NDIA

NATIONAL DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE

BUILDING A
DIGITAL INCLUSION
COALITION

Tips for Getting Started

WHY BUILD A DIGITAL INCLUSION COALITION?

The digital divide is a multifaceted issue that impacts all members of a community, especially the most socially disadvantaged. Millions of Americans need support from digital inclusion programs to get connected with affordable home internet, find low-cost computing devices, and learn basic digital skills. Across the country, communities with digital inclusion coalitions are often more effective in their digital inclusion efforts and better equipped to leverage financial

DIGITAL EQUITY is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

DIGITAL INCLUSION refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This includes 5 elements: 1) affordable, robust broadband internet service; 2) internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; 3) access to digital literacy training; 4) quality technical support; and 5) applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration. Digital inclusion must evolve as technology advances. Digital inclusion requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional, and structural barriers to access and use technology.

opportunities to close the digital divide than communities without coalitions.

READY FOR A DIGITAL INCLUSION COALITION?

- Are your community members in need of internet, devices, digital skills, and technology support?
- Are you interested in networking and information sharing, aligning organizational missions, and advancing common goals to support digital equity in your community?
- Do you want to develop a collective vision to holistically address digital equity in your community?

If you answered "yes" to these questions, then you are ready to begin exploring opportunities to build a coalition with your community stakeholders.

DIGITAL INCLUSION COALITION OUTCOMES TEND TO INCLUDE ANY OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **Advocacy:** bringing public attention to the community's digital inclusion needs and the coalition's shared goals.
- **Alignment:** increasing the ability of coalition members to "push in the same direction."
- **Collaboration:** creating the opportunity for subgroups of participants to form new working relationships to share workloads and not duplicate work.
- **Preparation:** collaborative projects, funding opportunities, and advocacy opportunities.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT: THINGS TO CONSIDER

Under-Resourced Communities

The pandemic magnified the disparate opportunities and treatment of students, essential workers, aging community members, and marginalized populations. Immigrant, low-income, and Black and Brown communities tend to have low household broadband adoption, lack appropriate devices needed to connect to the digital world, and lack digital skills and support needed to navigate the internet.

Partners and Local Engagement

Consider the community partners you would like to include and describe their involvement in the project and/or their support of digital inclusion more broadly.

Partners may include but are not limited to:
- Businesses and chambers of commerce
- Civil rights organizations
- Community economic development organizations
- Educational institutions (e.g. K-12, community colleges and universities)
- Faith-based institutions
- Financial Institutions (e.g. Banks, Credit Unions)

Do you want to develop a collective vision to holistically address digital equity in your community?

- Health organizations
- Internet service providers*
- Libraries
- Local foundations and funders
- Local government agencies and local elected officials
- Media and arts organizations
- Neighborhood associations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Private technology companies
- Public housing authorities
- Workforce development organizations

*Internet service providers are important, and it's important to carefully consider how and when to engage with them.

Determine Community Assets and Need

Use a mix of American Community Survey data, academic research, lived experience, and storytelling to understand what digital inclusion looks like in your community. Refer to the Research and Data page of the NDIA website for guidance on data gathering from the American Community Survey.

MOVING INTO ACTION: SOME STEPS TO CONSIDER

A. Assemble- Engage a small group of your community's digital inclusion advocate to help plan and kick start the coalition.

B. Engage - Convene community organizations to explore digital inclusion needs, resources, and present coalition opportunity.

C. Plan - Think about coalition work and structure.
- Partners and general participation
- Leadership composition
- Focus groups or working groups
- Meetings and format

Digital Inclusion Coalitions Across the Country:

[Digital Inclusion Alliance of San Antonio](#)

[The Bronx Digital Equity Coalition](#)

[Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition](#)

[Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance](#)

[Kansas City Coalition for Digital Inclusion](#)

RESOURCES

[NDIA Digital Coalitions Guidebook](#)

[NDIA Digital Inclusion Startup Manual](#)

[Digital Inclusion 101 Webinar (Recording)](#)

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