State Digital Equity Plan

OUR VISION
To realize a Connected Utah where all are invited to fully participate in modern society through access to affordable high-speed internet, reliable devices, and training to safely achieve digital independence.

The Roadmap

Implementation Timeline

Scan the QR code or visit connectingutah.com/digital-connectivity-plan to access the full Digital Equity Plan and share your feedback.
Utah’s plan relies on five strategic goals. Each category includes specific actions the Broadband Center and its partners will implement as we work together to invite everyone to fully participate.

**Coordinate People**
Create a digital inclusion community of practice.
- **Action:** Identify a suitable backbone organization to manage a statewide network of practitioners and support capacity building.
- **Action:** Provide programming stipends and connect organizations with professional development to stimulate an increase in digital inclusion practitioners across all sectors serving all Utah residents.

Maximize discoverability of programs and resources with a central directory.
- **Action:** Establish a directory of digital inclusion programs and resources based on the asset inventory initiated during the state planning process.
- **Action:** Maintain the directory with current information for easy use by individual residents and digital inclusion practitioners.

**Build Independence**
Create multiple pathways for digital independence through flexible programs that fit the diverse needs of Utah residents.
- **Action:** Create a digital independence training resource with statewide availability.
- **Action:** Work with Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) to formalize educational benefits for digital navigators or comparable positions.

Support the expansion of existing digital skillbuilding programs at community-based organizations.
- **Action:** Identify successful digital skillbuilding programs to use as a model for new efforts.
- **Action:** Actively support funding opportunities which utilize expert practitioners for the expansion of existing programs and establishment of new programs.

Prioritize the online accessibility of public services and resources, and support alternative methods of access.
- **Action:** Define a reasonable standard for accessibility of online services and resources, and assess the state’s current compliance with that standard.
- **Action:** Provide necessary resources to all identified public service entities whose online resources do not meet the standard.

**Sustain Programs**
Ensure longevity by prioritizing support for projects with a high likelihood of ongoing local investment for sustainable program maintenance.
- **Action:** For any programs funded by the Utah Broadband Center, require organizations to create long-term sustainability plans for program maintenance beyond the term of the Digital Equity Act.
- **Action:** Assist organizations with internal digital access planning and digital inclusion program design.

Maximize the responsible use of diverse funding sources to minimize reliance on Digital Equity Act funds.
- **Action:** Identify existing federal funding with outcome alignment and assist in identifying where digital access is already present in the objectives of those funding sources.
- **Action:** Future-proof anchor institutions by stabilizing or codifying existing state and local funding mechanisms for operations so new funding can support innovative, over-the-horizon digital inclusion efforts.

Highlight digital inclusion as a core service already present in the missions of many stakeholder organizations.
- **Action:** Through professional development and investment in capacity for direct services, assist organizations in defining digital inclusion as a core part of their existing missions.

**Expand Devices**
Maximize local resources by standardizing programs that recycle, refurbish, and redistribute existing devices.
- **Action:** Streamline the process for refurbishment and redistribution of state-owned devices.
- **Action:** Coordinate the use of existing device placement programs to fulfill community needs.

Support innovative efforts to broaden the impact of device lending and public computer access in K-12, higher education, and library settings.
- **Action:** Support programs offering device access which allow for whole-life impact.
- **Action:** Develop device availability measures within disaster readiness plans to ensure connectivity when it is most critical.

Encourage basic cybersecurity resources or education to be tied to all device distribution programs.
- **Action:** Work with experts to develop a simple, useful guide to basic cybersecurity measures all computer users should be aware of.
- **Action:** Require all device distribution programs under this plan to provide the free resource alongside devices distributed.

**Increase Opportunity**
Define true affordability for covered populations and incorporate this recommendation into the state’s minimally acceptable affordable internet plan for BEAD projects.
- **Action:** Develop partnerships with internet service providers (ISPs) to design low-cost broadband plans for low-income households.

Solidify existing outreach efforts to inform communities about affordable internet options, and establish coordinated ongoing outreach.
- **Action:** Coordinate with community organizations to create a comprehensive database of affordable internet options available to low-income households.
- **Action:** Train digital navigators to work with low-income households to identify affordable internet options and help with the enrollment process.

Support coordination between ISPs, qualifying entities (state, federal, tribal agencies), and community-based organizations to increase ACP adoption.
- **Action:** Work with ISPs to create a streamlined application process for low-income households to enroll in affordable internet plans.
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2023
- June: Public comment period
- August: Publish revised plan

2024
- Receive Digital Equity Act Capacity Grant funds
- Launch Phase 1

2025
- Launch Phase 2

2026
- Complete Phase 1
- Launch Phase 3

2029
- Ensure all Utahns have the opportunity to fully participate in the modern world

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