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Bridging the Digital Divide for U.S. Children in Immigrant Families



February 24, 2022

Today's Event

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- There is no voice Q&A. To ask a question:
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 - Write events@migrationpolicy.org
 - Tweet [@MigrationPolicy](https://twitter.com/MigrationPolicy) or [#MPIDiscuss](https://twitter.com/MPIDiscuss)
- Audio from today's webinar will be available at www.migrationpolicy.org/events
- Related report:
Advancing Digital Equity among Immigrant-Origin Youth
<https://bit.ly/immyouthdigital>



Essey Workie
Lillie Hinkle
Anna deDufour
Valerie Lacarte

20 MPI
MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE
YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

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Speakers



Essey Workie, Director, Human Services Initiative,
Migration Policy Institute (MPI)



Genna Robbins, Manager of Professional Development
Services, Internationals Network for Public Schools



Carmen Bordea, Digital Learning Program Coordinator,
Office of Global Michigan



Ji Soo Song, Broadband Advisor, Office of Educational
Technology, U.S. Department of Education

Essey Workie



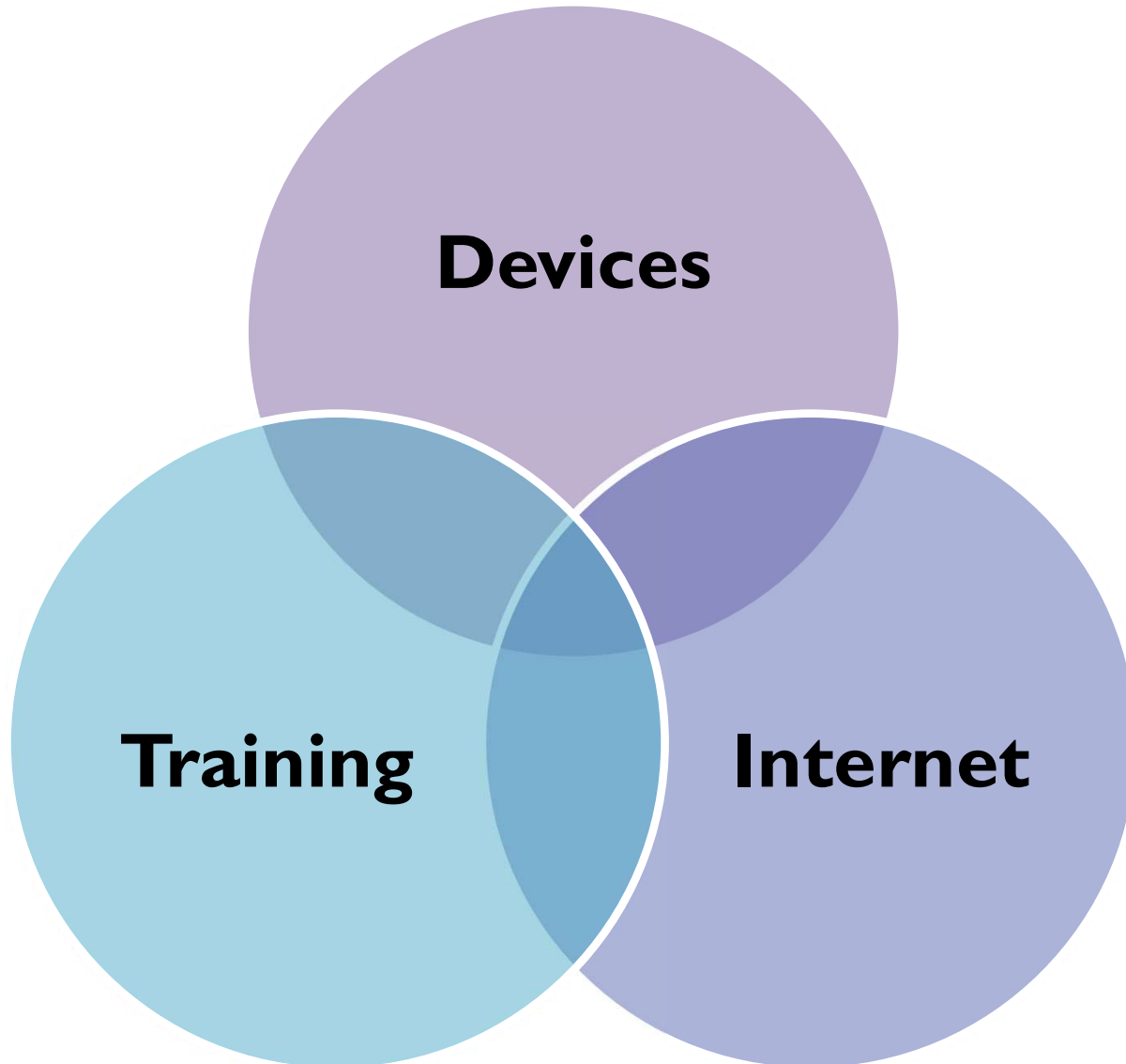
Essey Workie is Director of MPI's Human Services Initiative. Her work focuses on unaccompanied children, immigrant families, and access to local, state, and federal health and human service programs.

Ms. Workie previously worked as the Director of Refugee Health and the Director of Planning and Development at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. Previously, she served as the senior federal official and regional spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families in the mid-Atlantic region, where she led the intersection of human service programs including refugee resettlement, early childhood development, child welfare, youth, and workforce development. She also founded the division of refugee health at the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Ms. Workie began her career in nonprofit organizations and local government as a social worker, specializing in child and adolescent mental health. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology from James Madison University and a master's degree in social work from Temple University.

Digital Equity Framework

Language Access



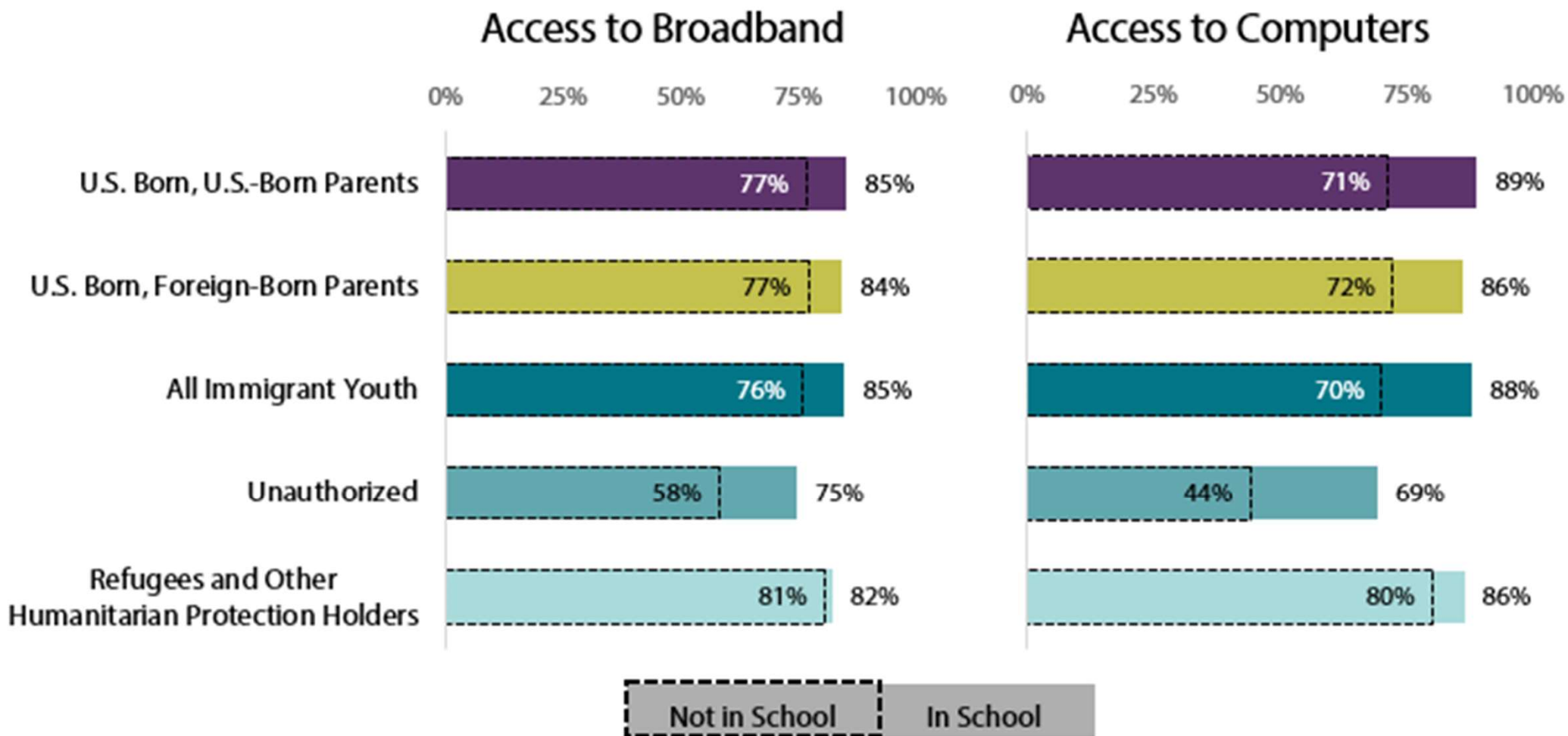
Language Access



Methods

- Purpose: Identify promising practices for increasing digital access and literacy
- Population: Youth ages 15 to 17 who are immigrants themselves or have at least one immigrant parent
- Analysis of Census Bureau data: American Community Survey from 2015–19
- 32 interviews with educators, staff of refugee resettlement agencies, community leaders, and library and IT professionals
- Six states: Arizona, California, Georgia, Maryland, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah

Digital Access



Source: These 2019 data result from MPI analysis of data from the 2015–19 ACS, pooled, and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), weighted to 2019 unauthorized immigrant population estimates provided by Jennifer Van Hook at The Pennsylvania State University.



Selected Findings

- The biggest reported challenge for many immigrant-origin students attempting to attend classes during the pandemic has been lack of access to reliable internet.
- Many learning management systems are not user friendly for English Learners with limited digital literacy.
- Some English Learners are unfamiliar with the Roman alphabet and face additional challenges learning remotely.
- The most important digital literacy skills for both students and parents are how to use email and how to use video conferencing platforms.



Summary of Recommendations

- **Federal Leadership**

- White House Task Force on New Americans (U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration - NTIA)
- State Broadband Leaders Network, Digital Inclusion Leaders Network, or other group (NTIA)

- **Faster and More Affordable Internet**

- Discounted plans with unlimited data and faster broadband speeds (Federal Communications Commission - FCC)

- **Assessments**

- Guidance to encourage assessment of refugees' digital needs (Office of Refugee Resettlement - ORR)
- Assessments for newcomers soon after arrival (schools and school districts)

- **Digital Literacy Training**

- Domestic cultural orientation for refugees (State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration in consultation with Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange - PRM/CORE)
- Educational activities for unaccompanied children in federal custody (ORR)
- Digital inclusion program including navigators and technical assistance provider (ORR)

- **State Digital Equity Plans**

Genna Robbins



Genna Robbins is the Manager of Professional Development Services at the Internationals Network for Public Schools.

She is an educator dedicated to improving the schooling conditions of linguistically, culturally, and racially diverse students. As Manager of Professional Development Services for the Internationals Network for Public Schools, she is responsible for the visioning, design, and implementation of professional development experiences that build teacher and school capacity around best practices for supporting multilingual learners. Previously, she was the founding science teacher at Crotona International High School, where she taught Grades 9-12.

Ms. Robbins received her bachelor's in biology from Swarthmore College and her master's in science education and EdM in Teacher of Education of Science from Teachers College, Columbia University.



Bridging the Digital Divide for U.S. Children in Immigrant Families

Genna Robbins

Manager of Professional Development Services
Internationals Network for Public Schools



Internationals Network is...

A **national school development and support organization** that works to ensure that immigrant Multilingual Language Learners (MLLs) have access to quality public secondary education.

A **network of 28 high schools, programs, and academies** serving over 9,000 students from more than 70 language groups across the United States. Based on a practitioner-developed design that has **documented success since 1985**.





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131
 COUNTRIES
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|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| CARIBBEAN | Liberia | ASIA |
| Cuba | Libya | Afghanistan |
| Dominican Republic | Mali | Bangladesh |
| Haiti | Mauritania | Bhutan |
| Jamaica | Morocco | Burma/Myanmar |
| Netherlands Antilles | Niger | Cambodia |
| Puerto Rico | Nigeria | China |
| Trinidad | Rwanda | Hong Kong |
| | Senegal | India |
| SOUTH AMERICA | Sierra Leone | Indonesia |
| Argentina | Somalia | Iran |
| Bolivia | South Africa | Iraq |
| Brazil | Sudan | Israel |
| Chile | Tanzania | Japan |
| Colombia | Togo | Jordan |
| Ecuador | Uganda | Kazakhstan |
| Falkland Islands | Zambia | Korea |
| Guyana | | Kuwait |
| Paraguay | EUROPE | Lao Pen Demo Republic |
| Peru | Albania | Lebanon |
| Surinam | Armenia | Macao |
| Venezuela | Belarus | Malaysia |
| | Bosnia | Mongolia |
| AFRICA | Bulgaria | Nepal |
| Algeria | Denmark | Pakistan |
| Angola | Estonia | Philippines |
| Benin | France | Saudi Arabia |
| Burkina Faso | Germany | Singapore |
| Burundi | Georgia | Syrian Arab Republic |
| Cameroon | Greece | Taiwan |
| Central African Republic | Hungary | Tajikistan |
| Chad | Italy | Thailand |
| Dem Republic of Congo | Lichtenstein | Turkey |
| Djibouti | Moldova | United Arab Emirates |
| Egypt | Montenegro | Uzbekistan |
| Eritrea | Netherlands | Vietnam |
| Ethiopia | Norway | Yemen |
| Gabon | Poland | |
| Gambia | Portugal | PACIFIC ISLANDS |
| Ghana | Romania | French Polynesia |
| Guinea | Russian Federation | Kiribati |
| Guinea-Bissau | Serbia | Samoa |
| Ivory Coast | Slovak Repub | |
| Kenya | Spain | |
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| Belize | | |
| Costa Rica | | |
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| Guatemala | | |
| Honduras | | |
| Nicaragua | | |
| Panama | | |

OUR STUDENTS



How does Internationals Promote Digital Equity?

- We support schools in creating engaging, culturally relevant, supportive curriculum for MLLs
 - Language rich experiences
 - PBL
 - Collaborative Learning
 - CRSE
 - Community
- We consider digital literacy a necessary characteristic of real-world learning.
- Students are provided with authentic, hands-on experiences so that they are able to build content, language, and skills.
- Students are able to connect to and build on their background knowledge and experiences.
 - This includes learning in and through their home language(s) while acquiring English and new content knowledge.



Key Lessons from Remote Learning

- Many students enter high school with limited experiences with digital tools from their “pre-migration lives.”
- Strong instructional practices, school structures, rich curriculum, and school community are the foundation for doing this work well.
- Asynchronous learning opportunities are necessary for ensuring all students have access.
- Small learning communities can provide extra support and practice.
- Teachers often learn best from each other.
- Schools were often the sole providers of technological tools and access, including laptops, tablets, and hot spots.



Recommendations

- MLLs need access to rich and relevant curriculum, opportunities to practice all of their languages, and a safe and loving school community.
- Invest time in finding out about students' prior knowledge and experiences, and create curriculum that connects to these experiences.
- Embed digital literacy in the context of authentic projects.
- Plan for and implement asynchronous learning opportunities for students who are not able to attend synchronous classes.
- Create learning communities within the school that can support students with instruction.
- Create networks of educators so they can continue to share and learn from one another.
- Form partnerships with community-based organizations and service providers.



Thank you!



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Carmen Bordea



Carmen Bordea joined the Office of Global Michigan in 2021 as the Digital Literacy and Learning Program Coordinator.

An immigrant herself and driven by her desire to help others, Ms. Bordea has held multiple roles in the nonprofit sector for more than 15 years. She contributed to building and managed successful programs focused on helping refugees, immigrants, and other mainstream populations become independent and thrive.

She worked for local refugee resettlement and social services agencies for 11 years, and taught English as a Second Language to immigrant adults and children for more than 15 years.



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
**LABOR & ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**

**GLOBAL
MICHIGAN**

DIGITAL LITERACY AND LEARNING PROGRAM

SUPPORTING REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS IN MICHIGAN ATTAIN DIGITAL EQUITY AND IMPROVE THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Serving refugee families resettled in Michigan and providing:

- English language learning
- Digital skills training
- Electronic devices and internet access
- Increase in social integration
- Support in accessing available services



ASSESSMENTS AND AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

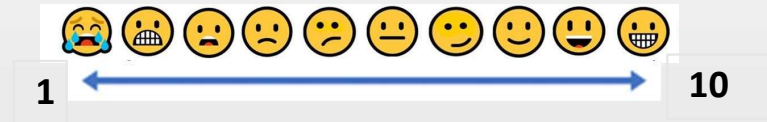
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

- Voxy EnGen Voxy Proficiency Assessment **VPA®**
- Adult English Language test
- Youth English Language test



Arabic Pashto
Dari Swahili
Spanish English
Haitian-Creole French
Farsi Burmese
Kinyarwanda

ASSESSMENTS AND AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE



SOCIAL INTEGRATION

- Do I understand what I hear?
- Can I read?
- Am I comfortable communicating?
- Can I manage my online benefits, finances?
- Do I know where to find useful information?
- Can I navigate outside my community?

DIGITAL SKILLS

- Devices and technology
- Information; digital content
- Communication and collaboration
- Social integration
- Internet safety

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Families learn better together
- Virtual learning brings the world to you
- Cyberbullying is a family issue
- Self-paced learning increases retention
- Virtual learning removes barriers
- Native language focused classes



ADDITIONAL WORK & PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- Statewide resource library
- Partnerships with local service providers
- Digital equity among refugees resettled in Michigan

“Closing the digital gap is a priority to ensure high-quality learning for all children in Michigan through access to robust broadband and digital learning resources, especially in rural areas and other groups lacking internet access.”

(Michigan Department of Education statement of digital equity)



A word cloud featuring various expressions of gratitude in multiple languages. The most prominent words are 'Thank you' in English, 'Merci' in French, 'Gracias' in Spanish, 'Asante' in Swahili, and 'كل اركش' (Kull Arkash) in Arabic. Other visible phrases include 'Teşekkür ederim', 'Mahadsanid', 'Multumesc', 'Salamat', and 'Asante'. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern, with some words appearing in larger, bolder fonts than others. The color palette is diverse, including shades of blue, green, purple, red, and black.

Ji Soo Song



Ji Soo Song advises the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology (OET) on policies and initiatives aimed at closing the digital divide, especially for historically underserved students. He serves as the principal point of contact on interagency collaborations around digital equity, including representing the U.S. Department of Education on the American Broadband Initiative.

Prior to joining OET, he was the Senior Policy Advisor at ISTE, where he led the research, analysis, and communication of federal, state, and local policy issues related to digital learning standards, educator credentialing systems, and professional development funding streams. He was a City Year AmeriCorps Member in the District of Columbia, where he taught 3rd grade mathematics and robotics and received the 2018 WilmerHale Civic Innovation Award.

He holds a bachelor's in biology and education from Dartmouth College and MEd in education policy and leadership from American University. He is a 2021 fellow with the Institute for Educational Leadership's Education Policy Fellowship Program.




Office Overview- *Mission*


Mission

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Technology (OET) develops national educational technology policy and establishes the vision for how technology can be used to transform teaching and learning and how to ***make everywhere, all-the-time learning possible*** for early learners through K-12, higher education, and adult education.

Project Highlight: Digital Equity Education Roundtables (DEER)




BIL addresses digital equity through \$65B investment to expand broadband access.



Broadband access involves three primary components:

- Availability
- Affordability
- Adoption



ADOPTION:
OET will address human-level barriers that impede broadband access.

Our Approach: DEER Strategy



Outcomes & Objectives

- National **conversations and convenings** to identify adoption barriers/solutions and capture exemplary stories
- Strategic **guidance** on equitable broadband adoption considerations for **state digital equity plans**
- Spur **community action/commitment** aligned to this strategic guidance



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- Reporters can contact Michelle Mittelstadt at +1-202-266-1910 or mmittelstadt@migrationpolicy.org
- To receive MPI updates, visit www.migrationpolicy.org/signup
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