



Asked and Answered:

From the Net Inclusion Webinar April 14, 2021

Q: Has NDIA furthered a 'financial means-based Internet service' policy? There is a part of our population that cannot afford even 'low-cost' broadband service...

A: We know there is a population for whom low-cost service is out of reach. We're advocating for a permanent broadband subsidy that assists those families. For more information see our resources on the [Emergency Broadband Benefit Program here](#).

Q: What leverage can a "regular" person like me have with the ISP's? I'd love to contact some in our community and ask them about providing some permanent low income programs.

A: You can always contact the providers yourself, but if these organizations or initiatives exist in your community, we'd recommend you also contact someone from your local digital inclusion alliance, your local government, state broadband office. There are federal resources coming from some of the legislation recently passed that will be key for local/state governments. Some of these include: Emergency Connectivity Fund, Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives, Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund.

Q: What kind of software does Digital Charlotte use to manage the tickets?

A: Digital Charlotte uses Hubspot Service Desk software. There are multiple tiers for Hubspot ranging from free-\$\$\$\$. We have a paid tier but I can fully recommend the free tier as well for any organization that wants to get started with it.

Q: What is the role of the library versus the role of the community organizations?

A: The Digital Navigator work is similar in the library versus the CBOs. However, the CBOs are more focused on different areas of digital skill support. Digital Navigators try to send individuals to the organization that will best support them.

Q: Do you believe that digital navigators help increase broadband adoption rates?

A: Yes! So far, Rural LISC's experience suggests the answer is yes

Q: Do you see digital navigator programs will continue to exist in some form once we're post-pandemic (whatever that may mean)?

A: Yes, we are looking at long-term sustainability. We have learned that only in-person services were not accessible for everyone, and plan to continue remote support.

Q: As the program continues to evolve, what uncommon barrier(s) are Digital Navigators experience when connecting services to those seeking access?

A: One of the barriers our Digital Navigators have had when connecting with community members is a phone number. People often borrow a phone to call-in, and it has been challenging to reach them again.

Q: If a digital navigator or an organization that has employed a digital navigator has formulated a program to raise awareness and provide assistance with signing up w programs like a computer from PCs for People or getting cheaper internet via lifeline (and soon, the EBB!) - how can we get this resource in front of those who need it most? Assuming online marketing is out the window

A: Analog approaches like lawn signs, brochures, and door-to-door hangers have been effective approaches for raising awareness.

Q: Thanks for the info. I don't believe that there is anyone local in my county or area that is focusing on this. How can I find that information for sure?

A: You can find a searchable list and map of NDIA's affiliates from across the country that include local public and nonprofit organizations including municipal government bodies, local public libraries and regional library councils, college/university programs, state government agencies, local school districts, housing authorities. And you can find information about state broadband offices at [Broadband USA's website here](#).

Q: Delta Regional Authority announced yesterday a new mapping initiative that also contains what they call a "crowd-sourced" data gathering speed test. Any familiarity with this and how can our Digital Navigators best participate and help folks in the community participate so that data is reflected in an equitable manner?

A: Many states are gathering crowd sourced data on broadband access and speeds to better inform state and federal funding and policy decisions. If a state or region has a survey or speed test, encouraging the digital navigators to walk the participant through that survey or speed test would help gather better data for policy makers and is a great idea to do. Tools like [MLab](#) are useful for gathering speed test data. Speed tests can be effective to compare advertised speeds versus actual speeds.

Q: Has anyone partnered with or connected with a local academic institution to encourage "digital navigator" as part of maybe a library school program?

A: I just found out that this work is being done in New Hampshire now with pilot planned for this summer.

Q: Is your library sharing the IMLS project on your website or is it documented somewhere?

A: The Urban Libraries Council is a partner on the IMLS project and they are sharing updates on [their pages here](#).

Q: Is there a proven resource on training that volunteers can pick up and teach those who need digital literacy on a regular basis (virtually and moving towards in-person once it is safe)?

A: I would urge you to check out our [Digital Navigator Resource Hub](#)

Q: How is Digital Charlotte engaging with the 2 local health systems?

A: Yes! We've met with local healthcare systems to discuss and share about our DN program. At these meetings, we've identified with the healthcare provider, the possible opportunity to train their employees to be "health digital navigators" and creating a system for each healthcare provider. Additionally, we've created a path for volunteer signups through these healthcare providers.