

Why is this topic important?

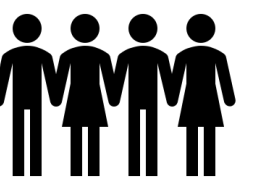
This strategy aims to bridge the digital divide by enhancing technology access for all residents of Inland SoCal by improving internet connectivity, providing access to digital devices, and offering digital literacy programs to ensure everyone can participate in the digital economy.

Why is technology access important for a strong and inclusive regional economy?

Technology is an increasingly large part of everyday life. All sorts of activities—searching for a job, paying bills, obtaining government services—now require internet access and some level of digital literacy. Unfortunately, the digital divide remains a challenge for some in the Inland Empire, particularly those from low-income households and / or rural communities. Improving internet connectivity and access to laptops and tablets can advance inclusive regional economic development by ensuring that everyone has the resources and skills they need to make use of technology in their daily lives. Enhanced connectivity can also attract more businesses to the region and encourages innovation.

How will technology access contribute to a more equitable Inland SoCal?

This strategy can improve equity by ensuring that all residents, particularly those from underserved communities, have the tools and skills needed to participate in the digital economy. Providing subsidies for access points (e.g., personal internet subscriptions, devices, community centers that provide computers and internet, community device lending programs) helps enable more people to access job opportunities, education, and vital services. Encouraging employers to provide technology allowances and partnering with tech companies for device donations further bridges the digital divide, supporting remote work and online learning. Investing in broadband infrastructure and advocating for digital inclusion policies will expand internet access in underserved areas, creating a more connected and resilient region.



What we have heard from the community ...

Kelly^[1], a citizen of the Torres Martinez tribal community, talked at length about the barriers faced by those who don't have the technological skills to apply to jobs online. She described that, although most job applications are online, "*They don't know how to do it online. [...] And that's another reason why they see how come we can just turn it in, you know, how can [we] fill it out like we used to? Because everything's computerized now. ...Most people don't even know what online means* , you know, the people that are out here? I mean, I know they try to go for jobs. And they go well, we tried to ask for applications. They told us no, go online. . . . Because that happens a lot. ... the ones that were out there, *the tribal members who are certainly searching for employment, they're the ones that are like, so used to doing it on paper, and they need help doing it online* . And they get frustrated too, because they can't get it on their phone or they can't do it. They don't know how to send it. They don't know how to, you know, attach it or whatever. "

With the increasing importance of technology in the workforce, programs that offer digital skills training can greatly improve job prospects. These initiatives teach participants essential computer skills, coding, digital marketing, and other tech -related competencies.



Key data findings...

While most households in the region have access to a computer and internet, there are still pockets of areas with low technological access. 2021 ACS data shows that **approximately 3.2% of Riverside County and approximately 2.9% of San Bernardino County households did not have a computer** , and **approximately 6.9% of Riverside County and approximately 6.2% of San Bernardino County residents did not have any type of internet subscription** . Households making less than \$20,000 were also almost twice as likely to not have any type of internet subscription as compared to households making \$20,000 - \$74,999, across both counties.

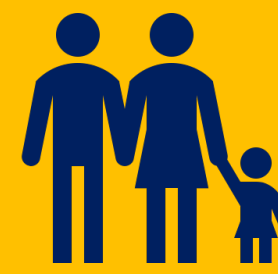


Strategies and tactics

- Provide subsidized internet and device access** : Subsidized internet access and refurbished devices can help ensure that low-income families have the necessary tools to participate in the digital economy and access essential services.
- Enhance community resources** : Bridge the digital divide by establishing community centers with free computer labs and Wi-Fi access and partnering with local libraries to create laptop and tablet lending programs. These resources will provide essential technology access and support to underserved communities, enabling them to participate in the digital economy and access vital services.
- Expand digital skills training** : Enhance digital literacy and technical skills in underserved communities by offering technology training workshops and classes and improving access to affordable or free software and online tools for skills development and entrepreneurship.
- Implement mobile technology solutions** : Deploying mobile technology units will bring internet access and technology resources directly to remote and underserved areas, ensuring that residents have the tools and connectivity they need for education, employment, and daily activities.
- Encourage employer -supported tech access** : Encouraging employers to provide technology allowances or reimbursements for remote work setups and collaborating with tech companies to donate refurbished devices can help bridge the digital divide that afflicts underserved and low-income communities in the region.
- Invest in broadband infrastructure and advocate for digital inclusion** : Infrastructure investments and government efforts to prioritize digital inclusion can expand broadband access in underserved areas and address the digital divide.

TOPIC

(Economic Mobility and Wealth -Building)



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INSERT TEXT

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INSERT TEXT / QUOTES

 Key data findings...

INSERT GRAPH(S) / TEXT



Strategies and tactics

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