

**California Emerging Technology Fund and
Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California**

REQUEST FOR ENDORSEMENT:

Smart Housing and Broadband Access Principles and Priorities

October 2012

Closing the Digital Divide is vital to economic prosperity and quality of life for all Californians. In a time of ever-increasing global competitiveness, low-income residents must have equal access to affordable technology and to the opportunities such access provides. Children with better access to broadband technology reach higher levels of academic success, and adults are able to participate in employment development programs, search for employment, and access other community resources.

Yet four out of ten California households earning annual incomes of \$40,000 or less do not have broadband at home, and low-income households report that the cost of high-speed Internet access is a significant barrier. Affordable housing developers, with program and financial support, are in an ideal position to provide low-income residents living in their properties with effective access to broadband technology, and to promote the continuing incorporation of this technology into affordable housing programs and policies.

We support the following priorities:

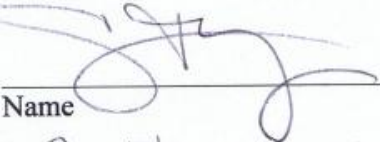
- Incorporate Smart Housing principles into state and local affordable housing policies to drive economies of scale that result in reduced-cost home Internet access for all residents.
- Ensure that these policies and any programs requiring the installation of broadband technology in affordable properties include adequate, dedicated funding for broadband installation and maintenance, to make it possible for developers to provide access to this technology for their residents in a time of sharply reduced funding for affordable housing.
- Seek committed partners who can provide discount broadband and affordable computing devices to low-income residents.
- Establish partnerships with community-based groups to train residents in Digital Literacy, and to train resident services staff to assist residents.
- Promote the use of the Smart Housing Tool Kit developed by Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California to guide the affordable housing community in making informed choices on how to provide and maintain broadband access for their residents.

There are currently 75,000 existing units of affordable housing in California, many of which need to be connected to broadband, along with newly constructed affordable units. State and local programs should include access to broadband technology as a priority for affordable housing developments, and must also provide dedicated funding for developers to install and maintain broadband technology, and to train site staff to assist residents with accessing and fully reaping the benefits of this technology.

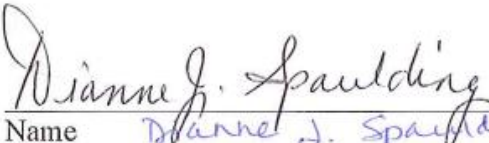
NPH's affordable housing developer members, who seek to provide residents with the best possible amenities and access to resources, will continue their efforts to incorporate broadband technology in their new and existing properties. Doing so is in keeping with their mission to not only develop affordable homes, but also to foster and support strong and connected communities. Dedicated program funding for broadband technology installation, maintenance, and staff training will be crucial to achieving this goal, and can help to extend access to this important resource for affordable housing residents.

ENDORSEMENT:

I support the principles and priorities listed above, and encourage the provision of dedicated funding for broadband technology installation, maintenance, and staff training in affordable housing properties, to promote access to this vital resource for all residents.


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Organization

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