



## Digital Equity Newsletter

*October 2024*

Welcome to One Network - This newsletter is an overview of the digital equity services offered by organizations like Literacy Minnesota and resources for those wanting to know more about digital equity.

This month's issue will discuss the Minnesota Digital Opportunity Plan created by the Office of Broadband Development within the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). This almost 400-page document goes over how the state works toward getting Minnesotans access to digital skills, the internet and devices.

As you look through the following article did you learn anything new about the objectives of Minnesota's plan for digital equity?

### **Covered within this issue:**

- Community Bulletin
  - Minnesota's Digital Opportunity Plan
- Literacy MN Digital Literacy Services
- Other Minnesota Initiatives - **Updated**
- Resources - **Updated**



651-645-2277

<https://www.literacymn.org/>

700 Raymond Avenue Suite 180, Saint Paul, MN 55114

**Mission:** To share the power of learning through education, community building and advocacy.

# Community Bulletin



## **Minnesota's Digital Opportunity Plan**

In 2021 the Digital Equity Act was a law passed to help create grants to fund digital inclusion programs within the US. Each state had to come up with a plan for what to do with this funding. Minnesota outlines their objectives in an almost 400-page document called the MN Digital Opportunity Plan (DOP).

It is important to review the information provided within the DOP as there are multiple state grants that will be coming out soon for organizations to get funding. This article will only be going over certain parts of the document so be sure to check out the full plan linked in the resource section listed after the article.

The vision of Minnesota's DOP is "a future where comprehensive digital access connects all Minnesota residents to opportunities, options, and each other." It lays out three goals and four objectives to follow in order to make progress. See them list below.

**Goals:** Connect People to People, Connect People to Information, Connect People to Resources

**Objectives:** Internet adoption, Devices, Digital skills, Accessibility

## **Digital Divide**

In 1995 an article by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) brought to attention the issue of what is called the digital divide. Originally it was about those who have cellphones and those without, today it has been expanded to include all technology. An updated definition of the digital divide is “the gap between people who have access to modern information and communications technology and those who don’t.”

Within the digital equity world, closing the digital divide is often portrayed as a three-leg stool. Each leg represents a part of a system that gives someone proper digital access. The digital access stool only stays standing (functions) if someone has access to all three legs. These three parts are internet, devices and digital skills.

## **Digital Connection Committee**

A Digital Connection Committee (DCC) serves as a key partner in ensuring the Digital Opportunity Plan reflects the goals and needs of all Minnesotans. Committees are voluntary workgroups which the Office of Broadband Development (OBD) is supporting. They “can be formed by a variety of entities, including political subdivisions, tribes, non-profits, anchor institutions, faith-based organizations, Minnesota-based businesses, and more – or any combination of these. Individuals are also welcome to sit on Digital Connection Committees without being affiliated with a formal organization.”

As part of the strategy for the DOP Minnesota looks to these committees to help them provide the state digital equity services.

## **Focus Areas**

Minnesota has listed a few groups that are often underserved when it comes to digital equity services. Anyone providing these services needs to be sure to include and/or even focus on these groups. These groups are: Aging individuals, Incarcerated individuals, Veterans, Individuals with disabilities, Individuals with a language barrier (both English learners and low literacy individuals, Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group, Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area and Individuals of a Low-Income Household.

## **Future Funding**

To conclude, the Minnesota Digital Opportunity Plan brings up more opportunities for organizations to receive funding. The state and committees have been gathering data to better plan for where the funding is needed. They “heard from thousands of Minnesotans about the role technology plays in helping them achieve their quality-of-life goals. Across these perspectives, access to technology consistently means access to education, access to healthcare, access to career advancement, access to housing, and access to basic government services.”

**Groups who should apply for funding:** Public schools, Public or multi-family housing authorities, Libraries, Medical or healthcare providers, Community colleges or other institutions of higher education, Other nonprofit or governmental community support organizations and Workforce agencies.

With the potential for more funding Minnesota continues to strive for digital equity. Follow the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) website to keep up to date with grants and other funding opportunities available.

## Article Sources

### **PDF of MN Digital Equity Plan**

[https://mn.gov/deed/assets/digital-opportunity-plan\\_tcm1045-615650.pdf](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/digital-opportunity-plan_tcm1045-615650.pdf)

### **MN State website on Digital Opportunity**

<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/adoption/>

### **Digital Equity Act website**

<https://www.digitalequityact.org/>

### **National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)**

<https://www.ntia.doc.gov/>

### **NTIA's article on the Digital Divide**

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED399126.pdf>

### **Investopedia article on the Digital Divide**

<https://www.investopedia.com/the-digital-divide-5116352>

### **Three-Leg Stool Metaphor**

*Digital Citizenship: The Internet, Society, and Participation* by Karen Mossberger, Caroline J Tolbert and Ramona S McNeal

### **Digital Connection Committee**

[https://mn.gov/deed/assets/digital-connection-committee-faq\\_tcm1045-563769.pdf](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/digital-connection-committee-faq_tcm1045-563769.pdf)

# Our Digital Literacy Services

Digital equity requires access to devices, an internet connection, and digital skills. Below you can find how Literacy Minnesota is helping provide those services.

<https://www.literacymn.org/digitalliteracy>

## Northstar Digital Literacy



The Northstar program assesses digital skills and provides classroom curriculum and self-directed online learning.

**Website:** <https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/>

## Digital Equity and Navigation

**Digital Navigators** mentor individuals in using technology and help with getting low-cost internet. For more information on our services contact Susan at [swbrandt@literacymn.org](mailto:swbrandt@literacymn.org).

<https://www.literacymn.org/digital-equity-navigation>



**Midway Location:** 553 Fairview Ave N, Saint Paul, MN 55104

The Midway digital literacy lab at Goodwill-Easter Seals is coordinated by Manee Thao and open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**Minneapolis Location:** 627 W Broadway Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55411

Katey Miller works at the Minneapolis campus facilitating computer labs and Northstar digital literacy classes. The lab is open from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays.

## Trainings and Workshops

We offer an assortment of programming for instructors that focus on digital literacy.

<https://www.literacymn.org/digital-literacy-trainings-workshops>

# Other Initiatives in Minnesota

## Neighborhood House



The Adult Education Program at Neighborhood House provides adult learners with ongoing educational support and learning opportunities. One of the areas of service they offer is digital literacy classes.

<https://neighborhoodhousemn.org/>

## Lyndale Neighborhood Association



The Lyndale Education Program serves the residents of Horn Towers with literacy, language, and career skills. They created the ELDES curriculum to help address digital literacy gaps in English learners.

<https://lyndale.org/>

## PCs for People



This is a nonprofit social enterprise working to get low-cost quality computers and internet into the homes of individuals, families, and nonprofits with low income.

<https://www.pcsforpeople.org/>

## Office of Broadband Development



<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/>

Helping Minnesotans understand broadband options available and work together to improve availability and use of high-speed broadband services.

## Connectivity Blueprint

**Connectivity Blueprint:**  
*Digital Equity Roadmap for  
Ramsey County and Saint Paul*

An initiative led by Ramsey County and Saint Paul to create a community-guided roadmap for achieving digital inclusion.

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/ramsey-connected-computer-internet-resources/connectivity-blueprint>

## Technology Literacy Collaborative (TLC)



The TLC is a group of aspiring leaders in the digital equity field within the Twin Cities. They gather to problem solve and discuss best practices.

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/14411564>

Check out this newsletter's resource section on our website to see more local organizations.

<https://www.literacymn.org/one-network-newsletter-resources>

# Resources



**Digital Equity Act**  
<https://www.digitalequityact.org/>



**National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA)**  
<https://www.digitalinclusion.org/>



**National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE)**  
<https://www.digitalequity.us/>



**National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)**  
<https://www.ntia.doc.gov/>

## **NDIA's Important Words**

### **Digital Equity**

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. Sometimes called TEQuity/Tech Equity which is the shortening of technology equity.

### **Digital Literacy**

The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.

### **Digital Navigators**

Trusted guides who assist community members with ongoing, individualized support for accessing affordable and appropriate connectivity, devices, and digital skills.

*Thanks for Sponsoring*



**COMCAST**

**More information here:** <https://www.literacymn.org/digital-equity-navigation#one-network-newsletter>

**Join the mailing list here:** <https://www.literacymn.org/one-network-signup>

**Questions, comments, or concerns?** – Contact Frances Bates at [fbates@literacymn.org](mailto:fbates@literacymn.org).



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