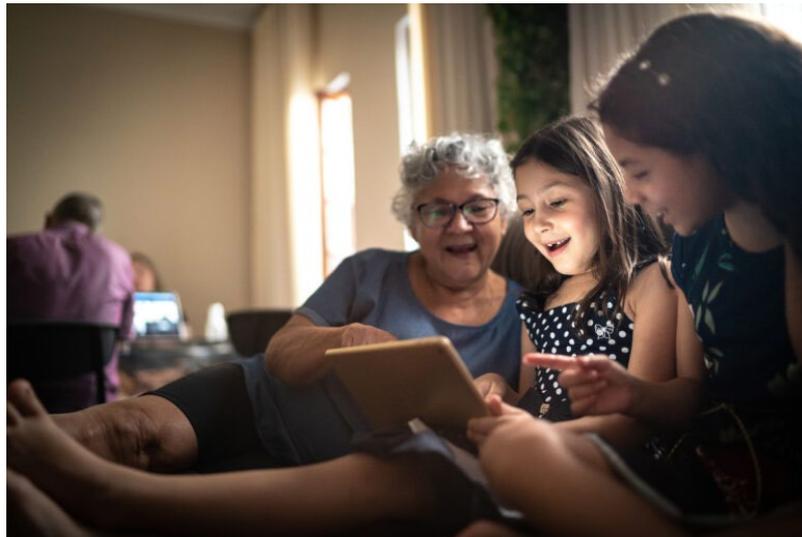


Achieving Universal Broadband in California

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Background and research design

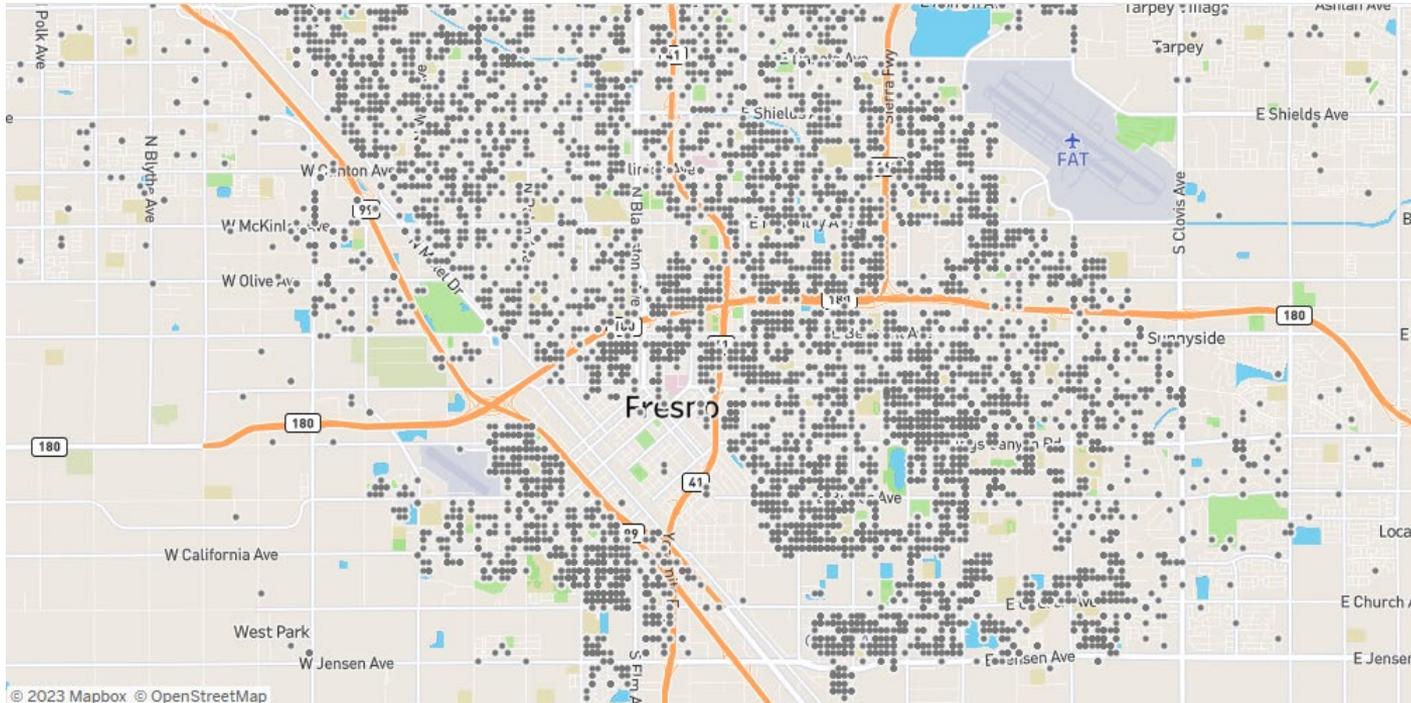
SB 156 was an unprecedented investment

- In 2021, the state passed Senate Bill (SB) 156, **over \$6 billion** to increase equitable, affordable access to high-speed internet
- Our analysis
 - Describes local efforts across the state
 - Identifies successes and challenges
 - Highlights partnerships

Existing data overstate served areas

- Existing service maps:
 - “FCC data maps...are in substantial error in un/underserved locations. They show [our region] as served by 100/10. **That is not the case. We are entirely unserved.**”
 - Interview respondent on tribal lands in Southern California
- Other efforts highlight the limitations of official maps:
 - Georgia Broadband Map
 - Fresno Unified School District

Nearly 13,000 unconnected students live around Fresno



Key findings and recommendations



Three major challenges to digital access

Infrastructure



Affordability



Digital literacy



Rural communities face unique infrastructural barriers

- Topographical challenges
 - Mountainous terrain
 - Forests
 - High-density rock
 - Sparse "gateway" infrastructure
- Tribal communities
- Migrant camps

Urban communities and mobile home parks also face access challenges

- Urban communities
 - High population density areas
 - Multi-unit residences
- Mobile home parks
 - Shallowly buried "spaghetti" of existing utility lines
 - Dangerous for new installations
 - Risk of shutting off other essential utilities

Many still struggle to afford internet

- Areas whose access was overstated by first-round FCC maps
- Natural disasters
 - Over 2.7 million people live in “very high risk” fire zones
- Low-income and high cost-of-living areas face barriers
- Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP): \$30/month internet subsidy
 - Enrollment has grown to only 32% of eligible CA households
 - Lack of awareness and burdensome application process
 - Not available through all internet service providers

Digital literacy is critical to internet access

- More people need the information, prior training, and resources to learn how to use technological tools
- Scarcity of digital skills training
 - Awareness of cybersecurity risks
- Time constraints
 - A one-day session may be insufficient to last a lifetime
 - Working adults may lack availability to attend workshops
 - Working parents may lack the time to help their children

Several strategies may help to bridge the digital divide

- Infrastructure:
 - Participate in or establish consortia to share information and strategies
- Affordability:
 - Boost program awareness and trust
 - Increase clarity and ease of application process
 - Improve internet service providers' offerings
- Digital literacy:
 - Partnerships with local schools, colleges, and libraries
 - Add digital navigator roles throughout community anchor institutions

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work!