



Closing Oakland's Digital Divide:

# The Town Link

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Why the Digital Divide?

## Building Wealth and Economic Opportunity

Internet access is a critical tool for building wealth and economic opportunity for communities of color.

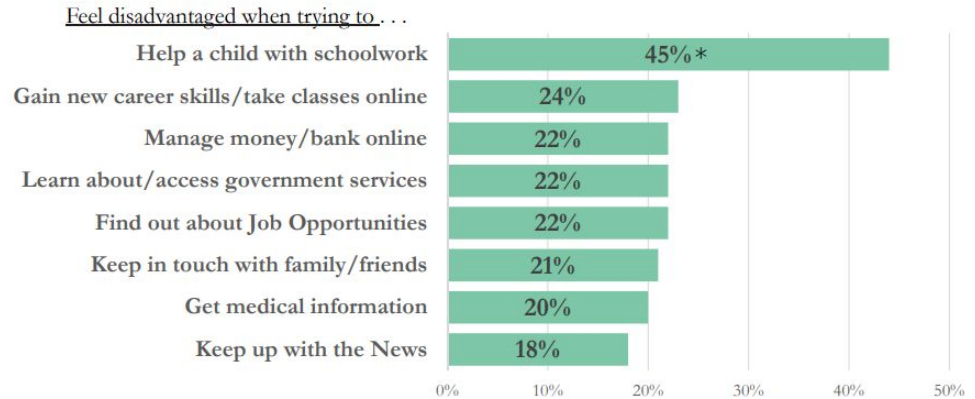
The Greenlining Institute works towards a future where communities of color can **build wealth**, live in healthy places filled with **economic opportunity**, and are ready to meet the challenges posed by **climate change**.

## Why the Digital Divide?

# Building Wealth and Economic Opportunity

Internet access is a critical tool for building wealth and economic opportunity for communities of color.

Table 8  
Ways Californians Who are to Not Connected to the Internet or  
Are Underconnected at Home Feel Disadvantaged



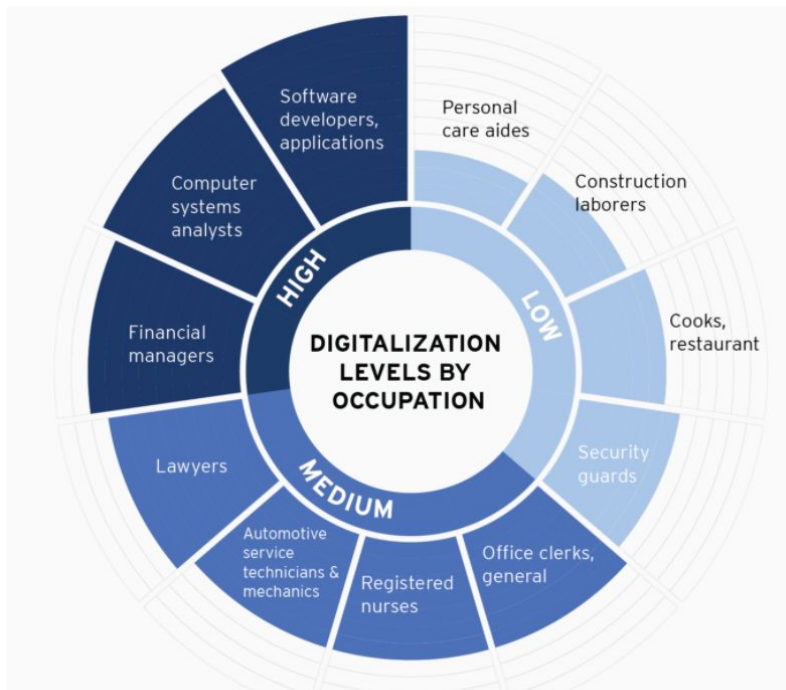
Building Economic  
Opportunity:

# Improved Employment Outcomes

Broadband access is a critical  
tool for building wealth and  
economic opportunity for  
communities of color.

## Improved Employment Outcomes

- 84% of job seekers used the internet to find employment.
- Unemployed people who used the Internet in a job search were re-employed 25% faster, the average job search is 5 months.
- 87% of higher paying “middle-skill” jobs require digital skills.



### Mean Annual Wage

High Digitalization:  
\$72,896

Medium  
Digitalization:  
\$48,274

Low Digitalization:  
\$30,393

Building Economic Opportunity:

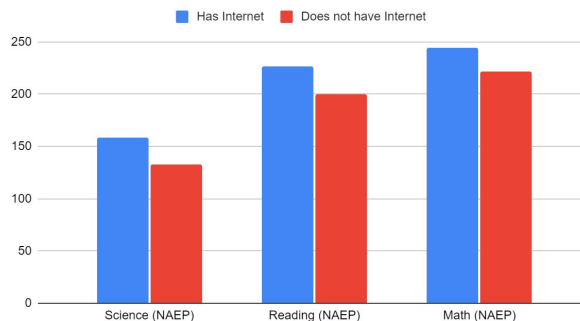
# Improving Academic Outcomes

Closing the digital divide also means improving educational opportunities and academic outcomes for communities of color.

## Improving Academic Outcomes

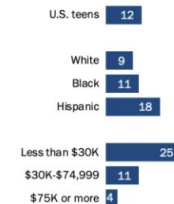
- High school students with broadband access at home have graduation rates 6 to 8% higher than those without.
- 73% of large school districts went fully online during the pandemic.
- Prior to the pandemic, 70% of homework assignments required Internet access.
- Students with access to internet at home score higher 10-20% higher on math, science and reading tests.

The Digital Divide and NAEP Test Scores



### One-in-four lower-income teens don't have access to a home computer

% of U.S. teens who say they do not have or have access to a desktop/laptop computer at home



Note: Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics; Hispanics are of any race. Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

What is the Digital Divide?

# The Digital Divide in America

Most Americans now have access to the internet either through a phone or home-broadband connection

## Nationwide Internet Adoption (2019)

White	92%
Black	86%
Hispanic	85%

\$75,000+	98%
\$50,000-\$74,999	97%
\$30,000-\$49,999	93%
<\$30,000	82%

What is the Digital Divide?

# The Digital Divide & Home Broadband

Home broadband adoption is key for academic and socioeconomic success but there are significant racial and income gaps to access.

## Nationwide Home Broadband Adoption (2019)

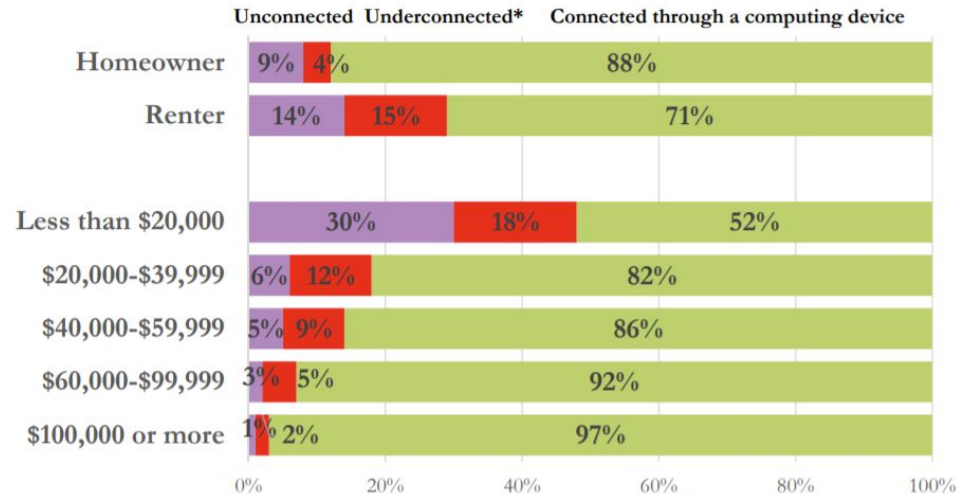
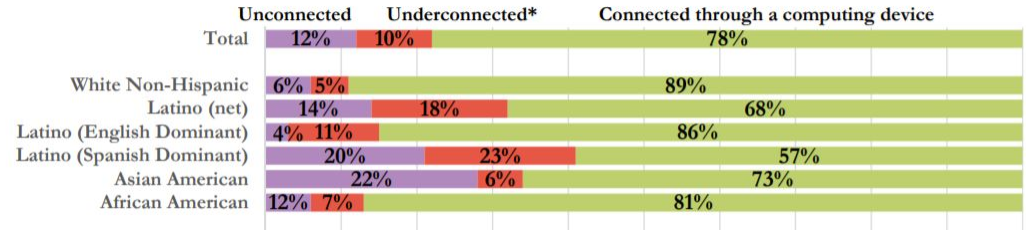
White	79%
Black	66%
Hispanic	61%

\$75,000+	92%
\$50,000-\$74,999	87%
\$30,000-\$49,999	72%
<\$30,000	56%

## What is the Digital Divide?

# The Digital Divide in California

Low-Income families and Latinos are hardest hit by the digital divide in California.





# What are our Goals?

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# Long Term Goals

## Closing the Digital Divide(s)

### First Divide:

- Close the Access Gap
  - 95%+ of BIPOC communities are subscribed to high-speed home and wireless broadband at future-proof speeds (100+ Mbps).

### Second Divide:

- Build Digital Inclusion and Technical Skills
  - Our communities have free or affordable access to a computing device, a high-speed internet connection and the skills to make the most of those resources.

### Third Divide:

- Equitable Distribution of the Benefits of the Internet and Digital Technologies
  - Eliminate algorithmic bias and discrimination while encouraging the use of data-driven solutions that build economic opportunity in communities of color i.e. algorithmic greenlining.



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# The Problem:

- COVID-19 pandemic made internet and computers a necessity.
- 94,000 households in Oakland lacked home internet access and are part of the digital divide with the burden falling on Oakland priority community.
- Internet accessibility programs are available but lack of outreach means many families are unaware or unable to sign-up.
- Affordability, digital literacy, and lack of devices contribute to the digital divide.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS FOR THE DIGITAL DIVIDE, BUT SEVERAL KEY BARRIERS TO INTERNET CONNECTIVITY INCLUDE:



### AFFORDABILITY

The high cost of internet service limits access to high-speed home internet.



### DEVICES

Many families cannot afford reliable computing devices that have internet connectivity.



### DIGITAL LITERACY

Many of those in the digital divide are not comfortable with using a computer or going online.



## Tech &amp; Telecom Law



The Emergency Broadband Benefit program would reach more households if Congress allocated more funds for outreach efforts, FCC acting chair Jessica Rosenworcel said.

Photographer: Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg

## Broadband Subsidy Program Sign-Ups Lag Amid Lack of Outreach Funds

Sept. 23, 2021, 2:00 AM



# The Goals:

1. Build digital inclusion and digital literacy through trainings and educational programs,
2. Build awareness around free and affordable broadband plans,
3. Provide computers and tablets to residents that lack devices, and
4. Partner with trusted local organizations to increasing internet adoption and digital literacy in priority communities and neighborhoods.

# What's the Strategy?

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# #OU Strategy



## PHASE I

### 2020–21 School Year Access

- ✓ **1A:** Connect and support 25,000 Oakland students (\$12.5M)
- ✓ **1B:** Meet immediate need in 2020 to support additional 8K students
- ✓ **2:** Support launch of OakWifi to 14 zones across West, Downtown, and East Oakland (leveraged \$7.7M in CARES Act funding from City Council)

## PHASE II

### 2021–22 School Year Access

- ▣ Sustain & Expand Tech Access for **all** Oakland public school students in need (\$6M):
  - ▣ *Computers for 7,500 students (\$2M)*
  - ▣ *Internet for 12,500 students (\$2M)*
  - ▣ *Tech Support for 40K+ students (\$2M)*
- ▣ Build partnerships with local, state, and federal legislators as well as build coalitions across the community

## PHASE III

### 2022 and Beyond: Long-Term Sustainability + Infrastructure

- ▣ Address barriers and increase access through policy
- ▣ Long-term Public WiFi and City-wide Broadband
- ▣ Work with strong coalitions to enact city, state and/or federal policies to expand and sustain access

# Building Digital Literacy + Device Connectivity

- **IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT A COHORT OF 15 OAKLAND RESIDENTS THAT HAVE BASIC DIGITAL LITERACY NEEDS AND ARE INTERESTED IN A GUIDED COURSE ON HOW TO NAVIGATE AND USE THE INTERNET.**
- The Greenlining Institute and partner organizations will connect this cohort to an online 6 week [digital literacy training](#) program provided by EveryoneOn. The Greenlining Institute will provide these 15 participants with laptops from [The Tech Exchange](#). These devices come with a one year warranty and technical support. Participants in the digital literacy program will be able to keep these laptops at the conclusion of the program. Partners can request up to 10 additional devices to distribute to community members that need them but are not otherwise participating in the digital literacy program.

# Building Awareness

- **DEVELOP A CAMPAIGN TO BUILD AWARENESS AROUND NEW AND EXISTING DIGITAL INCLUSION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES SUCH AS THE EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT, OAKWIFI, LIFELINE, FREE OR LOW-COST BROADBAND PLANS AND DIGITAL SKILLS-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. THE CAMPAIGN SHOULD EFFECTIVELY REACH 150+ OAKLAND RESIDENTS.**
- The Greenlining Institute and EveryoneOn will provide partner organizations and their staff with ongoing support that includes informational materials and training sessions that cover best practices for outreach, challenges with low-cost services, lessons from previous efforts as well as a comprehensive explanation of all programs and resources.

# Emergency Broadband Benefit

## About the Emergency Broadband Benefit

The Emergency Broadband Benefit will provide a discount of up to \$50 per month towards broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

# LifeLine

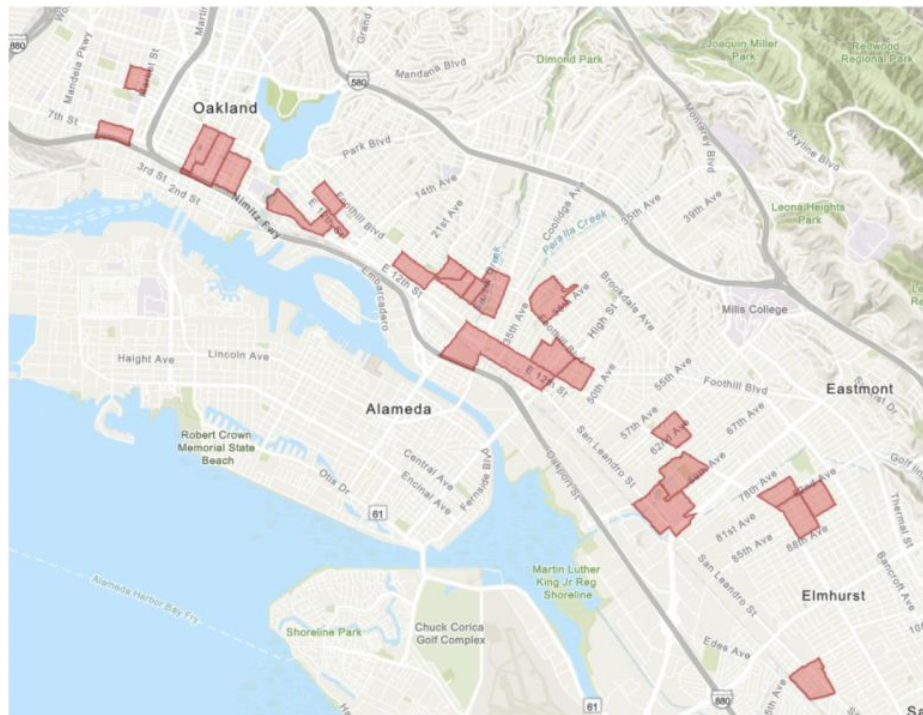
The California LifeLine Program (California LifeLine) is a state program that provides discounted home phone and cell phone services to eligible households. The California LifeLine discounts help consumers lower the cost of their phone bills.

# Targeting Priority Communities

Priority community members and neighborhoods are those that are less likely to have broadband access. This includes:

- [Residents of Oakland Equity Zones](#) or [low broadband adoption neighborhoods](#)
- Low-Income residents (\$51,500 or less)
- Unhoused Residents
- Latino Residents
- Re-entry populations
- Immigrants and English second language residents
- Senior Residents
- Black Residents
- Indigenous Residents

# Targeting Priority Communities



# Town Link Partners

Name of Organization
Allen Temple Baptist Church
Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS)
Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI)
El Timpano
Homies Empowerment
Oakland Workers Fund
Roots Community Health Center
St Mary's Center
The Unity Council
Bridgegood
The Oakland REACH
Hack The Hood
RRRComputer Inc.
Kickstart Coding
VACCEB
EveryoneOn
EducationSuperhighway
#OaklandUndivided





# Town Link Coverage

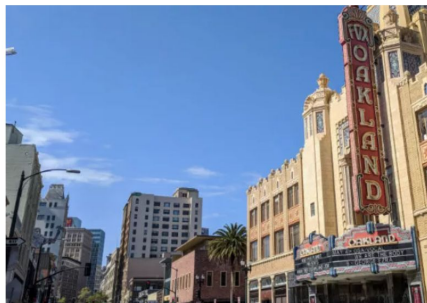


CIVIC INNOVATION

## What's New in Civic Tech: Grants Power Grassroots Digital Equity

Plus, a new report addresses ways the country's largest county citizens connected; San Jose, Calif., launches a new initiative to affordability; and more.

October 07, 2021 • Zack Qualitance, Julia Edinger



Alameda County, Calif., which includes the city of Oakland. (Shutterstock)

The nonprofit organization **The Greenlining Institute** has announced grants for 10 Oakland, Calif., that are working on **digital equity** projects and initiatives.



Outside the Greenlining Institute's office on 34th Street in Downtown Oakland, August 11, 2020. Credit: Peter Roosa

An internet connection can be a lifeline for many reasons: It can provide the ability to study, apply for jobs, or connect with resources and support. But not everyone has access; in fact, nearly one in four Californians are unconnected or under-connected.



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COMMUNITY

## Greenlining Institute Announces Grants to Close Oakland's Digital Divide

"The Town Link" Grants Fund Digital Inclusion/Literacy, Provide Tablets & Computers



The Greenlining Institute Logo courtesy of company's website

ed to announce grants to 10 grassroots Oakland : digital divide. The program, called "**The Town Link**" is a and the City of Oakland aimed at increasing internet

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THEGREENLININGINSTITUTE

# Next Steps

- Early October - Finalize MOUs and get signatures
- October 4 - Town Link press release
- October 19 - Kickoff Meeting
- November - January 2022:
  - Receive payment #1 (takes up to two weeks after GLI receives invoice)
  - Partner planning for Town Link activities
  - Partners schedule 1:1 training with their staff and GLI/EveryoneOn
  - Partners schedule laptop pickups
  - Partners meet with EveryoneOn + Tech Exchange to arrange laptop purchases
- January-October 1, 2022:
  - Partners execute Town Link plans: recruit for digital literacy classes, conduct outreach, collect surveys etc.
  - Partners schedule pickup of laptops (if still necessary)
  - EveryoneOn begins digital literacy classes with Oakland residents
  - Partners receive payment #2 once completing of 50% of milestones (takes up to two weeks after GLI receives invoice)
  - Draft end of project report