WASHINGTON STATE
CONNECTING DIGITAL EQUITY COMMUNITIES STATEWIDE

2025 REGIONAL DIGITAL EQUITY COORDINATION SESSIONS

WASHINGTON FOR ALL BRIDGING DIGITAL DIVIDES

WASHINGTON STATE OFFICE OF EQUITY

2025
DIGITAL EQUITY
RESOURCES AND
PROMISING MODELS

This compilation of digital equity resources was shared by community members participating in the 2025 Regional Digital Equity Coordination Sessions and compiled by the Washington State Office of Equity.

We're inspired by your resourcefulness and hope this guide makes a difference in your work.

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MODEL FOR AN ACCOUNTABLE COMMUNITIES OF HEALTH (ACH) PARTNERSHIP WITH A REGIONAL DIGITAL ACCESS COALITION

There is alignment between ACH work and digital inclusion efforts across the state. An example that has occurred since 2023 is the **partnership between NCW Digital Access Coalition as a regional lead partner and Thriving Together NCW (North Central ACH).**

This coalition thrives through community connections with several private businesses, regional libraries, and one of the school districts making commitments without applying for funding. There is considerable in-kind support on the ground matching the ACH investment, and some partners participate in their Commitments Campaign, not the advocacy work.

Explore the Coalition of Accountable Communities of Health website to learn about ACH regions across the state: Washington's ACHs | Washington ACHs.
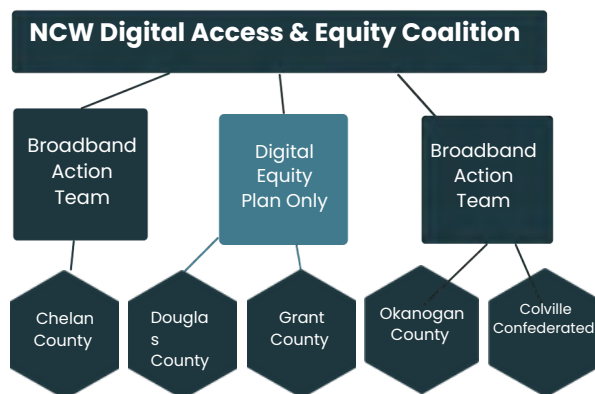
"ACHs have led efforts to transform our local systems of care and equity efforts to support health across sectors, investing millions of dollars into communities."

Washington's Accountable Communities of Health

NCW Digital Access Coalition

The NCW Digital Access Coalition is local industry, public utilities, government agencies, nonprofit and community leaders working together, collaborating, sharing resources and advocating to ensure all individuals across North Central Washington have the skills, devices and connectivity that they need to benefit from technology and access education, employment, healthcare, and entertainment and more.

NCW Digital Access & Equity Coalition

- Broadband Action Team
- Digital Equity Plan Only
- Broadband Action Team

- Chelan County
- Douglas County
- Grant County
- Okanogan County
- Colville Confederated

The Regional Digital Equity Plan Summary was released in 2024. The report outlines strategies to expand broadband infrastructure, promote digital literacy, and ensure access to affordable devices across Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan and Grant Counties.

Read the report

Technology Adoption and Digital Access in North Central Washington

Digital Literacy Cohorts In 2024, 193 students completed Digital Literacy skills training in Spanish as part of cohorts in Royal City, Mattawa, Moses Lake, Othello, Orondo, and George. Funded by the Community Health Network of Washington and Microsoft, the program equips participants with essential tech skills and provided each graduate with a new laptop computer to expand further access to services, support and digital resources.

Digital Navigator Trainings NCW Tech Alliance and the North Central Educational Services District partnered to train over 250 Digital Navigators through online and on-demand courses. These trainings equipped community volunteers and frontline staff to expand digital access and foster greater connectivity in their communities. These workshops are sponsored by the Community Health Network of Washington and Thriving Together NCW.

Computers for Community Through the Computers for Community initiative, NCW Tech Alliance has placed 357 refurbished computers into the hands of individuals in need. The devices were generously donated to the nonprofit and restored by trained volunteers, ensuring access to reliable technology for those who need it most. The Computers for Community program is proudly supported by the NCW Tech Alliance membership.

NCW Tech Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving North Central Washington. Founded in 1999 with a mission to connect people and technology. NCW Tech Alliance works with partners across the region to empower individuals with the skills that they need to harness technology for learning, productivity, and efficiency. These skills expand access to education, healthcare access, skills development, employment, and so much more.

2024 Commitments Campaign
50,000+ Impacted

52 organizations and municipalities across Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties made digital inclusion commitments as part of the first regional commitments campaign

View the 2024 Commitments

2024 Digital Inclusion Proclamations

Digital Inclusion Microgrants

22 cross-sector organizations were awarded microgrants to support their digital inclusion plans. These investments were made possible by funding from Thriving Together NCW. The funding empowered organizations across North Central Washington to advance digital inclusion in the communities they serve. As part of their digital equity commitments organizations implemented innovative solutions like a mobile technology center, added bilingual resources, offered training and educational workshops, and digital literacy trainings.

TOTAL IMPACT	KEY OUTCOMES	COMMUNITY VOICES	BARRIERS
22 microgrants awarded **$100,000** distributed **50,451** individuals across North Central Washington	• **Bridged Digital Gaps**: Improved technology access and digital literacy. • **Empowered Communities:** Inclusive programs for underserved populations. • **Enhanced Services:** Innovative tools for education, business growth and connectivity	**The Brave Warrior Project:** "Thank you for teaching me. If you had not helped me, I would not have known how to register for the services." **Safe Families for Children:** "Awareness and information are key to helping others who don't have access to what they need."	• Language access • Disabilities Rural • access • Socioeconomic divides

COLUMBIA CONNECTS COALITION

What is Columbia Connects?

•Coalition formed to implement WA's Digital Equity Plan
•Serving 13 counties across Central/South Eastern WA and parts of Northern Oregon
•30+ partners from nonprofit, government, education, and private sectors
•Collaborative, action-oriented, inclusive
•Buy in and collaboration with Broadband Action Teams (BATS) and key anchor institutions

Who is Columbia Connects?

- Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCOG)
- Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD)
- Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC)
- B5 Learning Center
- Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC)
- Columbia Basin College (CBC)
- Community Council
- Educational Service District 123 (ESD 123)
- Employment Security Department (ESD)
- Friends of Children of Walla Walla
- Goodwill Industries of the Columbia
- Mid-Columbia Libraries (MCL)
- PCs for People WA
- Prescott School District
- The Health Center
- The STAR Project

- Tri-Cities Diversity & Inclusion Council
- Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition (Shalom United Church of Christ)
- United Way of the Blue Mountains
- Valley Residential Services
- Walla Walla Community College (WWCC)
- Walla Walla County Rural Library District (WWCRLD)
- Walla Walla Public Schools
- Walla Walla Senior Center
- Walla Walla University (WWU)
- Walla Walla Valley Disability Network
- Walla Walla YMCA
- Whitman College
- & more!

The Need Is Real

TOPIC
High % of rural and underserved populations without devices or connectivity
Limited access to digital skills training
Barriers Among: ○ Covered households ○ Seniors, veterans, individuals with disabilities ○ English language learners, rural communities ○ Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE)

9 Initiatives

Digital Literacy and Skills Training Program	Community Outreach & Support	Program Evaluation & Sustainability Planning
Tech Device Recycling and Refurb Center	Workforce & Economic Development Support	Expanding Digital access
Life Skills Town	Health & Safety Promotion	Device Distribution & Support

WHY/WHO AND ROLE: GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF THE COLUMBIA

- TANF
- DVR
- DDA/ISE
- Employment Connection Centers
  - Pasco, College Place, Hermiston
- Housing Programs
- Lead Facilitor-NTIA Grant
  - Columbia Connects Coalition: Bridging the Digital Divide

Role of **PCs for People WA**

- **Mission: Provide low cost computers, internet, digital literacy to areas that need it the most, and sustainably recycle and reuse e-waste**
- **National footprint, local impact**
- **Trusted partner for equitable device access**

How you can get involved

- Join a subcommittee
- Host a device donation site
- Volunteer at Digital Literacy Day (May 2025 and on)
- Be a distribution or training partner
- Reach out!

✉ skulaga@goodwillotc.org
mhostettler@pcsforpeople.org

SCAN

Partnership in Action

01 Refurbished Device Distro Hub
A local, Tri-Cities, facility that will allow for a circular economy of devices to go from local business' to community members

02 Local E-waste Collection/Job Training
Create a space to help divert e-waste from landfills, refurbish devices for distribution, and train folks for careers in hands-on tech support

03 Integrated digital skills curriculum
Train 400+ Digital Navigators through shared, proven curriculum

04 Scalable, sustainable access
Local refurbishment and recycling allows for natural scaling with local business and community to increase supply and output

7

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF SEATTLE-KING COUNTY DIGITAL EQUITY ASSET MAP - COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Access Digital Literacy Resources in King County

This Map Tracks Digital Literacy Resources in King County. These resources have strong ties to BIPOC communities and delivering digital inclusion services to these communities.

Access it online here: https://www.seakingwdc.org/digital-equity-asset-map

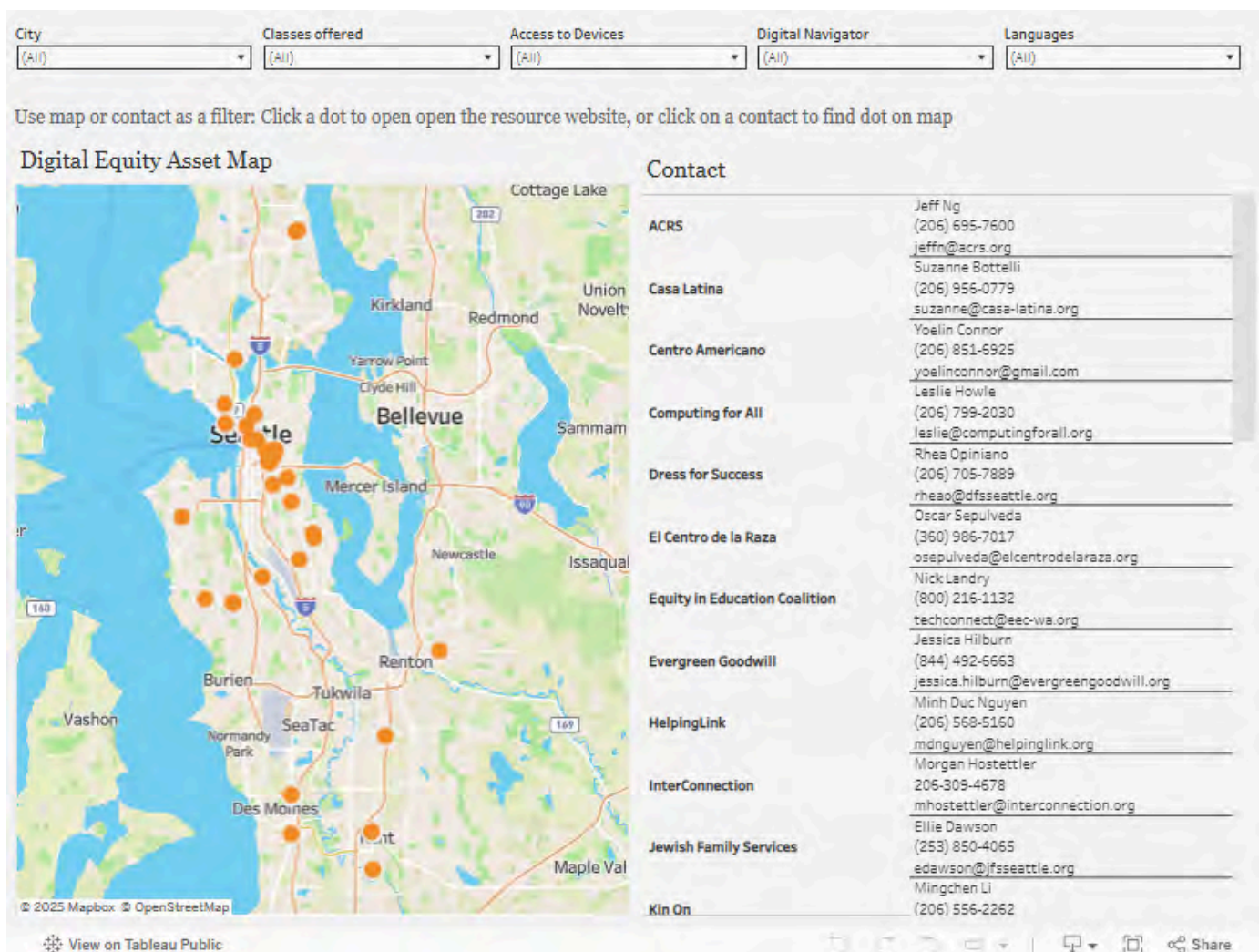**Goals of the Map**
1. Help community members locate programs with digital skills training, access to affordable devices, and technical support
2. Advocate for digital inclusion and identify service gaps

Get started on your own map using the "Digital Equity Asset Lists" in these Broadband and Digital Equity Community Action Plans:
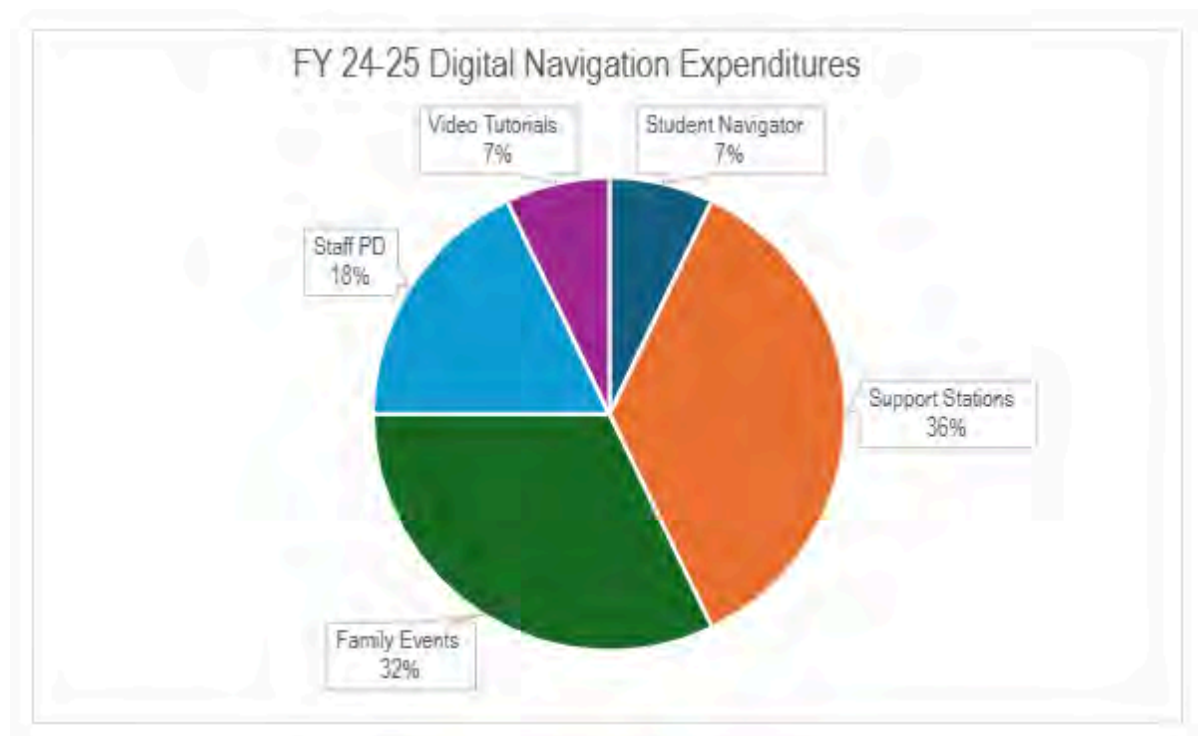Community Action Plans | Powered by Box

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION DIGITAL NAVIGATION GRANT SUMMARY

The Digital Navigation Grant, funded by the 23-25 legislative proviso, invited all school districts to improve digital equity by identifying community resources and implementing one or more eligible activities. Popular initiatives included Digital Navigation Nights and family-accessible computer stations.

This year, nineteen school districts participated, up from thirteen last year. Grantees received support with proposals, sustainability planning, peer and community collaboration, and training from the Program Supervisor and Association of Educational Service District (AESD) tech leads.

Despite lower participation than the other two proviso funded grants (Adaptive/Inclusive Tech and Device Maintenance & Replacement), the Digital Navigation Grant yielded high-impact results demonstrating its critical role in supporting digital access and skills.

FY 24-25 Digital Navigation Expenditures

- Video Tutorials 7%
- Student Navigator 7%
- Staff PD 18%
- Support Stations 36%
- Family Events 32%

OSPI DIGITAL NAVIGATION GRANT SUMMARY

Warden School District – "PCs for Parents" and HS Completion
- **Full Participation**: 20 parents enrolled; only one didn't complete due to relocation.
- **Lasting Impact**: Graduates are now enrolled in English and high school completion courses through Big Bend Community College.

Quote:
"If it weren't for taking PCs for Parents, I wouldn't be able to do my High School Completion courses. These classes are helping me qualify for better positions at work."

Federal Way School District – Increased Parental Engagement with School
- **Bridging Language Gaps**: Used instant translation tools to help a Dari-speaking parent navigate school technology.
- **Skills Learned:** Parent now independently uses ParentVUE and can request interpreter support.
- **Outcome:** Increased confidence and deeper parent/guardian engagement in child's education.

Bellingham School District – Parental Empowerment Through Digital Skills
- **Entrepreneurship:** A graduate now runs her own catering business and manages invoices independently.
- **Milestone**: Another parent shared this was the first certificate earned by anyone in their family, instilling pride and motivation.

Rochester School District – RISE Center, Digital Support Increases Independence
- **Practical Help**: Assisted a parent struggling with online forms due to language and tech barriers.
- **Follow-Up**: Parent later enrolled in free tech and English courses at Centralia College.
- **Long-Term Impact:** Boost in digital and language skills led to greater independence and confidence.

Conclusion

The Digital Navigation Grant is helping families build digital literacy, independence, and engagement in education. These stories show how even small investments in digital support can lead to transformational outcomes. Continued funding is essential to expand and sustain these efforts across Washington's districts.

King County Housing Authority

KCHA Digital Equity Strategy

Shared by Jamie Robbins, KCHA Digital Equity Manager

Every person, regardless of age, background, income, or experience, should have the tools they need to actively engage in the economy, society, and democracy:

- Affordable high-speed internet
- Affordable computers, laptops, and devices
- Opportunities to learn practical skills

ConnectHomeUSA (CHUSA)

The King County Housing Authority (KCHA) supports rental housing and assistance for more than 50,000 people in 37 cities across King County.

Through ConnectHomeUSA (CHUSA), a program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), KCHA received a model program description or playbook. KCHA used that playbook to develop a digital equity and inclusion pilot program at six public housing communities in the City of Auburn, serving nearly 300 households, including both seniors and families with children.

Launched in 2024, the pilot program organized workshops to gather information about residents' technology needs and will provide digital equity services and support to those residents through 2027.

Digital Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group

KCHA's Digital Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group brings together executive and frontline staff from across departments to inform KCHA's digital equity pilot and long-term strategies.

The Advisory Group developed the KCHA Connectivity Playbook and the KCHA Devices and Digital Literacy Programs Playbook. These playbooks will guide decisions and recommendations for program implementation.

As the pilot program moves forward, the Advisory Group will evaluate potential programs, partners, and funding opportunities to ensure alignment and efficacy, and can recommend longer-term implementation and scale to KCHA leadership.

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CITY OF BELLEVUE'S INCLUSIVE INNOVATION FORUM

Shared by the City of Bellevue IT Department's Julie David, Business Operations and Fiscal Manager and Molly Bandel, Program Manager

The City of Bellevue is dedicated to fostering a sustainable culture of innovation and ensuring community engagement in the process. The Inclusive Innovation Forum is a key step in achieving this vision, bringing together diverse stakeholders to collaborate on innovative solutions that enhance city services and improve the quality of life for all residents. This work will foster innovation that impacts the entire community and drives digital equity and economic growth.

Launched in 2024, Bellevue's Innovation Forum began with informal brainstorming sessions, open surveys, interviews, and collaborative study sessions. Since its inception, the forum has hosted three events, drawing participation from over 200 attendees. The initiative is organized into three key workstreams: Digital Equity, Prioritization and Policy, and Innovative Ecosystems. The Innovation Forum's Digital Equity Sub-Team began meeting in April 2025 to continue gather community input to identify key priorities. The team will focus on advancing these priorities through both short-term actions and long-term initiatives.

Digital Equity Initiatives:

Connectivity: Offer affordable internet access to ensure everyone can connect for education, work, and communication, bridging the digital divide

Devices: Provide equitable access to free or low-cost devices so everyone can fully engage in digital life, education, and work.

Support: Provide free, accessible tech support to help individuals confidently manage and resolve digital issues, promoting equal access to technology.

Education: Provide digital literacy classes to build essential tech skills for education, jobs, and personal growth, advancing digital inclusion.

THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTREACH HOTSPOT COMMUNITY LISTENING REPORT

Shared by Nadiyah Browne, Outreach Program Manager
Community Engagement and Economic Development

Summary

Overview

The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Outreach Hotspot Program was created during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide internet access to underserved communities. In late 2023, SPL initiated a community listening and reflection process to redesign the program for a post-pandemic environment, focusing on digital equity and community partnership.

Methodology

SPL gathered input through:

- In-person and virtual focus groups with community organizations
- Meetings with digital inclusion stakeholders
- Data from the 2024 City of Seattle Technology Access and Adoption Report
- Insights from webinars focused on digital equity for marginalized communities

Key Program Impacts

Participants emphasized that library-provided internet access enabled:

- **Access to opportunity**: Jobs, education, public services, voter registration, and social services
- **Infrastructure support**: Especially for shelters and grassroots groups working with people
- experiencing homelessness
- **Empowerment**: Civic participation, youth leadership development, and community organizing
- **Accessibility**: Participation by people who are undocumented, disabled, immunocompromised, or in transition
- **Community connection**: Strengthened networks of support and shared resources

Program Design Insights

- **Strengths**: Flexibility, ease of participation, supportive staff, reliable technology
- **Challenges**: Lost devices, high administrative burden, unclear eligibility for marginalized groups
- **Findings**: Strong, ongoing community relationships reduced equipment loss and increased participant engagement

THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTREACH HOTSPOT COMMUNITY LISTENING REPORT

Recommendations for Program Redesign

- Focus on groups rooted in social justice and community care that serve populations most impacted by the digital divide
- Outcomes to prioritize:
    - Temporary access to reliable internet
    - Greater awareness of SPL and community resources
    - Participation in coalitions working on digital equity
- Improve practices through:
    - Extended lending periods (up to one year)
    - Increased community outreach and presence
    - Strengthened internal communication and resource sharing

Broader Digital Equity Context

Persistent barriers include:

- Lack of affordable, high-speed internet
- Limited access to reliable devices and necessary software
- Insufficient training and support, especially for non-English speakers
- Unwelcoming digital learning environments
- Inadequate, short-term funding structures

Identified Resource Gaps

- Equipment sharing and lending (e.g., laptops, hybrid meeting tools)
- Support for grant writing and program sustainability
- Culturally and linguistically relevant training and tech support
- Improved accessibility tools and centralized information sharing

Library's Broader Role

- **Center the most impacted**: Listen to and invest in the communities most affected by digital inequity
- **Commit to long-term change**: Address structural issues within the library system and beyond
- **Build coalitions and share power**: Collaborate with external partners and consistently amplify community knowledge

PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT (PUD) MODELS

Contributors:
Stefany Zelepuza, Washington PUD Association
Angela Bennink, Kitsap County PUD
Mike Rose, Kitsap Regional Library
Willie Painter, Lewis County PUD
Justin Holzgrove, Mason County PUD #3

Washington Public Utility Districts (PUDs) are not-for-profit, community-owned utilities providing energy, water, sewer, and telecommunications services.

Kitsap County PUD & Kitsap Regional Library Partnership
- Developed from relationships formed by participation in the Kitsap County BAT
- PUD supplies internet to branches and KRL provides community with internet access and adoption support programs.
- KRL Offers Wi-Fi, Chromebook lending, and homebound e-reader services.
- Partners with Evergreen Goodwill for digital navigation services.
- Pending levy passage, plans to hire full-time digital navigators

Low-income PUD Discount Models
- Both use an open access network model where private Retail Service Providers (RSPs) operate on their fiber networks; the public still owns the infrastructure.
- Both offer low-income customers $20 off their bill for unlimited 1000/1000 Mbps service.

Lewis County Public Utility District
- Reduces their wholesale rate by $10, and the RSP reduces their retail rate a minimum of $10.
- Residents buy their home broadband subscription from one of four RSPs and the RSP is responsible for receiving the low-income application from the resident and qualifying them for the discounted service.

Mason County Public Utility District #3
- The PUD qualifies a customer for energy assistance and then if they are connected to PUD fiber, the discount is extended to broadband services operated by an RSP.
- The PUD discounts the wholesale rate by $10 and requires RSPs to pass it through to the customer; all RSPs on the PUD network also reduce their retail rate by an additional $10, providing the customers a $20 discount total per month.
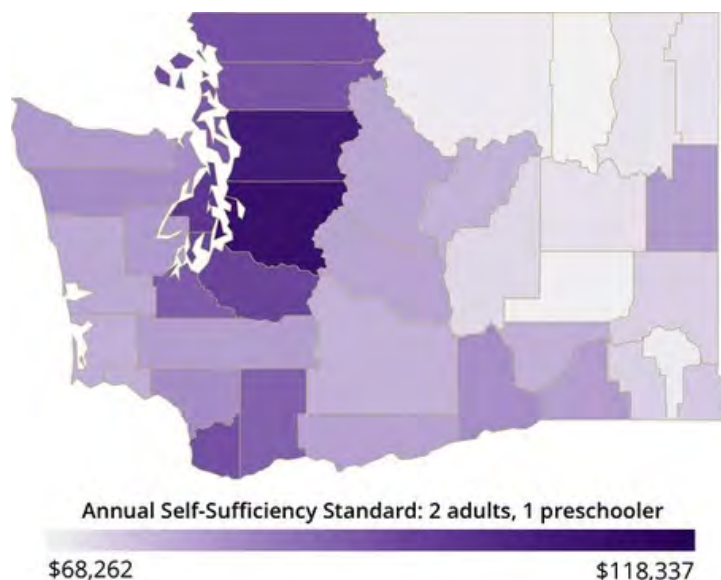
THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD

This methodology for assessing affordability advances equitable change by leveraging cost and socioeconomic data to inform policies that enhance family economic security. The Self-Sufficiency Standard is identified in the 2022 Washington State Digital Equity Act

THE SELF- SUFFICIENCY STANDARD

The Self-Sufficiency Standard defines the income needed to cover basic expenses without assistance, based on location and family type. It details county-specific estimates for 719 family types—including expenses for housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, broadband, taxes, and other necessities, and taxes.

Organizations across the United States rely on the Self-Sufficiency Standard to provide an accurate estimate of need and promote effective policies to achieve economic security. Best practice methods for assessing affordability enables more informed and targeted digital equity interventions.

Annual Self-Sufficiency Standard: 2 adults, 1 preschooler

$68,262 $118,337

DEFINING BROADBAND
AFFORDABILITY ACROSS WASHINGTON STATE

Federal low-income assistance is based on the official poverty measure, but it is outdated and inaccurate. The 2025 Federal Poverty Guideline for a family of three is **$26,650**.
The 2025 Self-Sufficiency Standard for a family of one adult, one infant, and one preschooler is $98,080 in Lewis County.

$48,225	$64,300	$96,450
150%	200%	300%

$94,344 — Ferry
$107,161 — Grays Harbor
$163,527 — King County (East)

The Federal Poverty Guidelines
Four person household

The Self-Sufficiency Standard
Two adults, one infant, one preschooler

Industry
Recommendations

- Train the digital equity field on modern affordability assessment methods

- Bring affordability and digital equity experts together to vision and co-design

- Develop fit-for-purpose analytic tools that simplify the application of modern affordability measurements for digital equity assessment and evaluation

PCS FOR PEOPLE – MODEL FOR STUDENT RESEARCH

University of Washington Geography Graduate Program Capstone: Exploration of Environmental Markers and Digital Equity

Shared by Morgan Costello-Hostettler, Washington Community Impact Manager, PCs for People.

Purpose
- The primary purpose of this project was to provide PCs for People Washington with visualizations and a database connecting electronic use and digital equity to public health factors that individuals are consistently facing.
- The project aims to provide a lens into the environmental impacts of electronic waste, and the crossover between locations near landfills and public health "toxic points."
- This project focused on King County and the Seattle metro area while specifically looking at areas with less data which include Bellevue and other surrounding areas of Seattle.

Deliverables
- Created two visualizations using ArcGIS Pro of the King County, WA region identifying locations that are adversely impacted by digital equity and public health, in addition to digital equity and vulnerable populations. These maps are both public facing and proprietary.
- Inclusion of data detailing the relationship between digital equity and public health as defined by the spatial visualizations.
- Concise report provided a contextual breakdown of findings. The importance of better understanding and defining the relationship between a lack of digital access and public health can be communicated to promote well-informed decision making.

THE WASHINGTON STATE LIBRARY'S DIGITAL EQUITY CO-CREATION TOOLKIT

Shared by Joyce Abbott, Workforce Development Librarian, Washington State Library (WSL)

Available June 30, 2025, under "LibGuides" on the WSL website and for check-out in Braille from the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library

- The Washington State Legislature directed the Washington State Library (WSL) to create a tool for measuring digital skills in the state and a protocol for using that tool.
- The Co-Creation Toolkit uses methodologies from Participatory Action Research where research is done "with" communities, rather than "on" them.
- Rooted in the principles of HB 1541: Nothing About Us Without US, the toolkit centers local unique solutions through collaboration, relationship-building, and community-led insight.
- WSL is part of the Digital Equity Forum Data Work Group and has been working with WaTech in hopes data from these types of survey activities can be voluntarily shared with the state through a data portal (not yet funded).
- Subject to the availability of funds for the Digital Equity Planning Grant Program (RCW 43.330.5393, Section 2b) "Priority will be given for grant applications that intend to use community-based participatory action research methods as a part of the proposed plan."

WASHINGTON STATE TELEHEALTH COLLABORATIVE

Shared by Hanna Dinh Hsieh, Program Manager, UW Medicine Digital Health Office

- Operating since 2016 as a hub for digital health policy, public education, and collaboration.
- Developed resources in partnership with the Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center.
- The collaborative ends June 2025, though materials will remain online through 2026.

CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE
TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

What is CATT-NW? The **Northwest Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT-NW)** provides technology and training related to devices from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). CATT-NW promotes a train-the-trainer model to empower anyone to learn and teach technology and support access to information for blind and low vision students.

Where does CATT-NW operate?

CATT-NW serves: Alaska, American Samoa, California, Hawaii, Guam, Idaho, Montana, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming

Who collaborates with CATT-NW?

Teachers and parents of blind and low vision students, including those with additional disabilities and deafblindness
Teacher preparation programs with a focus on developing tech-savvy teachers
Community partners who are committed to inclusive practices, such as: libraries, museums, makerspaces, coding clubs
Researchers and developers who are interested in expanding the evidence base and implementation of assistive technology from APH

How does CATT-NW provide technology and training?

CATT-NW is based at the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB), funded by a federal appropriation, and works in partnership with APH and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind.

Contact CATT-NW:

- https://wssb.wa.gov/catt
- Instagram and Facebook @cattnorthwest
- YouTube @CATT-APH

BRIDGING
DIGITAL DIVIDES