From Nancy Sherman to CTTAB 2/10/13

Comments on "Position Statement: Low Income Broadband Access":

Paragraph 1: "Internet access...."

Sentence 5: "However, only about a quarter of the lowest two household income groups...compared to two-thirds of households who make $100,000 per year or more."

***Comments*:** Is this an "apples to apples" comparison...is $100K+ the "highest two household income groups"?

Instead, compare "lowest two" to "highest two" income groups (and say of what stats--Seattle AMI? KC AMI?) -OR- compare bottom third to middle third and top third. Most people don't relate to the "top" or "$100K+"; it would be more powerful to show how far behind the bottom third or lowest two quintiles are, compared to the middle third or quintile. (And I suspect that the middle is close to the top in broadband access, so it'll show that clear divide for folks below a certain income level vs everybody else.)

Paragraph 2: "In our review...."

THANK YOU.

Recommendations...

#1: "For eleigibility verification...."

THANK YOU.

"~~Current plans often rely~~ One plan relies on reduced lunch fee programs...omitting participation by ~~underemployed~~ low income residents without school-age children in public school."

***Comments*:** Only Comcast does that, so not "often", just one. Don't "qualify" your use of "low income" with terms like "underemployed"--poor is poor, we're not dividing people by the *reason* for their poverty, are we? Note my additions, which point out the other people who are left out: families with toddlers or older children not in high school, families with kids in private schools or home school, etc.

Actually, the whole paragraph should be broken into two and simplified: 1) we want to make the programs available to ALL low income households, without limitations like whether there are children or other additional qualifiers, AND 2) we want to make the income verification as low barrier as possible by using existing "proofs" like Food Stamps, Medicaid, etc.

#2: "Allow low income residents to participate even if they are already an existing subscriber."

THANK YOU.

***Comments:*** Simplify and strengthen: "Existing low income subscribers should get the same price as new low income subscribers."

#3: "Provide a dependable single point of contact...."

EXCELLENT IDEA!

#4: "Publish and share...."

GOOD.

#5: "Provide data speeds...."

***Comments*:** Be consistent and complete--give download speed, upload speed, and data caps for each type of connection (if they differ). Perhaps spell out acronyms: Megabits Per Second (Mbps), maybe with a meaningful example, like "YouTube recommends \_\_\_\_ speed for smooth video streaming" &/or "x GB file can be downloaded in 15 seconds."

Final two paragraphs on Public Policy:

***Comments:*** Tighten and simplify; use a stronger "voice". Give "big picture" problem--low income people being left behind because internet access is too costly for them; then give clear solution that CTAB is recommending--standardized, low barrier, low price internet broadband programs for all low income residents and "education and outreach to support technology use" to help close the gap.

Note: I'm not sure it's right or effective to ask ISPs to provide "community education" at public venues. Analogy: we might encourage grocery stores and restaurants to donate or mark down their food for food banks and their clients, but do we ask them to provide nutrition and cooking classes at community centers? No, it's not their line of business.

Instead, I would encourage DoIT, SPL, WorkSource, and other agencies who might serve low income residents to collaborate on a very accessible (all ages, disability-friendly) "Technology Education & Training Portal" with curated tutorials and videos; links to MOOCs; Microsoft & other certifications; demos of using Tripplanner, online banking, job banks; etc.

***Additional comment:*** How many tech devices (laptops, desktops, tablets, smartphones, digital projectors, printers) are "surplused" each year by government and connected agencies (SPL, UW, computer labs, community colleges, Seattle Housing Authority, etc.)? Consider a recommendation (or requirement?) to direct retired technology to nonprofit training programs to be distributed at low cost to their clients. (People who complete a training program are more likely to use them productively.) Nonprofit groups that serve low income and homeless could probably use printers, digital projectors, etc. for office and training use. 501 Commons & Tech Soup might be willing to function as distribution channels to nonprofit orgs.