COMMUNITY-SCALE IN BROADBAND

CSI's role in creating community-scale broadband
• Assisting media democracy and policy organizations with race analysis around community-scale broadband.
• Co-developing policy solutions with local communities and field-related policy organizations to support community-scale broadband efforts.
• Connecting local communities of color with national technical broadband experts and opportunities for support for community-scale broadband projects like in MS.¹
• Lifting up challenges and opportunities for community-scale broadband innovation through case studies.

Community-scale creates inclusive policy in Broadband
• Community-scale networks can cover smaller distances to create affordable models that can take advantage of innovative, developing technologies.
• Community-scale networks can fill important gaps for places too costly for large telecommunications companies to serve, often communities of color.²

Challenges and opportunities for communities of color³
• Data on access and adoption by census track and race is unavailable.
• Access to broadband service is a challenge for communities of color due to price and an insufficient number of providers willing to serve them.
  o In urban communities, 57 and 55% percent of Blacks and Latinos respectively, versus 75% of Whites, have home broadband subscriptions
  o In rural communities, 41 and 46% of Blacks and Latinos, respectively versus 60% of Whites, have adopted broadband.
  o Cost is more of an issue for people of color with 22% of Blacks and 23% of Latinos compared to 15% of Whites citing it as the primary reason for not subscribing to the Internet⁴.
• There is inadequate funding for community-scale broadband projects. In MS, CSI connected several groups to submit a joint federal funding proposal.
• Public knowledge and engagement: Broadband is an abstract concept for many. In MS, CSI successfully raised awareness of its importance and increased advocacy on broadband access for Black MS Delta residents.

¹ For more information, please reference CSI Report: Broadband in Mississippi: Toward Policies for Access Equity.
² Ibid.
Community-scale is community-driven and looks different in different communities

- Chattanooga Electric Power Board invested in fiber and developed a smart grid to provide broadband, which will provide “3,600 jobs and more than $580 million in economic value over the first 10 years”\(^5\)

- In Brooklyn, New York, after the wrath of Hurricane Sandy, residents with the Red Hook Initiative (RHI) partnered with the Open Technology Institute (OTI) to develop an open-source, wireless mesh network to allow residents to get online and have immediate access to much needed resources.\(^6\)

- The Institute for Local Self Reliance’s Chris Mitchell was recently featured on Democracy Now! to talk community-scale and share their map of the 342 community scale broadband projects around the country.
