2022 ConnectHomeUSA

Preparing for New Broadband Funding: A Collaborative Partnership Model

Dina Lehmann-Kim: Thank you so much, Kate. Good morning, everyone. Welcome and thank you so much for attending this webinar. My name is Dina Lehmann-Kim. I'm the program manager for the ConnectHomeUSA program at HUD. The HUD ConnectHome team is really excited about this webinar. It's a timely one, since the very new and very large federal funding [inaudible] that are now available, require collaboration between states and local entities.

Today, [inaudible] broadband office and global broadband coalition, we are very lucky to be joined today by Mark Vasconi, the director of the Washington State Broadband Office and Ann Campbell, the infrastructure program manager with the Washington State Broadband Office.

They will discuss the work they do at the state level to promote broadband across the state and how the collaborative partnership model with local Broadband Action Team or BATS, informs their work.

Then we'll be hearing from Debra Hansen, who is the extension director with the Stevens County BAT. She'll talk about how BATs are organized, why they are important, and how they've been successful.

I'd like to take a quick [inaudible] to thank our speakers and their teams for helping to put this webinar together. And Annelieske Sanders for all her help, her help coordinating this webinar. And now, I'll turn it over to Mark Vasconi and Ann Campbell from the Washington State Broadband Office. Thank you so much.

Mark Vasconi: Good morning. Can everybody hear me, and can most of you or some of you see me? Just going to be -- just going to check on the [inaudible].

Male: We can hear you, Mark.

Mark Vasconi: Okay. Great, Great. Great. Okay. All right. Well, thank you. Thank you for inviting us to anticipate in this webinar today. There is a lot of ground to cover. We're going to try to do it somewhat briefly.

And it's going to -- we're going to talk about efforts that we've engaged in in the last or two and a half years, what we're currently doing, and the partnership that we have with Washington State extension organization, and how central the development and the fostering of community voices. And we're doing that for Broadband Action Teams. But let's get going into the meat of the presentation. Next page. Thank you.

What is a state broadband office? A number of years ago, I think it's two across the country, broadband while having been seen as an incredibly important requirement for digital life in America, a number of states really didn't have a focused effort on that. And in 2019, Washington State, which had had some previous efforts, sort of reenergized their focus on developing the state broadband office.

So in 2019, Washington State Broadband Office was created with 2.5 FTE to address the digital [inaudible]. Originally it was envisioned that it would be a policy office; however, that started to quickly evolve into also being an organization that organized funding and helped to direct funding to various entities within the state.

One of our guiding principles was to ensure that we were able to provide liable, resilient, and affordable broadband service to all parts of the state. And in the attempts to do that, in our efforts to do that, the offices expanded originally from 2.5 people to what are now nine people with more FTEs available to us.

But certainly is, I think you can all imagine, as the funding increases, with funding come additional requirements, which then requires additional management capabilities, and that's how we are actually moving forward with --- or that's why we're moving forward with additional headcount.

We talk about leading with equity. What does that mean and what does digital equity really mean in America or in any one region? And we sort of see it in -- I guess, some of you probably heard this, but being a pretty much a three-legged stool, you have to have access, which is to say there has to be the infrastructure, and the network has to be there, to be able to reach participants or to reach end users. So that's the access component.

But you al- -- it also has to be affordable. And thankfully, with most recently ACP, we've been able to make, I think, certain strides towards affordability but companies themselves have also taken up the challenge and offered various low-income plans, which have, I think, also helped. And it would be unfair to not address the fact that private companies have moved forward in that space.

And then thirdly, when one gets beyond access and affordability, one also has to talk about inclusion, but that also means digital literacy. If people can't use these services because of a lack of understanding as to how they work, then you basically established a large network that is affordable that has substantial hindrances to actually being able to use the services. So those three things combined will produce what we believe is digital equity.

Our goals moving forward, by 202- -- by the end of 2024, we want to create access to all users of at least 25 down, 3 megabytes up. By 2026, we want to have our anchor institutions, that being libraries, schools, community centers, health clinics, we want to ensure that each one of those locations in the state has at least 1 gig symmetrical available to them. And them by 2028 or the end of 2028, we want to reach symmetrical 150 megabytes for households and business connections. Next slide, please.

We've gone through one funding cycle. Well, we're in -- we're pretty much in the middle of a funding cycle right now. And in that, we funded, not only with the state broadband office, but also with two of our partner funding agencies at the state level, on the works board as well as the community economic revitalization board.

Through the three of us, we funded 48 projects, totaling some $270 million since July 1st of 2021. These investments have been through tribal nations, courts, cities, counties, public utility districts, and non-profits, covering 24 of 39 counties in Washington.

I think every state may be a little bit different. When I talk about Public Utility Districts, PUDs, I don't know that every state in the county has PUDs. But PUDs were established back in the 1930s, largely as a marketing arm for power that came from the [inaudible] power administrations investments in the 1930s in order to electrify the pacific northwest.

PUDs are established in every county in Washington, and I also believe in Oregon. And many of the PUDs in Washington have a substantial capability in providing infrastructure service. Because remember -- and I think it's easy to lose sight of the fact that what we are ultimately trying to get to, is the provision of service, not just infrastructure.

And in the world of broadband, as many of you probably know, infrastructure does not necessarily equate to service. One can put all the fiber in the ground that one wants, but there has to be a customer-facing capability in order to offer this thing called service, which is actually what it's specified in [inaudible].

So PUDs are well positioned in order to do that. And we've been moving quite rapidly, we currently have about $200 million of additional authority available to us to build on the progress that we've already made. So we feel good at having basically created a first start to be able to then take some of those learnings and leveraged those into the funding that IIJA will offer.

But in short, together with the three funding organizations, we've committed to the state goals to connect every household and business in Washington with functional and affordable internet service, broadband services in particular. Next slide, please.

As we all know, the digital divide has lots of different aspects to it. It affects persons of color in a disproportionate way. There are substantial regional differences between rural and urban locations. The elderly are substantially impacted by their inability, in many instances, to use the internet or to be able to afford it, if it's available. Income, of course, plays a major role. And that is in part, attempted to be addressed by programs such as ACP.

And it is truly a multifaceted issue. Language capability is another divide that is essential to identify and to try to work with. So what we're trying to do, and we'll get to it through the use of digital navigators, which is at the bottom of this slide, we're trying to bridge these things to the extent that we can. And as we move forward, we learn all the time about more effective ways to go about bridging a divide.

During the pandemic, the need was certainly accentuated. The need's always been there but it was certainly accentuated by the pandemic. And in order to address access needs, we helped to fund with a private entity, 81 hotspots across the state. Most of them in rural parts of the state. And those help, because at least they provided a place for people to go to be able to access the internet in order for children to do homework, or in order for people be able to make unemployment filings, in order to do job searches.

So these are the kinds of things that we feel good about having been able to do. That program is being funded again for the next biennium and it's being expanded. So that was in some sense, a down payment, like what we are attempting to do here.

Another way that we've connected is through what we call our digital navigators program. And I'm certain that that's not a term that's unfamiliar to folks on this call. But what digital navigators attempts to do, is really get to these issues of access to devices as well as digital literacy.

We have reached out to partnering with Goodwill Industries, the Seattle Housing Authority, the Community Health Network of Washington, and Equity in Education Coalition, to be able to provide learnings, to provide digital navigation, digital literacy courses, and to also begin to try to divide some -- try to bridge some the language issues.

As you can well imagine, Washington State is a large spectrum of languages that are spoken by non-English speakers. So moving forward in that space to try to provide support in native languages, has been something that's been really important so that those that are in a multilingual environment have the ability to learn how to use the internet and learn how to use broadband.

In our upcoming biennium, our funding is basically being doubled for digital navigators. Our funding previously had been about $7.4/7.5 million. That is doubling to $15 million. So we continue to move forward on that front. And that's been, I think, very helpful at addressing that third leg of the digital equity store. Next slide, please.

Here we go. Thank you. Some of the things our digital navigation capability are able to promote, are rapid design studies and grant-writing services. Rapid design studies is the tool that we use that when a community comes to us with the potential project, we have the ability of using a partner to provide some estimate of what the proposed network would actually cost.

And that's important when one starts to think about moving forward with various projects and trying to secure funding for projects. One has to have some sense, some baseline as to what that looks like.

Rapid design studies will provide that. And usually, those design studies will attempt to get to what is indeed a least cost solution in order to provide service to a given area. And that solution may be fiber, that solution may be wireless, or it may be some microwave arrangement. But we use rapid design studies in order to help our community understand how much it would cost in order to provide service.

We also provide grant-writing services to support governments and public private partnerships, tribal nations who are interested in moving forward in attempting to secure monies through a grant. This has been particularly helpful as well, especially for those entities that are typically smaller or haven't engaged in this space.

So this helps to get to certain capacity issues that particular organizations may have. And then lastly but separately from digital navigation, we are partnering with the Governor's Office of Equity, in what are digital equity forums.

Digital equity forums meet once every two months. And it's basically a place where the community, various members of the community from across Washington, can come to us with input on what they believe the community needs in order to move forward with access, affordability, and digital literacy, and the projects that need to be funded.

The thing that I find interesting about the digital equity forum as well as what we'll continue to talk about with respect to that, is that the model, the investment model that is being flipped, typically the investment model, for various reasons and good reasons, the investment in broadband is being driven by the private sector.

And the private sector has its own set of drivers. Those drivers are typically identified and defined by their shareholders. So they're going to make investments driven by shareholder returns. Not necessarily driven by community returns. What we're able to do now because of the requirements of engaging communities, is flip that, so the community have a direct -- not only a direct voice but are starting to direct where these public monies are going in order to provide broadband.

So a lot of the work that we're doing, I think, has to acknowledge the fact that that decision path has been somewhat flipped. And it's flipped because of things like a digital equity forum. And it's flipped by things like Broadband Action Teams, which we'll get to in a moment. Next slide, please.

We have been engaging for a couple of years now with broadband speed test -- with one particular broadband speed test. And as you can see, there's that funny box with black and white characters and black and white designs in it. This is our speed test.

And we've seen speed tests being taken by end users across the state. We've been able to gather this information and create what is effectively a mapping of where broadband is available and at what speeds. That's been rather helpful in order for us to be able to begin to direct or investment strategy. And we continue to use these speed tests.

Now, hopefully, with the FCC's new map that will be coming out late third quarter or early forth quarter of this year, there will be a lot more accuracy in that map. But we've been using the broadband speed test in order to sort of fill in what have been incredible large gabs with respect to the FCC's process.

And then again, as I've mentioned earlier, Affordable Connectivity Program, the ACP, which was announced last month. We're engaged in a role in coordinating inner agency effort with respect to that. And we will be working to increase the uptake. Next slide, please.

All right. Broadband Action Teams, I -- prior to coming into this position, I've been in this position about two and a half months, I hadn't been aware of Broadband Action Teams, because I had not been in a broadband management role.

But what I am incredibly impressed by, is that Broadband Action Teams are able to bring together various inputs, various representatives in a community, in a centralized place to be able to have, I think, a very in-depth conversation around digital equity, around access, around affordability.

And it's something that is somewhat organic, but when done well, it's organized so that everybody has a voice, and those voices can come together to create hopefully, a consensus as to what needs to be done, and that that consensus can then come to the State Broadband Office in order to begin to formulate plans and have funding to support that.

As I'd mentioned, they have been instrumental in establishing digital equity efforts across the state or certainly in the communities in which they've been active. Typically, not only do you have the education community or the health community, or the social services community, but you also have, I think, a functioning BAT, a provider community.

So whether that be a cable company or a traditional phone company, all of those entities come to play at a Broadband Action Team. And shortly, you'll hear from Debra Hansen, who is one of our Broadband Action Team partners, who's been instrumental in the development of the Broadband Action Team in eastern Washington, that's been particularly effective. Next slide, please.

Currently while there are 39 counties in the state, roughly a dozen of them are particularly functional. And what's really important here to realize is that in order for us to move forward with an effective state plan in the pursuit of BEAD funding, we are going to need input from BATs across the state or at least BATs if not on a county basis, at least on a regional basis, some sort of a multicounty arrangement.

So continuing that effort is substantially important to us. And as I think I'd mentioned earlier, we've engaged in a partnership with the Washington State University extension program to facilitate individual BATs in each county and with each tribal nation. And the BAT service is a great forum in order to share goals in order to, I think, define goals for each of the counties.

We're also providing local level funding for digital equity planning to both county, to county specifically as well as to tribal nations. So that they can move forward and developing specifically for them, their own digital equity plans.

So between the work that Washington State extension is doing, Washington State University extension is doing as well as the county and tribal specific funding, we believe that we will have the tools necessary to develop our state plan, which will then go into the BEAD framework to generate funding. Next slide, please.

If you don't have a BAT, what might you have? And I gather that ConnectHomeUSA helps to connect public and Indian housing residents to low-cost in-home internet service, affordable devices, and the necessary training so they'll understand why broadband is important.

And essentially [inaudible] communities are indeed BATs. They may not think of themselves this way, but the point is, is that there are ways of organizing public need in order to gain funding so that those needs are met. And next slide, please.

So I guess -- the point here is champion yourself. Don't be shy. Tell people what you're doing. Tell people -- let communities know that you're engaged in these processes. You know, maybe Debra will be able to talk a little more about that, but it's getting out into the community and letting the community understand that these are places for the community to bring their needs to an organization that may end up being able to meet those needs.

Again, it's flipping the model that's really essential. And this is where the -- this is how the model gets flipped and how the model then proceeds going forward. Next slide.

This is a timeline with respect to the future of broadband funding. And specifically, we're looking at four different [inaudible] their speed, which is basically an infrastructure funding program, which has, I think a total of about $42.5 billion in it. It's the digital equity fund out of IIJA. It's a tribal fund and a middle mild fund.

BEAD and digital equity are formula-based funds, whereas Middle Mile is a competitive fund. And the state broadband office is focusing on its efforts with respect to BEAD as well as digital equity.

Respect to BEAD, our letter of intent will be provided from the governor to NTIA by July 18th. By August 15th we will be submitting a proposed budget. We're expecting then probably in the October or November timeframe, to receive a determination for $5 million of planning money, which will then go into supporting the crafting of the five-year plan, which you see there.

That five-year plan will likely be submitted sometime midyear of 2023. Assuming that moves forward, we will hopefully begin to see funding sometime in late 2023 or 2024. We speak very briefly about the digital equity money.

By July 12th, which is coming right up, we will be submitting a budget for just over $1 million of digital equity state planning. Assuming that that comes to us, there will be a one-year state planning effort. And then moving forward, assuming that works well, we will ultimately be looking at a five-year state capacity implementation of plans that we put together.

With that, I don't really have anything more. If anybody has anything that they would like to add -- Ann, if you have anything you'd like to add with respect to the funding process, please do. Otherwise, I would like to turn it over to Debra Hansen, to speak about our efforts with respect to BATs. Thank you.

Ann Campbell: So before we segue to Debra, I just wanted to second what Mark just outlined at a really high level. The chart that you see in front of you, gives a very basic overview of the process. There is a loss of energy and attention being paid by a variety of sources, to, "Oh, all of this money is being released by the Feds to put broadband out in all of our community, so why are states taking so long to move forward?"

Well, for those of you who are old enough to recognize the reference, when the Feds released these funds, they did not send out a prize van with Ed McMahon and a big huge check. What they did is they did an excellent job of spelling out a very deliberate process, which they released in early May. And it has a very step-by-step approach with deadlines in it, which Mark just touched on.

The first deadline is the July 18th deadline -- excuse me, the July 12th deadline for the formula grants and the digital equity. And that is the case of submitting detailed information on how the state plans on capturing digital equity information and creating a digital plan.

And the BEAD funding, the Broadband Equity Accessibility and Deployment funding, that is -- the original or initial letter of intent is due on July 18th. But the letter of intent is not sufficient to start that particular ball rolling. It is -- in other words, the letter of intent needs to be accompanied by a broad overview plan on how the state plans on gathering information, awarding projects, rolling projects out, prioritizing projects, etc., and how the state intents to incorporate feedback at the extremely local level all the way up to the [inaudible] editorial level.

And that's where our Broadband Action Team, BAT teams come in. And with that, it -- just to reiterate, it's a case of identifying the plan, getting the plan approved by the federal government that is managing this [inaudible] program, so that's NTIA and then following through on those planning efforts.

So this is why it's going to be a multiple year process. Plus, infrastructure generally speaking, takes between a year to four years, depending on the type of infrastructure for construction efforts. There are a variety of reasons for that, which I don't need to go into unless you need that detail. But be patient. It will come and it will be amazing when it comes. And with that, I will leave the floor. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

Debra Hansen: Hi, this is Debra. I'm going to do a sound check. Can you hear me? Okay. I'm seeing a nod from Ann. Well, that last slide and that last conversation just nailed my point right away. You have to have a good conversation and relationship with your broadband office in your state, because this is so much information and so much coming down the pike, that we all have to be on deck to be able to help out with this.

So thank very much, Ann and Mark. I appreciate that you're there at that level. I am a county extension director in Stevens County, which is a very rural county on the east side of the state. And I've been working on broadband for about, I hate to say, 20-30 years, and I finally feel like all the planets are aligning and we're going to make it happen in rural America. So very happy to be here. So could I have the next slide, please?

I want to tell you that our Broadband Action Team, the one tenant that we all fall back on, is broadband as local. Even though you look at that state map and the big funding that's coming from the Feds, a small and mighty group of people that are local and passionate about their local broadband needs and issues, are the ones that can bring that message up to the state level.

And I'm so glad that the funding is coming through the state because we can have that kind of relationship. On our Broadband Action Team we work on awareness some, but we don't work on that as much anymore because a lot of people understand why they need internet. But we all work on access and use. So we can work in a small group like this.

We have 46 members on our team that come in and out of the meeting. So we have a lot of people that are involved in this type of work. Next slide, please.

So when you think about people being involved in your Broadband Action Team or whatever your group calls themselves, like Mark said, we are not the name brand. This is what we call ourselves.

Broadband touches everyone. Your local officials have an ability to do things like dig once, make policies. State and federal legislatures certainly have an impact on funding and possibilities for you. But locally, you've got information technology experts. Librarians are great at that digital navigation piece. Your medical talks about telehealth, schools talk about education. Your tribes talk about their very specific issues when it comes to getting broadband out to their tribal members.

Your residence, the people who just get crabby about not having good internet, are good to have on the team, because they do a very local boots-on-the-ground perspective.

Workforce development is great, economic development, emergency management, and fire districts. I will tell you that our Broadband Action Team really kicked off when we had a 55,000 acre fire, and the fire camp that was trying to solve the problem, did not have access to the internet. So they had to drive the maps an hour to the county to upload it to the internet.

So that just absolutely put a fire under our belly to get going on this broadband work. Because there was fiber across the road, and we couldn't get to it. So let's see the next slide, please.

Okay. One of the things that we found challenging with our Broadband Action Team, it's really easy to sit around and talk about what we need and how to maybe find funding. But that internet service provider is the piece that can be challenging. Because like Mark said, it used to be relied on the privates to solve this.

But now we're starting to see that there is public private partnerships that can have an impact. The federal funding that's coming through, if we have ways to work with the private internet service providers and help prioritize where those projects go and help write letters of support and fill in those blanks, we think we're going to have a better opportunity to solve broadband in those really difficult places to get internet.

In our county, we have rivers, rocks, mountains, and trees, and very low population. So it's not easy and it's certainly not easy for businesses to do that and make money at it. So we need to think about where -- how do we get that internet to them and make it good for the internet service providers.

This is our very first internet service provider meeting. There was so many people in the room, that we could only put the internet service providers and the Broadband Action Team at the table, and then we made our elected officials sit around the outside. They could listen to what our problems were, what our opportunities were for working with the internet service providers.

Again, I found this to be one of the most challenging push pull pieces of solving broadband in our region. So look to people to help you figure out how to make this happen. Next slide, please.

To do a Broadband Action Team in our area, we really felt like we've been successful -- excuse me, successful because we've had a local team leader, which is me. Every meeting I go to, I talk about broadband. Every time I get in front of people, I talk about broadband and ask for ways for them to support.

We also have a coordinator that takes notes and make sure that we get pieces out there. She watches webinars, filled me in when I'm missing something. And then we have a lot of outside resources, the broadband office. Anybody that gives any kind of education trainings, we pay attention to and try to figure out where to focus our efforts and inform our folks on how to do this work.

One of our tenants has never given up. We are valiant in our efforts to keep going. I have internet at my house, but I know a lot of people who don't, so I keep thinking about those people that have to drive to the Wi-Fi hotspots in winter. I want them to have broadband at their home. So next slide, please.

Some of the activities that we've been involved in and the way we get there is, we set community priorities and goals, where can we start billing out these broadband services out to. We looked at where we have access and gaps, where do we have places that can move easily into a community, and where are the hardest ones to get to.

We did many surveys, business surveys, community anchor institute surveys, education surveys. What are the needs that they have, both for access and for adoption. How can we help them get their clients and their students connected to the internet and learn.

We always discuss the needs and the opportunities. We're constantly looking to address inequities. We know that the main corridors are easy to solve, that people that are out in the rural areas are difficult to solve. And we're always trying to be action-oriented. We're always trying to help people understand that we are making progress. It is slow but we are making progress. Next slide, please.

So one of the things that we are kind of famous for on our Broadband Action Team, is we are like the pilot project people. When COVID started, the former state broadband director had this

mapping software that he wanted to try and test out for Washington State, and we said, "Bring it on. We will do it."

So in a matter of two weeks, through our 46 members of Broadband Action Team, we got 2,000 speed tests right on the map. That's the first map that came up two weeks after they launched.

And it was easy because we had already had those relationships, we had those distribution lists, we had those ways of talking to the rotaries and the schools and everybody else. And we were able to say that this test will help us tell the state and the federal government that we know we don't have broadband.

At the moment of this test, the FCC map said that we had 100 percent coverage, 150 up and 150 down. And as you can see from all those red, black, and yellow dots, that is absolutely untrue. Next slide, please.

And now look at Washington State. We are on fire. We have got places all over the state that have jumped on this effort to really show where there's not any broadband or where there's low broadband.

One of the things that we did in our county, is we went to the school districts and got a list of those students that did not have internet. And we personally plug them into that map so those black dots could show up. Those are the places that have no internet. So we're very proud that we launched it, and also proud that Washington State is leading this type of broadband mapping. Next slide, please.

During COVID, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers invited FCC Chairman Pai to one of our Zoom meetings. Another thing that we do in our group, is anytime anybody ask us to talk about broadband at the state level, the federal level, or anywhere, we sign up and we put together a panel to say, what are the issues that we need to share.

So Chairman Pai came to the work, our little gym room, and we had this conversation. And from that mapping that we had done, we were able to show him that there are even cities in our county that had access to broadband but had many several black dots from the students, so it showed us that we had affordability problems.

So using those maps to tell your story, is very valuable, because on a federal level, in a way that used to do reporting at least, it was difficult to show where we really needed broadband.

We also entertained Governor Inslee for a panel discussion here. And we've had the Washington USDA director came and visit us. And we've done many state panels with our legislators.

We are very strategic when we have these requests. We find out what their issues are, what they have the ability to impact and influence, and then we bring members of our Broadband Action Team to that table to specifically address those issues and answer those questions.

Because we do not want to be the team that says we want broadband and don't know what to do about it. We want to say we're the broadband team that says, "This is how we can fix it and what we need from you." We got to be going both ways on that one.

Although I will say we are politically neutral. We do not care what parties in the office. We work with all of them. Okay. Next slide, please.

The other thing that I think is really great about having an organized group, is you can start putting the other information sheet in a website and communication pieces that matter to you. So these are all Word documents that I've put together on different issues that are important to individuals on our Broadband Action Team.

We have one specific to libraries. How do they get access internet? How do they use different programs? How do they reach their patrons?

We did a specific one on mapping, so that a legislator came through and said we need to fix the map, we could hand it to him and say, "Here's why."

We did one on public safety, because remember this group started because of the fire. So we have often focused on public safety. How does no internet affect our firefighters who are all volunteers and have to get their training online, and they're 45 minutes away from a place that they can go online.

This is a -- something that impacts at a very low level, not having internet and how is that going to be fixed. So having these individual stories makes it much more personal and much more educated about why we care about broadband, why we on our Broadband Action Team do. Next slide, please.

So we also want to be action-oriented. We used to have a planning team, and like [inaudible] said, we need action. So that's where the Broadband Action Team came from.

We know it's going to be a while before we have internet out to every premise and every home in this county. So we do things like Gadget Garage.

We bought one of everything that could get to the internet and have them available at the library so people can come in and try before they buy. Do they need a laptop to get to the internet; or if what they want to do is to do Facetime with their grandkids and they only need a cell phone and the library can say, "Don't spend your money on this. Buy this, and this is how you use it."

So it becomes that loop of trust that this is how we're going to get to the internet and then this is what I can do to the internet.

So our Gadget Garage was very popular. We have eight libraries in our county, so they take it out. That's my favorite library, and Jessica there, doing a demo with someone who actually -- what he wanted -- I love this story. He said, "I want to get on Tik Tok, so I can see my

granddaughter." And she was talking to him. And she said, "Why don't you get on Facetime so you can talk to your granddaughter?" And he burst into tears.

So that's why I just have this love of librarians. They wait and figure out what the problem is and then try to figure out the solution.

Another thing that we did, this is pre-COVID and so we will probably do another here shortly, is a tech expo. And we call it our geeky techie version of the home and garden show. And anybody and anything that touched the internet, was brought into a space like a home garden show.

And we had internet service providers there, we had computer classes, we had librarians there, we had the robotics team came and demonstrated how they learned.

It became this way for people to come together and talk about their issues in an area. And it allowed internet service providers to find clients. They brought in maps, and they had internet access that they could see.

Again, we are trying to figure out how to help all parties in our team be effective and have a positive experience. Our internet service providers are critical. We want them to be happy. We want them to keep giving us service. So any way that we can help them is beneficial for us. Next slide, please.

Here's a brief survey of what happened with the BAT timeline for us: 2012, they had six communities in the state do a local technology planning team. And the Department of Commerce funded that. That's kind of the early days of the Broadband Action Team.

And then in 2015 is when we had our large fire, and we just decided we've got to get onboard. So we started this concept and then it evolved, like Mark said, to other counties and other tribes across the state, which is great.

In 2020 we developed a memorandum of agreement with the broadband office, so that Washington State University extension and they could look at what's the way to get things fired up on this. How do we get these things connected on all levels.

So in 2022 we had 32 BAT but they're on a continuum. Some are very effective in running away, and some of them are brand new and trying to figure this out.

So there's a curriculum that is being developed by national extension. And I think I'm going to the next -- oh, I'll be able to share that with you in a couple slides. Because that might be important to you if you're trying to set up a Broadband Action Team right now a similar route. But let me go on to a couple pieces of advice or lessons I have learned that you may not have to. Next slide, please.

There is strength in numbers. Work across boundaries. Work with groups that maybe you didn't work with before. Because you can amplify each other's voices. I've heard the libraries talk about workforce development in meetings, because we sat in the room and talked about their issues.

There are multiple perspectives when it comes to broadband, and you need to listen to all of them.

What I found beneficial out of our Broadband Action Team, is we don't duplicate efforts. If somebody says, "I have a workforce issue," I don't think I have to settle it. I contact my workforce guy and say, "How do we do this together?"

We all have limited budget and resources, especially in rural communities. I find that to be of -- we're thinly staffed. We got only a few people doing all this hard work, so not duplicating efforts is very valuable.

And we have a broad range of skills and expertise. When we can get in a room and talk, we get really creative, really creative and really fun. Next slide, please.

And then another thing I have to say, when Chairman Pai came to our meeting and we had a conversation about it, he said, "I've never been to a broadband planning team where people laughed."

I will tell you that we have fun at our meetings. We talk about things. We talk about serious things, but we all know that we're human beings and we want to be able to solve our problems.

We have regular meetings, consistent communication. We get notes out, so people know what's going on. We connect to the state, to the region, to national with projects, and we support each other, and we have fun.

One of my rules when we have these meetings -- like I said, we have 46 people on our list, but it's a no-guilt list -- if you can't get to a meeting, there's no guilt. You get here when we can. If I need you, I'm going to call you. But we all have very, very busy lives, and if you're not in the meeting, that doesn't mean that you don't care about broadband.

So it's a very flowing and forgiving type of group that says, get on the call when you can. And I've heard our medical people say, "We care about our records, but we also care about our community."

You create this really supportive environment when you all respect that you're trying to figure this out in the way that you can. So let's go to the next slide.

Now, this is what I was talking about, the curriculum. I'm going to put in the chat box, the long website that's at the bottom of that slide. We are not the only state that's doing this kind of work. There's a national digital equity team, extension team that's been working on, how do you start Broadband Action Teams or groups like this.

And we've developed a curriculum. Washington State has some pieces in it. University of Missouri has some pieces in it. And these are two of the types of forms and process that are in this curriculum. I will confess, I am a professor at Washington State University, but I am an old

graphic designer. And I sometimes look at these complex things like broadband action planning, and I think, I don't know what I'm doing.

So having a curriculum like this or a workshop or a worksheet that say: Okay, who do I need to call? How do I get there? This is the kind of work that will help you establish a team that can help you establish your broadband planning. It is not -- there is very few people, I think, out there that really know how to build a broadband network. It's not a skill that we often have, but having the local voices to be able to so this, is really important.

So on that website, you can find out more information, if you do want to get into something like this, or you have a roadmap or a plan moving forward. Next slide, please. And like I said before, team up. Nobody has every piece of this. Look at your statewide broadband team, your offices, what other universities are doing this, what other community groups are doing this. There are so many pieces of broadband planning and delivery.

Sometimes it's overwhelming. Sometimes there's so much information that you don't know how to unpack it. So start building that team slowly of people that can say, "This is important to us. This is what we can do in our community." And then grow from there.

I think broadband is so important to everybody. And I wish you all well at whatever stage you're at. And whatever you're doing in this area is important. So thank you for letting me come talk about Broadband Action Team.

Dina: Thank you so much, Debra. That was fabulous. And thank you so much to our other presenters as well. So we'll open it up now to Q&A, to questions. Annelieske, anything you want to add to the Q&A and how it works?

Annelieske: Yes. Thanks, Dina. And thank you to Debra, Mark, and Ann for such a great overview of your work. You're now taking questions from attendees. So if you're interested in submitting a question, you can do that through the Q&A. If you're looking to find the Q&A on your screen, that will be in the -- there's a button in the top right corner that you can click and then you can submit in your question.

Dina: So while we're waiting for questions, if it's okay with our presenters, I have a few that I believe will be helpful to others as well. One question I have for Mark and Ann is, do you engage with other state broadband offices, especially now with this new funding? Is there any collaboration going on? Are you noticing any commonalities or similar approaches to what's happening? Anything you can share on that?

Mark Vasconi: Oh, I'm sorry. Ann, did you want to address that? Then I'll talk a little bit about something. Because you've been engaged in this longer than me. I've been on this state for two and a half months. You've been on this for much longer than that. So would you [inaudible]?

Ann Campbell: So Mark is grossly underselling his amazedness. For being on the job for two and a half months, he's just hit the ground at a much fast pace.

We have been actively working and meeting with our other states broadband offices, or other states broadband offices, I should say, and have been a party to the western states broadband group as well as the larger scale sort of nationwide broadband sessions that NCIA has convened as well as the few charitable trusts have convened.

And we have directly worked with other states as they are setting up their offices, gathering data, etc. That includes Utah, Idaho, Oregon, California, the state of Maine. I mean, just -- this is an all-hands-on deck. And this is absolutely not the time for anybody whose behavior is information worthy. This is all about sharing information and being an open and available resource for everyone across the nation as well as in our territory.

So we also had conversations with Guam and Puerto Rico. So this is definitely an all hands-on-deck.

Mark Vasconi: Yeah. Let me add to that. I've had -- sort of had ad hoc conversations with my peers in both Oregon as well as Colorado as of just in the last week. And I think what needs to be really understood, is that there's no one size fits all with respect to moving forward.

And that just doesn't just happen across states, in that, what might work in Iowa may not work in Washington. That even happens within a state because there's a great deal of variation of any one state, you've got varying needs, varying network abilities. So it really takes, I think, an understanding of some fundamentals but also being able to talk to people to see what might work and what might not.

There may be very different policies in various states with respect to things like open access or the funding of private entities versus public and private entities. So the landscape really varies. It would be maybe wonderful if there was sort of a plug and play approach. But I would tend to think that if there was a plug and play approach that was uniformed across states, there would be a number of circumstances where it wouldn't work.

So there is guidance. It's important, but this stuff has to be done truly in a localized fashion. So that's all I have to say on that.

Dina: Thank you for that. That's really, really helpful. And Annelieske, are there any questions that you're seeing?

Annelieske: Nope. We haven't seen any questions in the Q&A. But just a reminder that folks can continue to submit them.

Dina: Yes. Please submit your questions. Okay. Well, while we're waiting, I have a few more. So, Mark and Ann, I was really interested to see that you mentioned funding being doubled for digital navigators. I assume that's because you saw the effectiveness of those programs. But if you could elaborate a little bit more on that.

Mark Vasconi: Yeah. I think one of the things was that the funding that was put forward, was only really funding for a short period of time. The funding was originally established, and I think it covered efforts in maybe late 2021 and into 2022.

Well, we started to see a good deal of interest. And a lot of that is with respect to the partnerships that we have. And one thing that I think is really important to understand is that, in so many of these funding efforts, you need to be able to engage with entities that have capacity to reach into various aspects of communities across the state.

And we've had success with the four partnerships that we've had. Some of that success has been really tangible success, like putting devices in people's hand. Other success, I think, has been more educational.

So we have now a biennium to fund it over. Actually by -- actually -- no, just one year. One year. One fiscal year. And because of the success of it, yes, we've doubled funding. And we'll also be looking for additional partners.

So the partners that we'd -- that I identified, will be extended but then -- so their efforts will be increased. But then we will also be looking for other partners to engage in digital navigation work. Because you're truly getting into the community and we're -- communities, I should say. And that's essential.

Dina: Thank you so much for that. I'm going to turn the questions now to Debra while we continue to wait. I don't think we have anymore questions yet from the audience. Debra, thank you so much for your enthusiastic presentation about your BAT.

Question for you about how you brought the ISPs to the table, that picture you showed us. How did you manage that?

Debra Hansen: Well, we spent a lot of time having phone ca- -- can you hear me?

Dina: Yes. Yes. Yes. We can hear you.

Debra Hansen: Okay. The symbols are confusing me. We spent a lot of time having individual phone conversations with the internet service providers before that meeting. And then had a clear agenda about what we were going to talk about.

One of the things I've noticed about them is, they're very cautious about sharing their current locations and where are they going to expand to. It's a very competitive field, very competitive in our area especially.

And so when we brought them together, we talked how we can partner and how we could benefit them, not just complain to them. I mean, I one of the things that they were worried about is, they're going to get in that room and all we're going to do is complain.

And we instead came forward with, we could do -- this is prior to the tech expo. So we talked about that, how would that help them. We talked about how could we get information out to people that aren't familiar with how to find internet service providers; how could we help with planning.

I think because we approached it that way, they were very interested in coming. And we've been talking about it for a while and really engaging them for a long time. It did not happen quickly.

Dina: Yeah. I was wondering about that because I -- yeah, my experience, too. There are cautious. Yeah. Thanks, [inaudible].

Debra Hansen: Can I say something else?

Dina: Of course.

Debra Hansen: Then I kind of took a gap [ph] of delay. But with this new funding opportunity and the way it's structured where we have to have community engagement and local support, they are coming to our Broadband Action Team at the same time. They're not necessarily talking about the specifics of their projects, but they are -- I mean, I've had some incumbents and local people get on the conversation and share information with each other. Kind of -- it's refreshing and nice. It's been great.

And I think they know because they trust us that we have their interests in heart as well as getting internet out there.

Dina: Yeah. And you've built that relationship already. [inaudible] really helped, I'm sure. But it's interesting the frame that you just put with this new federal funding, how it's also an incentive for them to get more involved at the community level.

Debra Hansen: Yep. And I'm very happy about that.

Dina: Yes. I'm sure you are. Another question for you in terms of -- with the new broadband funding that we're all talking about; do you have any suggestions for how our communities, either public housing and tribal communities or BATS, by other names, in other words, can engage in the planning process? I know you touched on it, but any other tips?

If -- I know very few states, for example, do not have, as far as I know at this point, do not have a state broadband office. Are there suggestions you have in that scenario or in scenarios where ConnectHome can engage [inaudible] have this relationship with the state? How can they start that? This question is really, I guess, for everyone. But starting with you, Debra.

Debra Hansen: Yeah. Sure. Be fearless. Be fearless and call agencies and call the office, and call your universities and ask if they're working in this space at all. And find out who is doing that kind of work and how you can engage.

This -- nobody is operating in a vacuum. There are many -- I mean, you can see even more fundings that's on the slide that they presented from the broadband office. There are many agencies that have pieces of broadband in their funding opportunities, FEMA and all different kinds of things.

So talk to anybody that's working in that space and say, "Is there a way that we can engage or get involved in that?" It's -- there's so many opportunities that you can do. And you might be surprised at where you fit. But be fearless. That's what I'd say. Be fearless. Just ask.

Dina: I love that. Ann, were you going to add something?

Ann Campbell: All I wanted to add was that I put a link in the chat, and that is the current listing of broadband offices throughout the United States. You click on your state and it will give you a list at the bottom of the screen with the people that NTIA have listed in that office.

Dina: Thank you for that. All right. I'll check in with Annelieske for any questions.

Annelieske: [inaudible] there are still no questions submitted to the chat.

Dina: Okay. All right. Well, I have another question then for Debra. Are you organized by any chance as a 501(c)(3)? Do you have a charter, and are your members volunteers?

Debra Hansen: Our members are volunteers. We do not have a 501(c)(3) or a charter. We have a mission statement that's very inclusive about our work. And that's very intentional. Our Broadband Action Team is the Stevens County and Spokane Tribe Broadband Action Team.

One of our tenants broadband is -- it doesn't stop at the border. Right? So whether you're a tribe or a county, the broadband's going to go across that border. But our funding is different, and our management is different, our laws are different, our structures are different. So we act as partners but not as a unit.

And we very specifically put it that way. Again, I -- we don't want to duplicate what others are doing. We want to connect what others are doing. And so, it's all volunteer and we don't do it that way at all.

Other BATs may and they may -- we will never apply for broadband funding, either the county, the city, government. Somebody else will be applying for those funds. We want to build up and lift up our partners.

So for digital navigation, we might go for fundings for the library district to do that. Our broadband action team is not going to take on that funding. So that's how we set it up.

Dina: [inaudible]. Thank you. Any -- folks on the line, don't be shy. This is your opportunity to ask real experts. [inaudible] give it a minute or so to see if questions come in.

Well, while we're waiting, I have another question for you, Debra. And that is, do you work with other BATs? Do you coordinate with other BATs?

Debra Hansen: Yes, we do. I work for a Washington State University extension. And we're in every county, and we are a network of sharing. I mean, my idea of if I've started a BAT team, somebody else might use my information. So that's how many of the other BATs started.

I had some of those early sheets there that helped me organize. And I'd share with other counties so that they can organize. I've taken phone calls from other extension offices, other BAT teams. I've made calls to other BAT teams.

Like Ann said, this is not the time to be withholding information. It's competitive, but it's also -- we have to be able to solve -- and I'm happy with my neighboring county gets funding for broadband. Because the next bucket of funding might come our way. So I think it's valuable that share information, not hold it do our chest.

I've gotten on a national team and I've shared across the state, different kinds of resources. That's why the ones that I share today is valuable. And we all want people to have access to this kind of organizing and training, and information.

That curriculum is very comprehensive. It goes through all the steps of setting up a Broadband Action Team and public private partnerships and resources. So I can't accept chat. How do we get a copy of the process used and how to develop a BAT?

If you go to that website, there's a button where you can click and get on a list. We're just finalizing the materials right now. I can put it back in the chat. But it's a SRDC link is where they would have that information. And they've got some of it posted already. Or you can send me an email and I'll send you my raw stuff that I have. Did I answer your question? [inaudible].

Dina: Yes, you did. I was trying to unmute myself. Thank you so much, Debra. And that's wonderful that you're sharing information, not withholding it, helping the whole community grow, the wider community grow. I think that's -- it's really wonderful. And Annelieske, I think there might be a question, another -- a new question.

Annelieske: There is. Thanks, Dina. So from Kelly Terry, she is has asked: Are public housing authorities eligible to apply directly to receive broadband funds? So far the [inaudible] seem to be for states and other local government. Perhaps Mark or Ann are able to answer those questions.

Ann Campbell: Yeah. This is Ann Campbell. Full disclosure, I am now the Washington State homeownership managing director. So this question about whether or not housing authorities can apply for funding, is actually quite near and dear to my heart.

And the answer is technically yes. They are an eligible entity in Washington State. They are what is considered a quasi-governmental organization. However, it's less a case of whether or not they

can apply for funding, but whether or not the housing authorities have the ability to enact the projects or the programs that are being fought for funding.

So for example, BEAT funding is infrastructure funding. We do have a housing authority, the King County Housing Authority, that we are contracting with to provide digital navigation services. And they are highly successful in a very high-capacity organization, is the King County Housing Authority.

Other housing authorities don't have that, pardon the pun, bandwidth. So it really just kind of depends. And it also depends on your state rules and regs.

Mark Vasconi: Let me add, some help can also be provided in maybe other ways, aside from funding. We've engaged with the Seattle Housing Authority. And in that, I've helped to review an RFP that they are putting forward, in order to try to provide wireless internet access to each of the units within [inaudible] structures that they happens to manage.

So there's -- there are lots of different ways to, I think, engage in assisting a housing organization to provide service, all the way from basically advice to maybe depending on the rules of the states that you happen to be in, whether they can be directly funded.

Dina: If I could just add a little bit, public housing authorities are mentioned in the as community anchoring institutions. So I know one of the -- we didn't really talk about the priorities and fundings for BEAD itself. But the first area -- the first priority is unserved areas. That's areas that either have no internet access at all or I think, less than 25 down and 3 up.

And then the second priority is underserved areas, that's areas that are anywhere between 25 down and 100 down. And then community anchor institutions. So the states are going to have to figure out -- and Mark, I don't want to speak for you, but how to prioritize the funding that they get from NTIA, which is formula based.

That's why your voice is so important here, is for the states to really know that you're there and know what your needs are. That's one point I wanted to make.

The other point is, in terms of digital equity act, there are two parts of funding. One is what we've just been talking about, which is the state portion of it. Later -- and I don't know, [inaudible] could back to slide that Mark and Ann provided about the funding timeline.

There's going to be a competitive -- there you go -- a competitive program under the digital equity act. If you see under -- look under the 2024/2025 framework, sort of right in the middle there, you'll see there's going to be competitive program as well. And housing authorities will be eligible to apply.

And currently under the planning, state could if they wanted to, subcontract to a public housing authority or plan [inaudible] and can help them plan for the program that we have been talking about. So I just want to make sure you guys all know about that. Thanks.

Mark Vasconi: Yeah. That's helpful. I do think going -- when we start talking about BEAD funding, that there is indeed a rank order, of if you will, where unserved is first, underserved is second, and then anchor institutions are third.

I tend to think that those -- you know, at least with respect to BEAD, that's where the -- that's where the state plan is so critical because in that state plan, with input from BATs, with input from counties, with input from, if you will, user communities, we can then start to come forward with projects.

Because in the state plan with regard to the BEAT funding, you have to identify projects. So that's where with certain respects the, will the rubber meets the road with respect to state directors office, because there are going to be -- we know that there are going to be more needs than available funding, I think.

Just as an example, back in November of 2021, the state broadband office came out with a tranche of a $135 million of funding. And I think it was oversubscribed by a factor of three. You had roughly 400 -- $425 million of request. But that's where, I think, coming into partnership with BATs, coming into partnership with the community, so that these projects start to get enumerated.

That's very helpful to ensure that a project for housing authorities, at least with respect to BEAT, is sort of on the menu and then looks forward to eventual funding.

Dina: Yeah. Absolutely. Thank you so much for that. Are there any other questions? I don't see any other questions. Let's see in the chat. Folks, we have about nine minutes left. So if you want to ask a question, now is your time.

Annelieske: Thank you, Dina. I just have one more question. [inaudible] to the chat, so just a reminder to the folks that you can submit your questions directly to the Q&A instead of the chat. But this question from Jayla Curo [ph] is, how do you recommend starting a partnership between my state broadband office and my housing authority? Debra, do you have any recommendations that you can share?

Debra Hansen: So we don't have a housing authority in Stevens County. We don't have any facilities that are that. But I think with any agencies, I would call and find out who at that agency is working on broadband and start to have a conversation about how you could help them, what kind of information you could provide, is there an opportunity for engagement, both ways, can they come talk to us, can I talk to them.

It really is -- I think the success of our Broadband Action Team is that we build our relationships. We call people and ask them what -- how to engage. It's my best advice.

Mark Vasconi: Yeah. I think it's really important for state broadband directors to, not only understand the funding, not only understand the technology, not only understand sort of the technical details of the job, but to be a connector.

I mean, you need to be a connector. And if that means -- like at least with respect to Washington office now -- I don't know how this plays with other organizations -- but with Washington State Broadband Office, it's sort of administratively housed under the commerce department.

The commerce department is a broad funding entity. And with people like Ann, working in the housing group, who came from Wisbo [ph] or other people, it's making those connections to those groups with instinct government as one place at least, for who's administering HUD funds, who's administering -- who's looking at housing organizations.

I would tend to think in most states, if not all, there is an organization dealing with housing. So start there. Start to plug in with that organization and then the network can start to grow. But I do see part of DNA [ph] state broadband director or the state broadband agency entity at large, as indeed an entity that is a connector.

And those connections can be used within the states, state organizations, outside of the state organizations. That's what it sort of takes. So let's start making phone calls and see where that goes.

Debra Hansen: Dina, this is Debra. I'm going to change my answer. I reserve the right. Mark is right; 39 of us counties should not be calling the housing or any other agency. We should call Mark and Mark say -- or if somebody in his office say, "Well, 10 of you should apply together on this particular regional project."

They should be the conduit for us to share information. And they can connect us. I take back my first answer. If this was a game show, I'd lose points, I'm sure.

Dina: You would have regained some with this answer. Thank you for that. That's -- and I mean, I do -- I know that state broadband offices -- I've heard, I should say -- I've heard this through the grapevine, through the network -- that they're very busy right now. So Mark, I would imagine, be persistent, be patient.

Debra Hansen: Yep. This is Debra. And make them -- you know, they serve the whole state, so they need to hear from you. They might be busy and overwhelmed, but they need to hear from you.

Mark Vasconi: Yeah. You know, I'm sorry that the cue can get somewhat long but it's really essential to -- it's really essential for people to raise their hand and try to make those connections through the broadband office. And in the process, we're not going to have all the answers. I'm going to be completely upfront about that. We're not going to be the wizards behind the curtain.

But as we move through the process, we start to learn, and then those learnings start to sort of fill out the knowledgebase and we become more efficient. This is -- you know, at least -- I'll say this with respect to Washington State, the state broadband office, at least in its current form, has been around for little over two years.

Now, there's been a substantial amount of churn. And I tend to think that's true in a number of different state broadband offices. So there's a capacity building that's being done at the same time within state broadband offices.

And -- but you only build capacity by doing this stuff and engaging in different questions with different sources of information. So it is -- you know, it's a working progress. There's no question about it, but we keep working at it.

Dina: That's a great way to put it, is as you do the work, you learn. It is -- I mean, I think it's uncharted territory. I also listen to historic levels of funding, so yeah, we'll learn. And those as the funding comes down the pike. But it is important to have your voice heard. So thank you so much for underscoring that point. I don't see any -- oh, maybe there is another question in the chat. No. Annelieske [inaudible].

Annelieske: Nope. I don't think we have anymore unanswered questions.

Dina: But there's very good information from Ann in the chat. So make sure you read it pertaining to the new funding. And then something from John Dombrowski [ph] also. Yes. Thank you for that, John, for clarifying what a public housing agency, the terminology is, in the BEAD [inaudible]. Thank you for that. Well, with two minutes left, Annelieske, anything you want to -- any closing points?

Annelieske: It does -- thanks, Dina. It does look like Ann has her hand raised. Ann, did you want to say something?

Ann Campbell: So I just want to clarify on John's comment below. For those of you who are not familiar with at least with how funding allocation works across -- at least across Washington State, and I have to assume it works this way everywhere else -- you actually have a tiered level of rules that you go by.

You have the initial tier, which is the source of the funding. So in this case, it would be the federal government, NTIA. And then on top of that, your state legislators may add additional qualifying criteria for that funding. So for example, NTIA allows for both non-profits as well as for-profits, to receive their funding.

But Washington legislator has made it clear in the authorizing language that the broadband office operates under, that the -- that strictly for-profit entities are not eligible for the funding. They've limited it to local governments including public utility districts and ports, federally recognized tribes, non-profits, non-profit electrical cooperatives, and what are called multi-party entities.

But the qualifiers is that the multi-party entity cannot consist of solely for-profit entities. It has to have a local entity as part of the funding recipients. So while the federal guidelines make it very clear that the funding is available for a broad array of organizational types, definitely look to your particular state's additional rules or regs that surround the awarding and administration of those funds.

Annelieske: That's great. Thank you, Ann. So with just one minute left, I do want to go over a few reminders for folks. And I want to say thank you to all of our great presenters to Washington State Broadband Office, Mark and Ann for the great overview that you provided, Debra for your great insight on how to form and lead a Broadband Action Team. A thank you to all the attendees for your participation and questions today.

So as a reminder, this presentation will be posted to the HUD Exchange in the coming weeks. If you are not already subscribed, you should subscribe to the ConnectHomeUSA newsletter. You can find more information on ConnectHomeUSA on the HUD Exchange. And if you've subscribed to the newsletter, you will also receive a mini guide to the new broadband funding in the coming weeks. And thank you all. And Dina [inaudible].

Dina: Thank you so much. Thanks to everyone. Thank you, Mark, Ann, and Debra, for your fabulous presentation today and taking the time to be with us. And thank you, Annelieske for the fabulous work you did to get us here today. And also I did want to underscore what Annelieske said, that we will be following up this webinar, not just with the recording and the slides, but with a mini guide that will hopefully answer the kinds of questions that were asked today and others that we anticipate.

So thank you so much. And we will see you back here hopefully soon. Thank you very much. Bye-bye everyone.

(END)