Every Student Deserves Fast, Reliable, and Affordable Broadband at Home

Right now, **Black, Latino, and low-income communities** across California all have lower broadband access than the state as a whole. Many families can't afford the cost of ongoing broadband subscriptions, in part because their local internet infrastructure is limited, old, or poorly maintained. Many of these families live in an area that has been **"DIGITALLY REDLINED."**

According to the **National Digital Inclusion Alliance** (NDIA), digital equity is a "condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy."

The Impact of Digital Equity on Education

Wealthier students—those whose families live in areas with better broadband infrastructure and can afford to pay high prices for access to the internet—have been able to continue learning more or less uninterrupted. But for our students, and so many others like them, the **learning delays and interruptions** they've faced over the course of the pandemic will have repercussions throughout their lives.

According to the **Public Policy Institute of California** the "digital divide has narrowed, but still affects California's children"—particularly those in low-income families. K-12 students who are Black and Latino are significantly less likely to live in households equipped with technology resources for distance learning. Thus, the socio-economic inequities are, once again, compounded by race.

According to a survey from the **Pew Research Center** 59% of lower-income families faced some form of digital inequity–with many having to log on from a smartphone, others who did not have a device, and many more who have to use public networks because the did not have reliable internet at home.

For some families in Los Angeles, this school year has meant that they had to choose between paying for the internet or other basic household needs. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified the digital inequities in our communities. While students all over Los Angeles have had to switch to virtual learning during the pandemic, low-income families have been left behind, unable to access quality, affordable internet to continue their education safely at home.

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In Los Angeles, the persistent lack of digital equity has resulted in a digital divide–the growing gap between communities that have access to the internet and computers, and those that do not.

In Los Angeles County, there are

26,000
Students who did not participate in daily online learning

271,067
Households without home computers

425,023
Households without internet access

543,552
Households with less than broadband speed

Data from 2020

Three Steps Can End Digital Inequity

Fast, reliable, affordable broadband for all
Every household in Los Angeles should have access to the same level of internet service. Unfortunately, the local internet infrastructure for Black, Latino, and low-income communities is often limited and poorly maintained. More investment is needed to address LA's inequitable internet infrastructure.

Increase competition in broadband market
Having more options for where to get your internet is good for LA families. But right now the California Broadband Coalition estimates that about half of all Californians have no say in who provides their broadband access. These monopolies mean that providers have little incentive to keep prices low or to maintain infrastructure to keep up with demand.

Local solutions targeted to local needs
With unprecedented allocations of public dollars towards addressing digital inequity, it is important now more than ever that public dollars at the local level get utilized to make community-driven investments.

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We Need Fast, Reliable, Affordable Internet For All!