



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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In Control: Innovation and Technology Committee

DEPARTMENT: Office of Innovation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jose De La Cruz, Chief Innovation Officer

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-wide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and possible action on the digital divide and digital inclusion in San Antonio

SUMMARY:

This briefing provides the Innovation and Technology Committee with an overview of the digital divide and digital inclusion in San Antonio

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Over the years, broadband has transformed the daily lives and economies of cities across the county. Access to broadband internet has become an essential component of economic opportunity and financial well-being, yet there are certain population segments, including low-income and rural areas where access to internet lags behind. This is referred to as the digital divide. The digital divide leads to further economic and social disparities for low-income and underserved populations.

Digital Inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This includes 5 elements: 1) affordable, robust broadband internet service; 2) internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; 3) access to digital literacy training; 4) quality technical support; and 5) applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.

In San Antonio, the Digital Inclusion Alliance of San Antonio (DIASA) is a public and private coalition dedicated to advancing digital inclusion opportunities to foster educational attainment, competitive employment, financial prosperity, and greater community engagement for all San Antonio residents. DIASA is cultivating and promoting public policies and initiatives that prioritize digital equity so that all residents can take full advantage of the digital economy.

ISSUE:

In June 2018, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) ranked the Worst Connected Cities in the United States. NDIA ranked 186 U.S. cities with more than 50,000 households by the total percentage of each city's households lacking fixed broadband internet subscriptions.

San Antonio ranked 42nd on the list with over 186,000 or 37% of households without a fixed broadband connection. The term "fixed broadband internet" as used by the U.S. Census Bureau includes wireline broadband technologies (cable Internet, digital subscriber line (DSL), fiber to the premises) as well as satellite and "fixed wireless" technologies.

By comparison other Texas cities include the City of Brownsville which ranked first with 67% of households, the City of Dallas ranked 20th with 42% of households and the City of Houston ranked 41st with 38% of households lacking fixed broadband internet.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.