



Proclamation

- WHEREAS,** broadband services are essential infrastructure for the twenty-first century and play an important role in providing access to knowledge and opportunities from communities locally and around the world; and
- WHEREAS,** digital empowerment ensures that all individuals have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy, and is necessary for civic and cultural participation, lifelong learning, access to essential services, and economic development; and
- WHEREAS,** neighborhoods across nation and across the City of Merced are experiencing a digital divide; and
- WHEREAS,** South Merced experiences some of the lowest rates of broadband connectivity in the City, with many households lacking access to high-speed internet due to affordability challenges, limited provider options, and gaps in digital literacy, leaving residents at risk of falling further behind in education, employment, and access to essential services, and highlighting the urgent need for infrastructure investment, community outreach, and skills training to close the digital divide in this historically underserved area; and
- WHEREAS,** access to a reliable, affordable internet connection is increasingly recognized as a vital social determinant of health, enabling individuals to obtain essential resources such as healthcare, education, employment, and social services, as well as timely public health information during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- WHEREAS,** disparities in access should be treated as a public health issue because they affect the health of people and communities where they live, learn, work and play; and
- WHEREAS,** Digital Inclusion Week 2025 is sponsored by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance and aims to raise awareness of solutions addressing home training and support programs that get household access to the internet; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MATTHEW SERRATTO, Mayor of the City of Merced, California, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby proclaim October 6th to October 11th, as Digital Inclusion Week 2025 and urge all residents to residents to join the council in raising awareness of advancing digital empowerment and being committed to closing the digital divide.

Signed this 3rd day of October 2025.

Matthew Serratto, Mayor of Merced