

**Accelerator Group Exercise**  
***What does it all mean for us?***  
**6/13/2024**

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) Sharing and Applying Key Insights:**

***Description:***

Each team member shares one key insight from the Accelerator sessions that resonated with them. Discuss why this insight stood out and explore how it can be applied to address the specific needs and challenges in your community.

**Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Personal Connection:** Start by reflecting on which lesson or insight from the sessions made the most significant impact on your personal understanding of broadband deployment or seemed particularly relevant to your community.
- **Community Relevance:** After each person shares, delve into a discussion on how these insights could potentially impact your community. What specific challenges could they help overcome? How might they influence policy or project planning in your community?
- **Collective Insights:** As a group, identify common themes or recurring ideas in the insights shared. Consider how these could help form the basis of a cohesive strategy for your community's broadband development efforts.

## 2) Evaluating Community-Specific Needs and Solutions:

### *Description:*

Discuss as a group the specific broadband needs of your community that have been identified during the Accelerator sessions. Consider which solutions proposed or discussed might be most effective in addressing these needs.

### **Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Identifying Needs:** Begin by listing the specific broadband needs of your community that have been highlighted throughout the program. These might include gaps in access, quality, or affordability. Or specific geographic areas.
- **Matching Solutions to Needs:** Move on to discuss various solutions or strategies that have been covered in the Accelerator that could address these needs. Which strategies seem most viable? Are there innovative approaches that could be particularly effective in your local context?
- **Feasibility and Impact:** Evaluate the feasibility of implementing these solutions in your community. Consider factors like resource availability, potential barriers, and the likely impact of these solutions on the community. How could these actions transform connectivity and its benefits for residents?

### 3) Partnership and Collaboration Opportunities:

#### *Description:*

Identify potential partners within and outside the community who could contribute to broadband projects. Discuss the roles these partners could play and the benefits of such collaborations for achieving your broadband goals.

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

- **Identifying Potential Partners:** Start by listing local stakeholders and regional organizations that could be potential partners in your broadband projects. Consider businesses, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, local government, and community organizations.
- **Roles and Contributions:** Discuss the possible roles each identified partner could play in the broadband project. What resources, expertise, or other contributions could each partner bring to the table?
- **Benefits of Collaboration:** Explore the benefits of these partnerships. How could collaborating with these partners enhance the project's scope, funding opportunities, or success rate? What might be the challenges, and how could they be mitigated?
- **Strategic Outreach:** Conclude by considering strategies for engaging these partners. Discuss how you might approach them, what proposals you could present, and how to maintain an effective partnership over the course of the project.

#### 4) Applying Funding Knowledge:

##### *Description:*

Reflect on the various funding options discussed, including local, state, and federal sources. How can these funding sources be realistically applied in your community? Develop a preliminary funding strategy that includes potential sources, required matches, and any identified risks.

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

- **Understanding Funding Sources:** Start by reviewing the different types of funding sources discussed during the Accelerator, such as municipal bonds, state grants, federal programs, and private partnerships. Discuss the characteristics and requirements of each funding source.
- **Matching Funding to Needs:** Align these funding sources with the specific broadband needs of your community. Which sources are most appropriate for the scope and scale of your proposed projects? Consider the compatibility of funding sources with your community's demographic, economic, and infrastructural profile.
- **Developing a Funding Strategy:** Create a preliminary strategy that outlines how these sources can be combined to maximize funding potential. Include considerations for any matching funds that may be required and how these will be sourced.
- **Risk Assessment:** Discuss the potential risks associated with each funding source, such as dependency on fluctuating governmental budgets, administrative burdens, or stringent compliance requirements. Brainstorm ways to mitigate these risks.
- **Community Engagement in Funding:** Explore how to involve the community in the funding process, whether through public hearings, community voting mechanisms, or informational campaigns to ensure transparency and gather support.

## 5) Developing a Long-Term Vision for Broadband in Your Community:

### *Description:*

Discuss how broadband deployment will transform your community. Consider how this vision addresses existing challenges and integrates with broader community goals such as economic development, education, healthcare, and public services.

### **Guidance for Discussion:**

- **Vision Creation:** Each participant should briefly articulate their ideal scenario for broadband in the community 10 to 20 years from now. What does comprehensive connectivity look like? How does it affect daily life, business, education, and health services?
- **Alignment with Community Goals:** Discuss how the broadband vision aligns with and supports other long-term community objectives. How can broadband act as a catalyst for broader societal benefits?
- **Addressing Current Challenges:** Consider the current broadband challenges faced by the community. How does your long-term vision address these issues? What infrastructure improvements, policy changes, or community programs might be necessary?
- **Sustainability and Adaptability:** Discuss how the vision can be sustained and adapted over time in response to new technologies and changing community needs. What mechanisms need to be in place to review and revise broadband strategies?

## 6) Anticipating and Planning for Potential Challenges:

### *Description:*

Identify and discuss potential challenges that could arise while implementing the broadband vision in your community. Explore possible solutions and preventive measures to overcome these challenges.

### **Guidance for Discussion:**

**Identifying Challenges:** Start by listing the potential technical, financial, regulatory, and social challenges that could impede the progress of broadband deployment projects. This may include technological limitations, funding shortages, regulatory hurdles, or community resistance.

**Analyzing Impact:** Evaluate the potential impact of each identified challenge on the timeline, cost, and overall success of potential broadband projects. Discuss the likelihood of these challenges and their potential to disrupt project plans.

**Developing Solutions:** For each challenge, brainstorm possible solutions or strategies that could be employed to mitigate these issues. Consider both preventive measures and reactive strategies that could be implemented should the challenges arise.

**Resource Allocation:** Discuss what resources (human, financial, technical) would be necessary to address these challenges effectively. Consider how these resources can be acquired or mobilized within the community or through external support.

**Building Flexibility:** Explore how to build flexibility into the broadband plans to accommodate unforeseen challenges or changes in the project scope. Discuss the importance of adaptive project management practices that allow for adjustments as the project progresses.

## 7) Developing an Action Plan:

### *Description:*

Based on the discussions of broadband needs, visions, partnerships, and potential challenges, outline an actionable plan that specifies what needs to be done, who will do it, and by when to start realizing your community's broadband goals.

### **Guidance for Discussion:**

**Specific Actions:** Identify specific actions that need to be taken to move forward with the broadband projects discussed. This should include both immediate steps and longer-term initiatives necessary to achieve the outlined vision.

**Assign Responsibilities:** Discuss and assign clear responsibilities for each action. Determine who in the community or among the stakeholders will be responsible for executing each part of the plan. Consider creating roles or committees as needed to manage various aspects of the projects.

**Timeline Development:** Establish a realistic timeline for each action, setting both short-term and long-term deadlines. Ensure that the timeline reflects the urgency of needs and the practicality of implementation schedules.

**Resource Allocation:** Determine what resources are needed for each action. This includes funding, human resources, technology, and any other materials or support required. Outline how these resources will be sourced or mobilized.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Plan for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the action plan's implementation. Discuss how progress will be tracked and measured, what milestones will be set, and how feedback will be incorporated to refine the plan moving forward.