

WNY Digital Inclusion and Equity Coalition Meeting Notes

2021-05-19

Present:

- Alex Carducci, Real Estate Financial Analyst, City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning
- Christine Carr-Barmasse, Executive Director, Mission:Ignite
- Kier Dirlam, Director, Allegany County Office of Planning
- Jim Finn, Administrative Vice President, M&T Bank
- Justin Foster, Website and Communications Manager, Healthy Community Alliance
- Jesse Friedman, Fellow, Ralph C. Willson, Jr. Foundation
- Matt Giordano, President, Villa Maria College
- Kimberly Herrington, Founder, Western New York WiFi Warriors
- Brett Lawton, Chief Executive Officer, Universal Primary Care/Southern Tier Community Health Center Network
- Don Matteson, Chief Program Officer, Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation
- Sam Mattle, Executive Director, Center for Self-Advocacy
- Tanvier Peart, Just Recovery Coordinator, Partnership for the Public Good
- Lauren Picone, Government Affairs Manager, Feedmore WNY
- Katie Pieri, Executive Director, WNY Nonprofit Support Group
- Michael Prutsman, Executive Director, Council on Addiction Recovery Services
- Michelle Roberts, Executive Director, Buffalo Bills Foundation
- Amber Slichta, Vice President of Programs, Ralph C. Willson, Jr. Foundation
- Andy Strohmeier, Integrating Special Populations Coordinator, Clinical and Translational Research Center, University at Buffalo
- Heidi Ziemer, Outreach & Digital Services Coordinator, Western New York Library Resources Council

Moving Forward Together Grant Request Update

- Moving Forward together Committee did approve the \$100,000 grant to the Coalition.
- Working on a fiscal sponsorship agreement because the grant can't go to the Tower Foundation. The fiscal sponsor will be responsible for managing the finances, but Don (eventually the Coalition Coordinator) will be responsible for day-to-day work and narrative reporting.
- Further updates as events warrant.
- The Orleans Digital Literacy Initiative also received a Moving Forward Together grant to support work in Orleans County. Don shared the Orleans County Digital Literacy Report at the last meeting. It's available a

Committee Updates

- Don is working on scheduling standing committees' first meetings so that they can self-define their charters, roles, responsibilities; identify their representative to the Steering Committee; and start setting out bodies of work.
- The Policy, Advocacy, and Funding committee has had its first meeting.
 - It will be responsible for keeping tabs on major legislation and determining what funding opportunities might be available to Coalition members. It will also be responsible for trying to keep track of what's coming down the pipeline, as there's a lot of money being mobilized around digital access, inclusion, and equity issues.
 - The Policy, Advocacy, and Funding Committee will be building out a Google Doc to keep track of this information and will be disseminating updates monthly via email. The Google Doc is modeled after the document Curtis Robbins from the Oishei Foundation created to keep track of the provisions in the American Rescue Plan.
 - Alex Carducci has agreed to take the lead on this committee, and thus joins the Steering Committee, at least until these roles create a conflict of interest with his day job with the City of Buffalo.
 - The broadband advocacy letter has shifted to this committee, so here's the latest on that:
 - The letter has been revised to death, so it's time to live with its imperfections and send it out.
 - Don has a couple of minor tweaks remaining to make, then will send around an invitation to sign onto the letter. Signatories can sign on as individuals (still listing job title and organization affiliation), or on behalf of their organizations. Naturally, people can opt not to sign onto the letter at all.
 - A remaining question is whether we will be targeting state legislators only, or whether we will be aiming for federal legislators, so the Coalition also needs to identify specific legislators to whom to send the letter.
- Digital Equity Dashboard Ad-Hoc Committee
 - Don has run into some scheduling challenges getting this group back together to resume work after a promising preliminary meeting. He will persist in trying to get this moving again.
- Digital Inclusion and Equity Initiatives Directory
 - Curtis, Sam, and Don met last week and settled on Airtable as the platform to serve as the repository for this information.
 - Curtis and Sam had built out the framework for that information, and we were able to port it over to Airtable.
 - Don showed a brief demonstration of the data entry form in Airtable and how the information can be displayed.
 - The data entry form is available at:
<https://airtable.com/shrObs202Vo9NHFas>

- The directory's contents can be viewed here:
<https://airtable.com/shrw3a3CuVo8fB9eY>
- Airtable is fairly mobile-friendly, so it should be easy to enter or retrieve information from the directory.

Buffalo Broadband Assessment Update

- Alex Carducci let everyone know that the Buffalo Broadband Assessment survey is now live. It can be accessed at <https://buffalobroadband.com>. There's also other resource information available on the site.
- It is designed to gather information from businesses, residents, nonprofits, religious organizations.
- It has a relatively long window for completion, closing in late July. The first step was just to launch it and to start getting a sense of who was responding. From there, after some fine-tuning, the City will step up its outreach and communications efforts, especially in areas with low response rates. They're also working through how to get responses from people who do not already have internet access.
- Alex indicated that the survey firm (ECC) observed a low response rate at the outset, but they think things will pick up before long.
- Don offered to connect Alex to the communications staff at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo to help with that outreach and communications.
- There have been past efforts to gather this information from outside of the City of Buffalo, but not necessarily exactly this survey with this exact information.

For Next Meeting

- Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 9:00am.
- Don will be updating committee rosters and working to get them activated.
- Don will also work on final edits to the advocacy letter and distributing it with an opt-in for signatures.