

**August 13, 2024 Hybrid Meeting Of The
Communications Equity And Diversity Council
10:00 am – 12:15 pm**

**Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, D.C.
20554**

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance (in person, online and via video):

Council Leaders Present

Heather Gate, Council Chair, Connected Nation

Susan Au Allen, Council Vice Chair, US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce Education
Foundation

Nicol Turner Lee, Ph.D., Council Vice Chair, Brookings Institution

Members and Working Group Members Present

Digital Empowerment and Inclusion Working Group

Chair: Anisa Green, AT&T

Members:

Diana Eisner, USTelecom

Patricia Boyers, Chairman of the Board, ACA Connects

Robert Branson, Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council

Edgar Class, Representing the Hispanic National Bar Association

Michele Cober, Verizon

Norma Estela Fernandez, EveryoneOn

Julianne Goodfellow, National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC)

Jennifer Gutierrez, New York City Council

Nicole Lazarre, Charter Communications

Rosa Mendoza, Founder, ALLvanza

Ryan Palmer, Microsoft

Lakecia Foster Stickney, Comcast

Alisa Valentin, Public Knowledge

Felicia Welch, Kansas Department of Children and Families

Odette Wilkens, Wired Broadband, Inc.

Diversity and Equity Working Group

Chair: Christopher Wood, LGBT Tech

Members:

Graham “Skip” Dillard, Audacy Broadcasting

Shayna Englin, California Community Foundation

JudeAnne Heath, HTTP - Hispanic Technology & Telecommunications Partnership

Dr. Ronald Johnson, Ph.D., Wireless Infrastructure Association

Aama Nahuja, A Wonder Media Company

Otto Padron, Meruelo Media

Brian Scarpelli, ACT/The App Association

Adria Tinnin, The Utility Reform Network (TURN)

J. Augusto Valdez, 2042 Media

James Winston, National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters

Innovation and Access Working Group

Chair: TBA

Members:

Michael Fernández, V-Me Media, Inc.

Charles Harrell, II, The IT Architect Corporation

Mike Johns, Digital Mind State

Sherman Kizart, Kizart Media Partners

Henry M. Rivera, Representing The Emma L. Bowen Foundation

Steven C. Roberts, The Roberts Companies

Ellen Schned, Strong Women Alliance

M. Anne Swanson, Representing GPS Innovation Alliance

Joycelyn Tate, Black Women’s Roundtable (BWR), National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP)

Dr. Christopher Terry, Ph.D., University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communications

Leticia Latino van-Splunteren, Neptuno USA

Rahul Walia, Touchdown Media

Julie Wenah, Representing INCOMPAS

Commission Staff Present

Rodney McDonald, Designated Federal Officer

Diana Coho, Deputy Designated Federal Officer

Jaime McCoy, Deputy Designated Federal Officer

Sima Nilsson, Deputy Designated Federal Officer

Jamile Kadre, Wireline Competition Bureau

Joycelyn James, Office of Communications Business Opportunities

Jeffrey Riordan, Office of Media Relations

Steven Balderson, Office of Media Relations

Deandrea Wilson, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Anthony Butler, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Renee Coles, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Alma Hughes, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau

Link to August 13, 2024 Meeting: <https://www.fcc.gov/news-events/events/2024/08/communications-equity-and-diversity-council-meeting-august-2024>.

Welcome and Opening of Meeting. Designated Federal Officer Rodney McDonald welcomed members of the Communications Equity and Diversity Council (CEDC). He introduced the Deputy DFOs, Diana Coho, Sima Nilsson, and Jaime McCoy for their brief opening remarks. Finally, he introduced the CEDC Leadership and turned the floor over to the Chair, Heather Gate, for her opening remarks.

CEDC Chair and Vice Chairs' Opening Remarks.

Heather Gate, CEDC Chair, expressed her thanks to Chairwoman Rosenworcel. She welcomed the CEDC members and shared her enthusiasm for working hard over the next ten months to develop recommendations around access to broadband and digital equity for all. She outlined the legislative background which provided funding for broadband deployment and grants through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) as well as the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) which was administered by the FCC. She also outlined the CEDC workgroups, thanked the workgroup chairs, and shared successes and lessons learned from the previous CEDC. She emphasized the importance of attending workgroup meetings regularly, listening to each other, and leveraging opportunities to interview experts and hear about the lived experiences of those from underrepresented communities. She outlined several options for engagement including hosting roundtables and listening sessions, writing white papers or responding to FCC filings, and reviewing FCC orders to offer insights and perspectives that drive meaningful change. Chair Gate also advised that the workgroups assess existing data and studies and bring forth innovative ideas. While she emphasized the need to make recommendations that are actionable to the FCC directly, she indicated that the CEDC can also make recommendations that the FCC can communicate with other agencies; particularly those responsible for advancing broadband programs including the White House.

Nicol Turner Lee, CEDC Vice Chair spoke next, a returning member of the CEDC leadership having served in the same capacity under the previous charter. She referenced her newly released book and the way it documents her ongoing concerns about how the internet is creating a true underclass in America. She also expressed her view that in addition to reviewing policy setbacks and discontinuation of the ACP, the CEDC must explore the impact of the artificial intelligence movement which will require people to be connected to the internet. She opined that the CEDC has the opportunity to do something special with the current charter to ensure that we provide equitable broadband access and ensure technology innovation. She encouraged the working groups to be creative with their proposals, to consider the backdrop of the technology ecosystem, and to provide actionable recommendations that address the concerns of the underserved populations they represent.

Susan Allen, CEDC Vice Chair, seconded Chair Gate's remarks and thanked Chairwoman Rosenworcel for her commitment to closing the digital divide and expanding economic opportunities especially for the underserved and underserved communities. Ms. Allen explained that she represents the growing 30

million Asian-American businesses in the country on behalf of the U.S. Asian American Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation. Through this work, she has also reached out to the black business community, Hispanic, LGBT, and disabled business community, and suggested that the CEDC also reach out to veterans under the current charter. She outlined the need to address education and skills gaps as well as the role that small businesses can play in advancing digital equity and literacy. She also called for more programs in vocational and technical schools to help implement the Infrastructure and Jobs Act.

Call to Order of the August 13, 2024 Meeting and Roll Call. A quorum was present.

Introduction of the Working Groups.

Chair Gate invited the working group chairs to introduce their members by name and position starting with the Digital Empowerment and Inclusion (DEI) Working Group chaired by Anisa Green. Chair Gate explained that this working group is charged with 1). identifying innovative solutions and making recommendations to the Commission on accelerating equitable deployment of broadband access in communities; and 2). providing recommendations on reducing and removing regulatory barriers to a credible deployment and investment in broadband access and adoption for all communities. DEI Workgroup Chair Anisa Green expressed her thanks for the opportunity to chair this working group. She noted the presence of familiar faces and welcomed new members including members from industry and consumer groups.

Next, Chair Gate welcomed Chris Woods to introduce the Diversity and Equity (D&E) Working Group, charged with: 1). studying the underrepresentation, underemployment and challenges to advancement of diverse employees in the media, communications and technology sector; 2). identifying best practices to encourage participation, upskilling, development, promotion and advancement of opportunities for historically underrepresented groups; 3.) highlighting best practices of industry leaders in training and employment diversity in the media, communications, and tech sector; and 4). seeking innovative training approaches in science and technology.

D&E Working Group Chair Chris Woods thanked the CEDC and FCC for choosing him to chair this group. He made the point that the LGBTQ community in particular as well as the disability community is not a monolith and they can be part of multiple marginalized communities. He highlighted some experiences during the previous charter commenting on the amount of knowledge shared by the members and their contacts to ensure that they were listening to the right people whether it was on the outskirts of Chicago and the programs that were being stood up with hardly anything to Native American tribal lands and ensuring that they were getting access to information technology as well as the internet. He then introduced the members of the D&E Working Group.

Chair Gate explained that the last working group whose chair will be announced soon is the Innovation and Access Working Group. This working group is charged with: 1). making recommendations to the FCC on reducing barriers to media ownership and management of media, digital communication services and next-generation networks; 2). encouraging startups and diverse viewpoints by a broad range of voices; 3). examining issues associated with access to capital, financing and participation of small businesses in media and the technology sector; and 4). evaluating the impact of new technologies on diverse consumers.

After introducing the working group members, Chair Gate welcomed them and commented on some of their work under the last charter. She stated that it is essential to have diverse voices in new media and diversity in media ownership. She then turned to the business of all of the working groups thanking them for accepting this challenge. She explained that the working groups members will be hearing from their chairs and the federal officers to schedule recurring meetings so they can start putting together a workplan with goals, milestones, and final deliverables. She counseled them to remember it can be a little difficult to get started because they are all coming from different industries and different perspectives. She also encouraged them to work with their DFOs to make sure that whatever tactics they choose, such as events or white papers, lead to recommendations to the FCC that are feasible and fall under the FCC's purview.

Vice Chair Susan Au Allen suggested that everyone focus on low hanging fruit given the short timeframe remaining to accomplish this effort. She thought the emphasis should be on producing a good product and a sterling report, one that's practicable and not too idealistic.

Rodney McDonald, DFO noted that work with the Office of the Chairwoman is underway in developing tasks for the workgroups.

Information/Update on the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Jamile Kadre, and Attorney Advisor with the Wireline Competition Bureau presented an overview of the ACP program and the impacts resulting from the end of this program to the 23 million households that were enrolled when the funding ran out in May 2023. She explained that the FCC conducted a survey in December 2023 to better understand the program's impact and how the end of the program might impact access to broadband services. Results illustrated that ACP households were able to access health care, school, and work. Jamile also outlined how loss of ACP benefits lead to disruptions in service and explained how vulnerable populations including active duty military servicemembers and veterans, school aged children, and households in rural and Tribal areas were adversely affected. She provided links to survey results and ACP enrollment data. Discussion of this presentation by CEDC members highlighted the importance of ACP and their support for continued funding for this program to increase adoption by addressing affordability issues.

Information on the FCC's Office of Communications Business Opportunities (OCBO). Jocelyn James, Attorney Advisor with OCBO, explained that this office 1) is focused on issues affecting small, minority, and women-owned tech, media, and telecommunications businesses; and (2) promotes competition and innovation in telecommunications ownership and information services. She briefly reviewed relevant statutes which the office implements for the FCC to ensure that the interests of small entities are considered each time the FCC proposes or adopts a rule. In addition, she outlined outreach and training functions conducted by OCBO for small, minority, and women-owned businesses. These activities include liaising with other federal agencies and conducting supplier diversity workshops to connect small businesses with larger corporations in the tech, media, and telecommunications ecosystem. The presentation concluded with contacts for more information and a brief summary of work OCBO performed with previous iterations of the CEDC.

Vice Chair Allen commented on the way the presentations dovetailed nicely together. She also felt that the information presented this triggered an urgent call to action. She said that America is not as competitive as it has been in the global marketplace, that there is so much untapped talent in the US, particularly in

underserved communities. She cited other examples of strides made in the workplace during COVID yet certain groups are still being left behind, such as the disability community.

Chair Gate thanked Susan for that call to action. She noted some reports from the working groups under the last charter including one on the need for a national strategy for digital skills and digital scaling. She asked the current CEDC to review the work that was done and the recommendations the CEDC made last year. This led to a brief question about whether the FCC has taken any action on the recommendations submitted under the previous CEDC charter. Rodney McDonald, DFO, pointed out that some of those recommendations were adopted in the FCC's Digital Discrimination proceeding. He also clarified that the FCC is working to name the Chair of the Innovation and Access Workgroup soon.

Questions/Comments from the Public. There were no questions from the public online or in person during the meeting.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment.

Rodney McDonald, DFO, clarified that the full CEDC meets three times per year, and will meet again before the end of 2024. Public notices and related information about the meetings will be shared with CEDC members and posted on the FCC's website. He noted that all of the workgroups will begin to meet in the near future with a DFO present.

Chair Heather Gate closed with a call to action now that the workgroups have their assignments, reminding them to develop recommendations that are meaningful to the FCC. She also advised that CEDC members of underrepresented communities may be called to speak as experts by the working groups and encouraged them to do so.

Vice Chair Allen asked the CEDC to focus on how to ensure high speed broadband for all to increase access to care and mental health services, increase financial stability, increase improved health outcomes, mental health, well-being, and social connectedness.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:10 p.m.

CERTIFICATION OF MINUTES

I have reviewed the above minutes for the August 13, 2024 meeting of the CEDC, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, they are true and accurate.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

Heather Gate
Connected Nation
Chair, Communications Equity and Diversity Council
Federal Communications Commission