

Working  
together  
to create  
opportunity  
**FOR ALL.**

# DIGITAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN YEAR 1-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

# INTRODUCTION

In April 2016, the Portland City Council, the Multnomah County Board of County Commissioners, and the Multnomah County Library District Board made a significant commitment to bridging the digital divide for excluded members of our community by unanimously adopting the Digital Equity Action Plan (DEAP).

The societal cost of digital exclusion is great. Without functional access to the internet, full participation in nearly every aspect of society is compromised – from economic success and educational achievement, to positive health outcomes and civic engagement. We know that at least 15% of Portland residents do not have adequate internet access at home (2014 Portland-area Broadband Adoption Survey). And we also know that those without access represent some of our community’s most vulnerable populations – low-income, new immigrants and refugees, people of color, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and people with limited English proficiency.

The DEAP harnesses the collective efforts of local partners (community-based organizations and non-profits on the front lines of digital inclusion efforts, and local governments, businesses, schools, libraries, etc.) to focus services and resources on traditionally underserved and vulnerable residents. Specifically, the DEAP provides a framework for local partners to collaborate on 17 strategic actions that target inequities in access to high-speed internet at home and in school, devices to use the internet, and relevant training to gain digital literacy skills. The DEAP addresses key goals that the community identified as important to overcoming barriers to an inclusive and digitally-connected community:



*Hailed as a national model for its collaborative approach to creating a digital equity action plan, the DEAP won the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors **Community Broadband Strategic Plan of the Year** in 2016.*

- 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.

# DEAP PROGRESS

Staff from the City of Portland Office for Community Technology (OCT) and Multnomah County Library District, with assistance from other County staff, are tasked with overseeing DEAP implementation. A primary responsibility and commitment of OCT and the library/county is to foster and engage partnerships and community efforts that align with DEAP goals. OCT and library/county staff facilitate and support community partners in carrying out the plan. These resources are critical to providing backbone organizational supports to this collective community effort.

Central to DEAP success is the continued participation and engagement of diverse local partners that authentically understand the needs and barriers faced by the DEAP target populations. The Digital Inclusion Network (DIN), currently 35 member organizations strong, has demonstrated ongoing commitment to guide DEAP implementation efforts, pursue opportunities for greater community engagement, and meet monthly to check-in on project progress. The DIN also established key evaluation questions and designed a

related tool to help assess progress and impact over time. The tool and DIN meetings provide avenues for partner organizations to continually learn from each other about best practices derived from their digital inclusion activities.

Based on the DEAP framework, partner organizations are developing strategic action projects that specifically improve services that meet their constituency's digital access needs. Many partners have acted on the plan with activities such as providing free computers in exchange for training completion, and door-to-door surveying of residents of low-income public housing to identify technology needs.

The DEAP Year 1 Report highlights the groundwork completed to build out DEAP design and implementation and provides an overview of the strategic action projects underway. Future reports will present a "report card" highlighting progress on long-term goals. As work progresses, we will continue to uncover and draw attention to barriers to a digitally-connected community in order to help guide public policy and future actions.

## DEAP Roadmap



# 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	STATUS
<b>GOAL 1</b> <b>Access:</b> 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	
	1.2 Leverage City/County assets and regulatory authority to incent broadband providers to expand low-cost internet access.	Office for Community Technology	
	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	
	1.4 Expand participation of business, government and residents in computer recycling programs that repurpose devices for use by low-income residents.	Free Geek	
	1.5 Design and implement an affordable housing digital equity pilot project.	Home Forward	
	1.6 Design and implement a digital equity pilot project for the homeless community.	Multnomah County Library	
<b>GOAL 2</b> <b>Support and training:</b> 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	
	2.2 Compile connectivity data at Affordable Housing units.	Home Forward	
	2.3 Expand availability of culturally specific digital literacy curriculum.	Multnomah County Library, Free Geek	
<b>GOAL 3</b> <b>Leadership and capacity building:</b> 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	
	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	
	3.3 Expand public and private funding for digital equity focused projects.	Office for Community Technology & Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission	&
<b>GOAL 4</b> <b>Connecting to the digital economy:</b> 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	&
	4.2 Support STEAM initiatives for K-12 students.	Portland Public Schools	
<b>GOAL 5</b> <b>Policy:</b> 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	
	5.2 Engage business, community, neighborhood and government leaders to take action on DEAP implementation.	Digital Inclusion Network	
	5.3 Develop a digital equity lens for public officials to use when updating or creating public policy.	Multnomah County Library	

For detailed project descriptions visit [www.portlandoregon.gov/DEAP](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/DEAP)

## IMPACT STORIES

Part of the process to document the impact of the DEAP is through the sharing of personal stories captured by local partners and celebrating new partnerships and capacity-building as a result of the DEAP.

### TRAINING, DEVICES & INTERNET ACCESS

**NTEN DIGITAL INCLUSION FELLOWS EARN-A-COMPUTER PROGRAM.** Multnomah County Library and Free Geek partnered with community-based organizations to design and implement the Earn-a-Computer program. Both the library and Free Geek hosted a Digital Inclusion Fellow, sponsored by the Nonprofit Technology Network (NTEN) and primarily funded by Google Fiber. The program delivered more than 1,561 hours of digital literacy training in five languages: Somali, Spanish, Russian, Karen and English. After completing training, 157 participants received a computer from Free Geek along with support to sign up for low-cost, high-speed internet service at home.

The library and Free Geek are working to make the program sustainable after the fellowships end in June 2017. Free Geek, with glowing letters of support from several DIN partners, is actively seeking grants to fund a digital inclusion position longer term and the library has created a digital equity and learning librarian position to carry on the work. Thus far, the Earn-a-Computer program has partnered with four community-based organizations at seven locations across the county. A few are profiled on the following page.



## EARN-A-COMPUTER PARTICIPANTS:



are English language learners



have no high school diploma/GED



have a household income less than \$30,000

**157 COMPUTERS** (+ 1 yr tech support) given by Free Geek to low-income/immigrant/refugee individuals through the **Earn-a-Computer program**.



## EARN-A-COMPUTER PROGRAM PROFILES



**HUMAN SOLUTIONS** connected the Digital Inclusion Fellows with affordable housing residents to fill six training series (30 total sessions). The series provided Somali and Russian translation. Fawziya Omar, one of ten Somali residents at the Lincoln Woods Apartments who received a computer upon completing the program, shared the following:

*“ I was born in Somalia and moved to the United States in 2013. With my new computer from the Earn-a-Computer program, I've been using English language learning videos on YouTube and I apply for jobs. I use Google and YouTube to reconnect with Somali culture, news and music. We subscribed to Comcast Internet Essentials. Now my daughter uses the computer for homework and her friends come over and use it to study for tests.”*



**METROEAST COMMUNITY MEDIA'S** new Rockwood DIY location is where 16 Somali adults—mostly women—learned email, Facebook, typing, and more taught by the Digital Inclusion Fellows. MetroEast provided dinner, translation, and childcare, and students from the Center for Advanced Learning (CAL) shot documentary photographs and video. All participants received a free computer from Free Geek.

Earn-a-Computer program participants Tafoata and Heti had just received their computer when, a few days later, a teacher assigned internet homework to their child. The teacher asked, “Do you have a computer at home?” Heti said, “Yeah! I just got one.” Now Heti and Tafoata's other children can access the tutorial and homework materials online.



**HOME FORWARD** teamed up with a Digital Inclusion Fellow to develop and conduct a door-to-door survey about technology adoption and digital literacy to assess the needs of housing residents. Trainings of low-income residents at Stephens Creek Crossing and Humboldt Gardens include young adults, seniors, and English language learners. All 15 received training, a certificate and their own desktop computer from Free Geek. One participant said,

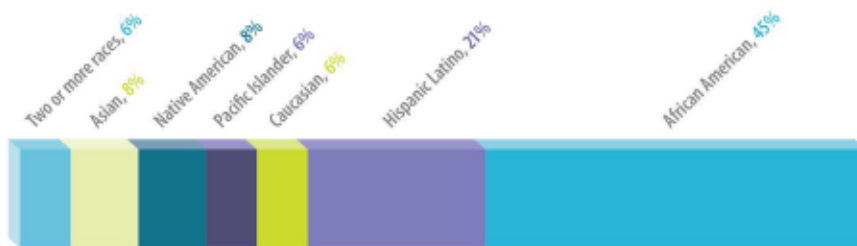
*“ ...it makes me feel like a person of the times to be able to communicate with job applications, friends, family. It certainly boosts your ego as a human being. It gave me a chance to communicate with my neighbors, some of whom I had never met, to boost community support.”*

- **Dianne J. Ford**, Stephens Creek Crossing resident

## CONNECTING TO THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

**IURBAN TEEN ISUCCEED** The iSucceed program builds on iUrbanTeen's iEngage all-day tech immersion events and iLearn modules, which include technology training programs and camps. The program ignites teens' interest in STEM+Arts careers and builds a sense of possibilities and options in bright students who may not otherwise have exposure to technology careers. The skills, knowledge and confidence they learn allows them to imagine themselves working in a STEM+Arts environment, and gives them the ability to help shape their world in a creative way.

**Demographics served by the iUrban Teen program include:**



**WORKSYSTEMS, INC. TECHRISE PDX** TechRise PDX is designed to develop a diverse homegrown talent pipeline into the local tech industry by providing support and training to young adults who lack the educational credentials or work experience to secure employment. In the U.S., 1 in 20 job openings is a tech job—that's nearly 8,000 jobs in the Portland metro area over the next decade. But local talent is not benefiting from this opportunity, especially women and people of color. TechRise PDX aims to train over 450 local residents through June 2020. Training includes career coaching, culturally-specific mentoring, industry-specific training and supportive services intended to result in enhanced employment opportunities.

**METROEAST'S DIGITAL INCLUSION AND YOUTH (DIY)** In response to interest expressed by the children of adults taking digital literacy classes at the MetroEast Rockwood location, the Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) is offering its Make Think Code curriculum as part of MetroEast's Digital Inclusion and Youth (DIY) classes. The collaboration supports Rockwood area youth in learning coding and other technology skills that are sought after in today's digital economy.



## ABOUT PORTLAND OFFICE FOR COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY (OCT)

OCT has a well-established track record of facilitating and coordinating visionary public policy and regulatory leadership in the area of broadband and digital equity, on behalf of both the Portland City Council and the Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission. OCT was instrumental in helping the City and MHCRC document its digital equity focus through the YourVoice, Our Communications Technology Initiative in 2010 and through Council's development of the 2011 Portland Broadband Strategic Plan (Broadband Plan). The Broadband Plan identifies digital equity as two of five goals with specific key strategies identified. As a result of the Broadband Plan, digital equity was incorporated into the City's 2035 Comprehensive Plan and further translated into the Portland Plan. The 2016 Digital Equity Action Plan solidified a digital equity framework.

In addition, OCT, through participation on the City's Smart Cities Steering Committee, works to ensure digital inclusion and equity values are central in the development of Portland's Smart Cities vision, policies and projects.

## ABOUT MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY

Digital equity work aligns with the Library's mission: Empowering our community to learn and create. DEAP activities and outcomes also support three of the Library's strategic priorities:

- We reflect and serve a diverse community.
- We enable creation and learning.
- We build digital literacy.

The Library has been pioneering digital equity programs and policy for the County since 1996-1997 when the Midland and Central libraries became some of the first in the nation

to offer public access computers. Today, MCL is the largest provider of free broadband internet access, equipment, and training in the greater Portland area. The Library will host approximately two million free Wi-Fi and public access computing sessions in 2017. The Library also offers about 1,900 classes, open labs, and individual tutoring sessions each year to help people get online, use their devices, and build digital literacy skills.

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## For more information

The Digital Equity Action Plan, detailed strategic action project descriptions and other resources are available at [www.portlandoregon.gov/DEAP](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/DEAP)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OCT and library/county staff wish to thank the following DIN members for their dedication and commitment to implementing the DEAP and to creating real change for our community.

- CenturyLink
- Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon
- City of Gresham
- City of Portland:
  - Bureau of Transportation
  - Office of Equity & Human Rights
  - Planning & Sustainability
  - Housing Bureau
  - Office for Community Technology
- Comcast
- Concordia University
- East Metro STEAM Partnership
- Elders in Action
- Free Geek
- Hack Oregon
- Home Forward
- Human Solutions
- Innovate Oregon / Scale-Up Partner
- Mary Beth Henry (consultant)
- MetroEast Community Media
- Multnomah Co. Dept. of County Assets
- Multnomah County Library
- Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission
- NTEN
- Open Signal
- Pacific Northwest College of Art
- Parkrose School District
- Personal Telco
- Planning and Sustainability Commission
- Portland Community College
- Portland Public Schools
- Portland State University
- Prosper Portland
- Reynolds School District
- Technology Association of Oregon
- Worksystems Inc.