

DIGITAL EQUITY IN ARLINGTON

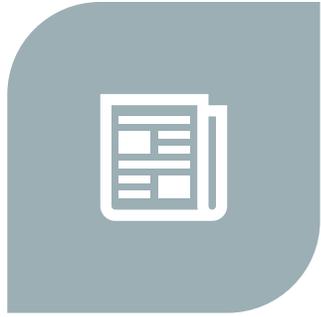
Digital Inclusion Network
Meeting Highlights
March 5, 2020

Arlington Mill
Community Center



MEETING OVERVIEW

- **Purpose of Meeting:** The meeting was held to share recent progress on the Digital Equity Program underway at Arlington County. The goal of the meeting was to gather feedback on drafted action steps and strategies corresponding to the County's digital equity goals. Meeting attendees were also requested to provide outreach assistance for upcoming focus group recruitment and survey distribution activities.
- **Networking:** Attendees were asked to provide feedback on the Digital Equity Action Plan guiding principles with sticky notes. This encouraged socialization and time for guests to informally discuss pertinent topics for the night's event.
- **Presentation:** The moderators for the event provided an overview of the status of the Digital Equity Program efforts to date, such as: website creation, digital equity resource map, drafted Digital Equity Action Plan action steps and strategies.
- **Rotational Group Discussion:** The attendees rotated between 4 stations. Each station referenced a digital equity goal (Connectivity, Access, Usability and Sustainability) and the corresponding actions/strategies to support that goal. A facilitator guided group conversation and elicited feedback pertinent to each goal.
- **Communal Feedback and Sharing:** Each facilitator provided highlights from their discussions to the greater audience. The meeting provided an opportunity for the County to partner with nonprofits, businesses, and the community in order to better serve disadvantaged populations in Arlington.



PUBLISHED DIGITAL EQUITY WEBSITE:
PROVIDES THE PUBLIC WITH A SINGLE
POINT OF INFORMATION FOR
DIGITAL EQUITY EFFORTS



ENGAGED INNOVATION TEAM
WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES TO DELIVER
DIGITAL EQUITY RESOURCES MAP:
TOOL TO SUPPORT AWARENESS OF
DIGITAL RESOURCES TO VULNERABLE
POPULATIONS



BEGAN STRATEGY PLANNING FOR
COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS AND
SURVEYS: RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUPS
AND SURVEYS FROM IMPACTED
POPULATIONS WILL BE
INCORPORATED INTO DIGITAL
EQUITY ACTION PLAN



SOCIALIZED DIGITAL EQUITY
EFFORTS WITH COMMISSIONS
(TENANT-LANDLORD AND HOUSING
COMMISSION): PROMOTE AWARENESS
AND OPPORTUNITY FOR INPUT

DIGITAL EQUITY PROGRAM - PROGRESS UPDATES -

Connectivity

Invest in infrastructure to support lower cost connectivity for affordable housing residents.

- Past due assistance for internet bills should be considered
- Encourage affordable housing communities not to sign exclusivity deals with major ISPs which is prohibitive
- Wi-Fi for public spaces (parks, outside community centers and libraries)
- All community centers should have computer labs
- County should explore utilizing their real estate assets (high-rise buildings) to broadcast wireless internet signals
- Affordable housing residences need to factor in managed service providers to provide customer care support
- Wi-Fi hotspots on busses
- Issue RFP for a 3rd party ISP for affordable housing residences

Access

All County residents can access the internet.

- Provide recycled devices for low-income residents (donor suggestions: County and/or local universities). Or perhaps a voucher-based system for technology such as laptops, tablets or smartphones which meet minimum tech specifications
- Considerations must be made for support and trade-in.
- Subsidize ownership of devices with low-income residents.
- Provide hotspots to nonprofits which have direct access to targeted audiences.
- Install device charging stations in public spaces.
- Volunteer Tech Brigade: Offer basic services like setting up a home network and connecting personal devices. Multilingual volunteers would be ideal.
- Explore existing nonprofits such as Computer Core
- Tech support is always an issue. The County gives grants for purchase & network set up, warranties, but then what happens in 3 years?

Group Discussion: Digital Equity Goals

Usability

Residents have the skills necessary to be successful on the internet

- Training on internet usage is important especially for aging population
- Telehealth is a good use case for elderly or those with difficulty accessing public transportation
- Promote existing County services which are already offered and, in some cases, underutilized
- Ensure all community centers have computer labs
- Ensure translation services are available in multiple languages
- Train the trainer: train key community members within a target population so they can promote their knowledge
- Suggestion that training is centralized on mobile app

Sustainability

Ensure digital equity goals are sustainable and the community is engaged

- Ensure cross-County collaboration for Digital Equity efforts
- Utilize County radio and television stations for promotion
- Make presentations or info nights at affordable housing residences
- Going door-to-door is an effective way of engaging the community
- Encourage private sector to participate in device donation programs
- Partner with area hospitals/universities
- Share information and leverage APS data on connectivity at home in order to target digital equity efforts
- Ask community youth organizations to help gather data surrounding internet use and ease of connecting to APS
- Focus should be placed on lobbying legislature to allow for municipal broadband
- Internet should be considered a basic utility

Group Discussion: Digital Equity Goals