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 color[3]

- 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.
    - In urban communities, 57 and 55% percent of Blacks and Latinos respectively, versus 75% of Whites, have home broadband subscriptions
    - In rural communities, 41 and 46% of Blacks and Latinos, respectively versus 60% of Whites, have adopted broadband.
    - 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 Internet[4].
- 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.
[3] FCC Eighth Broadband Progress Report. http://www.fcc.gov/reports/eighth-broadband-progress-report.
[4] Digital Nation: Expanding Internet Use. http://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/ntia_internet_use_report_february_2011.pdf.

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.

[5] Broadband at the Speed of Light. http://www.ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/muni-bb-speed-light.pdf.
[6] New Community-Tech Tool to Help in Sandy's Aftermath. http://newamerica.net/pressroom/2012/release_new_community_tech_tool_to_help_in_sandys_aftermath.