

Western New York Digital Equity Coalition Steering Committee

2024-10-09

Attendance

Present

- Christine Carr-Barmasse; Executive Director; Mission:Ignite
- Don Matteson; Chief Program Officer; Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation
- Sam Mattle; Executive Director; Center for Self Advocacy
- Jeff Sanderson; Vice President of Strategic Initiatives; People Inc.
- Bob Spino; Director of Technology; Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES

Excused

- Steve Heist; VP, Information Technology & CIO; OneBridge Benefits

Financial Update

- There has been no movement in the financials since the last meeting.
- Don will be submitting a reimbursement request for approximately \$450 at the end of next week, which will be reflected on the October financials.

Digital Inclusion Training Update

- Don reminded the Steering Committee of its decision to pass on purchasing a handful of seats for the Marconi Society's digital inclusion training and its counteroffer.
 - The Committee felt that the content was good, but not very engaging.
 - The Committee asked Don to offer \$5,000-6,000 for full-Coalition access to the course.
- The Marconi Society did not accept coalition's counteroffer.

Digital Inclusion Week 2024

- The Peace Bridge will be lit in teal on Monday (10/07) and Friday (10/11) in recognition of Digital Inclusion Week.
 - The Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) arranged for Monday's lighting.
 - Don submitted a request on the Coalition's behalf to have the bridge lit on Friday.
- Sam Mattle mentioned that Center for Self Advocacy held a tabling event at the Buffalo Public Library, where information about the WNY Digital Equity Coalition was shared.

- Heidi Ziemer of WNYLRC worked with NYS Senator Sean Ryan's staff to secure a proclamation, but we're not sure where this ended up. Heidi is in Greece, so we can't follow up with her.
- The Communications Workgroup developed social media content to be shared for Digital Inclusion week and distributed it via the email list.

Project Updates

- The Digital Equity Stories group and Strategic Case Making group are meeting this week to get oriented and start developing work plans.
- Once these two projects are well underway, the Coalition can look at revisiting a couple of other dormant projects
 - A tech support professional survey project is in the pipeline, aimed at identifying pain points that can then inform digital skills training.
 - A "digital adulting" curriculum project, previously led by Elizabeth Freas (Erie 1 BOCES) and Heidi Ziemer (WNYLRC), has stalled but may be revisited if there's interest and capacity.

Planning for 2025

- The Committee discussed setting goals for 2025, including:
- Developing a legislative advocacy agenda
- Planning another coalition convening
- Arranging more guest speakers for meetings
- Preparing for Digital Inclusion Week 2025
- Digital Equity Technical Assistance grant activities (if funded):
 - Forming workgroups to develop shared metrics for broadband access, equipment access, and digital skills
 - Conducting a community survey to assess digital literacy
 - Implementing Results-Based Accountability work across the coalition
 - Hosting sessions on barriers to digital inclusion for various populations covered under the Digital Equity Act

Digital Equity Competitive Grants

Bob Spino inquired about whether the Coalition is applying for any of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Digital Equity Competitive Grants.

- The coalition is not applying for the current round of Digital Equity Competitive Grants:
- The application deadline has passed
- The grants (\$5-12 million) require a lead agency willing to handle significant financial and programmatic reporting
- Local applications known include a collaboration between the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara University (along with other area nonprofits)
- Mission:Ignite was approached to be part of the National Digital Inclusion Alliance's application.

Membership and Outreach

- Coalition Community Member recruitment efforts are ongoing, but with limited success so far. UB's Clinical and Translational Research Center has shared the opportunity with its email lists, and the posting is still listed on the Coalition website.
- There is still a budget line in the current Moving Forward Together grant to support Coalition Community Member stipends for some time.

Announcements

- **Jeff Sanderson announced his retirement** at the end of the year and will work on identifying a replacement for his role in the Coalition.