WNY Digital Equity Coalition Full Member Meeting

2024-04-17

Attendance

- Ann Battaglia; Chief Executive Officer; Healthy Community Alliance
- Christine Carr-Barmasse; Executive Director; Mission:Ignite
- Isaac Carrasco-Ortiz; Digital Inclusion Coordinator; Action for Boston Community Development Elder Services
- Courtney Deuro; Program Assistant; Center for Self Advocacy
- Katie Earl; Community Recreation Coordinator for the Aging; Erie County Senior Services
- Elizabeth Freas; Assistant Superintendent, Educational Support and WNYRIC Services; Erie1 BOCES
- Vicki Haas; Business Assistance Specialist; Erie County Department of Environment and Planning
- Trent Hamilton; Community Coalition Member; Entrepreneur School of Thought
- Amanda Horner; Outreach Specialist; Americorps and Mission: Ignite
- Mandi Joyce-Phelps; Planner; Allegany County Planning Office
- Nekia Kemp; Executive Director; Police Athletic League of Buffalo, Inc.
- Hex Kleinmarten; Digital Literacy Coordinator; Literacy Buffalo Niagara
- Brett Lawton; Chief Executive Officer; Universal Primary Care/Southern Tier Community Health Center Network
- Don Matteson; Chief Program Officer; Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation
- Alan Meyers; Fatherhood Connection Facilitator; Cattaraugus Community Action
- Amy Miranti; Administrative & Communications Associate; Liftoff & WNY Nonprofit Support Group
- Tianna Porter; Director of Economic Development; Native American Community Services
- Jeff Sanderson; Vice President of Strategic Initiatives; People Inc.
- Bob Spino; Director of Technology; Erie 2-Chautaqua-Cattaraugus BOCES
- Richard Zink; Executive Director; Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board

Announcements

No announcements

Steering Committee Update

The Steering Committee is starting to meet monthly to review financials and think about future directions. Here is a summary of the April Steering Committee meeting.

Current Grant Funding

- The formal grant from Moving Forward Together (COVID-19 Community Response Fund) ended in 2023.
- There is flexibility in reallocating remaining funds, but Don wants to keep $70,000 budgeted for re-granting.
- The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo has given flexibility on fund usage.

WNY Convening

- A reminder email was sent about the upcoming convening, and the venue is booked.
- The soft budget for the convening is around $10,000, expected to come in below that amount.
- This is consistent with the original Moving Forward Together budget.
- Further event planning details are coming up later on the agenda.

The Case Made

- There may have been an overbilling issue with a consulting engagement with The Case Made last year for a strategic case-making workshop.
- If there is an error, it might be due to split payments across two grants (Schmidt Futures and Moving Forward Together).
- Don needs to investigate the potential $10,000 billing error further.
- Jeff pointed out the issue, and Don appreciates the extra set of eyes.

New York State Convening

- There is an appetite to host an in-person convening for all the digital inclusion and digital equity coalitions across New York State (about a dozen).
- The convening would help identify common advocacy points to unite and advocate with state government, FCC, NTIA, etc., while also recognizing local differences.
- Don is moving forward with inviting folks and figuring out the budget based on the convening's location and plans.

Regranting and Systems Change

- The conversation moved towards the systems change grant-making and how to effectively use the $70,000 noted above to drive systems change.
- Don briefly reviewed the Water of Systems Change model, with practice change, policy change, and funding change being the most accessible — but least durable — types of systems change.
- Changing power dynamics, relationships, and equity are slightly more durable but harder to do.
- Changing mental models (how people, society, and culture think about an issue) is the most durable but also most difficult systems change work.
- Awareness and education campaigns can be done inexpensively but it is difficult to demonstrate effectiveness and require longer timeframes.
- Previous re-granting projects benefited direct recipients but didn't significantly change the overall system.

- The group needs to give some more thought to what can sorts of meaningful systems change work can be done with a small budget.

Communications Updates
- The April newsletter went out, and people can sign up for the monthly mailing list to receive updates, events, resources, and information.
- Previous newsletter issues are archived on the website.
- The newsletter featured a spotlight segment on the intersection of transportation issues and digital equity.
- Coalition members can contribute updates, events, or resources to the newsletter even if they're not part of the communications workgroup.
- The final version of the New York State Digital Equity plan is now available, with the coalition's submitted comments included in the appendix.

May 17 Convening Update
- A small group consisting of Pete Hill, Katie Pieri, and Jeff Sanderson has been working on planning the May 17 convening.
- Two venues were considered (The Columns in Elma and St. Bonaventure University in Olean), and Center for Self Advocacy conducted accessibility assessments for each.
- St. Bonaventure University was chosen for its slight edge in accessibility and more flexible time frame, as The Columns has an event later that day, which would have us cutting our day slightly short.
- The convening will be from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm.
- Registration is open, and the form includes questions about dietary restrictions, accommodations, and carpooling interest.
- Final numbers are needed by May 7, so please register as soon as possible.

There will be no full-member meeting in May, as the convening will take its place. The next full-member meeting will be on June 26 (please note the date change). Representatives of the NYS ConnectALL Office will be joining us for that meeting.