

WNY Digital Inclusion and Equity Coalition Meeting Notes

2021-11-17

Present:

- Rick Banner; Director of Advocacy and Person-Centered Services; People Inc.
- Dean Bellack; Executive Director; United Way of Orleans County
- Alex Carducci; Real Estate Financial Analyst; City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning
- Christine Carr-Barmasse; Executive Director; Mission:Ignite
- Jessi Donner; Director of Technology; Tonawanda City School District
- Jim Finn; Administrative Vice President; M&T Bank
- Justin Foster; Website and Communications Manager; Healthy Community Alliance
- Matt Giordano; President; Villa Maria College
- David Godfrey; Legislator; Niagara County Legislature
- Anne Haberer; Executive Assistant; Center for Self Advocacy
- Kimberly Herrington; Founder; Western New York WiFi Warriors
- Erica Kreutzer; Population Health Manager; Value Network
- Brett Lawton; Chief Executive Officer; Universal Primary Care/Southern Tier Community Health Center Network
- Ba Zan Lin; Senior Program Officer; Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
- Don Matteson; Chief Program Officer; Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation
- Sam Mattle; Executive Director; Center for Self-Advocacy
- Amy Mazur; Director of Operations; Literacy Buffalo
- Amy Miranti; Administrative & Communications Associate; Liftoff & WNY Nonprofit Support Group
- Tanvier Peart; Just Recovery Coordinator; Partnership for the Public Good
- Lauren Picone; Government Affairs Manager; Feedmore WNY
- Jeff Sanderson; Vice President of Affiliations; People Inc.
- 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
- Richard Zink; Executive Director; Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board

Miscellaneous Announcements and Updates

- Don has not yet sent out the copies of “Lead, Care, Win,” book, but hopes to get to that before year’s end! There are still plenty of copies available if anyone’s interested.
- Don reminded everyone to take a look at the [article about the Orleans County Digital Literacy Initiative](#). They’re really picking up steam over there.

Committee Updates

Policy, Advocacy, & Funding

- The Committee is working on getting a handle on the recently passed Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which provides \$65 billion in new federal funding for broadband infrastructure. There's a lot of information to digest, and the Benton Institute for Broadband and Society and National Digital Inclusion Alliance are putting out resources to help us understand what's in there and how those funds might flow.
- This does provide us with an opportunity to revisit our advocacy work. This could be an opportunity to revisit the campaign from over the summer, which encouraged legislators to place more decision-making power to the local level. That letter got some response from legislators, and we also converted that to a [ResistBot petition](#).
- If we are going to try another advocacy campaign, we need to do some more work to figure out a brief, actionable message. We also need to be able to articulate a call to action and a consequence if that action isn't taken. Don will get in touch with Carolyn, one of the communications people for Moving Forward Together to see about pulling together some ideas.

Digital Literacy & Technical Support

- The Committee spent its most recent meeting trying to hash out some more of the technical aspects of having a shared resource page that can be updated and mirrored at various school districts across the region. That would allow us to have an easily-maintained resource list for parents, families, and kids that also avoids version control issues.
- The Committee has also been having discussions about ways to deploy digital mentors, along the lines of what the Orleans Digital Literacy Initiative is doing, building on partnerships with the UB School of Information and Library Sciences and other agencies around the region.
- Heidi shared that the WNY Library Resources Council is likely to become a Northstar Digital Literacy curriculum licensee, and that many libraries across Western New York will have access to those assessments and training modules.
- Don reminded everyone to add any digital literacy or technical support resources they're aware of into [the Airtable database](#).

Data & Landscape (Data Dashboard)

- This group is working on answering four key questions to get at developing the dashboard:
 - What are the visuals?
 - Why were they created?
 - What are the key takeaways for viewers?
 - What action could someone take after viewing these visuals?
- The group agreed that the primary focus is to provide knowledge rather than serve as a resource toolbox. The resource toolbox is, to some degree served by the Airtable database, so we're focusing here on data.

- The task now is to narrow down the entire universe of things we could be tracking to those that will be most useful to our intended target audiences and relate to what we're doing. We want to be able to see how much we're doing and whether people are better off because of it.

Providers & Infrastructure

- Don has gotten meeting dates from the committee members so he'll be able to begin scheduling those meetings into the future.

Broadband & Equipment

- This committee has not yet met, but with some shifts in participating coalition members, we now have only a single person serving on the Broadband & Equipment Committee. Don asked that anyone interested in serving on that committee let him know.
- Committee involvement is essentially an additional hour per month plus whatever homework the Committee devises for its members.

Steering Committee

- Not yet populated, but getting closer once these last two committees become active.

Regranting Opportunity

- Don reminded everyone that we have a regranting opportunity with an application deadline of 11:59pm on December 3. There's a total of \$50,000 to award, with collaborative projects having a maximum \$12,500 award and solo applicants capped at \$5,000 for their requests.
- Don has done a few calls and email exchanges with folks to answer questions about the opportunity.

Branding & Logo Design

- Don announced the winner of the logo design competition, with eight submissions from six Villa Maria College graphic design students.
- Each student will be receiving \$200 in tuition assistance from the Coalition as a thank you for participating, and the winner will also be paid for the revisions needed to make the logo ready for use.

Open Discussion

Advocacy Petition: Revisited

- What happens if people don't sign the petition?
- Things will continue the way they are if people don't speak up about a need to do things differently.
- [The Resistbot petition](#) is written to be fairly evergreen, so there's no specific deadline to sign. If people want to do this as a coordinated campaign, we can pick an arbitrary sign-by date.

Federal Funding for Niagara and Orleans County

- Dave Godfrey's office had a call with Congressman Jacobs's office about federal funding, since Niagara and Orleans County have been seeking USDA funding. The window for applications closes in February, with an unknown award date. Funds are not likely to get to communities until well after early 2022, possibly moving into 2023. Niagara-Orleans are moving forward on their project using American Rescue Plan funds.

Digital Literacy Curriculum

- Renee Cadzow from UB and D'Youville College is in search of digital literacy curriculum
- Orleans Digital Literacy Initiative is working with Can Code to develop curriculum. Can Code has a contract with ODLI to put together a two-day curriculum with about 16 modules. They could probably be contracted to put together different combinations of modules to meet various needs.
- Mission:Ignite is also doing some of this work, using the Northstar curriculum. It has a good assessment component and integrates with Google platforms.
- Northstar's assessments are free for anyone to use; the paid version has data analytics that help pinpoint specific areas of weakness to be addressed.

Next Meeting

- Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 9:00am.