

# 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.