

# WHAT IS THE COST IF WE ARE UNABLE TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE?

## INTRODUCING TEN MINUTES WITH A CHANGEMAKER

Next Century Cities is focused on supporting local efforts to bring broadband within reach for every resident in every community. The coronavirus pandemic and ongoing calls for equality have only accelerated our timeline for making that goal a reality. We believe that citizens, policymakers, lawmakers, and providers must all claim a piece of addressing the digital divide. In our new video series, Ten Minutes with a Changemaker, we asked local, state, or federal officials to discuss connectivity challenges in their communities and ways to build strong digital infrastructure for future generations.



**REPRESENTATIVE  
YVETTE D. CLARKE  
(NY-06)**

If we aim to maintain our global wireless leadership there needs to be more understanding that our leadership means billions in economic growth and millions of jobs for Americans in the development of smart city technologies and the Internet of Things.

[Video](#)  
[Blog Post](#)



**DIRECTOR  
WASHINGTON STATE  
BROADBAND OFFICE  
RUSS ELLIOTT**

If we think about this in terms of electrification of our country, we see a great example of communities that were slow to adopt and are no longer "on the map." We want to ensure this is not the case for communities and broadband for the future of Washington.

[Video](#)  
[Blog Post](#)



**MAJORITY WHIP  
JAMES CLYBURN  
(SC-06)**

If we do not act to close the urban-rural digital divide and we settle for federal and state policies that allow rural areas to get second-class service compared to cities and suburbs, then we will have signed a death warrant for our small towns and communities.

[Video](#)  
[Blog Post](#)



**CHIEF INNOVATION  
OFFICER OF  
SOUTH BEND, IN  
DENISE LINN RIEDL**

Not addressing the digital divide will lead to a loss of social mobility and opportunities due to suffering of e-learning, job seeking, and online training... Democratic participation and engagement will also suffer if the digital divide is not addressed.

[Video](#)  
[Blog Post](#)

# NCC MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES ARE IN THE NEWS



**Boston, MA**

**Baltimore, Maryland.** Organizers installed a WiFi Hotspot in the Sandtown neighborhood and provided high-speed internet access for residents within a half-mile radius. They have now set their sights on installing a network of routers in additional locations throughout the city. The expansion includes the installation of a WiFi Hotspot in the Cherry Hill neighborhood and placing wireless routers in the homes of about fifty residents. ([The Business Journal](#))

**Boston, Massachusetts.** The City of Boston launched the Boston Counts 2020 initiative to guide and encourage every resident to complete their Census questionnaire. The initiative's [web page](#) includes a wealth of resources that are useful for other cities and towns. In a [video testimonial](#), Mayor Marty Walsh emphasized the importance of an equitable and complete count. ([Boston.Gov](#))

**San Antonio, Texas.** San Antonio's ConnectHomeSA, a partnership between the public and private sector, works to increase broadband adoption by providing computer literacy training, digital devices, hotspots, and WiFi connectivity for San Antonio Housing Authority Residents. ConnectHomeSA has helped upwards of 4,000 residents complete 18,000 hours in digital literacy training and assisted almost 1,000 residents with obtaining free hotspots or WiFi connectivity. ([San Antonio Express-News](#))

**Seattle, Washington.** Seattle residents shared their difficulties associated with accessing reliable internet in the wake of COVID-19. Research shows that, "closing the long-held digital gap isn't as simple as handing out computers: it requires reliable internet, adequate devices and digital literacy skills in order to take advantage of the technology." ([Seattle Times](#))

**South Bend, Indiana.** Denise Riedl, the Chief Innovation Officer of South Bend and Benton Institute for Broadband & Society Fellow, penned an [op-ed](#), "Smart Cities, Inclusive Technology, and Public Service," revealing her optimism about the future of technology in cities. Click [here](#) to access her June 2020 report, Lessons, cases, and resources developed by local technology champions and planners. ([Benton](#))

# BROADBAND HEADLINES

[Local government delivers equitable broadband during the pandemic](#). In response to issues concerning broadband adoption, local governments play a key role in narrowing the digital divide. (GCN)

[They Used Smartphone Cameras to Record Police Brutality—and Change History](#). Over the course of the past decade, smartphone technology has been instrumental in documenting instances of police brutality against African Americans.

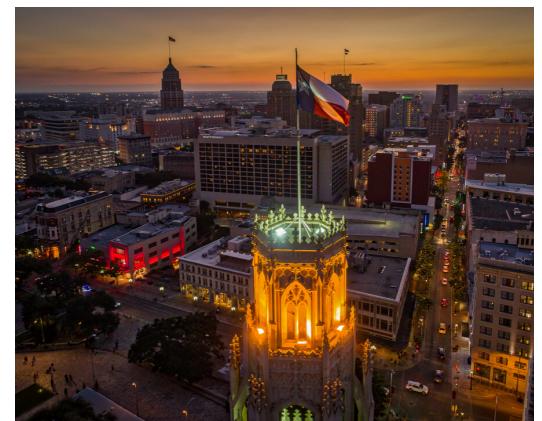
(The Wall Street Journal)

[Adult learning and the digital divide](#). In this episode of the Kojo Nnamdi Show, three Washington, DC, based educators discuss how they are using digital literacy initiatives to close the existing digital divide among the area's adult learners. (WAMU)

U.S. Representative G.K. Butterfield introduced the [Expanding Opportunities for Broadband Deployment Act \(H.R. 7160\)](#) on June 11th. If passed, the Bill would eliminate existing requirements that only internet service providers designated as eligible telecommunication providers can receive Universal Service Funds (USF), enabling more providers to participate in the Federal Communications Commission's Universal Service Fund programs. Striking down this existing barrier would accelerate broadband deployment to unserved and underserved communities.



South Bend, IN



San Antonio, TX

# NCC IS ADVOCATING FOR WIDESPREAD BROADBAND ACCESS



Seattle, WA

**Next Century Cities Sends Open Letter to Congressional Leadership Urging Investment in Digital Infrastructure.** On June 11, 2020, NCC sent an [open letter](#) to leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. The letter included testimonials from local officials from a variety of NCC member municipalities and shed light on the impact of COVID-19 on existing broadband infrastructure. Bringing national attention to local hardships and success stories will help heighten the urgency for digital infrastructure in communities nationwide.

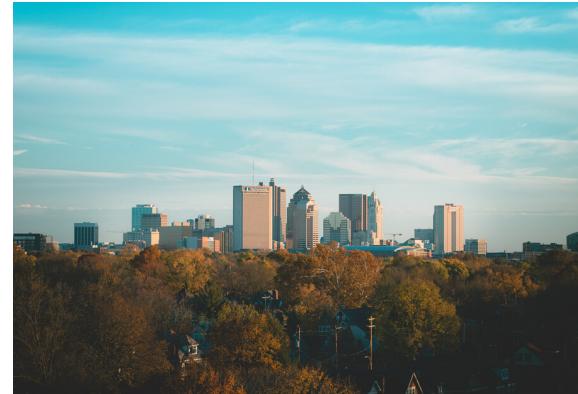
**Smart Cities Expo Includes NCC "On The Front Lines of Change."** In lieu of its in-person conference, this year's Smart Cities Expo Atlanta virtually convened local officials, changemakers, and innovators to share their stories and ideas. Executive Director, Francella Ochillo, was invited to discuss how NCC is working to ensure that communities big and small have access to digital opportunities. As she highlights in this [video](#), the lack of digital access is a longstanding issue that, like other inequalities, has been further exacerbated by COVID-19.

**Next Century Cities Supports Changes to the Rules Governing TV White Spaces.** Along with other members of the Public Interest Spectrum Coalition, NCC signed on to [reply comments](#) highlighting how FCC changes to the rules governing TV white spaces could promote broadband access, especially in rural, Tribal, low-income, and other underserved areas.

**Investing in Broadband Should be a part of a National Economic Recovery Strategy.** NCC's Policy Fellow, Oscar Lopez, writes about broadband's role in turning the United States economy around in the wake of COVID-19. Lopez argues that nationwide broadband expansion could aid in job creation while increasing educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.

# FEDERAL POLICIES HAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUR COMMUNITY

**The Federal Communications Commission Approves and Seeks Comment on New Rules Governing ATSC 3.0.** NCC's Policy Counsel, Ryan Johnston, explains the FCC's decision to adopt a Declaratory Ruling and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the new Advanced Television Systems Committee standard 3.0 and how adoption of the new standard could impact broadband connectivity in municipalities nationwide. Contact [Ryan](#) if your city or county is interested in weighing-in on this proceeding.



Columbus, OH

## **The FCC Approves and Seeks Comment on Rules Governing State and Local Approval of Wireless Equipment Modifications.**

Ryan Johnston delves into the FCC's June 10th approval of a Declaratory Ruling and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on state and local government approval of wireless equipment modifications under Section 6409(a) of the Spectrum Act of 2012. These amendments would directly impact local governments and indicate why it is necessary to consult state and local officials. Email [Ryan](#) for more information.



Lexington, KY

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS TO GET INVOLVED



**Commissioner Starks Announces Digital Opportunity Equity Recognition Program.** Federal Communications Commissioner Geoffrey Starks announced the Digital Opportunity Equity Recognition (DOER) Program. It will recognize organizations and individuals that have helped others access to broadband in areas heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The deadline for nominations is July 8, 2020. Learn more about the program [here](#). The [nomination form](#) must be submitted to [DOERProgram@fcc.gov](mailto:DOERProgram@fcc.gov) by July 8, 2020.

**NCC Hosts a Roundtable for Local Officials in New York.** Next Century Cities will host a [virtual roundtable on broadband connectivity](#) on June 24, 2020. During the roundtable, elected and appointed New York officials will make recommendations for Governor Cuomo's recently appointed commission on remote learning, telehealth, and broadband access. Josh Breitbart, Deputy Chief Technology Officer for the Mayor of New York, will provide opening remarks. Local leaders working on behalf of communities across the state can register for the roundtable [here](#).

**The FCC's Vision for Closing the Digital Divide.** On Thursday, Jun 18th at 3:00pm, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai is participating in a fireside chat with telecom expert Joel Thayer to discuss the Chairman's plans to close the digital divide and how the agency's policies will evolve in the coming months. Learn more about the program and register for the event [here](#).

**Cities Rising Summit.** The Tom Tom Foundation is planning a [virtual event](#) featuring flash talks, audience breakouts, and conversations with leaders from across the country. The event is scheduled for September through October 2020. Speakers will be announced in weeks to come.

# LET'S STAY CONNECTED



**Tell us how we're doing.** Your feedback is important to us. Share your comments [here](#).

**Send us photos of your community and your next-generation broadband successes.** We want to share your good news and photos of our member communities. If you have photos you would like to include in our next newsletter, please send them to [Brittany-Rae Gregory](#).

**Does your city, town, or county have a new mayor, commissioner, or supervisor?** If so, please email [Lukas Pietrzak](#) so we can update our records.

**Send us your Requests for Proposals (RFPs).** Our [website](#) includes a subscription box that allows individuals to sign up for an alert whenever a new RFP is announced. Our goal is to get your RFP more attention, giving you better options during the selection process. We have already received dozens of subscriptions from a wide variety of vendors, so please be sure to [send us your RFPs](#). You can [visit this page](#) to read current and past RFPs from other cities as well.

**Is your city currently involved in civic engagement projects that leverage technology to benefit the community?** [Let us know!](#) We would like to feature your community in upcoming blog posts and reports.

**Is there someone from your community that you think should be added to this list?** [Send us](#) their contact information.