The Affordable Connectivity Plan: How is Baltimore Doing?

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The Affordable Connectivity Plan

- Two goals:
  - Increase broadband adoption
  - Ease cost burden for lower-income households

- Eligibility criteria:
  - SNAP
  - Medicaid
  - Federal public housing assistance
  - School lunch program
  - Income is 200% or less of federal poverty guideline

- $30 per month subsidy for internet service and one-time $100 subsidy for device
ACP Enrollment Data
(in millions of households)

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Month
What about Baltimore?

- **Enrollment rates**
  - 5th fastest (among top 40 U.S. cities) in early program rollout (June 2021)
  - By end of March 2022, 48% of eligible households in Baltimore had enrolled in ACP
    - 3rd best among top 50 U.S. cities (by population)

- **Performance ➔ whether enrollment exceeds expectations**
  - Baltimore does better than expectations by about 6%.
  - Some places with very good performance metrics:
    - San Antonio: +25%
    - Cleveland: +23%
    - Los Angeles: +18%
Performance rates vary

- Johnston Square (21202) → 25% better than expected
- Broadway East (21213) → 31% better than expected
- Areas with similar demographic profiles can have different performance:
  - Ednor Gardens/Lakeside (21218) → 20% better than expected
  - Irvington/SW Baltimore (21229) → about average
What influences performance rates?

- Community anchor institutions → Public Libraries
  - Zip codes with libraries receive about a 6% performance boost

- Outreach:
  - City of Cleveland targeted ads on ACP to 11 zip code areas
  - In those areas, performance was 32% greater than expected
  - In rest of city, ACP enrollment performed 14% better than expected.
  - Targeting areas with public library branches had very good payoff
Usefulness to decisionmakers

- Identifies drivers of performance differences:
  - Socio-economic factors, role of community anchor institutions

- Invites exploration of levers that can change performance:
  - Outreach campaigns
  - Role of community anchor institutions

- Tool for prioritizing community engagement:
  - ACP performance as proxy for digital inclusion capacity
Why tracking ACP is important

▪ Helps in digital equity planning
  ▪ Highlights places doing well, so models can be replicated
  ▪ Directs attention to areas falling short.

▪ Complements BEAD funding
  ▪ Helps address “networks to nowhere” risks