



Digital Equity and Inclusion

Refocus & Recommit

Presenters



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Today's Agenda



1. Digital Inclusion Definitions
2. Everything Old is New Again
3. Understanding Barriers to Digital Inclusion
4. 3 Interconnected Solutions
5. Digital Navigators
6. Coalitions
7. The State of Play in Michigan
8. Getting Involved
9. Questions & Comments

Definitions

The background features a teal gradient. In the center, there is a faint, light-colored graphic of a hand with a Wi-Fi signal symbol above it. Large, semi-transparent letters 'N', 'D', and 'A' are scattered across the background, with 'N' on the left, 'D' in the middle, and 'A' on the right.

Digital Divide: The Issue

The gap between:

- Those who have affordable access, skills and support to effectively engage online
- Those who do not have access



Digital Equity: The Goal

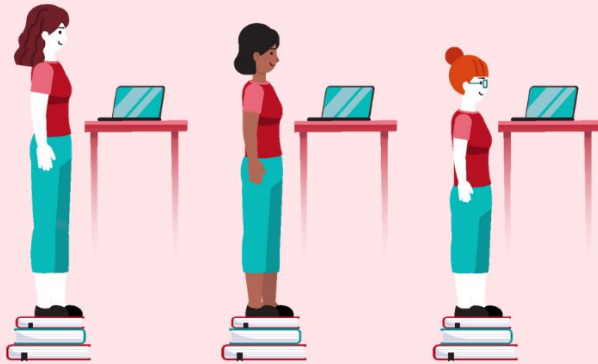
Condition where all individuals have the technology capacity needed to participate in:

- Society
- Democracy
- Economy



Why 'Digital Equity'?

EQUALITY



EQUITY



Digital Inclusion: The Work

The activities necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to:

- Affordable home broadband
- Appropriate devices
- Digital Skills
- Tech Support
- Applications



History Lesson

The background is a solid teal color. In the center, there is a faint, light-colored graphic of a hand holding a device with a Wi-Fi signal icon above it. Below this graphic, the letters 'N', 'D', and 'A' are faintly visible in a large, sans-serif font, spaced out across the width of the page.

REA's Electric Circus

Wires alone don't ensure adoption and empowerment.





ACTIVITY

What prevents people in your community from consistently connecting to the internet and using it effectively?

The background is a solid teal color. In the center, there is a faint, light-colored graphic consisting of two hands, one above the other, with a Wi-Fi signal icon above them. The text is centered over this graphic.

Key Barriers to Digital Inclusion

Key Barriers to Digital Inclusion



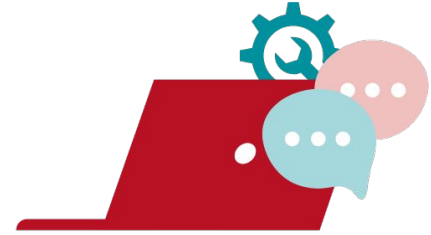
BROADBAND

- ✗ Unaffordable
- ✗ Unreliable service
- ✗ Digital Redlining



DEVICES

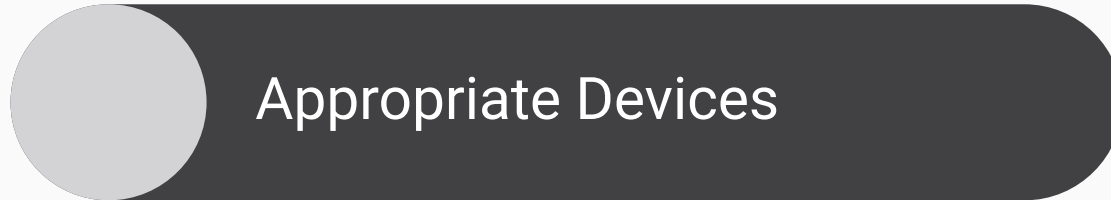
- ✗ Unaffordable
- ✗ Outdated software
- ✗ Device not matching user's needs



DIGITAL SKILLS

- ✗ Limited skills
- ✗ Fear & shame
- ✗ Inaccessible trainings

3 Interconnected Solutions





ACTIVITY

Pick one of the barriers you shared or heard – share a program or strategy your library uses to overcome that barrier.



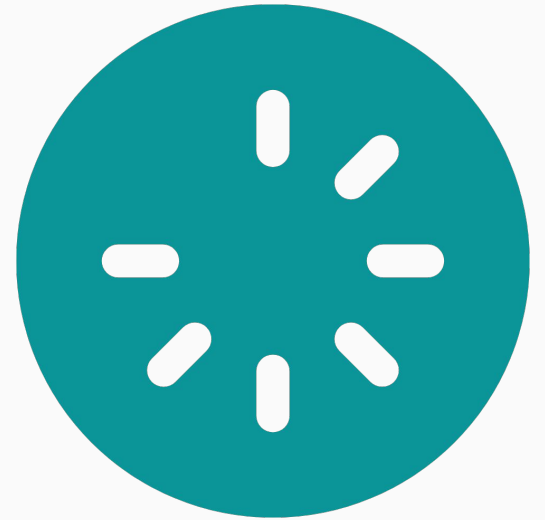
**Solution:
Affordable & Low
Cost Broadband**

What Is “Broadband?”

Broadband is the transmission of wide bandwidth data over a high speed internet connection.

In 2024, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines the minimum standard for broadband speed as 100/20:

- 100 megabits per second for downloading
- 20 megabits per second for uploading

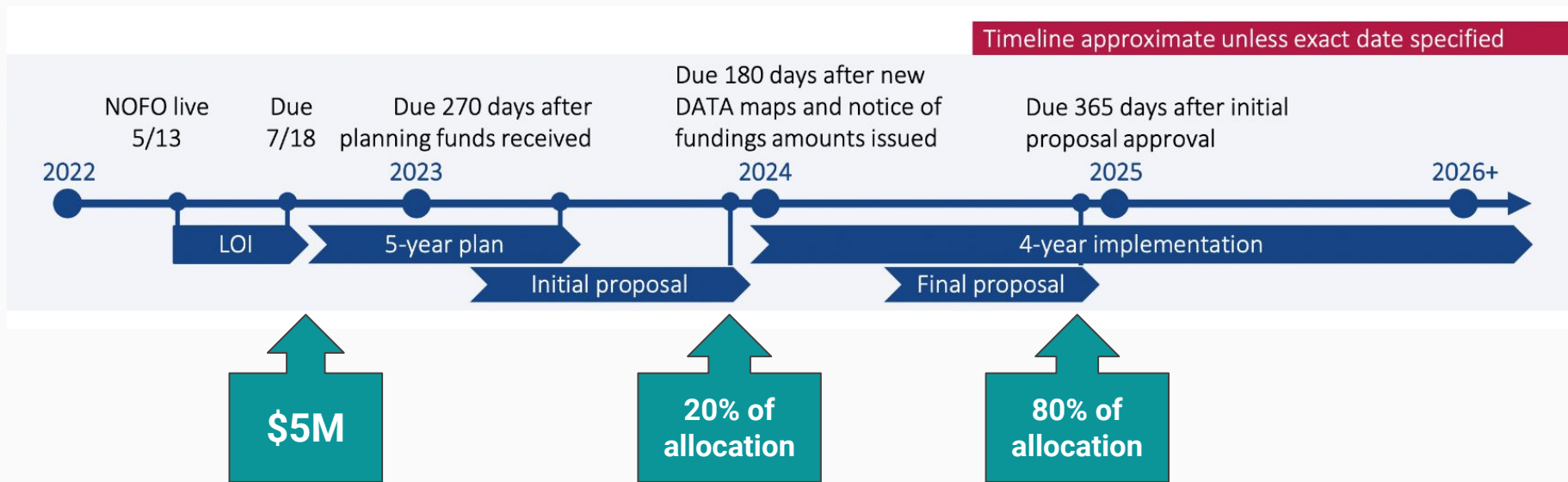


Broadband Equity, Access And Deployment Program (BEAD)

- **Program Description:** Block grant program to states for broadband infrastructure deployment and other digital inclusion activities.
- **Program Administrator:** National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
- **Total Allocated:** \$42.42 Billion



BEAD Timeline



NDIA Resource: Honor Roll of Low-Cost Internet Plans

To support local efforts, NDIA has compiled a list of current offers from Internet Service Providers (ISPs) that will help low-income households to acquire service at low or no cost.



HONOR ROLL OF **LOW-COST** INTERNET PLANS

Low-Cost Offers Must Meet The Following Minimum Standards To Be Included:

- ✓ **Speed:** Plans with speeds at or above the threshold of 100mbs/20mbs
- ✓ **Cost:** Maximum monthly subscription cost for any plan will not be greater than \$30/month
- ✓ **Data Caps:** Plans included have no data caps or the data cap is at or above 1TB

Visit: [Honor Roll of Low-Cost Internet Plans Page](#)

Hotspot Loan Programs

Schools and libraries often loan mobile hotspots.

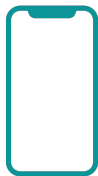
- Terms and loan periods vary
- Not a permanent solution, but can be a lifeline or one component of a solution.
- The E-rate program will be subsidizing hotspot loan programs for the first time in funding year 2025!





**Solution:
Appropriate &
Affordable
Devices**

Appropriate Devices



✓ Portable device

✓ Long battery

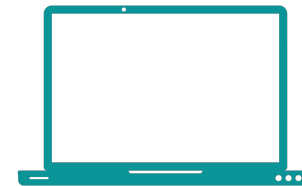
✗ Does not replace a laptop



✓ Accessibility

✓ Long battery

✗ Cannot make calls without a cellular data plan



✓ Mandatory for jobs

✓ Large storage

✗ Shorter battery life

✗ Least affordable option

Affordable Devices Example: Human-I-T

Human-I-T is a device refurbisher that recycles “e-waste” and partners with community organizations to offer:

- Low-cost devices and some no-cost devices
- Ongoing technical support
- Digital skills training



Device Loan Programs

Schools and libraries have computer labs and often loan devices.

- Terms and loan periods vary
- Not a permanent solution, but can be a lifeline or one component of a solution.
- Comes with helpful humans!





Solution: Digital Skills Training

TRIVIA QUESTION

Across
industries, ___%
of jobs require
digital skills

A. 48%

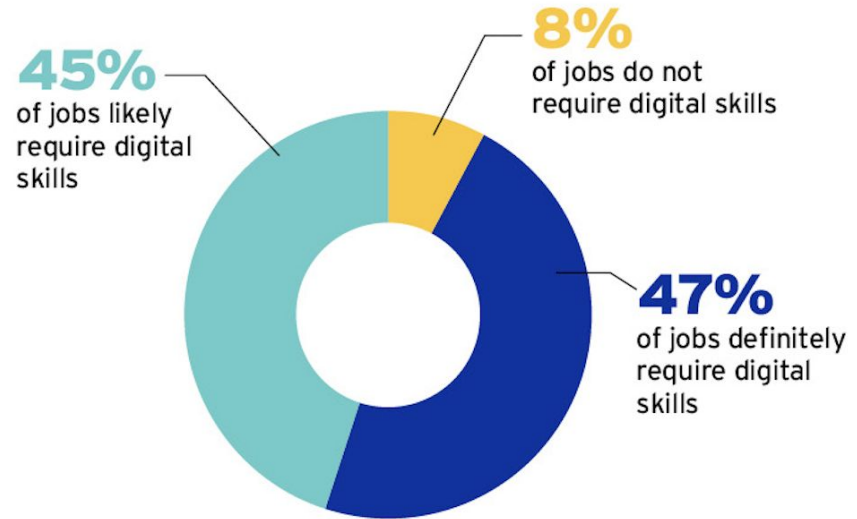
B. 92%

C. 76%

D. 12%

ANSWER: B - 92%

According to the National Skills Coalition new report: “Closing the Digital Skill Divide”, **92%** of jobs require digital skills.



Source: NSC/Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta analysis of 2021 job postings. Full report: Closing the Digital Skill Divide.

Foundation Digital Skills

Some examples include:

- Ability to use the available controls on my device
- Ability to interact with the device's home screen
- Ability to connect device to safe & secure Wi-Fi network
- Ability to update and change my password
- Ability to open a browser to find and use websites



Classes at the Library



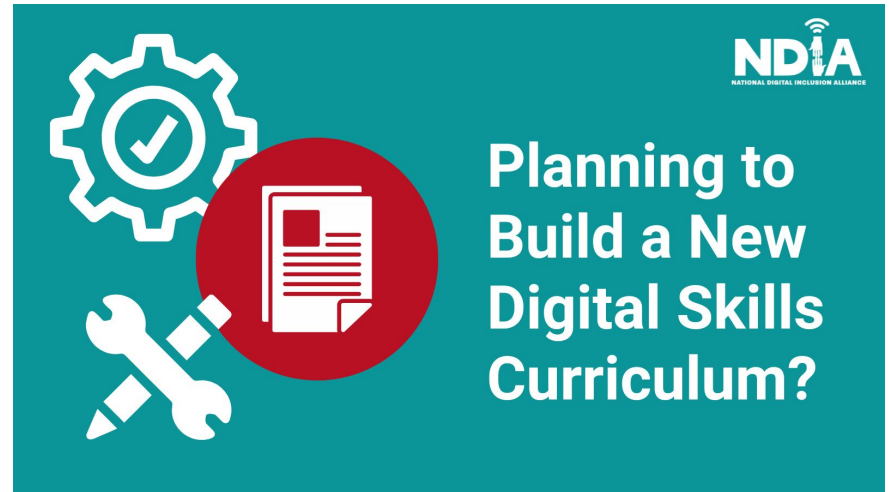
Approaches have shifted over time:

- Classes embedded in the community
- 'Drop in' support hours
- Appointment based 1:1 help
- Subscriptions to online curriculum
- Curation of learning resources

NDIA Resource: Digital Skills Curriculum Post

This post includes:

- Resources to develop a digital skills framework
- A list of free online digital skills programs that includes multilingual programs, special features and facilitator support



Digital Navigators

The background features a teal gradient. In the center, there is a faint graphic of a hand holding a device with a Wi-Fi signal above it. Large, semi-transparent letters 'N', 'D', and 'A' are scattered across the background, with 'N' on the left, 'D' in the middle, and 'A' on the right.

Digital Navigators consistently provide holistic, individualized support through repeated interactions.



Affordable Broadband



Appropriate Devices



Digital Skills Training



Example: Denver Public Library

The Denver Public Library digital navigator program provides one-on-one support for devices, digital skills and support securing hotspots for Denver community members.

Digital navigators provide specialized support by peers of the following populations:

- Spanish Speakers
- Unhoused Populations
- Community members with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities



NDIA Resource: Digital Navigator Page

Visit [NDIA's Digital Navigator Model](#) page to learn more about the open, flexible model & access:

- Skills Assessment
- Follow-up Survey
- Baseline Digital Navigator Job Description
- Intake Form & Exit Survey
- Digital Navigator Toolkit

[Digital Navigator 101 Webinar](#)



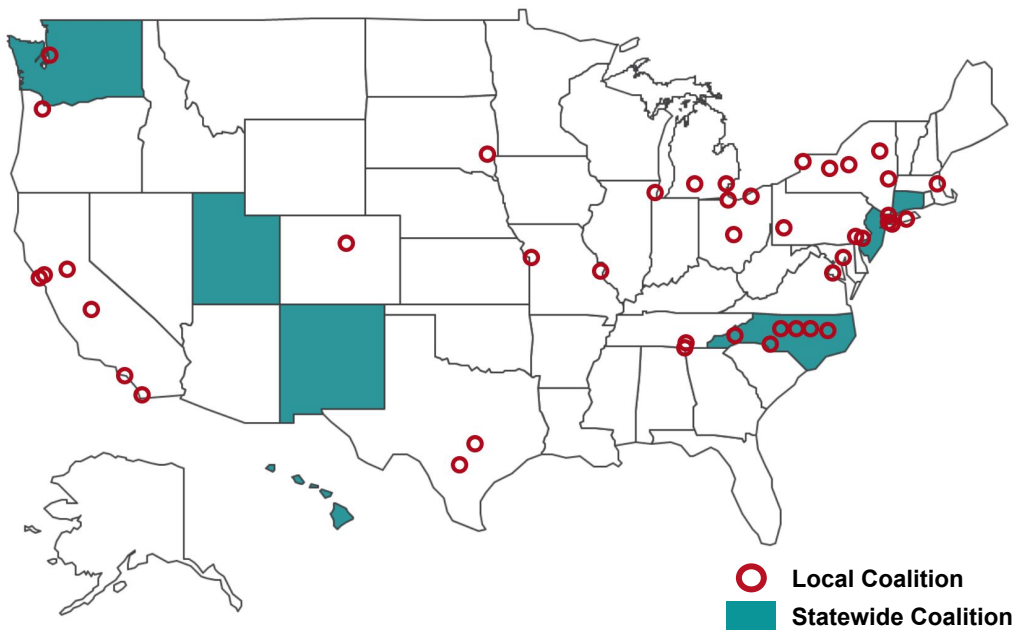
The graphic features a teal box on the left containing icons for a smartphone, a Wi-Fi signal, a gear, and a person. To the right, the text reads: "Digital navigators consistently provide holistic, individualized support through repeated interactions." Below the text is an illustration of two people, a woman and a man, looking at a tablet together, surrounded by various digital icons like a Wi-Fi signal, a gear, and a person. In the top right corner, there is a small video thumbnail showing a woman speaking. The NDIA logo is in the bottom left corner.

Coalitions



Coalitions

- Are a **collective** of organizations
- To raise **funding** for digital inclusion programs
- To **raise awareness** about digital inequities and the impact on your communities



Coalition Example: Connect 313

Created in 2020, the **Connect 313**
Coalition has four focus areas:

- Devices & Connectivity
- Digital Literacy & Skilling
- Policy, Advocacy, & Ecosystem
- Special Projects / Shared Resources

Detroit, Michigan

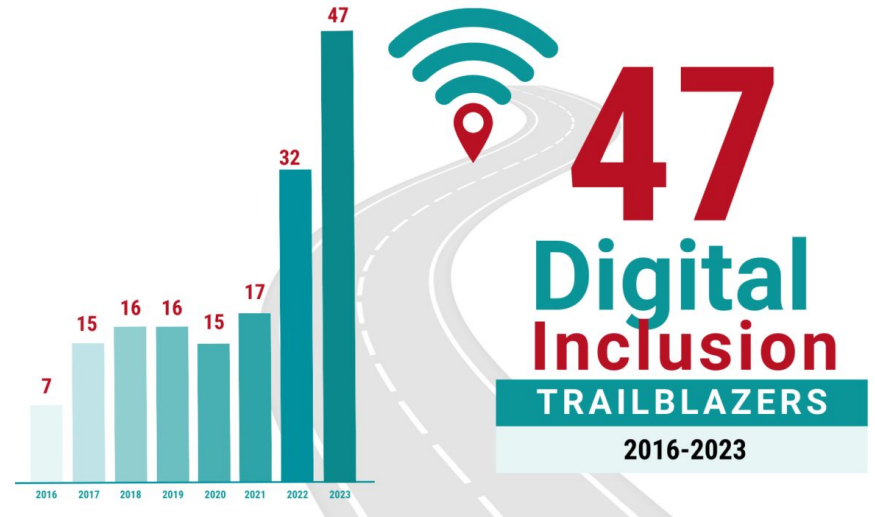


NDIA Resource: Digital Inclusion Trailblazers

Digital Inclusion Trailblazers are municipal, county or regional governments that are paving the way and providing excellent models for digitally inclusive communities.

Visit the page to learn more about the 2023 awardees. You'll find:

- Job Descriptions
- Survey Templates
- Digital Equity Strategies



The State of Play in Michigan

The background is a solid teal color. In the center, there is a faint, larger-scale graphic of a hand holding a glowing lightbulb, with a Wi-Fi signal icon above it. The letters 'N', 'B', and 'A' are also faintly visible in the background, positioned behind the main text.

BEAD in Michigan

\$1.6B to

- Enable connection of all households, businesses at minimum 100Mbps download/20 Mbps upload
- Enable connection of all Community Anchor Institutions at 1Gbps download/1Gbps upload

365 day clock has started for state to solicit and fund projects

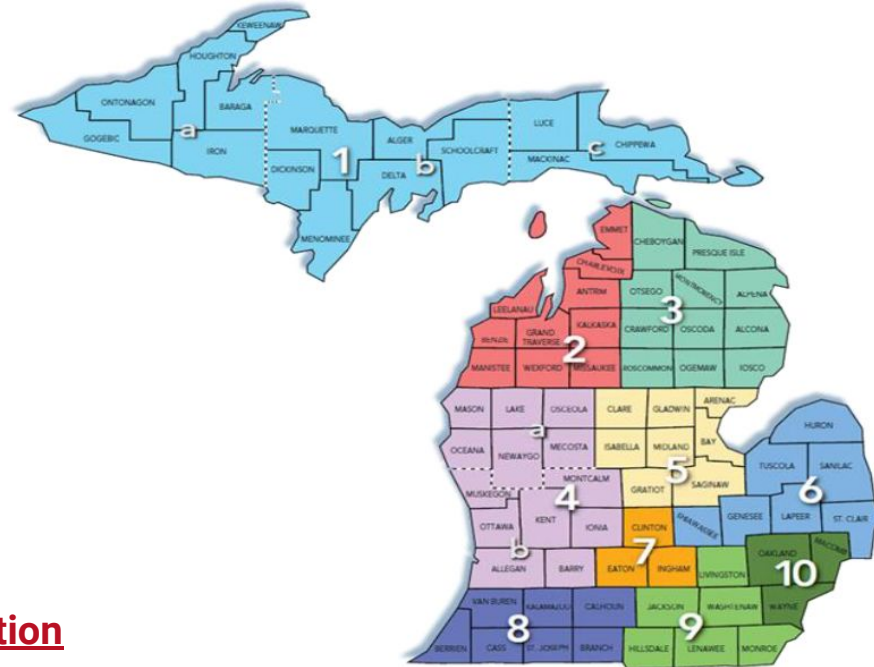
Buildout will occur approximately 2026 - 2031

Watch for an announcement about the Michigan BEAD map and then go look at it!

MITTEN

Michigan's Inclusive Training, Technology, and Equity Network

- \$13.7M spread among 13 multi-county regions and 2 cities over 4 years
- Regional resource hubs to support and coordinate digital inclusion activities
- 15 American Connection Corps members



E-Rate for Hotspots

New in the 2025 Funding Year - Subsidies for Hotspot Lending!

- July 2025 - June 2026
- Similar but different from the ECF program
- Various \$ caps and rules
- % subsidy, not 100%
- Learn and plan now

Learn More: [USAC Overview](#)
[SHLB Webinars](#)



Other Opportunities

- Federal NTIA DEA Competitive grants - application period has closed, but watch for 'trickle down' opportunities
- Many other funders have programs and interest



Getting Involved

The background features a teal gradient. In the upper right, there is a faint Wi-Fi symbol. In the center, a hand is shown with fingers spread. Large, semi-transparent letters 'N', 'D', and 'A' are positioned behind the main text.

Affinity Groups



- Find the MITTEN applicants in your Prosperity Region
- Merit Network - [BEACOP](#) - Broadband Equity and Advocacy Community of Practice
- ALA [Digital Inclusion Working Group](#)
- Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB) - [Anchors for Digital Equity](#)
- [Libraries4DE](#)
- [NDIA!](#)

About NDIA

National Digital Inclusion Alliance advances digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act.

1800+ 50 31

Affiliates

States + DC,
AS, CNMI,
GU, PR, VI

Tribal Entities



About NDIA



Practitioner Support



Policy



Awareness



Data & Research



SCAN FOR

NDIA RESOURCES

Join the NDIA Community



Become an Affiliate and get free access to:

- ★ NDIA listserv with free resources, research and tools
- ★ Monthly Community Calls
- ★ Monthly Newsletter



Powered by
TEAM
NDIA



Net Inclusion ²⁰/₂₅

GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY

AIRPORT: PHOENIX SKY HARBOR
SAVE THE DATES: MAY 20-22, 2025



Early Bird Registration Ends November 5!

Powered by
TEAM 
NDIA



Net Inclusion ²⁰₂₆

CHICAGO
RIVERWALK

SAVE THE DATES:
FEBRUARY 3-5, 2026





ACTIVITY

What one thing can you do in the next 2 weeks to advance digital equity in your community?



ACTIVITY

What is one strategic goal your library could pursue to advance digital equity in your community?



Capital Area
District Libraries
cadl.org



NATIONAL DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE

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Q&A

THANK YOU!

