

Digital Landscape

Discussion Guide



Let's review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room.

And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

The "Table-it" Rule: If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

Let's begin

- Take five minutes to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief:
 - Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
 - What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share with the Group During Your Discussion

- The [FCC's Broadband Deployment Report](#) estimates fewer than 20 million Americans lack access to broadband, but [others estimate](#) as many as 42 million Americans actually lack access, due to flawed reporting.
- Between 2015 and 2020, the federal government provided [\\$22 billion](#) to support the expansion of rural broadband, and the American Jobs Plan signed into law in November 2021 provides an additional [\\$65 billion](#). The estimated cost of bringing broadband access to all Americans who need it amounts to [\\$80 billion](#).
- Some states like California have a few national or regional providers; others like Minnesota have small but critical local companies and providers; and places like Tennessee have rural electric cooperatives that are expanding into broadband [to meet community needs](#).

Let's discuss

Pick 2 or 3 questions that resonate with the group and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** How many times a day do you rely on our digital infrastructure? In a national emergency if the Internet went down, how would you get news and information?
- **Government:** What role should the government have in developing new technology or providing access to the digital infrastructure and economy?
- **Business:** How does a lack of digital equity affect businesses, employment rates, and overall economic growth?

Let's act

1. **Take it local. Talk to your neighbors** to identify the [status of the broadband access](#) in your community. Identify opportunities to work with other community members in your area.
2. **Explore the impact of data infrastructure laws in your community.** See the National Conference of State Legislature's database for [your state's laws in regards to net neutrality](#), or see Broadband Now's list of states with [regulations on broadband providers](#).
3. **Investigate community programs.** Many states have special digital infrastructure and technology initiatives with their own websites. See if your state has a [broadband initiative](#) or [task force](#). Alternatively, search on your state's or municipality's website for "cybersecurity" or "internet" to see what programs are in place in your community.
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on digital infrastructure, and their vision for how to tackle technology challenges facing Americans and your community. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on data privacy in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
 - [Immigration](#)
 - [Foreign Policy: Middle East](#)
 - [Foreign Policy: Asia Pacific](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.