DIGITAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN
YEAR 2-PROGRESS REPORT

DEAP Vision Statement: All residents of Portland/ Multnomah County will have barrier-free access to high-speed broadband internet at home and school, an affordable computing device, and the training to use them effectively.

City of Portland
Office for Community Technology

▲ Broadband & Communications Policy
▲ Cable Regulation & Consumer Protection
▲ Utility Franchises, Licenses & Wireless

Multnomah County **Library**

Prepared for: Portland City Council, Multnomah County Board of County Commissioners/Multnomah County Library District Board

Prepared by: City of Portland Office for Community Technology, Multnomah County Library District and Multnomah County Department of County Assets

Presented by:
Digital Inclusion Network

Digital Inclusion Network

INTRODUCTION

The critical need to be online is well established — using the internet is no longer optional to fully participate in education, the economy, healthcare, and civic and cultural life. Yet many Multnomah County residents — 18% of households with income under $30,000, 28% for those 65 years or older, and 30% for Hispanic households — do not have internet service in the home.

The reasons for not being online are hard to pinpoint because they vary greatly from individual to individual; however, we do know that digital barriers follow and reinforce existing lines of social disadvantage — socioeconomic status, age, race/ethnicity, education, and ability — and underscore the importance of our efforts to reach those most in need.

Working to achieve digital equity is not easy. Fortunately, through the Digital Equity Action Plan (DEAP), adopted by the Portland City Council, the Multnomah County Board of County Commissioners, and the Multnomah County Library District Board, we have taken action to bring local partners together to collectively focus services and resources on traditionally underserved and vulnerable residents. As a result of this work,

Portland and Multnomah County continue to make progress in our efforts to achieve digital equity for all in our community.

The DEAP addresses key goals that the community identified as important to overcoming barriers to an inclusive, digitally-connected society:

- Ensure access to affordable high-speed internet and devices;
- Provide culturally-specific training and support;
- Empower community partners through funding, coordination, and resource sharing;
- Create digital economy job opportunities for underrepresented populations; and
- Build a supportive public policy framework.

The community engagement process to develop the DEAP brought diverse voices to the table. Participation by many community members was foundational to building an actionable strategic plan that is intentional in its strategies and investments to overcome the barriers to affordable internet access, training, and tools.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Through the DEAP, we continue to lead a path forward for public agencies, businesses, and community nonprofits to work together in a more efficient way. Without these efforts, digital inequity would undoubtedly intensify as existing and emerging technologies continue to influence nearly every facet of our lives. The City of Portland's Office for Community Technology (OCT) and Library and County staff are working to envision new ways to leverage existing infrastructure, build new partnerships, and capitalize on funding opportunities. This work will continue in Year 3 of DEAP implementation in addition to developing DEAP-Phase 2 (Years 4-6).

We define Digital Inclusion as the process, strategies, and activities to reach the goal of Digital Equity.

Digital Equity means everyone has adequate access to and understanding of information and communications technologies regardless of socioeconomic status, physical ability, language, race, gender or any other characteristics that have been linked with unequal treatment.

DEAP PROGRESS

With the groundwork completed in Year 1 to build out DEAP design and implementation, DEAP-Year 2 focused on:

1. LEADING AND SUPPORTING EXISTING & NEW DIGITAL INCLUSION INITIATIVES.

Initiatives to narrow the digital divide require more than simply internet service; they must also include access to a computing device (other than a smartphone), digital literacy training, and quality technical support. The DEAP provides local partners a framework to collaborate on designing and implementing initiatives aligned with 17 strategic actions. The partners brought 100% of the strategic actions to ON TRACK status (see Page 4 Strategic Action Update).

2. BRINGING AWARENESS TO PERSISTENT OR NEW BARRIERS.

We continue to build a shared understanding of the need to take action at a public policy level to ensure all residents are able to participate in an increasingly digital society. We have:

- Actively engaged in the City of Portland's Smart Cities Steering Committee and contributed to the development of the Smart Cities PDX Priorities Framework, which leads with equity and inclusion.

- Used the framework of Multnomah County Equity and Empowerment Lens and the City of Portland's Racial Equity Roadmap assessment tool to begin developing a Digital Equity Assessment and Lens, intended for use by public agencies in decision making about technology-related programs. Library and County staff are leading the effort with plans to pilot it in 2019.

- Advocated for important federal policies and programs that support digital equity, such as local authority to negotiate public benefit agreements with commercial providers, Net Neutrality rules, and LifeLine, E-rate, and FirstNet programs.

3. INCREASING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE CAPACITY TO ACT.

Throughout the year we:

- Led monthly meetings. The Digital Inclusion Network (DIN), an informal network that has grown to over 45 organizations, met monthly to engage in conversations, resource-sharing, and planning that led to new and unique collaborations and partnerships among members.

- Designed a DIN Resource Database. Funded by a Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission Community Technology Grant, the Library designed a searchable, web-based database of digital inclusion training materials, free WiFi locations, free or low-cost hardware resources, and public computing centers, for use by community-based organizations. DIN members will champion the use of the database to leverage and share the work and best practices developed by local digital inclusion providers and as a resource to community-based organizations seeking to better serve residents. The DIN database will go live in Fall 2018.

- Convened the 2018 Digital Inclusion Summit, on May 10, hosted by the DIN. Over 120 digital inclusion practitioners, representing 69 unique organizations, gathered for the full-day event focused on ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY. Featured speakers, panel discussions, and networking helped advance efforts to build a digitally-connected, prosperous community.

PROGRESS

○ = **"in-progress"** - action planning in progress   ○ = **on-track** - the action is underway with engaged partners and specific activities on track

GOAL	STRATEGIC ACTION	LEAD PARTNER	YEAR 1	YEAR 2
GOAL 1 **Access:** Ensure access to affordable high-speed internet and devices for those in need.	**1.1** Leverage the network shared by public institutions to extend free WiFi service into low-income neighborhoods.	Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission	in-progress	on-track
	1.2 Leverage City/County assets and regulatory authority to incent broadband providers to expand low-cost internet access.	Office for Community Technology	in-progress	on-track
	1.3 Create (or locate) web-based inventory of broadband service options (searchable by address) that identifies lowest-cost options for residents.	Citizens' Utility Board	in-progress	on-track
	1.4 Expand participation of business, government and residents in computer recycling programs that repurpose devices for use by low-income residents.	Free Geek	on-track	on-track
	1.5 Design and implement an affordable housing digital equity pilot project.	Home Forward	on-track	on-track
	1.6 Design and implement a digital equity pilot project for the homeless community.	Multnomah County Library	in-progress	on-track
GOAL 2 **Support and training:** Provide training and support to ensure that everyone has the skills to use digital technology to enhance their quality of life.	**2.1** Create and maintain a searchable, web-based database of digital inclusion programs, services, activities and training tools for use by community organizations.	Multnomah County Library	on-track	on-track
	2.2 Compile connectivity data at Affordable Housing units.	Home Forward	on-track	on-track
	2.3 Expand availability of culturally specific digital literacy curriculum.	Multnomah County Library, Free Geek	in-progress	on-track
GOAL 3 **Leadership and capacity building:** Empower community partners to bridge the digital divide through funding, coordination, training and staff resources.	**3.1** Strengthen the Digital Inclusion Network (DIN) as a diverse, countywide, community-based work group to guide, advocate for and support DEAP implementation.	Multnomah County Library, Office for Community Technology	in-progress	on-track
	3.2 Convene an annual digital inclusion summit to provide an update on DEAP implementation, share learnings, network and recognize good work.	Multnomah County Library, Citizens' Utility Board	in-progress	on-track
	3.3 Expand public and private funding for digital equity focused projects.	Office for Community Technology & Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission	in-progress & on-track	on-track
GOAL 4 **Connecting to the digital economy:** Create opportunities for jobs in the digital economy for underserved populations.	**4.1** Support initiatives to assist people from underrepresented populations to prepare for, find and create jobs in the technology economy.	Worksystems, Inc. & Free Geek	in-progress & on-track	on-track
	4.2 Support STEAM initiatives for K–12 students.	Portland Public Schools	in-progress	on-track
GOAL 5 **Policy:** Build a policy framework that supports digital equity and meaningful internet adoption, leading to better community outcomes.	**5.1** Develop a strategy for funding internet services, devices and training in affordable housing projects.	Home Forward	in-progress	on-track
	5.2 Engage business, community, neighborhood and government leaders to take action on DEAP implementation.	Digital Inclusion Network	in-progress	in-progress
	5.3 Develop a digital equity lens for public officials to use when updating or creating public policy.	Multnomah County Library	in-progress	in-progress

For detailed project descriptions visit www.portlandoregon.gov/DEAP

IMPACT STORIES

We're in the community working to develop, implement, and replicate actionable strategies!

Our partners are providing low-cost internet service and the devices to connect, while helping new broadband adopters gain the skills they need to navigate the internet and online services. Examples include:

INTERNET IN THE HOME

LOW-COST INTERNET SERVICE. Throughout the County, Comcast continues to be a leader in offering low-cost internet service to encourage internet adoption. Through Comcast Internet Essentials, low-income families with school-aged children and residents in HUD assisted housing can be eligible for the $9.95/month service that includes free in-home WiFi. The company continues to make enhancements to the program, such as increasing speeds from 10/1 Mbps to 15/2 Mbps, providing access to Xfinity hotspots, and recently expanding eligibility to low-income veterans.

STUDENT WIFI HOTSPOTS. Portland Public Schools (PPS) became the recipient of a Sprint 1Million Project award to provide mobile hotspots to high school students who do not have reliable home internet. The PPS Information Technology Department is working with high school administrators to implement the program in the 2018-19 school year.

> **Home Forward, the City of Portland, Multnomah County Library, and Free Geek partnered to gain membership in the national ConnectHomeUSA initiative. Through engagement in ConnectHomeUSA's national discussion platform the DIN partners gain access to new public-private partnership opportunities and learn about digital inclusion program best practices designed to help produce locally-tailored solutions for narrowing the digital divide specifically for public housing residents.**

COMPUTERS IN THE HOME

FREE COMPUTERS. Free Geek, with the help of a letter of support from Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, expanded business and government participation in its computer recycling program. Last year, Free Geek increased the number of corporate and consumer e-waste pick-ups by 50% and distributed 1,400 free computers to low-income individuals, schools, and nonprofits. With funding from First Tech Federal Credit Union, Free Geek increased its capacity to provide even more Portland-area kids with free computers. Referrals from nonprofits and organizations with youth volunteers continue to widen Free Geek's reach in the community.

Portland YouthBuilders (PYB) students are leading digital inclusion training programs for HUD assisted housing residents, seniors, and college students. After completing the training, participants receive a free laptop that the PYB students refurbished as part of PYB's technology program. PYB students also worked with Free Geek in the refurbishment of over 300 computers.

LOW-COST COMPUTERS. Comcast Internet Essentials offers the option to purchase a refurbished desktop or laptop computer for $150 that includes Microsoft Office, Norton Security Suite, and 90-day warranty.

homeforward
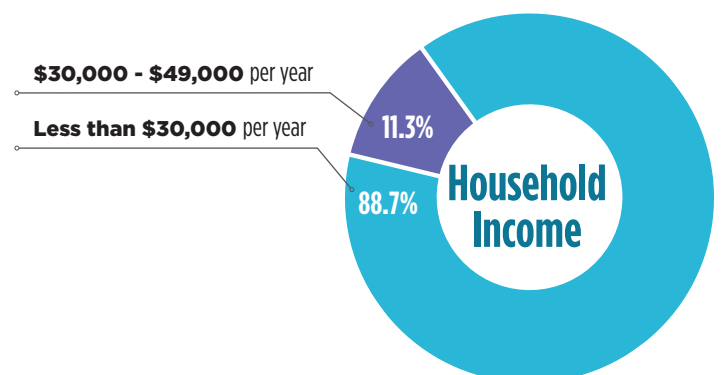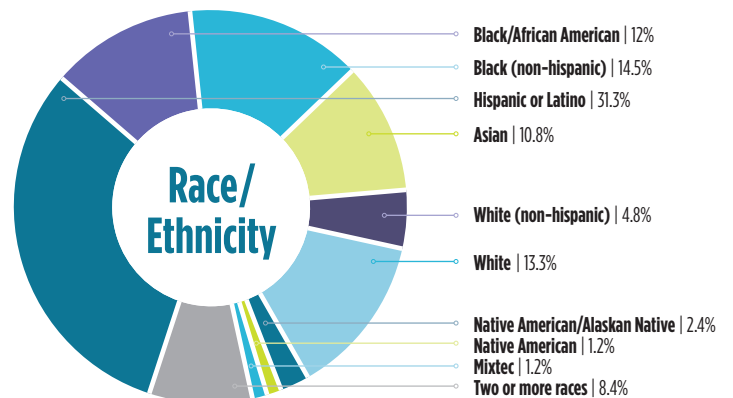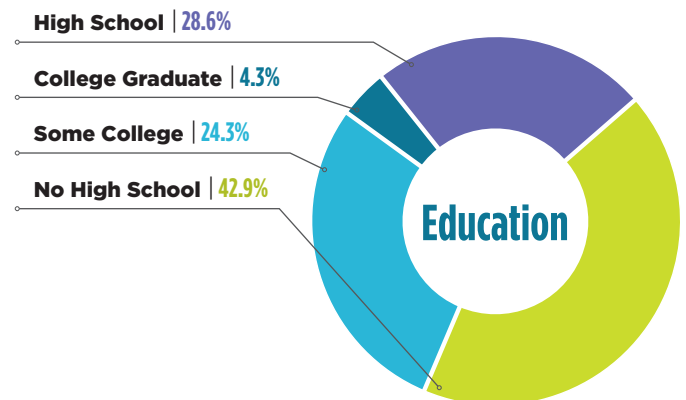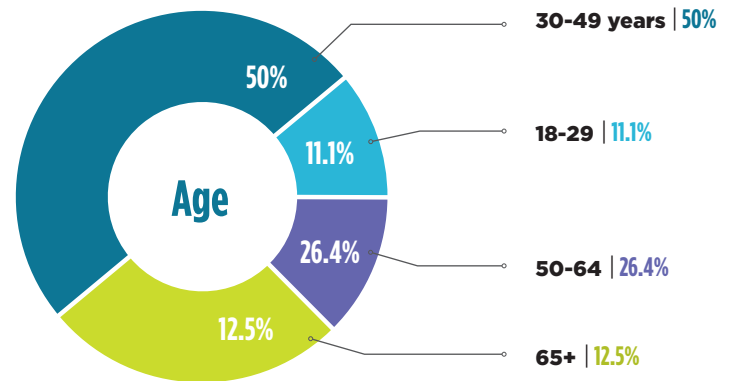
ConnectHomeUSA

DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING

EARN-A-COMPUTER PROGRAM. Building on the success of its first year, Free Geek, the Library, and new lead partner MetroEast Community Media continued to offer the Earn-a-Computer program and worked with community-based organizations to identify and enroll residents in the free training. Earn-a-Computer participants receive a minimum of five classes of digital literacy training including sessions on privacy and security, getting to know your computer hardware, email and social media, and how to apply for low-cost internet service. Upon completion participants receive a laptop and one year of technical support from Free Geek.

This past year, all three Earn-a-Computer partner organizations took significant steps toward ongoing sustainability by adding permanent staff to run the program. Free Geek and MetroEast successfully garnered external funding support from Olseth Family Foundation, the Collins Foundation, Ninety-Nine Girlfriends, and East Metro STEAM Partnership to support staff positions, further develop curriculum, and expand class offerings.

The three partner organizations taught 59 sessions of Earn-a-Computer at eight host locations totaling over 1,000 training hours and 88 laptops given away. The classes were available in five languages: Somali, Spanish, Russian, Karen, and English through both translation and native speaking instructors.

Evolution of the Earn-a-Computer program is already underway for DEAP-Year 3. The partners are piloting a program for individuals to utilize existing digital literacy programming at Library locations throughout the County that meet participant's scheduling and language needs while offering a greater variety of instruction. Through the pilot expansion, Earn-a-Computer classes have already been taught to multiple family generations in Spanish at the Gresham Library, Clients of Central City Concern at their Employment Access Center, and Portland IRCO clients received training at the North Portland Library. The Earn-a-Computer partners have a goal of giving away over 150 computers in DEAP-Year 3.

ABOUT EARN-A-COMPUTER PARTICIPANTS

Age

- 30-49 years | 50%
- 18-29 | 11.1%
- 50-64 | 26.4%
- 65+ | 12.5%

Education

- High School | 28.6%
- College Graduate | 4.3%
- Some College | 24.3%
- No High School | 42.9%

Race/Ethnicity

- Black/African American | 12%
- Black (non-hispanic) | 14.5%
- Hispanic or Latino | 31.3%
- Asian | 10.8%
- White (non-hispanic) | 4.8%
- White | 13.3%
- Native American/Alaskan Native | 2.4%
- Native American | 1.2%
- Mixtec | 1.2%
- Two or more races | 8.4%

Household Income

- $30,000 - $49,000 per year | 11.3%
- Less than $30,000 per year | 88.7%

In addition to the Earn-a-Computer program, the three partners made significant individual digital literacy training contributions:

Multnomah County Library provided digital literacy training at its 19 branches; offering a variety of computer and technology classes in five languages in addition to one-on-one technology help sessions. Library staff taught classes ranging from basic computer or smartphone operation to coding and website creation. This past year, 359 group technology classes were taught to 1,599 individuals. In addition, Library staff helped over 4,000 individuals through one-on-one tech help sessions. The Library also provided over 1.9 million annual wireless internet sessions, public computers, and online video technology training via Lynda.com and Learning Express.

Last year, Free Geek taught 396 technology education classes (3,966 class hours) reaching 1,854 individuals. Learners came away from the trainings excited about the opportunities created by computer ownership.

MetroEast Community Media celebrated its first anniversary at its Rockwood DIY (Digital Inclusion and Youth) facility in Gresham. To date MetroEast has served 574 people in the DIY space with a focus on serving underrepresented groups. Almost 90% of basic computer class attendees are women and 99% are people of color. MetroEast also hosted three innovative youth camps this summer: Video Game Camp, Music Video Camp, and Make Think Media for a diverse group of participants. MetroEast also renewed its partnerships with the Game it Up Initiative, Pacific NW College of Art, and East Metro STEAM in support of its digital workforce development goals.

At the end of MetroEast's Russian Speaking Smartphones for Seniors class, assisted by interpreters and Google translate, an elderly man told the youth from Portland Youth Builders, who were teaching the class, in Russian:

> *Thank you for not forgetting us, when you get old I hope the youth will help you too.*

Through Free Geek's Plug into Portland program, Lenore came in to pick up her computer and take a class to learn how to use it. Not only can she finally do math quizzes and write essays, but she gets to read the news and "see the whole world out there." And Lenore isn't the only one who benefits from her new computer. She said:

> *I don't need a computer all to myself and because my family needs one, I love sharing it with thems.*

DEAP PLANNING TEAM CONTACTS

Portland Office for Community Technology

Julie S. Omelchuck, OCT Program Manager

503-823-4188 | julie.omelchuck@portlandoregon.gov

Rebecca Gibbons, Digital Equity Program Coordinator

503-823-5515 | rebecca.gibbons@portlandoregon.gov

Multnomah County Library/Multnomah County

Jon Worona, Director of Content Strategy

503-988-0335 | jonw@multcolib.org

Matthew Timberlake, Library IT Project Portfolio Manager

503-988-6806 | matthew.timberlake@multco.us

Brian McGuirk, Digital Equity & Learning Librarian

503-988-5478 |brianmc@multcolib.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Digital Equity Action Plan, detailed strategic action project descriptions and other resources are available at:

Website | www.portlandoregon.gov/DEAP

Email | digitalequity@portlandoregon.gov

PHOTOS

Angela Holm Photography - cover far left, p1, p6 lower

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