "scammed" online, getting a computer virus or paying for something they didn't intend to pay for. This fear prevented community members from paying bills, banking, shopping online or from filling out forms online for social services.

Lack of Access to Technology

A handful of community members mentioned a lack of access to technology such as a phone, tablet, laptop or computer prevents them from being able to use the Internet. People experiencing homelessness especially, shared that access to electricity to be able to charge their devices consistently is a major barrier to staying connected.



Community Pop-up at Long Beach Senior Arts Colony

"The Senior rate has incrementally increased...I'm afraid it is going to keep going up. I have tried talking to customer service, but they haven't been helpful."

Community Member at the Long Beach Senior Arts Colony

MAKING ACCESSING AND USING THE INTERNET AND COMPUTERS EASIER

Cost
Most community members who stated the cost of both the Internet and computers were a significant barrier, recommended funding low-cost or free (high-quality and reliable) Internet services, computers, tablets, laptops, smart-phones. Additionally, many shared low-cost or free cell phone data plans could improve their ability to be connected. In a previous survey conducted by the City, affordability was a main factor for Long Beach residents. Citywide, most Long Beach residents reported $20 or less per month as the maximum they could pay. More than 80% of Long Beach residents without current home Internet access and earning less than $25,000 a year indicated they could not afford more than $20 per month.[5]

Tutoring and Classes
Many community members prefer one-on-one technology tutors at community-based organizations, public libraries, via phone or at home rather than group classes. Very few community members stated they wanted to attend a group class. Others shared that if classes are offered, the classes should ensure the lessons are for first-time users and are very basic (how to turn on, navigate, make an email address, etc.). Additionally, tutoring or classes to learn how to use Internet-based apps on a phone was a very popular recommendation.

Language Access
Offering English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and literacy classes would provide greater digital access to some of the most marginalized community members.

Consumer Advocate
Fund a digital inclusion consumer advocate position and hotline where community members can call to help with ISP issues.

Internet Security
Provide information and education about Internet security.

Public Wi-Fi
Offer free public Wi-Fi, particularly in locations where there are high concentrations of people experiencing the digital divide. Some City parks have Wi-Fi, but it was noted that the service is very poor. Other locations to consider for public Wi-Fi are transit stops and on public transit, grocery stores, community-based organizations, school parking lots and faith-based organizations.

Library Hours
Extend the Long Beach Public Library hours and have them open seven days a week.

Charging Stations
Develop a network of public charging stations.

Community Technology Hubs
Provide City-funded community computer labs and printing centers.

Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library

"Just yesterday I couldn't go to any of my classes because my Wi-Fi was down, So I ended up staying up all last night pretty much doing everything my classmates did while I was absent. It is such a burden to have to pay and keep that really good Wi-Fi going all the time.... You have to prepare for the worst."

Carlos, Long Beach Community Member

SMALL BUSINESS OWNER PROFILE

Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, small business owners (even those who did not use the Internet pre-pandemic) are having to use the Internet and computers to find resources to support their small businesses. Applying for grants and loans opportunities are entirely online and small business owners need reliable Internet services and affordable computers now more than ever to access these financial resources.

The small business owners who participated in the Community Survey, shared that meaningful digital inclusion support provided to support them would include:

- Access to on-call technical support to help small business owners complete everyday online business-related tasks and help with online grant and loan applications
- Technology resources, information and technical support in the primary language spoken by the small business owner
- More technical assistance to small business owners which could include creating websites that can be used for marketing and linking to online platforms such as Postmates, Ubereats, Mercato, etc. so that products and services can be sold online, and delivery can be made seamless
- Free or low-cost Broadband Internet at the business site
- Free or low-cost technology devices
- Increase support to community-based organizations that are currently helping small business owners navigate and meet their digital needs

One way to accomplish many of the strategies provided by small business owners is to look to a model that the New York Comptroller is currently implementing. They created a Tech Corps to help small businesses adopt digital tools and develop an online presence, expand online sales, and implement digital payroll, sales and inventory tools. The Tech Corps works directly with small business owners to design websites, help purchase business software, and set-up these tools. In addition to paid staff members, the Tech Corps model could be fortified by volunteers from Long Beach's technology sector as well as qualified and multilingual students from local universities.[6]

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Capacity

GOAL 1: Ensure that computer literacy knowledge and support are designed to meet community members where they are.

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2025, develop and/or increase the number of multilingual computer literacy programs in every Council District by 40%.

GOAL 2: Expand and create pathways to digital skills to ensure job employability and ability to participate in society.

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2023, increase the digital competency levels in under resourced neighborhoods by 20%.

OBJECTIVE 2: By 2025, increase post-secondary educational attainment among community members in under-resourced neighborhoods by 20%.

GOAL 3: Empower cross-sector partners to advance digital inclusion through leadership development and capacity building.

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2024, increase the number of community partners who engage in citywide digital inclusion efforts by 30%.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES

1. Provide one-on-one tutoring where community members can learn how to use the computers and Internet.
2. Promote classes where community members can learn how to speak, read and write in English.
3. Establish a hotline where community members can call to resolve issues or problems they are having with their ISP to ensure they are not being taken advantage of and they have their needs met (e.g. consumer advocates).
4. Create multilingual computer classes provided by public libraries, community-based organizations, local K-12 schools, colleges/universities or where community members live (e.g. apartment complexes).
5. Provide information and education to community members about Internet security (e.g. identity theft and scams prevention).
6. Promote the Long Beach Public Library staff who support community members identify and locate the best resources for their needs such as helping with technology at public access computers, (e.g. downloading eBooks/audiobooks, downloading library apps, and accessing other resources) in the Digital Library.
7. Create a citywide tech tutor program led by community-based organizations that prioritize the neighborhoods most in need.
8. Provide longer opening hours at the Long Beach Public Libraries.
9. Establish opportunities for community members to learn how to use Internet-based apps on their phone.

CAPACITY STRATEGIES

Promoting Current Resources and Services

- Promote and expand computer literacy training programs (e.g. computer classes, workshops and one-on-one appointments) at the Long Beach Public Libraries.
- Promote and expand human-I-T's Include Program that provides a self-paced digital literacy training course on Internet and computer basics in English and Spanish.
- Promote and expand free non-credit computer courses (e.g. Microsoft Office suite) for students, faculty and community members from Long Beach City College (LBCC).
- Promote the Long Beach Public Libraries technology-related book collections selected by librarians to help meet the community's digital literacy needs.
- Promote the Long Beach Public Library Digital Library that provides online learning and research tools.
- Promote the Long Beach Public Library's (The Studios), Learning Lab and Mobile Studio that serves as community workspaces where community members can meet, socialize, innovate and collaborate using technology and resources.
- Promote the Long Beach Public Library staff who support community members identify and locate the best resources for their needs such as helping with technology at public access computers, (e.g. downloading eBooks/audiobooks, downloading library apps, and accessing other resources) in the Digital Library.
- Promote the Long Beach Public Library's Family Learning Centers for communities most in need and offer homework support materials and computer-based learning opportunities to enrich student study skills and develop parent participation and support.
- Promote Long Beach Unified School District's (LBUSD) Parent University that provides parent involvement activities.
- Promote and expand the City's digital media internship opportunities through partnerships with California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) and Long Beach City College (LBCC).
- Promote California State University Long Beach's (CSULB) Student Virtual Lab (SVL) and ensure resources for CSULB students most in need.
- Promote Laserfiche Careers (STEM Advantage) and expand scholarships and paid internships to help students graduate with less debt, along with pairing mentors with students who typically are first generation and low-income college students.
- Promote Long Beach Forward's capacity building work of helping parents use the Internet to get critical information, share their experiences and communicate with other parents.

Creating New Resources and Services

- Establish a multilingual digital inclusion resources hotline to connect community members to digital inclusion resources and services through digital inclusion navigators.
- Develop multilingual digital inclusion resource guides that are updated annually.
- Create a citywide tech tutor program led by community-based organizations that prioritizes communities most in need.
- Create a train-the-trainer program with a best practice toolkit for digital literacy training programs.
- Ensure language access (e.g. interpretation, translation) is integrated into the implementation of all digital inclusion resources, services and programs.

Exploring Partnerships

- Facilitate partnerships with the Long Beach Senior Arts Colony and community-based organizations to expand the "Tech Talk" that provides learning experience, through college-level, semester-based classroom instruction to older adults.
- Create partnerships with human-I-T and community-based organizations to promote and expand the Include Program.
- Create partnerships with Pacific Gateway and community-based organizations to expand

job search assistance, job preparedness and direct referrals to enrolled adults seeking technology-related employment and internship opportunities.

- Collaborate and leverage the City's Technology and Innovation Commission (TIC) to conduct ongoing digital inclusion research and analyze quantitative and qualitative data (e.g. Broadband Internet adoption data, computer access and training data, existing challenges and barriers) in communities affected by the digital divide.
- Establish a community benefit agreement through the City's procurement process that allocates funding and resources for digital literacy training programs for communities affected by the digital divide.
- Partner with the California Emerging Technology Fund's (CETF) School2Home Initiative that integrates computing and Broadband technologies into teaching and learning in low-performing middle schools and provides a unique focus on parent engagement.
- Leverage the California Emerging Technology Fund's (CETF) Neighborhood Transformation Program efforts in the Roadmap implementation.
- Leverage California State University Long Beach's (CSULB) TechDay which showcases a multitude of campus and vendor technology services and innovations to students, faculty and staff and establish additional partnerships with community-based organizations.
- Engage Laserfiche Cares's Program with digital inclusion community-based organizations and expand technology device donations to communities most in need.

Leveraging Funding Opportunities

- Create partnerships with the City, County, State and Federal government entities, community-based organizations, for-profit companies and foundations to invest and allocate funding to multilingual digital literacy training programs.
- Incorporate and leverage the City's Smart City Initiative strategy into the Roadmap implementation and partner with community-based organizations on potential funding opportunities.

Promoting Small Business Owner Resources

- Implement multilingual digital literacy training courses for small business owners.
- Promote and expand the Google: Digital Marketing + Adwords Workshop effort that offers free digital marketing and AdWords training for small business owners and entrepreneurs from the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA).
- Collaborate with community-based organizations and promote the City's Kiva Long Beach Loan Program for small business owners and entrepreneurs and emphasize that loans can be used for digital inclusion purposes (e.g. technology devices, paying for Broadband Internet services).
- Implement multilingual on-call technical assistance that helps small business owners complete everyday online business-related tasks (e.g. grant and loan applications, technology usage, marketing).
- Increase support to community-based organizations who are currently helping small business owners navigate and meet their technology needs.

Engaging in Local, County, State and Federal Advocacy

- Engage elected officials from the California State Legislature and advocate for equity-centered digital inclusion policies and local control.
- Engage elected officials from the United States Congress and advocate for equity-centered digital inclusion policies (e.g. consumer privacy, free-open Internet).
- Engage in the implementation of the State of California Broadband Action Plan.
- Facilitate partnerships with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and increase grant opportunities through the California Advanced Services Fund.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Connectivity

GOAL 1: Promote and expand free and low-cost, high-speed, quality in-home Internet services for all communities.

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2025, increase residential households with quality Internet access from 78% in (2020) to 95%.

OBJECTIVE 2: By 2025, 100% of community members who are in-need know how to and are able to access low-cost Broadband.

GOAL 2: Expand the citywide fiber network infrastructure to serve the Long Beach community.

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2025, expand citywide network to provide ubiquitous connectivity.

GOAL 3: Promote and expand public Wi-Fi resources in public community areas.

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2025, promote and expand public Wi-Fi resources in the West, Central and North neighborhoods of Long Beach by 50% and ubiquitous Wi-Fi by 2030.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES

1. Provide free, quality high-speed Internet services for community members at home.
2. Provide low-cost, quality high-speed Internet services for community members at home.
3. Administer free quality Wi-Fi provided at public libraries or public parks.
4. Administer free quality Wi-Fi provided at community-based organizations.
5. Administer free quality hotspots provided at local K-12 schools, colleges and/or universities for students to use at home.
6. Administer free quality Wi-Fi provided at local businesses (e.g. restaurants, grocery stores, laundromats).
7. Administer free quality hotspots provided at local K-12 schools, colleges or universities for students to use at home.
8. Provide free and/or low-cost hotspots for community members to own or borrow.
9. Administer free quality Wi-Fi provided by a landlord (e.g. apartment complex).
10. Administer free quality Wi-Fi on public transportation or at transit stops.

CONNECTIVITY STRATEGIES

Promoting Current Resources and Services

- Promote and expand the human-I-T Connect Program that connects qualified, low-income communities to low-cost Broadband Internet services and mobile hotspots through its partnerships with various Internet service providers.
- Promote and expand low-cost high-speed Internet services provided by Internet service providers (e.g. Spectrum Internet Assist, Frontier Fundamental Internet) to low-income communities.
- Promote and expand the City's ConnectedLB Platform which is a centralized online resource for community members to access low-cost Internet services, affordable computers and free digital literacy training courses.
- Promote free public Wi-Fi for community members at City parks and community centers.
- Promote free public Wi-Fi for community members at the Long Beach Public Libraries.
- Promote free public Wi-Fi for community members at YMCA of Greater Long Beach Community Development location.
- Promote free public Wi-Fi for community members at Pacific Gateway.
- Promote the California State University Long Beach (CSULB) Campus Wi-Fi and Wired Network that provides Internet services for the campus.

Creating New Resources and Services

- Administer free mobile hotspots with paid Internet service plans to communities most in need and facilitate low-cost Internet sign-ups once the free services have expired.
- Provide public charging stations especially for communities experiencing homelessness.

Exploring Partnerships

- Partner with human-I-T and community-based organizations to promote reliable, low-cost high-speed Internet services and mobile hotspots (e.g. Spectrum Internet Assist, Frontier Fundamental Internet, Mobile Citizen) to low-income communities.
- Partner with affordable housing developers to build in low-cost, high-speed, quality in-home Internet services into housing projects.
- Enter into strategic partnership agreements with Internet service providers and explore strategies around (e.g. Broadband affordability, quality, speeds, expansion).
- Partner with Internet service providers to collect disaggregated data around Broadband, adoption, access, etc.
- Partner with Accenture's Smart City Enablement, or equivalent program, and the City's Smart City Initiative to integrate multiple technologies and provide a common platform.
- Leverage Crown Castle's Tranche 3 effort that will expand fiber and small cell wireless network with the capability of providing 5G and in-home Broadband Internet services to all residents with emphasis on communities most in need.
- Ensure residential Broadband and public Wi-Fi is integrated into the City's master fiber planning process.
- Negotiate with 5G providers to deploy infrastructure in Long Beach with a priority on communities with low Internet access.

Leveraging Funding Opportunities

- Create partnerships with the City, County, State and Federal government entities, community-based organizations, for-profit companies and foundations to invest and allocate funding to free and low-cost, high-speed, quality in-home Internet services and funding to increase the speed, reliability and range of public Wi-Fi.
- Negotiate and establish community benefits with both 5G carriers and Internet service

providers to fund digital inclusion efforts.

Promoting Small Business Owner Resources

- Administer free mobile hotspots with paid Internet service plans to small business owners most in need and facilitate low-cost commercial Internet sign-ups once the free services have expired.
- Incentivize small business owners to offer free public Wi-Fi by creating a new program called "Connected Businesses" similar to the Long Beach Green Business Network.

Establishing Baselines and Requirements

- Establish a baseline for quality Internet speed recommendation and adoption.
- Include contractual requirements for Internet service providers to include geodata maps.

"For my daughter, she is a child it is hard for her to keep up with this frustration when she cannot fulfill school work. My daughter likes to make sure that she can complete the classes and activities the same as others. When she cannot do it, it makes her even more frustrated and it is so hard to see her go through this...The most important need we have that we need right now is the high speed Internet, my daughter asks me, 'Why my work that I submitted is late when I completed the work before anyone else?' and I realized that it is because of the Internet speed. It delays her work that needs to be submitted, the high-speed Internet is one of the most important things to have the situation better."

Chheng Heng, Long Beach Community Member

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Technology

GOAL 1: Ensure access to reliable, secure and supported Internet-enabled technology devices.

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2025, increase the percentage of households with Internet-enabled technology devices (e.g. desktops, laptops) in low-income and interconnected communities by 50%.

GOAL 2: Ensure high-quality multilingual technical support for Internet-enabled technology devices, programs and applications.

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2025, offer high-quality multilingual technical support services (e.g. one-on-one appointments, troubleshooting workshops) for City-provided and partner-provided technology devices to 100% of devices.

GOAL 3: Ensure free community computer labs (e.g. public libraries).

OBJECTIVE 1: By 2025, promote and increase the number of privately-provided PCs and labs in free public spaces by 20%.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES

1. Provide free, quality desktops, computers or tablets for community members.
2. Administer free technical support to community members with computer issues and problems.
3. Provide low-cost quality desktops, computers or tablets for community members.
4. Provide free computers at local K-12 schools, colleges and universities for students to use at home.
5. Administer more money to support free desktops, laptops and computers for community members.
6. Administer free computer and printer access at local K-12 schools, colleges and universities for students.
7. Administer free lending programs for laptops and tablets for community members to access.

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES

Promoting Current Resources and Services

- Promote and expand human-I-T's Equip Program that provides low-income communities and other community-based organizations access to free or low-cost refurbished desktops and laptops.
- Promote the Long Beach Public Library's Device Lending Program.
- Promote Pacific Gateway's Access to Learning Lab that provides free access to computers, printers, copy machines, faxes and scanners to community members who are job searching online and applying for unemployment benefits.
- Promote free public computer and printing access through the Long Beach Public Libraries to communities most affected the digital divide.
- Promote and expand free computer access at Houghton Park, Orizaba Park and the Long Beach Senior Center.
- Promote Centro CHA's community-based computer Technology Learning Center and Youth Social Enterprise that includes computer stations, Internet and printer access.
- Promote the Long Beach Public Library's Center for Adaptive Technology (CAT) that provides adaptive hardware and software, library materials, and library staff to answer reference requests and assist with computers and technologies for communities with different abilities.
- Promote and expand the City's technology devices recycling effort and ensure that technology devices are offered at an affordable price to local Long Beach community-based organizations that are providing digital inclusion programming.
- Promote California State University Long Beach's (CSULB) Technical Support which provides end user assistance for any technology service to students and faculty.

Creating New Resources and Services

- Administer free computing devices (e.g. desktops, laptops or tablets) to community members most in need.

Exploring Partnerships

- Partner with human-I-T and community-based organizations to promote the Equip Program.
- Facilitate partnerships and expand human-I-T's E-Waste Services that collects unwanted desktops, laptops and other technology devices from all sectors.
- Collaborate with community-based organizations to explore the feasibility of establishing a program that provides full-time technical support for community for their Internet-enabled technology devices and explores factors such as (e.g. full-time employee to device, partnerships, costs, youth, students).
- Partner with community-based organizations to provide multilingual technical support for technology devices up to one year for the free computing devices administered.
- Partner with Accenture's Help Desk Services and community-based organizations to promote resources that resolve common issues and route live agents.
- Leverage the Long Beach Housing Authority's computers (e.g. kiosks) for digital inclusion efforts for low-income communities who qualify for HUD-resources.

Leveraging Funding Opportunities

- Create partnerships with the City, County, State and Federal government entities, community-based organizations, for-profit companies and foundations to invest and allocate funding for technology devices.
- Expand free community computer labs/tech centers that have free computer access within a 15-minute walk of every household by identifying and building partnerships with potential funding partners.

Small Business Owner Resources

- Administer free computing devices (e.g. desktops, laptops or tablets) to small business owners most in need.

Community Pop-up at Long Beach Senior Arts Colony

During the pandemic I am using the Internet more than before because I cannot go anywhere. I am sharing the Internet with my neighbor, and I pay them my share. I don't have a computer at home, but I have a smartphone. So, I learned to pay bills online and search for news via my phone."

Community Survey Participant

CARES Act Community Event

CARES ACT DIGITAL INCLUSION PROGRAMS

Overview

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act provides fast and direct economic assistance for American workers and families, small businesses and preserves jobs for American industries. The City received $40 million in CARES Act funding and $1 million was allocated towards digital inclusion efforts. It was important to implement high-priority digital inclusion strategies during COVID-19 and not wait for the Roadmap to be finalized. City staff in partnership with community partners implemented the following programs below.

Digital Inclusion Resources Hotline

The City partnered with the Long Beach Public Library and the United Cambodian Community to launch the Digital Inclusion Resources Hotline (Hotline) in October 2020. This multilingual hotline and call center helped connect community members to digital inclusion resources and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital inclusion navigators, eight in total, provided real-time interpretation services in Khmer and Spanish.

These digital inclusion navigators were available by phone and email to help community members find information about free and low-cost Internet service offers, computer resources and free digital literacy training courses. The Hotline 562.570.7000 was available on weekdays from 8:00am to 5:00pm through March 2021. The Hotline received 2,433 inquiries.

Digital Inclusion Community Outreach Program

The City partnered with nine community-based organizations (CBOs) in Long Beach to implement robust community outreach efforts that connected digital inclusion resources and services to communities most in need during COVID-19. The CBOs were selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process using PlanetBids in September 2020. Starting in November 2020, the CBOs facilitated canvassing, pop-ups, virtual/social media engagement and community outreach efforts that promoted free and low-cost Internet services, computer resources, virtual digital literacy training courses and the Hotline. Collectively, the CBOs reached more than 21,000 Long Beach residents.

The City partnered with the following community partners:

- Centro CHA
- Heart of Ida
- Long Beach Bar Association
- Long Beach Center for Economic Inclusion
- Ronnie's House
- Success in Challenges
- The Children's Clinic (TCC)
- United Cambodian Community (UCC)
- YMCA of Greater Long Beach (Community Development)

Free Internet Services and Computing Devices Program

The City partnered with the Long Beach Housing Authority, the Long Beach Public Library, human-I-T and the nine CBOs from the community outreach activities, to help connect community members to free digital inclusion resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the Free Internet Services and Computing Devices Program (Program), the City provided free hotspots with paid one-year Internet service plans and computing devices (e.g. tablets, Chromebooks) on a first-come, first-served basis to qualified, low-income Long Beach residents with proof of income eligibility and a Long Beach City address, while supplies lasted. As a result, close to 1,100 hotspots and

CARES Act Community Event

1,600 computing devices were administered to communities most in need during COVID-19.

Multilingual Resource Guides

The City partnered with the United Cambodian Community to create hardcopy and online multilingual resource guides that includes a comprehensive list of digital inclusion resources and services. The resource guides were made available in English, Khmer, Spanish and Tagalog.

Virtual Digital Literacy Training Course

The City partnered with human-I-T and provided a free computer literacy course that educates community members on computer, Internet and email basics. More than 500 community members signed up for the course.

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"During COVID-19, I see that I need to use the Internet at home more and more. For myself, I need to learn to pay some bills online, study from home, and help my son with his school work. Even though we got the hotspot from school, it does not work well. Sometimes the Internet speed of the hotspot is frozen. So, the Internet right now is very essential for my family's daily usage."

Community Survey Participant

NEXT STEPS

The Roadmap development process unveiled dynamic community ideas, strategies and solutions for kicking off an equity-focused implementation process for advancing digital inclusion. City staff identified the following next steps to facilitate the Roadmap implementation process.

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Distribute the Roadmap

City staff will distribute the Roadmap to the community and cross-sector partners who participated in the Roadmap development process. A high-level version of the Roadmap will be made available in Khmer, Spanish and Tagalog. City staff will also share the Roadmap with other regional, state and national digital inclusion partners.

Establish a Digital Inclusion Stakeholder Implementation Committee

City staff will establish a Digital Inclusion Stakeholder Implementation Committee that will include both the community and cross-sector partners.

Facilitate and Convene a Roadmap Implementation Process

City staff will facilitate and convene a Roadmap implementation process that will incorporate identifying funding, personnel, data collection structures and reporting processes to implement the prioritized strategies. A racial equity lens and Collective Impact Approach will be the essence of the Roadmap implementation process.

Ensure Accountability, Communications and Evaluation

City staff will prepare routine progress reports that provide specific updates on digital inclusion strategies implementation in collaboration with cross-sector partners. A shared measurement system will be created to track and monitor key performance indicators from the strategies being implemented.

Convene an Annual Digital Inclusion Roundtable

City staff will convene an annual Digital Inclusion Roundtable in partnership with the community and cross-sector partners. The Roundtable will highlight short-term wins, celebrate successes, share best practices and impact made in advancing digital inclusion in Long Beach.

Endnotes

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