



All About Florida

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September 2, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear BOCC Chair

County Manager/Administrator,

Over the past few years, the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) and our partners have worked diligently to address the Digital Divide that exists across the State of Florida. FAC recognizes that the lack of broadband access limits Florida's counties in delivering public safety, healthcare, economic development, and education. Last year, FAC launched the **ACCESS 67 Initiative** to implement a comprehensive approach to empower our members to develop solutions to address the impacts of the lack of access to critical telecommunication and information technology resources in Florida communities.

During this summer (2021), I announced the creation of the **Presidential Select Committee on Broadband** (Select Committee) at the FAC Annual Conference in Orlando. The Select Committee is focused on eliminating the Digital Divide in Florida by implementing a comprehensive approach to deliver high-speed, reliable, and affordable Broadband Internet to all Floridians.

Each county is requested to appoint a county commissioner with the support of county staff to serve as its **County Champion** for Broadband. **County Champions** will be the point person to assist the Select Committee and FAC in advocating, collaborating, and educating on Broadband policy for solutions and best practices. Enclosed with this letter is a Call to Action – that outlines the set of actions that the Select Committee has discussed. FAC requests full participation in this major policy priority.

The Select Committee aims to have **67 County Champions** as soon as possible to coordinate each county's response to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Broadband on critical broadband assets, infrastructure, and planning as well as steer future advocacy efforts of FAC.

Please respond with your appointee to the **ACCESS 67 County Champion** by Thursday, September 9th to FAC's Associate Director of Public Policy, Jeff Scala at jscala@fl-counties.com.

Thank you for your attention to this request!

Sincerely,

Ralph Thomas
President, Florida Association of Counties





Advocacy

The Presidential Select Committee on Broadband is focused on eliminating the Digital Divide in Florida by implementing a comprehensive approach to deliver high-speed, reliable, and affordable Broadband Internet to all Floridians. The Select Committee will coordinate FAC's ACCESS 67 Initiative to:

- **Advocate** for the adoption, as well as, the implementation of state and federal policies that contribute to the development of solutions that address the lack of **ACCESS** in our local communities.
- **Collaborate** with key stakeholders who share a common goal in developing solutions to address the lack of **ACCESS** in our local communities.
- **Educate** our members with local solutions by sharing best practices among Florida's counties and similar communities and organizations from around the country.

Presidential Select Committee on Broadband Members

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Chair Larry Harvey (Putnam) | • Ron Moore (Madison) |
| • Vice Chair Greg Weiss (Palm Beach) | • Eileen Higgins (Miami-Dade) |
| • Terry Burroughs (Okeechobee) | • Viviana Janer (Osceola) |
| • Ken Cornell (Alachua) | • Charlie Justice (Pinellas) |
| • Kimblin NeSmith (Gadsden) | • Tray Hawkins (Washington) |
| • Susan Adams (Indian River) | |

Establishing an ACCESS 67 County Champion

- Each BOCC chair should designate a commissioner to be the lead county contact for matters related to the Presidential Select Committee on Broadband and ACCESS 67 Broadband Initiative.
- **County Champions** should have support through a designated county staff person that will assist the county in matters related to the ACCESS 67 Broadband Initiative
- FAC will keep a communication network consisting of the designated **County Champions** and the supporting staff person to facilitate collaboration with stakeholders