

**Accelerator Group Exercise**  
***Crafting an Action Plan***  
**6/20/2024**

During the next two weeks we will be reflecting as a team on what we've learned over the course of Accelerator and thinking about how we can implement what we've learned. The goals for these exercises are to facilitate team discussions and to begin working towards a clear, actionable plan for broadband deployment in our community.

**1) Define Community Broadband Goals:**

***Description:***

Set clear, specific goals for what the community aims to achieve with its broadband initiatives. These goals should address the identified needs and be aligned with broader community development objectives.

**Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Identifying Needs:** Reflect on the community needs that you identified last session. What gaps or opportunities exist in your community? Consider aspects like access, affordability, digital literacy, and the capacity of current infrastructure.
  
- **Formulating Goals:** Convert these needs into well-defined goals. Make sure each goal adheres to SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound). For instance, a goal might be “to increase broadband access to 95% of households in rural areas within the next three years.”
  
- **Community Impact:** Discuss the potential impact of achieving these goals. How will they affect education, healthcare, business and other critical sectors? This will not only help in clarifying the goals but also in rallying community support for the initiatives.
  
- **Set Priorities:** Determine which goals are most urgent or have the potential for greatest impact. This will help in prioritizing actions in later stages of planning.

## 2) Identify Strategic Actions:

### *Description:*

Outline the specific actions required to meet the broadband goals defined in Question 1. Consider what initiatives, projects or changes need to be implemented to turn these goals into reality.

### **Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Action Steps:** Begin by breaking down each defined goal into actionable steps. For each goal, discuss what practical measures need to be taken, who will be involved, and what resources are required. For example, if one goal is to enhance broadband access in rural areas, actions might include surveying the area for current infrastructure, identifying suitable technologies, and engaging with potential service providers.
- **Resource Identification:** For each action, identify the necessary resources. This includes financial resources, human resources, technical expertise, and any other logistical supports needed. Discuss potential sources for these resources, such as local government funding, private sector partnerships, or federal grants.
- **Barrier Analysis:** Anticipate potential obstacles for each action step. What challenges could hinder the progress of these initiatives? Consider technical, regulatory, financial, or community-related barriers. Brainstorm potential solutions or preventive strategies to overcome these challenges.
- **Timeline Considerations:** Discuss preliminary timelines for each action. While detailed timelines will be developed later, establish general timeframes for initiating and completing action steps. This helps in setting realistic expectations and aligning actions with funding cycles or other community activities.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** Highlight the importance of collaboration in implementing these actions. Identify key stakeholders for each action step and discuss how to engage them effectively. This could involve forming task groups, holding community forums, or establishing formal partnerships.

### 3) Assign Roles & Responsibilities:

#### *Description:*

Determine and assign clear roles and responsibilities to ensure that each part of the action plan is effectively carried out. This is crucial for maintaining accountability and ensuring progress.

#### **Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Identifying Key Players:** Begin by identifying who needs to be involved in implementing each action step. Consider involving local government officials, community leaders, business owners, educational institutions, and other relevant stakeholders. Discuss the strengths and capabilities of each potential participant or group.
- **Assigning Responsibilities:** For each action identified in the previous question, assign specific responsibilities to individuals or groups. Ensure that each role is clearly defined, and the parties understand their tasks. Discuss the support they will need to fulfill these responsibilities effectively.
- **Creating Ownership:** Encourage a sense of ownership among those assigned roles. Discuss how they can be empowered to make decisions and take initiative within their designated tasks. This might include regular updates, autonomy in certain decisions, and access to necessary resources.
- **Coordination Mechanisms:** Establish how coordination between different roles will be managed. Discuss the establishment of regular meetings, reporting structures, and communication channels to ensure everyone remains aligned and informed.
- **Backup Plans:** Recognize that changes might occur in personnel or circumstances. Discuss establishing backup plans or alternate team members who can step in if needed to ensure that the project's progress is not hindered.

#### 4) Develop a Timeline:

##### *Description:*

Establish a comprehensive timeline for implementing the action plan, detailing when each action should be initiated and completed. This timeline should include both short-term and long-term goals, ensuring a structured approach to achieving broadband objectives.

##### **Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Mapping Out Timelines:** Start by mapping out when each action identified in Question 2 needs to begin and when it should ideally be completed. Assign realistic timeframes based on the complexity of each task, availability of resources, and dependencies among actions.
- **Setting Milestones:** Identify key milestones within each action's timeline. Milestones act as checkpoints to assess progress and make necessary adjustments. Discuss how these milestones are tied to specific outcomes or deliverables.
- **Prioritizing Actions:** Consider any actions that need to be prioritized due to urgency or strategic importance. Discuss how prioritization affects the timeline and resource allocation.
- **Integrating Flexibility:** Acknowledge the need for flexibility in the timelines due to potential unforeseen circumstances or delays. Discuss how to incorporate buffer periods and the criteria for adjusting timelines if needed.
- **Coordination with Stakeholders:** Explore the importance of synchronizing timelines with all involved stakeholders. Discuss how to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding the timing of different activities and their roles in them.

## 5) Plan for Monitoring & Evaluation:

### *Description:*

Outline a strategy for monitoring the progress of the broadband plan and evaluating its success. This will involve setting up systems to track implementation, assess outcomes, and refine the plan based on feedback and changing conditions.

### **Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Defining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Start by identifying the key performance indicators that will be used to measure the success of each action. These KPIs should be directly linked to the goals set in Question 1 and should be measurable and specific.
- **Establish Monitoring Systems:** Discuss what systems or tools will be needed to monitor these KPIs. Consider digital tools, surveys, community feedback mechanisms, and regular reporting from those responsible for each action.
- **Scheduling Evaluation Points:** Determine how often evaluations should occur. This could be at the completion of each milestone, after a set period (e.g., quarterly, annually), or at the end of each major project phase. Ensure these evaluations are scheduled regularly enough to effectively guide the project and adapt to any needed changes.
- **Feedback Loops:** Plan how to collect and integrate feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, including community members, partners, and external experts. Discuss how this feedback will be used to adjust the action plan and address any issues or new opportunities that arise.
- **Documenting & Reporting:** Outline a plan for documenting findings from monitoring and evaluation activities and reporting these back to stakeholders. Discuss who will be responsible for compiling reports, what information will be included, and how these reports will be communicated to ensure transparency and accountability.

## 6) Synthesizing Insights into an Actionable Plan:

### *Description:*

Consolidate all the insights and decisions made during the session into a comprehensive action plan. This plan should clearly articulate the steps, responsibilities, timelines, and resources needed to achieve the community broadband goals.

### **Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Consolidation of Actions:** Review and summarize the strategic actions discussed in earlier questions. Ensure that every action is clearly defined with specific objectives and outcomes expected.
- **Finalizing Roles & Responsibilities:** Confirm and finalize the assignment of roles and responsibilities. Ensure that every participant or stakeholder group is aware of their tasks and has agreed to their roles in the implementation of the plan.
- **Timeline Agreement:** Confirm the timelines for each action, ensuring that they are realistic and agreed upon by all parties involved. This includes finalizing start and end dates, milestone markers, and any critical deadlines.
- **Resource Allocation Review:** Reassess and finalize the resource allocation for each action, ensuring that all necessary resources are identified and their sources are confirmed. This includes financial resources, human capital, technical needs, and other support structures.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation Framework:** Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation framework is agreed upon. This should include what metrics will be used, how data will be collected, and who will be responsible for the evaluation processes.
- **Communication Plan:** Develop a plan for how updates and communications will be handled throughout the project. Decide how often updates will be provided, who will be responsible for them, and through what channels they will be disseminated.
- **Final Review & Adjustment:** Make any necessary adjustments and ensure that the plan comprehensively addresses the community's broadband needs.