City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 2

Agenda Date: October 12, 2021

In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Office of Innovation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brian Dillard

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Provide a briefing on SA Digital Connects.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this item is to provide the Economic and Workforce Development Committee with a briefing of SA Digital Connects

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

According to the 2014 to 2018, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 23.4% of San Antonio households don't have access to broadband internet at home; which creates the digital divide between those residents who have the skills and internet access to fully embrace broadband, and those who do not; making it clear that additional action to tackle the digital divide was needed.

In 2018, City Council took that action by approving the formation of a Smart Cities team within the Office of Innovation; that had as a main area of focus to work in collaboration with the Information & Technology Services Department of the City, the SmartSA partnership, the community, and other key stakeholders to improve access to services for the community.

Phase 1 began in 2019, when the City of San Antonio led by the Office of Innovation, partnered with Bexar County and UTSA to develop and deploy the Digital Inclusion Survey and Assessment (DISA).

Digital Inclusion Survey and Assessment (DISA Phase 1)

The digital inclusion survey was implemented as a SA SpeakUp campaign that made the survey available from December 2, 2019 to February 8, 2020. The survey was intended to capture the digital divide in San Antonio and Bexar County through connectivity, access to devices, and digital competency.

The responses were aggregated by UTSA and used to create the Digital Inclusion Survey & Assessment (DISA) report. The major findings from the report include: the confirmation that over 20% of San Antonio and Bexar County is disconnected and the major barriers are access, affordability, and adoption that perpetuate inequities in our community.
The DISA report was shared with the Innovation & Technology Committee at the June 2020 meeting and can be found on the City's SA SpeakUp site https://www.saspeakup.com/Portals/37/Files/Innovation/digital-divide-final.pdf. The final DISA report has and will continue to inform the collaborative and multi-faceted Digital Inclusion Strategy (Phase 2).

Public-Private-Community Digital Inclusion Strategy -SA Digital Connects (Phase 2)

SA Digital Connects

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many long-existing social inequities, to include the digital divide, propelling digital equity solutions and support to the national stage and creating "once in-a-generation" investment opportunities to support digital equity initiatives across the country.

SA Digital Connects is a public, private, and community partnership that came together through the leadership of the private sector with a goal of tackling the digital divide by creating a strategic roadmap that would guide the efforts and set San Antonio and greater Bexar County to be "shovel" ready for any and all digital inclusion investment opportunities.

SA Digital Connects is Texas registered Unincorporated Nonprofit. The fiscal agent for 501c3 donations and financial oversight is greater: SATX (formerly the Economic Development Foundation).

Scope of Work

Through the effort, SA Digital Connects engaged 140+ community entities through interviews, an inventory survey, and focus groups as well as identified learnings from 80+ local efforts supporting digital inclusion today. All the feedback from these entities along with data and research led to the creation of the Digital Inclusion Roadmap that includes goals, future action steps, timelines, milestones, key stakeholder roles, and required investment for execution. The full report can be found here: https://www.sadigitalconnects.com/roadmap

With the Digital Inclusion Roadmap, our community will be prepared to make effective use of local, state, and federal funding for key digital access and equity initiatives impacting households, students, older adults, veterans, people living with disabilities, workforce, telemedicine, and justice system.

ISSUE:

Briefing on SA Digital Connects

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.