WNY Digital Equity Coalition Full Member Meeting 2023-11-15

Attendance

- Ann Battaglia; Chief Executive Officer; Healthy Community Alliance
- Rachel Bonsignore; Director; Liftoff WNY
- Christine Carr-Barmasse; Executive Director; Mission:Ignite
- Courtney Deuro; Program Assistant; Center for Self Advocacy
- Dave Falgiano; Senior Vice President / Security & Network Infrastructure Manager; M&T Bank
- Elizabeth Freas; Assistant Superintendent, Educational Support and WNYRIC Services; Erie1 BOCES
- Jason Fulkerson; Program Coordinator; WNY Rural Area Health Education Center
- Nyla Gaylord; Director of Development; United Way of Orleans County
- Matt Giordano; President; Villa Maria College
- Trent Hamilton; Community Coalition Member; Entrepreneur School of Thought
- Steve Heist; Director of Network and Communication Services; University at Buffalo
- Pete Hill; Special Initiatives Director; Native American Community Services
- Jacqueline Hovey; Librarian I, Branch Manager; Buffalo & Erie County Library
- Matthew Hubacher; Vice President for Research; Invest Buffalo Niagara
- Sheila Kalkbrenner; Digital Literacy and Wellness Coordinator; Ardent Solutions
- Erika Kastel; Director of Community Impact; Literacy Buffalo Niagara
- Heather La Forme-Maldonado; Bureau of Native American Services; Office of Children and Family Services
- Brett Lawton; Chief Executive Officer; Universal Primary Care/Southern Tier Community Health Center Network
- Dennis Lee; Community Coalition Member; Hopewell Baptist Church
- Don Matteson; Chief Program Officer; Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation
- Amy Mazur; Director of Operations; Literacy Buffalo
- Amy Miranti; Administrative & Communications Associate; Liftoff & WNY Nonprofit Support Group
- Katie Pieri; Executive Director; WNY Nonprofit Support Group
- Adrianna Seewaldt; Executive Community Relations Coordinator; Literacy West
- Sherry Sherrill; Coalition Community Member; Covington Associates
- Bob Spino; Director of Technology; Erie 2-Chautaqua-Cattaraugus BOCES
- Andy Strohmeier; Integrating Special Populations Coordinator, Clinical and Translational Research Center; University at Buffalo
- Roberta Sullivan; Teaching & Learning Strategist; University at buffalo
- Heidi Ziemer; Outreach & Digital Equity Coordinator; Western New York Library Resources Council

Announcements
- Pete Hill announced a digital equity and wellness fair Resource Fair happening on Saturday, requesting small giveaway items related to digital access or health resources. Pete is unsure of the exact number attending, but hopes to have around 20 people.
- Pete also shared that Native American Community Services received renewed grant funding through 2024. He thanked everyone for their support.

State Digital Equity Plan - Draft for Public Comment
- The group discussed the state's draft digital equity plan (website | PDF), which is open for public comment until 5:00PM on December 6th, 2023.
- Comments must be submitted using a web form on the ConnectALL website. The ConnectALL Office has enlisted regional digital equity coalitions to hold public comment sessions to gather feedback.
- Don encouraged everyone to review the draft, focusing particularly on the Implementation Section, which contains tables outlining goals, strategies, and outcome measures identified by the state.
- Heidi expresses appreciation for highlighting both positives and negatives in comments.

Public Comment Sessions for State Digital Equity Plan
- With the public comment period closing in early December, we need to move quickly if we are going to organize public comment sessions.
- Our target dates will be the last week of November. We will aim to have one online session with two in-person sessions. Ideally, one in-person session will be in the Northtowns and the other in Allegany County.
- Don asked for volunteers to help with these public comment sessions.
    - Jeff Sanderson volunteered by email prior to the meeting
    - Elizabeth Freas and Christine Carr-Barmasse also volunteered to help.

Coalition Convening
- Following a Policy, Advocacy, & Funding Committee meeting, there was a strong desire to hold a coalition convening in January 2024 to align with stated goals and build relationships among members.
- The target date for this is in the last week of January 2024, in part to help us identify and initiate projects before the state releases its notice of funding opportunity (expected around June 2024).
- Don again asked for volunteers to help coordinate the convening.
    - Sherry Sherrill, Pete Hill, and Katie Pieri volunteered to help out.

Governance Revisions
- Based on high levels of burnout and overwhelm amongst Coalition members, along with a desire to incorporate new voices into the Coalition's work, Don intends to transition from a standing committee model to project-based workgroups.
- This creates the need for a Steering Committee, with at least half of its members coming from the community.

- With the ideal size for the Steering Committee being between six and eight members, it will be essential to recruit additional coalition community members. Don reminded the Coalition members that there is a stipend associated with the position, with the expectation of committing up to 10 hours per month.
- Please send recommendations to (or have candidates contact) Don at dwmatteson@wnydigitalequity.org or 716-906-8903.

Communications

- Christine reminded everyone to submit news and announcements for the Coalition's newsletter.
- She expressed a strong desire to share actionable content.

Action items

Don

- Organize public comment sessions for the state digital equity plan.
  - Follow up with volunteers to help coordinate these public comment sessions
  - Follow up with Jackie Hovey about possible library space for public comment sessions
- Organize January 2024 convening for full Coalition membership
  - Follow up with volunteers to help plan for this event
- Build some infrastructure to help coordinate projects

All Members

- Review the draft state digital equity plan and submit comments
- Recruit additional community coalition members.
- Submit information and announcements for the newsletter.
  - Share the newsletter with the coalition and push out call-to-action communications