**"CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN
ADVANCING BROADBAND ADOPTION AND USE"**

**Co-Sponsored by the
Media Bureau
and the
Digital Empowerment and Inclusion Working Group of the
Advisory Committee on Diversity and Digital Empowerment**

**Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

**August 3, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

**Additional Resources on Libraries and Broadband
August 2020**

1) **Information from Afterschool Alliance (Workshop Participant)**

   a. Blog with a link to a survey showing about 75% of afterschool programs working in partnership with libraries: https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/afterschoolsnack/Have-you-thanked-your-library-lately_04-03-2018.cfm

   b. And the full report can be found here as well:http://www.starnetlibraries.org/stem-in-libraries/collaboration/collaboration-opportunities/afterschool/

   c. Here is an example of a successful ongoing collaboration between afterschool and libraries in Nashville known as the Nashville After Zone Alliance: https://nashvillez.org/#:~:text=Launched%20in%202010%20by%20Mayor,the%20learning%20experiences%20of%20youth.

d. *Mapping out digital inequities.* Stephanie Barker, an Afterschool Sustainability VISTA at KYOSA (Kentucky Out of School Time Association), has been supporting her site's efforts in highlighting and addressing digital inequity among K-12 students. KYOSA was recently featured in a video report on digital inequity and Tom Haggard, Director of KYOSA, shared that, "This was made possible thanks to the incredible work that Stephanie Barker has been doing with our data and mapping project." For the story, Stephanie created two different interactive maps using PolicyMap, a GIS-based data mapping tool. The static maps featured in the video report "show how digital inequity is not just a product of lack of/inadequate infrastructure but is also closely linked with socioeconomic and racial inequalities, particularly within Kentucky's urban centers (i.e. Louisville, Lexington, and Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky)," Stephanie explains. Click here to find the map that Stephanie created that explores computer access across Kentucky and click here to find an interactive map that explores broadband internet access across the state.

2) **Information from American Library Association (Workshop Participant)**

a. Digital inclusion reports

Up until 2015 when funding became scarce, ALA produced yearly reports on public libraries and technology starting in the mid-90s. The most recent report focused on digital inclusion. Although the report is five years old, the themes are still relevant, and ALA anticipates another increase in the need for online access through libraries. Here are a couple briefs from the last report:

Libraries and Digital Inclusion

Digital Literacy

Employment

3) **Information from the Institute of Museum and Library Services**

IMLS has this 2-pager summary of some of its digital inclusion projects. There is also a 2013 report on small and rural libraries which might be of interest. Additional IMLS resources include:

IMLS Office of Library Services Brochure

IMLS Research & Evaluation

IMLS Grant Programs

Examples of libraries with partnerships supporting digital inclusion efforts:

- ➤ Nashville Public Library continues to be very involved with ConnectHome. Marian Christmon (workshop participant) is the lead on this work.
- ➤ The Maine State Library is a partner in a digital inclusion initiative that currently focuses on the most rural counties in the state. There are a number of partnerships involved in this work.
- ➤ The Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records has a Digital Inclusion Resource Hub and right now hosts a map of public library Wi-Fi access points. Nicole Umyam (workshop participant) is the lead for digital inclusion at the State Library. Nicole has also done a lot of work with the AZ Tribes.
- ➤ This is a more specific examples of how libraries might be tackling digital inclusion needs of specific groups in their communities. The Jackson County Public Library (KY) was a partner with Peoples Rural Telephone Coop in its Virtual Livingroom project to use telehealth to connect veterans to the VA hospital in Lexington KY. This has now grown beyond the one library to be an initiative of the Foundation for Rural Service.
- ➤ New initiative between the Public Library Association and Microsoft to help address connectivity gaps in rural communities during the current crisis. It's an example of a public private partnership at the national level with local impact: http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2020/04/public-library-association-and-microsoft-announce-initiative-help-expand-0

Library building closures widen a chronic digital divide. A substantial majority of libraries (more than 80%) of survey respondents report they left on their public Wi-Fi access when the library building was closed before the COVID-19 crisis, and 12% have added or expanded this service since the crisis began. Smaller percentages of libraries have expanded the range of their public Wi-Fi, checked out mobile internet hotspots or used their bookmobiles to provide internet access.

Data provide the first sense of how widespread the use of hotspots (p7 of the findings: http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/advocacy/covid-19/PLA-Libraries-Respond-Survey_Aggregate-Results_FINAL2.pdf). See p11—libraries list public internet access as one of four priority needs, which is significant. Also, libraries are using their hotspots in a temporary fixed way to provide public internet access.

4) **Information from Recent Common Sense Media and Boston Consulting Group Report on Digital Divide**

On June 29, Common Sense Media (CSM) and Boston Consulting Group (BCG) released a report analyzing the digital divide for U.S. K-12 public school students and teachers. With extended school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of a home Internet connection and/or device suitable to support distance learning undermines students' ability to learn and engage.

The report contends that the "distance learning digital divide" is comprised of three segments with unique needs that must be met: 1) fully disconnected, with no home Internet connection and no device; 2) Internet insufficient, with a laptop or tablet, but inadequate connectivity for distance learning; and (3) device deficient, with adequate connectivity, but no laptop or tablet. Key findings are as follows:

- **Students.** Using 2018 data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the report finds that 15-16 million K-12 public school students, or about 30%, lived in households without either an Internet connection or a device adequate for distance learning.

    - Of these students, about 9 million students are fully disconnected; 5-6 million are Internet insufficient; and 1 million are device deficient.

    - Using data from the FCC and Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS), the report estimates that 2-3 million students do not have an Internet connection at home because of lack of access to a wired connection in their residential area.

- **Teachers.** The report finds that 300,000 to 400,000 K-12 teachers, or 8%, live in households without adequate Internet connectivity to support teaching distance learning, and 100,000 teachers, about 3%, lack adequate home computing devices. Though this is smaller than the overall population without a home Internet connection or device, "the impact is magnified" due to the number of students that teachers must reach.

- **Cost to Close the Distance Learning Digital Divide.** The report estimates that it would cost $6-11 billion to provide Internet connections and devices to K-12 public school students in need for one year, and an additional $1 billion to do the same for K-12 teachers in need.

The report also provides a state-by-state breakdown of the distance learning digital divide as an appendix, as well as in an interactive map.

In addition to the data analysis, the authors interviewed representatives from more than 20 stakeholders, including Comcast, Charter, Cox, Verizon, T-Mobile, Apple, Zoom, the FCC, and Khan Academy, as well as other state and local education agencies and education stakeholders. BCG and the Walton Family Foundation funded the report.