

# SA DIGITAL CONNECTS

A San Antonio and Bexar County, Public-Private-Community Collaboration

**SA DIGITAL CONNECTS** is a public-private-community collaboration that developed the **San Antonio and Greater Bexar County Digital Equity Plan**. We advocate for City/County officials to **designate local, state, and federal funding** for initiatives to close the digital divide. We will track and report progress in un/under-served areas, impacting **households, students, older adults, veterans, people living with disabilities, workforce, telemedicine, and e-justice**.



## San Antonio Express-News

### Digital divide suddenly wider

As COVID-19 forces schools online, a public education involves a home computer and an internet connection, putting low-income children on shakier ground. March 22, 2020 | By Alia Malik

Photo: Billy Calzada / Staff File Photo

Sancell Jeffries-Johnson, 14, receives a Chromebook from Maria Reyes at Indian Creek Elementary School on Wednesday. Despite receiving the device, Sancell's family has no internet access at home. As schools switch to online learning, San Antonio's digital divide is widening.

<https://www.expressnews.com/news/education/article/San-Antonio-s-digital-divide-gapes-wider-as-15147022.php>

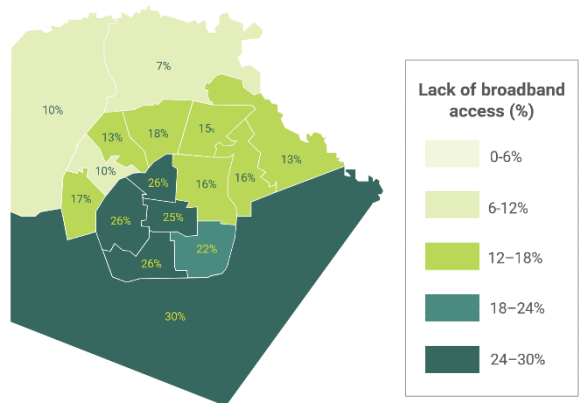
**THE DIGITAL DIVIDE** affects more than **20% of San Antonio and Greater Bexar County households**, which are un/under-served today, largely due to access, affordability and adoption barriers.

Size of the divide:

**130K+** / **20%+**  
of all households are without broadband

**65K+** / **10%+**  
of all households are without devices

The divide impacts the underserved areas— primarily in the South, West, and East— and disproportionately affects already disadvantaged households and populations.



**OUR ASPIRATION** is for San Antonio/Bexar County to become a nationwide leader in business, workforce development and economic growth through digital inclusion. The following are goals for every household:

- **Availability:** Reliable access to speeds of 100/100 mbps with committed service levels.
- **Affordability:** Adequate internet service quality at annual cost no more than 1% of household income
- **Device access:** Access to connected devices that meet technical requirements for foundation applications
- **Adoption support:** Everyone knows how to get access and feels motivated/comfortable to do so

**THE DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN** proposes key initiatives that are grounded in learnings from efforts underway locally and nationwide, including 140+ local community entities that were engaged.

- **Expand infrastructure access**
- **Enable access in affordable housing**
- **Support school-sponsored access programs**
- **Expand low-income internet offerings**
- **Distribute devices**
- **Stand-up adoption support programs**
- **Collect data & track KPIs**
- **Implement an effective operation model**

**FUNDING** has been committed by the City of San Antonio and Bexar County for implementation. A broad coalition of public, private, and community partners invested to develop the comprehensive plan and roadmap that will be utilized. These funders include:



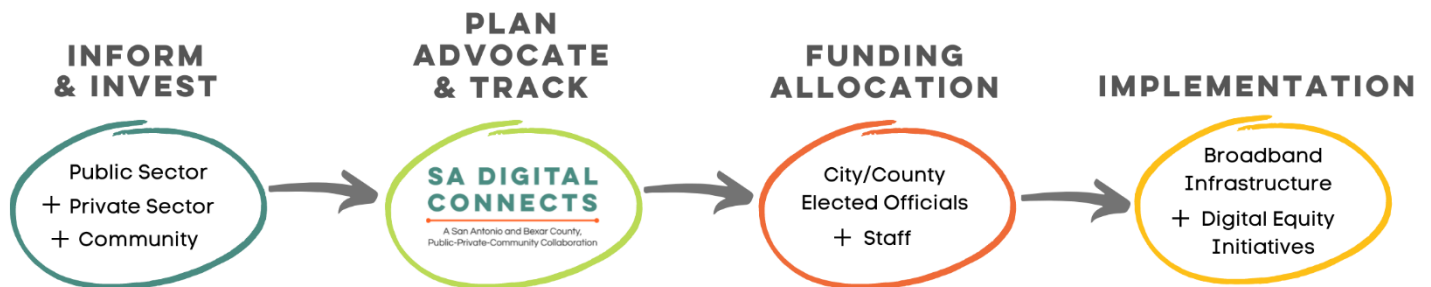
The SA Digital Connects fiscal agent is **greater: SATX**.

**THE INVESTMENT STILL NEEDED** to fully close the digital divide is an estimated **\$600 MILLION** over the next 3 years and **\$90M annually thereafter**, which will cover the expenses for connectivity (infrastructure), devices, and digital literacy.

This requires activation of public sector dollars from local, state and federal sources. Local elected officials are the funding-decision makers, who will determine the allocation of funding from available sources.

**We are asking for a significant and meaningful funding contribution from federal, state, and local sources, like ARPA and the 2022 Bond Program.**

These funds will then be flowed through the City and County to all of the local organizations and agencies that will be implementing the initiatives. SA Digital Connects will not receive any of the funds for implementation.



**ACHIEVING OUR DIGITAL GOALS** requires cross-stakeholder support, engagement, and implementation. We cannot do it alone. Every funder, organization, and community member, play key roles:

- **City, county, state, and federal public officials:** prioritize and designate sustainable funding for the digital equity initiatives per the plan
- **Private sector:** champion the need for digital investment and implementation
- **Service providers:** ensure solutions are provided affordably and reliably (ex. speed and affordability)
- **Community organizations:** elevate the needs of the community; points of contact to drive adoption and support digital skills
- **Educational entities (K-12, higher ed, libraries):** expand digital/tech curriculum; points of data collection
- **Non-Profits:** ongoing research, data collection, and execution of programming to close the digital divide

**If we do not act now, we could lose this opportunity**, and it is critical that the community remain involved and invite others to get involved and advocate.

For more information, visit [SADIGITALCONNECTS.COM](https://SADIGITALCONNECTS.COM) or contact us at [CONNECT@SADIGITALCONNECTS.COM](mailto:CONNECT@SADIGITALCONNECTS.COM).