

Join Kelley Drye and Silicon Flatirons for a Discussion of the Digital Divide and Digital Inequality

April 21, 2021

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) will keynote “[Legal Code: Reframing the Divide by Addressing Broadband Access Through Affordability and Inclusion](#)”, a virtual event co-hosted by Kelley Drye and Silicon Flatirons on May 12th from 2:00-4:00 PM (ET) that will explore issues surrounding broadband affordability. The COVID-19 pandemic shined a spotlight on the Digital Divide and Digital Inequality, and with it, illuminated the broader issue of digital inclusion and internet access as a civil right. Over the last four years, efforts to close the Digital Divide have been geared largely toward access to networks in rural America, but pandemic related displacement is driving a shift in focus toward affordability in both rural and urban areas. This shift is most clearly evidenced by the recently adopted [Emergency Broadband Benefit program](#), which gives broadband providers the unique opportunity to help fight Digital Inequality by offering subsidized discounts on robust Internet service and connected devices capable of helping low-income Americans connect to classrooms, jobs, and telehealth. Other recent efforts include the schools and libraries-focused [Emergency Connectivity Fund](#), which aims to address a homework gap that transformed into a school-year-long remote learning gap.

This event will examine the pandemic’s impact on how we think about the digital divide and digital inequality, the new administration’s approach, and related activity in Congress, at the FCC, and at other federal agencies.

Agenda **Introduction & Opening Remarks**

- Amie Stepanovich, Executive Director, Silicon Flatirons

Keynote

- Ron Wyden, U.S. Senator for Oregon

Panel: Conceptualizing and Navigating Paths to Affordability and Inclusion

- John J. Heitmann (Moderator), Partner, Kelley Drye & Warren LLP
- Kate Black, Acting Chief Policy Advisor, Federal Communications Commission
- Jose Cortes, Chair, Regulatory and Government Affairs Committee, National Lifeline Association
- Claire Park, Policy Program Associate, New America's Open Technology Institute
- Trinity Thorpe-Lubneuski, Senior Director, Internet Essentials, Comcast

[Click here](#) for more information and to register.

Kelley Drye's Communications group regularly monitors issues related to [closing the Digital Divide and enabling connected life](#). Follow us for future updates:

USF Tracker The [USF Tracker](#) newsletter is produced by Kelley Drye's Communications practice to help you stay current on recent Universal Service Fund news and provide an updated comprehensive summary of pending appeals and guidance requests before the FCC relating to USF contributions issues. [Subscribe here](#).

Kelley Drye's Full Spectrum [Kelley Drye's Full Spectrum](#) podcast features smart, informative conversations about the latest issues in the technology, telecommunications, and media industries. Bringing together thought leaders in business, government, and enterprise, Full Spectrum offers an in-depth exploration of current legal, regulatory, and business issues. [Subscribe here](#).

12th Annual USF Update Webinar On March 22, 2021 Kelley Drye's Communications practice presented our annual webinar discussing the state of the federal Universal Service Fund. This webinar, back for its 12th year, provided an in-depth look at all four USF programs and the USF contribution mechanism, highlighting major developments in the last year and trends for the upcoming year. In addition, this year we discussed how the ongoing pandemic has influenced the importance of the USF and related policy decisions.

[Click here](#) to access the recording and [here](#) to access the slide deck. Click here for our [2020 USF Yearbook](#).