

January 14, 2025 Meeting - Seattle Community Technology Advisory Board

Topics covered included: 2025 Telecom Forum; 2025 CTAB Workplan and Committees; CTAB 2024 Year-End Summary Document; Committee Updates

This meeting was held: January 14, 2025; 6:00-7:30 p.m., via Webex

Attending:

Board Members: Phillip Meng, Coleman Entringer, Omari Stringer, Isabel Rodriguez, Hailey Dickson, DeiMarlon Scisney, Femi Adebayo,

Public: Dorene Cornwell, Sanchit Gera, Harte Daniels, Bliss Collins, Lauren Paulini, Roger, Evan Poncilet, Ezra Davis, Katherine VanHenley, Jasmine Brown, Margo J., Morgan James, John Kelso, Jeremy Warren, Josh, Ty Griffen, Luzmila Freese, Daniel, Call-in User 1, Lassana Magassa

Staff: Jon Morrison Winters, Vinh Tang, Cass Magnuski

30 In Attendance

Philip Meng: Let's get started. Folks, apologies for the delay. I am connecting on several devices today. You will see me on video soon. A very good evening. This is always one of the CTAB meetings that I look most forward to. Today, we have the Community Technology Advisory Board's Telecom Forum. I want to start with an abridged introduction from everyone in the room. I will go alphabetically, starting with Bliss Collins. Would you like to introduce yourself?

INTRODUCTIONS

Phillip Meng: Let's get going. We have a packed agenda. First, can I get a motion to approve the December minutes?

DeiMarlon Scisney: I so move.

Coleman Entringer: Second.

Phillip Meng: All in favor? Motion passes. Can I get a motion to approve today's agenda?

Isabel Rodriguez: I so move.

Phillip Meng: Thanks. Can I get a second?

DeiMarlon Scisney: Second.

Phillip Meng: All in favor? Motion passes. Great. As I said, today's meeting focuses on the Digital Equity and Telecom Forum. I believe that this is the third time we have run this forum. It is spearheaded by the Digital Equity Committee. I particularly want to recognize Coleman Entringer for leading the effort this year. Over the past three years, the Digital Equity and Telecom Forum has been an opportunity to engage with leading telecom players in the region on issues that cross equity, accessibility, and the impact on telecom on communities, and it has been a way to connect into our broader work on broadband, equity, and our work towards equitable internet access across Seattle. With that in mind, Coleman, the floor is yours to introduce this year's forum and our panelists today.

2025 TELECOM FORUM

Coleman Entringer: Thank you, Phillip. That was a great introduction. I would like to welcome everyone to our third annual telecom forum. As Phillip mentioned, the purpose of this is to open a dialog between the community and some of the most important service providers that we will encounter in our day-to-day lives, mainly the providers of telecom services, internet services, etc. This forum is mostly focused on the intersection of those services and digital equity. But at the end of the day, what we want to do most is to foster that dialog with the community. With that, we would really like to invite community participation throughout this forum. This year's forum is with AT&T and Verizon (unintelligible). We want to go through those and basically get into that conversation with our telecom representatives. But before we do that, I do want to set

aside just five minutes for introductions of this year's contributors, the representatives of those companies. I know we did a little bit of a round of introductions earlier, but we have Bliss Collins from Verizon, and Lauren Paolini from AT&T. So, before we get into the bulk of our session, I want to invite brief comments from our participants. And again, I want to thank them on behalf of the Digital Equity Committee, as well as CTAB, and the community for agreeing to participate. With that said, Lauren Paolini from AT&T, if you would like to provide brief comments before we get into the session.

Lauren Paolini: Thanks, Coleman. Lauren Paolini with AT&T Legislative Affairs. I work mainly here and am in West Seattle, so I am very local. I work across the State to help close the digital divide. We have lots of programs in place over the past couple of years in the company at large, and that's quite a bit of money, and you will see later how much we have invested right here in the State of Washington. But for the past four years or so, AT&T has had a huge focus on bridging the digital divide. Obviously, as we saw during the pandemic, this is echoed throughout meetings that you guys are probably in every single day. But we had an aim to make sure that those kids who had to go home from school had devices in their hands, connectivity, and had the aptitude. And adults and seniors that needed to be connected had the ability to learn those digital skills and also get those devices into their hands. So, we have had a huge focus on making sure that we equalize the playing field across all socio-economic strata, across all members of our community. We continue to do that work today. I'm really excited to be here today to talk about the work that we have done. So, thank you for having us.

Coleman Entringer: Thank you, Lauren. and Bliss Collins, if you would like to go next?

Bliss Collins: Thank you, Coleman. And Lauren is here. I remember doing a forum with you back in October. So, great to see you again. Again, my name is Bliss Collins. I support the Verizon State Government Affairs team. More specifically, I am the associate director of community engagement and public relations. We, much like AT&T, are very committed to digital equity in the region, and making sure that historically marginalized communities, disadvantaged communities, and communities that are facing challenges with internet access and high speeds are able not only to get those services, but also meet with us. A lot of times, people put these big brands on pedestals, and sometimes it is really hard to get in touch with us. So, I really enjoy these forums because I think it is a way to localize our presence in the community, and the work that we are doing to ensure digital equity and digital education, digital literacy in all communities. So, I really look forward to this conversation today, and to make sure that you all can get in touch with me after to keep this conversation going. So, thank you.

Coleman Entringer: Perfect. And keeping this conversation going is something the Digital Equity Committee will try to disseminate materials or important conversation point that we get out of this meeting to our network. I think that keeping this conversation going in our community is kind of the theme tonight. With that said, I think we can get into an official Q&A session. Again, with the interest of community participation, I want to invite anybody to contribute into the comments, any questions that you would like asked. And then, we would love to be a part of our session. Phillip, if you don't mind, I would ask you help to field those questions. If you would monitor the chat?

Phillip Meng: Of course.

Coleman Entringer: Sorry, for some reason, I cannot see the chat right now. We also have a number of questions that were submitted prior with a survey that we sent out. Those questions will appear on the sides, and we will prioritize questions that come during this meeting, but if there is a lull in those questions, I will go ahead and flip to some of the questions that the committee has created in dialog with some of our stakeholders. With that said, I think we can go ahead and kick us off with the first set of questions, which are some that were submitted from our survey. And the first one is senior digital navigation. How can there be funding made from organizations and nonprofits to help our seniors to safely navigate through the internet about digital navigation. Just starting in alphabetical order, we will start with AT&T, and then we can go to Verizon, and then, we will flip for every question.

Lauren Paolini: Through what used to be ACP, which was a federal program, which was discontinued in April, AT&T has made a lot of headway in putting together great plans that are affordable for those folks who need it. It is really just a matter of whether you qualify for certain services that can make you eligible for other services. But I think also, just making sure that they are aware. I think knowledge is the biggest thing, and communication. So getting connected with organizations that can help you with those types of programs. I know that DELN is a great one to work with, and there are several others throughout the community, as well.

Harte Daniels: I think about any programs that you have for seniors as is noted in the question.

Lauren Paolini: We do have senior level pricing, so you can visit our web site to look at pricing there that is eligible for seniors, or visit one of our local retail stores, and they can talk you through that pricing. Because we do make pricing specifically for seniors, because we know that that is a need in the community.

Harte Daniels: For the other two points of digital equity, besides access to the internet, the other two points were access to devices and any involvement you have with CBOs in getting digital literacy to seniors.

Lauren Paolini: Yes, also that. So, when you go in to talk to our folks about the senior-specific rate plans, they will also have pricing for devices, as well. As far as digital literacy goes, across the nation, we have thousands of workshops. And here in the State of Washington, we have also had several workshops that were put on by the Public Library Association. If you want access to the internet, to be able to look for those types of digital literacy courses. We have those that are specific for anybody that needs a literacy course to be able to connect to the internet. Let me just go see if I can find the specific data points on digital literacy trainings. We had 50 in Washington since 2021. And then, obviously, our retail folks are trained to literally do that sort of device training every single day, so they are ready for that. We also provide a service called AT&T Screen-Ready that provides tips and tools and resources. It has developed coursework and materials that can help you waft through everything from how to launch a browser, how to get into the internet, set up email or G-Mail accounts, all the way to cybersecurity that helps you, obviously, to learn about the risks of being online, if you are not aware of those risks. And our digital literacy training is geared towards seniors and older adults.

From Chat: DeiMarlon "D" Scisney- CTAB 1/14/2025 6:25 PM • This is DELN:
<https://www.digitalequitykc.org/>

From Chat: Evan Poncelet 1/14/2025 6:26 PM • Would the community consider enfranchising Black-owned internet service providers innovators that have a focus on community access such as Culture Wireless or Figgers Communication?

<https://www.goculturewireless.com/>

<https://www.figgers.com>

Coleman Entringer: And moving onto Bliss Collins of Verizon. Same question.

Bliss Collins: Thanks, Coleman. For the first part of this question, Verizon here locally has made really big commitments financially to supporting Digital Navigators in the community. We have worked with organizations like El Centro de la Raza, and the Cambodian-American Community Council of Washington, and that is a really great community that helps seniors, particularly in the Cambodian community, to understand not only how to get on the internet, but how to turn on a computer. So, really fundamental skills that we often overlook, but are just as vital as applying for a discount plan or whatever it may be. We are really committed to working with organizations that are doing digital equity work in the region. We put money behind it. We put money behind the City of Seattle's Technology Matching Fund (TMF), which also works to ensure digital literacy among youth and adults throughout Seattle. We are always open to continuing to work with other organizations, and quick frankly, individuals that just have a vested interest in digital equity and making sure that we are meeting people where they are at, and continuing to have conversations that better inform our approach. As it relates to assistance programs, we do have a really great program that we had in place even before the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which is the Verizon Forward program. This is a discounted program that basically, if you qualified for the ACP, the government subsidy or any kind of government subsidy, you can qualify for this program. When the ACP did sunset last year, we made it real easy to roll over from that ACP program into the Verizon Forward program. And I believe that some eligible customers can receive up to six months of no cost internet at all with our Verizon Forward program, so that's one of our discount programs. We also have a number of other digital equity offerings on our web site, and I provided the links to Coleman, so hopefully, he can distribute that out at the end of our meeting. But I am always open to continuing to have conversations with the **community about how we can meet folks where they're at. So, thank you.**

From Chat: Jeremy Warren 1/14/2025 6:26 PM • A few of the local workforce boards have digital equity programs and digital navigators, has there been any thought to making (or increasing) funding for those programs?

Coleman Entringer: Great. So, if there are no follow-up questions, I will go ahead and move to our second question, and then we can move to our chat section. To move to our second question, which is on assistance programs. We have heard a little bit about this, but I think it is worth listening a little bit further, which is any discounts for assistance programs that can help to support disadvantaged households that are

experiencing (unintelligible). And then we talked about programs similar to ACP participation. Just curious if there are any more things that our representatives want to add for assistance programs. And anything specific around point in time partnerships. I think in view of current national disasters in the news space, that is a great topic, as well. So, with that, going to Bliss Collins from Verizon.

Bliss Collins: Thanks, Coleman. As I mentioned earlier, we do have the Verizon Forward program, which is a discounted program for internet. We also do have our Lifeline Program for eligible customers, which again, if you are qualifying for the Verizon Forward program, there is a good chance that you will qualify for the Lifeline program. This is a federal assistance initiative that Verizon does recognize, and eligible participants can receive at least \$10 to \$20 off the Verizon bill, just depending on certain eligibility criteria. Additionally, we also have the Tribal Link-up Assistance, which offers eligible tribal and subscribers covering up to 100 percent of their Verizon bill. I know that there is always more that can be done. We are constantly evaluating every day how we can adjust how we serve people and how we make our services affordable. That is really what I love about this forum. And certainly, the opportunity to do it in partnership with other industry partners, like AT&T, which I know is equally committed to making sure that together we are working to ensure that people have not just internet but high speed internet, and ultimately, the digital education and the understanding to be able to utilize these services.

Lauren Paolini: Yes, and I will just tag onto that, yes, we are always working together with industry partners to find the best solutions for our community. In addition to the senior discounting programs that we have, we also offer tribal discounts, we also offer federally-assisted programs, as well. I think we also have a continuation of what was the ACP on a subsidized program. In certain communities, you can help. So, in light of what is happening in Los Angeles right now, we discontinued some of our billings until we can make sure that everybody is taken care of. We don't shut off anybody's service, so when we talk about 'in the moment,' hardships are kind of what we do, as well, to help those that are in need. We are always open to hear feedback from our communities, so the senior discounts, we can always address that. We can always look at what we can do, so we are always open to feedback. We appreciate specific questions around what types of programs we have to help.

Phillip Meng: I'm seeing a follow-up here, from Margo, /what age is classified as 'senior' for these programs?

Bliss Collins: That's a really good question.

Lauren Paolini: I would say the same thing. I think it got the federal government qualifications of a senior, which I believe is 65. I would have to follow up and check on that.

Phillip Meng: That would be great. Margo, we will reach out to you through the chat so that we can follow up with you with the answer to that question.

Bliss Collins: I was actually able to get that information on Verizon's behalf. We do offer a 55-plus unlimited plan for customers who are 55 and older. I am not sure if there is a federal plan based on a federal age, but I know that that unlimited plan is typically a pretty good senior plan.

Phillip Meng: I also want to ask a follow-up from the comments in chat. Evan asks whether the community would consider enfranchising Black-owned internet service providers and innovators that have a focus on community access. Such as culture, wireless.

Bliss Collins: Was that from Evan?

Phillip Meng: Yes.

Bliss Collins: That's a really great question, Evan, and I would certainly love to know more about that work, and that initiative, and would definitely set time aside after this call to meet individually on how Verizon at a local level can support that.

Lauren Paolini: I am not familiar with the organizations, though I would be very interested. We are always looking ways that we can locally support our community

agencies that are helping the community. So, I would be interested in a conversation about that, as well. I see that the web site is here, so I will check that out.

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Evan. I also want to, just to clarify, please feel free to continue adding questions into the chat. We will ask them. If you would like to ask directly, feel free to raise your hand. A quick question from Jeremy, and Dorene, I know you have been very patient here. Jeremy asks, 'A few of the workforce ports have digital equity programs and Digital Navigators. Has there been any thought to making or increasing funding for those programs?'

From Chat: Harte Daniels 1/14/2025 6:32 PM • The Federal Qualified Health Centers in Seattle serve the constituency of Digital Equity. Many lack transportation to health clinics but don't have the access, devices or digital literacy to conduct a video doctor's appointment. So do you have, or would you consider creating programs to increase access to health and mental health providers through digital means?

Lauren Paolini: As I just mentioned, my role here in Washington is philanthropy. So, we're always looking for places that we can help support programs that help DEI and digital equity. Jeremy, I would love to have a conversation with you to see if that is something that we can support here locally, if you have one in mind.

Bliss Collins: We are really specifically focused this year on how we can narrow our focus and our CSR initiative to really support what we do best , And that is telecommunications and internet, and so making sure that people have access and understanding, and the organizations that are supporting that work that we are working with them and supporting them is a really big focus. So, if there are organizations out there that are really doing great digital equity work, we want to be at the table with them. So, Jeremy, I would like to follow up with you, as well.

Dorene Cornwell: I have a bunch of questions, so I will try to keep time in focus. One question is, this is like a coverage troubleshooting question. My phone sometimes tells me that I have 5G signal, and sometimes doesn't. My mother lives now in an unincorporated King County area, right between Seattle and Renton. We are both Verizon customers. I'm going to put Bliss on the spot. But, I think one of the questions is just about how to figure out -- I know I've tried 5G home internet, and for some reason, it's not available. And then, I put my mailing address zip code, which is different from my

home address. But there is also a troubleshooting. My mother just has troubles with her calls going through, and I don't know if that is some kind of impediment to the signal where she is geographically. So, that is the tip for troubleshooting questions. Let's start there, because I have lots of questions, but I don't want to take up all of the time.

Bliss Collins: I appreciate your questions. Dorene, would you be able to elaborate more specifically just on the technological issue? Is it that your mother has internet access and an old plan with Verizon?

Dorene Cornwell: Yes, she has a mobile plan with Verizon. The facility where she lives does a lot with Xfinity and there seems to be some issue with size of pipeline going into Xfinity which serves a whole lot of customers within the building, and I think she wants to do her direct phone connections. That's part of it, to figure out what to troubleshoot. Like I say, I'm not sure whether there is just line of sight and no cell tower, or something like that. I call her and we have trouble with her calls going through. But if that seems like too customer-specific, I can put my email into the chat. And we can solve it offline.

Bliss Collins: I am glad you brought up the question. It's not that I don't want to address it, it's just that I will be the first to admit that I am nowhere near the network expert that a lot of my colleagues are, and I want to make sure that whatever the issue is, it gets handled correctly and appropriately. So, if we could follow up offline in regards to that, that would be great. But, if there are any other questions that you feel that I can answer, I am happy to answer whatever I can.

Dorene Cornwell: Okay, so I'm going to talk about a different question. One is that I know some people who have just gotten the low end devices, and one person in particular goes to the AT&T store at least weekly and has other people help her between times. I don't know if there is a way that she could call in and get help that isn't having to go to the AT&T store, because transportation is a constraint. So, that would be one thing. But the other thing is I work with a lot of people who are aging into blindness, and they all get smart phones and run a technology meet-up. I am not an I-Phone user, but it is kind of like are there any specific training programs or outreach programs that specifically help develop people's fluency about the different accessibility features. Because I know that they are there. And just experimenting with them is a big thing.

Lauren Paolini: Yes, Dorene. I can help you with that. If you want to drop your email into the chat....

Dorene Cornwell: I just dropped my email into the chat.

From Chat: Dorene Cornwell 1/14/2025 6:42 PM • dorenafc@gmail.com

From Chat: Harte Daniels 1/14/2025 6:34 PM • Have you had any feed back on the phones used in the Lifeline program? The antedotal information I've received is the phones in this program are not durable and do not have capability of video visits.

Lauren Paolini: We can certainly help on both ends of that, for both questions. As far as the accessibility options, we can help your friend with that. I can connect you with somebody and get your questions answered.

Dorene Cornwell: Good. I think that's enough for right now. I'm going to make sure that someone else gets to talk.

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Dorene. I appreciate you both for following up. If there is anything that the others would like to follow up on, please place your contact information in the chat. I want to go onto Harte. Harte, I notice you have a lot of questions. Would you like to ask them directly?

Harte Daniels: Sure. And that way, if you want clarification on the questions, I will be able to do that. I'm trying to screen through here, and find the first question. Basically, the federally qualified health centers. There are a few in Seattle. And what you will find is these are the same constituency that CTAB and especially the Digital Equity and Inclusion Committee and the DELN serve. When I say that any of them lack transportation to the health clinics, I find that when they are trying to set up appointments with their doctors and they have an acute issue, there's no way for them to get to the clinic, because they have to go to Hopelink. Hopelink requires them to give them 48 hours or more. And then, frequently, doesn't get them there on time, and they

lose the appointment. And therefore, they lose access to healthcare. Additionally, there are those that we try to keep the health centers that have providers who try to keep those that have come there living away from addiction, and not have withdrawal symptoms start, which are very severe when they don't get their medication. And a lot of other things around access for children's health care as well as mental health providers. All of these, for the low-income people, if the health care providers do have a lot of set aside video visits, which are the only ones that are allowed by State of Washington. You cannot do it by phone. The providers cannot be paid if you call them on the phone, so it has to involve technology. Do you have, or would you consider creating programs to increase access to health and mental health providers through digital means? That would include using some CBOs or approaching these federally qualified health centers specifically, and help to fund them, or give them resources to see if they can help their patients.

Lastly, just one of those had about 528,000 appointments with unique -- about 52,000 unique patients, just to give you an idea of the population we are looking at. And the spread of how it affects such a large part of Seattle. That's the first question.

Bliss Collins: I can try to -- I want to make sure that I am answering everything accurately, so I might ask you to repeat to make sure that I am getting this correctly. Verizon does have a number of CSR initiatives that are geared towards certain communities, and based on our alignment with organizations that are supporting these communities, we do give funding. But, at the end of the day, we also realize that we are a telecommunications company, and while there are many issues that we are passionate about, there is not always an opportunity to put money behind these issues. That doesn't mean that we wouldn't be willing to have conversations with organizations that are doing really impactful work with regard to mental health and access, and I think you mentioned transportation being a barrier, as well. We are definitely open to coming to the table, and being a stakeholder in a way that makes sense for both Verizon and for the community. But I am hesitating here because I also want to make sure that I am transparent. There are some issues that we recognize our direct involvement is not going to solve at the end of the day. It doesn't mean that we are not willing to participate, but we also are very strategic about how we fund and finance organizations. Again, that aligns with our CSR initiative. So, I would be happy to try and meet individually and have this conversation. I think there was a lot of information there that I also want to make sure that I am digesting appropriately. But again, this isn't to say that we are not interested, but I think I would just need to know more, and how directly we can get involved in something like that.

Harte Daniels: So, failing funding, would you be willing to help with the collaboration connection of CBOs as a type of support maybe, even from a volunteer corps from your company to work between the CBOs and the service help providers?

Bliss Collins: Yes, that's a really great follow-up. And yes, that is something that I think we would be interested in getting involved in, in one way or another. I think we do have a really great, robust, Verizon volunteer team of champions that are local, and to a lot of our internal staff, mental health is definitely a priority, and definitely becoming an increasingly bigger societal issue at large. And so, that I, definitely, in my individual capacity, would love to push and move the needle on that. There are a myriad of ways that I can think of us getting involved in, so yes, I think that would include us connecting offline and figuring out more specific ways to act on some of these ideas.

From Chat: Harte Daniels 1/14/2025 6:38 PM • Would AT&T be willing to sponsor one of the yearly TMF project applicants? The City has more applicants than funds to satisfy many good community based organizations

From Chat; Melany Bell 1/14/2025 6:40 PM • How expansive is digital equity education for elders and marginalized communities? Does it occur in-person? is it done in multiple languages? ASL accessible ? Is it in perpetuity? Do Verizon plans include streaming networks/cable?

Phillip Meng: Thanks so much, Bliss, and to Harte. Great question. I want to be mindful that we only have so much time scheduled, and we are so grateful for all of the enthusiasm in chat. To make sure that we can address everyone's questions, we will go around with one question per person. Then what we will do is, we will keep a log of all of the questions in chat and send them to Bliss and Lauren offline for further follow-up. But I want to make sure that everyone gets at least some of their questions heard. Melany Bell asks how expansive is digital equity education for elders and marginalized communities? Does it happen in person? Is it done in multiple languages? ASL accessible ? Is it in perpetuity? Do Verizon plans include streaming networks/cable?

Lauren Paolini: Yes, we have digital equity education. We have digital literacy courses that we are holding here locally. We usually partner with a public library, but we are also open to CBOs hosting those. And then we bring in our volunteers. That is a big piece on closing the digital divide and what we are calling the bridge to possibility. In

many places we have connected learning centers that are hosted by a CBO, and we bring in all of the equipment, and we bring in all of the course materials, and we teach these folks, whether they are immigrants or seniors, whoever needs that education. We host it there on the site, and then the seniors can come to them. We don't necessarily usually take it into their houses, but if there is a senior facility that can host something like that. we are more than happy to do that. That's kind of the bread and butter of what we do, to answer the previous question and this one. Our course material right now is in English and Spanish, but we can always find a translator to put it into ASL or another language. Those are all in person that are hosted either by the PLA, through a public library, or we can bring our volunteers on site. We have a big campus in Bothel and folks who are willing to travel all around the greater Seattle area. We also have a lot of those retail folks who are always willing to volunteer and do these types of engagement to help the community to better understand how to use their devices.

Bliss Collins: To follow up on that, great question, Melany. Verizon, much like AT&T does work with public libraries and local community organizations in Seattle and beyond. We also do -- my region is also all of western Washington, so I do a lot of work in Pierce County, as well. But more specifically, any in-person trainings that we have, we typically have online. And I know, again, for people that do not have internet access, that can be a challenge getting a date and time for these workshops, but I am happy to leave my contact information and be in contact with anyone here who has any interest in any of the digital equity initiatives that we are doing both locally and online and making sure that you all can get access to that is definitely a priority of mine, and so it is definitely going to be pivotal for me to make sure that my information gets to you all at the end of this meeting. I am happy to elaborate if I did not directly answer that.

From Chat: Melany Bell 1/14/2025 6:41 PM • Are VR devices included in device distribution?

From Chat: Dorene Cornwell 1/14/2025 6:42 PM • dorenefc@gmail.com

From Chat: Evan Poncelet 1/14/2025 6:43 PM • feel free to follow up with me via email as well: evan@venture-black.org

From Chat: Margo J 1/14/2025 6:46 PM • Do either of the carriers have any support services to help under served small businesses to navigate around some of their digital service needs?

From Chat: Dorene Cornwell 1/14/2025 6:47 PM • What can either of you tell me about sense of whether the lowest low end plans are adequate for people's needs. I was listening to someone sign people up for low end plans with limitations on minutes. Some seniors just insist on waiting in phone queues and not pressing options for call backs? Do you have a sense of customers that have that problem? 1/14/2025 6:47 PM • I agree with Harte about the access to health care question.

Phillip Meng: Thank you, Bliss. and thank you for the great question. A question from Margo. Do either of the carriers have any support services to help underserved small businesses to navigate around some of their digital service needs?

Lauren Paolini: We have small business sales teams that would be able to specifically answer what sort of services we have, but I know that we have a whole section of our business that caters to small businesses. I don't know specifically the rate plans for those, but I can get you in touch with the folks who manage that team to see what options we do have.

Bliss Collins: That's a really great question that I am glad someone asked. Yes, this is one of the things that we are most passionate about, at least with respect to our digital equity initiative. We have a really great program at Verizon, called our Small Business Digital program. It was created in response to the Covid 19 pandemic and in understanding that a lot of businesses that before 2020 were operating with brick and mortar and in person did not really have digital skills or the knowledge to completely transition their business or their operations online. So, we created an entire self-paced platform online that is completely free for anyone who is interested in starting a small business, for anyone that does have a small business and wants to maybe hone in more on the digital piece of it. It is, again, a self-guided course that has workshops and trainings from everything, accounting to social media and marketing. And I think someone just dropped that into the chat, so thank you, DeiMarlon, for dropping that into the chat. But the best part about this is that certain participants who do complete this course can be eligible for a \$10,000 small business grant, So, it is another great incentive to take this course if you are interested to get involved. Again, I am happy to follow up with anyone afterwards regarding this. We also have a really great small business digital-ready team that is always looking to come and plug into Seattle for a

workshop or a presentation. And so, if there is any interest in that, please feel free to reach out to me.

From Chat: Dorene Cornwell 1/14/2025 6:49 PM • Digital navigators also sometimes equal transportation or other info and referrals function. How can CBO's involved in these roles get help to support these services?

From Chat: Melany Bell 1/14/2025 6:49 PM • Are those that have been incarcerated included in the new accessibility model?

From Chat: Dorene Cornwell 1/14/2025 6:51 PM • Some companies have programs where people can get paid their regular salaries for volunteer work in the community. Do AT&T and Verizon have programs like that?

Margo J: I just wanted to chime in and say, yes, Bliss, the Verizon Digital Ready program was very pivotal during Covid and after. I did take a couple of the courses there for my business and I know lots of people in the community that also attended some of those courses. And I just want to echo the fact that yea, everyone should tap into that web site, and that they do have lots of rounds of grants I know you talked about the \$10,000 one, but I know they have like \$1,000 every now and then if you take some of their courses. So I just want to echo and thank you all for that opportunity, not just here in Washington, but for everyone, small businesses around the country.

From Chat: Harte Daniels 1/14/2025 6:38 PM • Would AT&T be willing to sponsor one of the yearly TMF project applicants? The City has more applicants than funds to satisfy many good community based organizations

From Chat: Melany Bell 1/14/2025 6:40 PM • How expansive is digital equity education for elders and marginalized communities? Does it occur in-person? is it done in multiple languages? ASL accessible ? Is it in perpetuity? Do Verizon plans include streaming networks/cable?

From Chat: Melany Bell 1/14/2025 6:41 PM • Are VR devices included in device distribution?

From Chat: Jeremy Warren 1/14/2025 6:46 PM • Here is a free resource that helps locate digital navigators. It could be helpful for those in the community <https://www.seakingwdc.org/digital-equity-asset-map> .

Bliss Collins: Thank you so much, Margo. I'm really happy to have a direct testament to that program, and I'm glad you were able to take some course. And yes, I am definitely happy to elaborate and then follow up with anyone else who is interest. Again, there is a whole team dedicated to small businesses already, and they are always looking for new innovative ways to support digital equity initiatives, in Seattle and nationally. So, thank you again, Margo. I really appreciate that.

Margo J: Yes, I will definitely be in touch with you to see how we can support some of the other small businesses here in the community. Maybe there is something we can come up with, both yourself and Lauren. Maybe we talk to some of these small businesses that can benefit from who you guys are offering.

Bliss Collins: That sounds great. I look forward to it.

Phillip Meng: Coleman, how are we looking on time? I understand that there is an additional presentation. Are we able to take any more questions?

Coleman Entringer: I think we are pretty much tapped on our Q&A section. We have about 15 more minutes budgeted towards the total forum. I do want to reserve a few minutes for closing comments from each of our presenters. I do want to note that we want to keep the conversation ongoing offline. The Digital Equity Committee will make sure that any kind of materials or commentary contributed to us via the representatives, and we will do our part to send that out as best as we can, making sure that that dialog continues offline.

From Chat: Margo J 1/14/2025 6:46 PM • Do either of the carriers have any support services to help under served small businesses to navigate around some of their digital service needs?

From Chat: Dorene Cornwell 1/14/2025 6:47 PM • What can either of you tell me about sense of whether the lowest low end plans are adequate for people's needs. I was listening to someone sign people up for low end plans with limitations on minutes. Some seniors just insist on waiting in phone queues and not pressing options for call backs? Do you have a sense of customers that have that problem?

From Chat: Roger 1/14/2025 6:59 PM • What resources are available to them if any?

From Chat: Harte Daniels 1/14/2025 7:01 PM • can CTAB help link questioners with the 2 representatives for follow up?

Phillip Meng: I've just noticed a couple of questions that just came in. Let's try to get some very quick answers here, and again, if folks will compile all of the questions and send them along, I look forward to following up. Apologies, Coleman, I just saw these. A writer asks, what about nonprofits who center services on existing both seniors and youth in technology under limited resources? Bliss, Lauren, any comments on that?

Lauren Paolini: Sure. As I mentioned earlier, we are always looking for organizations in the community that can help us to reach more people and get digital resources into their hands, so we are always open to looking to partner with those organizations, whether it is from a sponsorship or a contribution standpoint, or from a manpower standpoint. So, however we can connect with them, I am more than happy to have a conversation about how we can support what your mission is. So, whether it is youth and seniors, or whoever it is that you are serving, as long as it is digital resources or digital literacy focus, I think we can find something to help you out. I am very happy to have that conversation.

Bliss Collins: That's great. And for time's sake, I don't think I could say it better than Lauren. So, ditto. You can follow up with me. I look forward to that.

Phillip Meng: Someone asks, does either company release information publicly on how they measure the success of their digital equity programs?

Bliss Collins: I believe we have some information out there on successful outcomes for these programs. It's something that I might have to go and look for. But that's a really good question, and something that we really should do more of, so that is something that I will take into consideration.

Lauren Paolini: AT&T has a Washington Connect web site. So, I'll drop that into the chat. It shows what we've been doing here locally. It shares the number of folks that we provided a laptop to over the past four years; the people we have connected; how much we have invested. So, we have some data that you can read there for both State and national. I can drop that into the chat.

From Chat: Roger 1/14/2025 7:03 PM • ceoevans@aol.com, The Organization is called the Seattle Griot Project www.theseattlegriotproject.com

From Chat: Lauren Paolini - AT&T 1/14/2025 7:03 PM • <https://attconnects.com/washington> 1/14/2025 7:04 PM •

From Chat: Lauren Paolini - AT&T 1/14/2025 7:05 PM • lauren@att.com

From Chat: 1/14/2025 7:04 PM • AT&T Connects | Broadband Access and Affordability & More

Phillip Meng: Fantastic. Thanks so much. And thanks for the very quick answers. Back to you, Coleman.

Coleman Entringer: So, again, I want to keep this conversation going offline. I would like each of our presenters to summarize any take-aways that they think are really

important for the Seattle community at large to take away from the digital equity work that each of your companies are doing, or any programs that can be easily accessible. With that said, I know that we started with AT&T at the very beginning of the session, so I'll go ahead and pass it off to Verizon. Bliss?

Bliss Collins: Thanks, Coleman, and thanks to CTAB. I really appreciate the opportunity to be here. I enjoyed being here last year, as well, to have a continuation of this conversation is great. Ultimately, my goal in supporting Verizon's state government affairs team is to ensure that, number one, people have access, that things are affordable, and that we are being adaptable. Those are the three "A's" that we try to live by. My LinkedIn profile is literally just Bliss Collins, and I will make sure to drop my email and everything in the chat, too. But anyone who wants to have a conversation about how Verizon can get involved with their organization with respect to digital equity, and also, we also do have a CSR platform that does cover other areas. So, if you want to check out that platform online, or if there are any other ways that you can think of about how we can get involved in supporting the community, please let me know. I try my best to be innovative and creative and open-minded, so I am open to all suggestions, all ideas in figuring out how we can make this a better community for us and for the next generation. Thank you.

Lauren Paolini: Like Bliss mentioned, our role here is to make sure that we get as many folks connected and using their devices. I have some data points here. From 2021 to 2023, we invested more than \$2 million in our local community for the State of Washington. And then, additionally, for the last three years, we distributed more than 1,200 laptops to organizations, like *El Centro de la Raza* or Treehouse. So organizations that have families or students or seniors that are in need of those types of resources. And then, following up with them on making sure that they were taking care of from a technology standpoint, from a support standpoint, and then, also, from a literacy standpoint. Additionally, we have resources in our retail folks. So, they give day in and day out. I know that transportation might be a challenge, but if you are looking to get some sort of solution for somebody, we can do it over Facetime or something, I am more than happy for some retail folks to help you with that. In totality or to close here, AT&T actually just unveiled our AT&T guarantee, which is a new guarantee. This was just last week, so this is really great timing to make sure that the experience that you want is the experience that you get.

From soup to nuts, when you walk into the store, or you sign up online and get a device shipped to you, all the way through billing, we want to make sure that that experience is effortless. So, we have guaranteed, both from a fiber and 5G standpoint, that we will make sure that you are taken care of for anybody that needs that particular action. We take action on all of those issues as they arise to make sure that you are treated the way that you expect to be treated. Again, I want to thank everybody for having us here

today. Thanks, Coleman, for reaching out and including AT&T, and to the whole CTAB board for doing what you do and allowing this forum to be able to speak about the great digital equity work that we are doing in the community. And, obviously, with Bliss Collins, as well, because we are all in it together to make sure that everybody is connected the way they need to be connected. So, thank you.

Coleman Entringer: Thank you, Lauren. I just want to reiterate to CTAB and the broader community, thanks for your participation. And I also wanted to thank everybody who participated in the chat. We really love having that two-way dialog. I think it makes these forums much more helpful for the broader community, and anybody who has been listening in. I love to see that. With that said, I think we can close out the 2025 Telecom Forum, or at least the session of that forum. Thanks again, everybody. (unintelligible) ...continue with the rest of the agenda.

Phillip Meng: Thank you, Lauren and Bliss, and thank you again to Coleman and everyone on the Digital Equity Committee, for their work to get us to this point. Once again, I want to recognize the fantastic participation and questions from the group, so much so that we didn't think we could cover them all, but as I mentioned, we plan to share these questions soon. If you would like to receive the answers to these questions, please drop your email address into the chat. We will also take a little bit of time in the next meeting to quickly go over it for everyone's benefit.

From Chat: Bliss Collins (Verizon) 1/14/2025 7:10 PM • Thank you all!
bliss.collins@ichorstrategies.com

From Chat: Harte Daniels 1/14/2025 7:10 PM • Harte.Daniels@outlook.com

From Chat: Luzmila Freese 1/14/2025 7:11 PM • Luzmila Freese, Latino Community Fund, luzmila@latinocommunityfund.org

From Chat: Ty Griffin WILLIAM GROSE CENTER 1/14/2025 7:13 PM • Ty@africatownlandtrust.org. PM for the William Grose Center for Cultural Innovation in Seattle's Central District.

Phillip Meng: With that complete, I want to move onto the next part of our agenda for today's meeting, which is to discuss the 2025 CTAB Work Plan, committees, and year-end summary document. These are documents that we have seen before. CTAB members, they should be in your email inboxes, if you would like to follow along, But I will quickly take the chance again to walk through what we are looking at, and how today it would be very lovely to get a vote or a decision on a path forward. Allow me to share my screen here to discuss the work plan.

2025 CTAB WORK PLAN

Phillip Meng: We are leaving the work plan in a very flexible place. And I want to get a quick confirmation from everyone that you can see my screen. In October, we talked about the overarching vision and how we plan to align with this. What that means is that we are really going pretty broad with our work plan, tackling topics that range from responsible AI to the impacts of social media on health, with the idea that an expanded slate of committees will be able to define these more specifically and really drive the work forward. The big change, of course, is expanding our committee footprint to a total of five: Privacy and Cybersecurity, Digital Equity, Digital Wellbeing, Smart Cities, as well as Outreach. We have heard from folks, including Hailey, who will provide us some context and starting points, and even in one case, perspective committee work plan for the work that these committees will take on. With that in mind, I want to just open up again to any comments. If folks here have any comments on the proposed work plan and specifically, the expansion of the set of committees. Once we have a discussion, we would love to get a vote on our committee plan so that we can officially kick these off in the next few weeks. Margo, would you like to comment?

Margo J.: My apologies. I'm kind of just taking it all in. I don't have a comment at the moment, but I will have a comment soon. As you know, I keep commenting.

Phillip Meng: We welcome any comments. I appreciate it. I just want to check. I noticed the raised hand.

Evan Poncilet: Yes. I'm kind of interested in the supplier vendor diversity. Do we have a diversity plan in terms of vendors?

Phillip Meng: I can comment on that briefly. CTAB is not involved in any contracting processes. So if you mean whether we have any role to play when it comes to vendor and supplier selection, that's not in our body of work. That being said, insofar as promoting equity and diversity in business, at that relates to digital equity, I think it is a potential topic that the committee could be interested in learning more about.

Vinh Tang: Thank you. I have not mentioned this to the CTAB members, but I just want to make sure that you have this information. The Seattle City Council in 2024 as part of the process, they passed a statement or letter of intent, which is government speak for asking for a report to come back to the City Council in 2025. That statement reads: "Request that the executive collaborate with the City Council to establish and advisory work group to explore alternative financing and operating models for the Seattle Channel in recognition of declining cable franchise fee revenues." So, as we speak right now, the executive from the Seattle IT side are meeting and talking with the Seattle City Council staff (unintelligible), to make up a work group of three from the executive and three from the City Council side, and I think one or two City representatives on that board. It's not a board; it's just a working group. It's got a very specific (unintelligible) to look at, basically the financing piece, the governance piece and the (unintelligible) piece for the Seattle Channel in terms of the future of the Seattle Channel. That work group is charged with various tasks to go over that. Obviously, when that is ready, I will share a draft with CTAB, because it involves CTAB, as well. But that is just something that I want to make sure that, Phillip and your team, is aware of.

Phillip Meng: That's great to know. Any questions or comments from folks? Vinh, would you recommend adding that to our work plan? I imagine that that is something that we may want to tackle either from the Digital Equity or from a full-court perspective. It is certainly something that a lot of us will be following with interest.

Vinh Tang: I think it is something (unintelligible). CTAB or anyone can provide input or feedback on the Seattle Channel's future, but it turns out that the role of CTAB in terms of getting involved in the actual final product, you will provide input, but it won't be an official (unintelligible) for this group. I think that we should track it, and then we will obviously have it in our CTAB agendas, and at some point in time, we will probably get a presentation about it at CTAB, as well.

Phillip Meng: Makes sense. And we would love to have it as an agenda item. Folks, any other questions or thoughts here? I recognize, too, for board members as well as community members who are joining us over time. We have had many conversations, both as a full group as well as one on one in a number of cases about these plans. One quick note to the community members who are not board members in the room, all of these committees hugely welcome your membership and participation. All Seattleites are very much invited to join each of these committees, and as we stand them up, we will be happy to share information about their regular meeting times, and invite you to participate. If there are no other comments or objections and so forth, I would love to get a motion to approve the 2025 work plan and the creation of Digital Wellbeing and Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure, and Privacy and Cybersecurity Committees. Those are the ones that would be new or reactivated as part of this plan. Do I have a motion?

DeiMarlon Scisney: Motion to approve the 2025 work plan. Do we only do one motion at a time, or is this all going under the same motion?

Phillip Meng: I have never, as a member of CTAB, seen a new committee be created. Vinh or Jon, I refer to you on this.

Vinh Tang: I think you should do that so that everyone has a say in these committees as a board. Phillip, do you have names assigned as the lead CTAB member for each of these committees?

Phillip Meng: I have a list of members, but not leads yet. We can follow up with names and further details there, but do we need that in order to stand the committee up?

Vinh Tang: No, but (unintelligible)...take ownership of some of these committees.

Phillip Meng: Yes, absolutely. Certainly, we will follow up in the next couple of weeks.

Vinh Tang: I'll see to the web site, and once these committees, in terms of days and times, send it my way and I will put it on the web site.

Phillip Meng: Will do. Thanks, Vinh. Sorry, D. One at a time. We will start with the work plan.

DeiMarlon Scisney: Actually, I will do the committees first, and then the overall work plan, because that includes the committees. So, motion to approve the three committees that were mentioned , Privacy and Cybersecurity, Digital Wellbeing, and Smart Cities and Digital Infrastructure.

Phillip Meng: Thank you, D. Can I get a second?

Isabel Rodriguez: Second.

Phillip Meng: Thank you, Isabel. All in favor? Any abstentions? All opposed? Motion passes. Thank you all. I'm very excited to launch these. And now onto the work plan.

DeiMarlon Scisney: Motion to approve the 2025 work plan.

Phillip Meng: Can I get a second?

Femi Adebayo: Second.

Phillip Meng: Thank you, Femi. And by the way, I forgot to mention earlier, thank you for joining us today. All in favor? Any abstentions? All opposed? Motion carries. Thank you very much. Now onto our other item. I know we have a good amount of voting today. I want to draw attention to the annual report that we discussed in December.

With this, I also want to thank again the members of the Digital Equity Committee for their contributions here as in years prior. I have one small edit from last December, and that concerns the Digital Equity and Telecom Forum that we just held in January 2025. I am happy to quickly walk through this again and I don't want to take too much time on it, since we have already covered it in December, but as you know, we have engaged with broad range of topics, hosted folks like Rob Lloyd and Joy Hollingsworth; members have been reviewers for the TMF. The Digital Equity Committee has provided additional updates on some of the areas they engaged in; and we have welcomed new members. Any questions or comments or pieces that would be good to review within the report? All right. In that case, is there a motion on the table to approve the 2024 year-end report?

From Chat: Roger 1/14/2025 7:23 PM • At anyone's convenience we have been building out a mental wellbeing profile with diverse technologies highlighting history. my device does not let me speak through this system.

From Chat: Ty Griffin WILLIAM GROSE CENTER 1/14/2025 7:23 PM • Great discussion on closing the digital equity gap and would love to discuss how the William Grose Centers youth can participate on a deeper level.

Sanchit Gera: I just want to make a correction as a new member on the board. I'm not sure....

Phillip Meng: My apologies. I thought I had corrected that. Sanchit, of course, we are very happy to have you as a community member. One thing that would be very exciting is that if we can start recognizing somehow all of the new folks who join our meetings on a regular basis. My apologies.

Sanchit Gera: No worries. Thank you.

Phillip Meng: Any other comments? If not, do we have a motion on the table?

Coleman Entringer: I move to approve.

Phillip Meng: Thanks so much. Do I have a second?

Femi Adebayo: Second.

Phillip Meng: Thanks, Femi. All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstentions? Thank you all very much. I will send around the corrected annual report shortly after this meeting. My apologies for missing that on the annual report. That concludes our special programming for today. To lead off, we want to go to the committees on any updates, starting with Digital Equity.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

DEI COMMITTEE

Coleman Entringer: For Digital Equity, there were no substantial committee updates. We were working on launching the 2025 Telecom Forum. So, mission accomplished for that. I think that our next order of business will be to wrap up and send out any materials from the forum that we had today. We hope to do that at the next meeting.

Phillip Meng: The update is very much another successful forum. Thank you. And from the Outreach Committee, Femi, D, any comments for this time?

DeiMarlon Scisney: Yes. It was a pleasure working with Coleman Entringer just on the outreach for this event. But I would like if we could meet and abrogate a list for the Outreach Committee that is inclusive of different organizations. I was able to send a list of over 700 organizations. But they segmented that down even more to digital literacy-specific organizations, procurement organizations, and things like that, which we can do as an Outreach Committee. But just proposing that moving forward and working in

collaboration with the other committees to have a centralized database of sorts for Outreach.

Phillip Meng: Thanks so much, D. I think that would be a great idea. But I also want to take the opportunity here -- D, I almost think of you as being part of the Digital Equity Committee, now, because you have been so integral to the Digital Equity and Telecom Forum. But I also want to really recognize D for the amazing work on outreach as part of the Outreach Committee, so that we can have such a great community together. Any other comments on the Outreach side. I would love to follow up on building out that database. I think, especially as we expand our scope of work, that is going to be very, very helpful.

DeiMarlon Scisney: Yes. Towards that, Vinh Tang, are there any tools? We can talk offline about this, as well, that we have access to their table or anything to store any information right now that the City has access to?

Vinh Tang: Yes, we can discuss it offline. For the Boards and Commissions, I think we have a standard, just Microsoft 365 as our standard. But, for the most part, I think we've had (unintelligible) in terms of what CTAB is interested in.

Phillip Meng: Thanks. With that said, that brings us to our final item on the table. Public Comment. Is there anything that folks would like to share?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Harte Daniels: On March 7, there is a free symphony at Benaroya Hall. It actually was commissioned by (unintelligible) who rescued the (unintelligible) language. It's called The Healing Hearts of the First People of this Land. She received a calling to ask to use Chief Seattle, who is who Seattle was named after. This power song, and Isadora Tom, used those healing songs as the basis for that symphony. Because it is considered ceremony, it is free to everybody that might want to reserve a space. She had this calling after the towers in New York City came down and I was recognizing the 10,000 years of knowledge that the indigenous people here have in relationships with each

other and peace and healing. She wanted to offer their knowledge to the entire world
Thank you.

Phillip Meng: Thank you very much for sharing, Harte. Are there any other public comment from folks here? If not, a huge thank you again, for joining this session, and another very successful Digital Equity and Telecom Forum. We will see you next month or sooner for committee meetings. Have a fantastic rest of your night.

