



# CA Alliance for Digital Equity

Advocating for equitable, affordable access to the connected world.



THE MICHELSON 20MM  
FOUNDATION



Join the growing list of California organizations dedicated to and advocating for digital equity:



Fast, Reliable, and  
Affordable Internet



Digital Literacy and  
Navigation Support



Public Digital Equity  
Programs and Subsidies

## Background

Access to and facility with the internet is a fundamental requirement to engage in today's world. Work activities, school coursework, social interactions, job training, and medical appointments all demand reliable, high-speed internet service. Over the last few years, average broadband usage has significantly increased with household and business internet usage continuing to grow dramatically. However, access to high quality, reliable, and affordable broadband service remains deeply inequitable in various parts of our state, leaving too many of our communities on the wrong side of the digital divide.

Americans can expect to pay more for internet on average than other consumers abroad.<sup>1</sup> Even though the cost of providing internet services is rapidly diminishing, the prices for high-speed broadband are going up. Californians do not enjoy equal access to connections that meet today's needs (let alone tomorrow's). Rural, suburban, tribal, and urban communities across the state have been left behind.

## Summary

Every Californian deserves access to fast, reliable, and affordable internet service, as well as the opportunity to learn how to effectively navigate the digital world. We believe a fast connection without bandwidth or data limitations, coupled with technical support, is a civil right—not a luxury.

The California Alliance for Digital Equity (CADE) is a dedicated group of local and statewide advocates focused on all forms of **digital equity**, from device acquisition to **broadband access** to **digital literacy**. California policies, programs, and taxpayer dollars must prioritize closing the digital divide. This means putting people and communities first and empowering them to tackle the barriers to broadband access.

<sup>1</sup> New America, *The Cost of Connectivity 2020: Focus on the United States* (July 2020), <https://www.newamerica.org/oti/reports/cost-connectivity-2020/conclusion/>



# CADE 2023 Legislative Priorities



## **AB 41 – The Digital Equity in Video Franchising Act of 2023**

**Author: Assemblymember Chris Holden**

There is an urgent need to reform the Digital Infrastructure & Video Competition Act (DIVCA) of 2006. As originally envisioned, DIVCA would increase competition between cable and internet service providers and thereby provide increased broadband access, improved service quality, and reduced prices. After 17 years, the evidence is clear – DIVCA has failed to deliver on these promises.

**AB 41**, the Digital Equity in Video Franchising Act (DEVFA) of 2023, will comprehensively reform and update DIVCA to meet the needs of all the urban, rural, and tribal communities left on the wrong side of the digital divide. Specifically, this bill revises the cable franchising renewal process, strengthening current equal access, oversight, and anti-discrimination laws which, in turn, will lead to improved broadband access, quality, and pricing.

## **AB 286 – Broadband Infrastructure Mapping**

**Author: Assemblymember Jim Wood**

Publicly available broadband maps fail to fully illustrate the extent of the digital divide because the current maps paint an incomplete picture of access to quality broadband services – millions of Californians are actually underserved. Current law provides an ability for existing providers to over represent the depth and breadth of their service territory. Whether it is densely forested areas in rural California or digital doughnut holes' in urban California, we know our current mapping system needs to become more detailed and inclusive.

**AB 286** improves broadband mapping by requiring more granular data as well as providing more resources to upgrade the publicly available California Interactive Broadband Map. The bill will ensure that household level data on internet speeds, costs, and more is directly shared with the CA Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) which will enhance the mapping process.

## **AB 1588 – The Affordable Internet and Net Equality Act of 2023**

**Author: Assemblymember Lori Wilson**

Millions of Californians lack access to broadband service because they cannot afford it—the cost is just too prohibitive. And California does not have a broadband affordability program to provide assistance to these low-income families similar to those in the electricity and gas sectors.

**AB 1588** would create the Net Equality Program, which requires internet service providers (ISPs), that do business with the state, to offer lower-income households an affordable broadband option that meets minimum speed thresholds, a latency that supports distance learning and telehealth services, as well as that provides technical support to facilitate households signups.