

How Civic Infrastructure Supports Digital Equity

Long before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 15 million public school students lacked internet access at home which prevented their ability to complete homework. This homework gap disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous and Latine families. The shift to virtual classrooms during the pandemic widened the digital divide and limited learning opportunities for millions.

The StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network had long recognized digital access inequities and pivoted quickly during the pandemic to bridge the digital divide.

A CLOSER LOOK: Fresno, California



FCC indicates broadband is not available to ~595K people



* FCC Broadband has or "could" provide greater than or equal to 25 Mbps / 3 Mbps

Microsoft data indicates ~11.0M people do not use the internet at broadband speeds



** Broadband speeds greater than or equal to 25 Mbps

Maps showing FCC fixed broadband availability and broadband usage based on Microsoft data updated as of October 2020, California. [Click here](#) to learn more.

A member of the StriveTogether network, Fresno Cradle to Career worked with community stakeholders to create the Fresno Coalition for Digital Inclusion (FCDI). This cross-sector group includes leaders from local city and county government, institutions, agencies and community-based organizations. Together, they work to ensure equitable solutions are implemented for all.

They began by determining the actual level of internet connectivity in Fresno County. They found data provided by Internet Service Providers vastly misrepresented on-the-ground reality in urban and rural areas. To get better data, they examine Microsoft cloud services to determine internet performance based on actual usage and worked with the Fresno Unified School District to gather real-time data.

The school district found that insufficient internet speeds may affect more than 27,000 students from doing their schoolwork online. Working with FCDI, the school district created a cellular network using 15 schools as towers providing coverage for 10,000 students and families in southeast and southwest Fresno. The school district also provided laptops for students, Wi-Fi internet on buses and broadband access at home so that many more underserved students can learn beyond the school. FCDI, of which Fresno Cradle to Career is a part, is working with the state to use new

technology to better measure internet speeds and use an equity lens in the decision making around towers and fiber to ensure digital inclusion for all.

STRIVETOGETHER: WHO WE ARE

StriveTogether is a national network of nearly 70 communities across 28 states and Washington, DC, working to build a future where a child's potential is not dictated by race, ethnicity, zip code or circumstance. The StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network impacts the lives of more than 11 million youth — including more than 7 million children of color. For more information about StriveTogether, visit strivetogether.org.