

Western NY Digital Equity Coalition Steering Committee Meeting

November 13, 2024

Attendance

Present

- Christine Carr-Barmasse; Executive Director; Mission:Ignite
- Steve Heist; VP, Information Technology & CIO; OneBridge Benefits
- Don Matteson; Chief Program Officer; Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation
- Jeff Sanderson; Vice President of Strategic Initiatives; People Inc.
- Bob Spino; Director of Technology; Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES

Absent

- Sam Mattle; Executive Director; Center for Self Advocacy

Personnel Updates

- Don recognized that this will be Jeff Sanderson's last Steering Committee meeting as he is retiring.
- Jeff is working on finding a People Inc. replacement representative.
- Amanda Horner will be leaving her AmeriCorps position at Mission:Ignite at the end of November but will resume her engagement with the coalition as a Coalition Community Member.

Financial Updates

- The financial spreadsheet Don sent out to the Committee matches Mission:Ignite finances exactly.
- Two notable expenses were discussed:
- Reimbursement in October for operating expenses incurred between mid-July and mid-October.
- Payment to International Institute of Buffalo for translation work on state surveys from mid-2023 that was recently billed (\$580).
- Christine requested confirmation about the August regional community event finances. Don confirmed that any payments relating to the statewide NYS Digital Equity Network (NYSDEN) convening are reflected in the current financials.
- Christine also noted that Mission:Ignite auditors are beginning to ask questions about the one-year 2022 Moving Forward Together grant that is about to be extended into its third year as we enter 2025. Don will request a letter from the Community Foundation

for Greater Buffalo confirming that a no-cost extension through 2025 (and possibly into 2026) is acceptable.

Project Status Updates

Strategic Case Making

- The project is on track for completion by end of December.
- Work continues on adding prompts and feedback into presenter notes in the shared Google Slides deck.
- A revised version will be ready to share with the full Coalition in January.

Digital Equity Stories

- A recent workgroup meeting established a good work plan, including work on crafting an initial approach to prospective storytellers and prompts to elicit stories.
- Initial stories will focus on Erie and Niagara Counties.
- Once a solid workflow is established, it will be shared with the entire coalition.

Communications

- Don is planning a website revision within the next year (likely sooner than later), as the existing site has been unchanged for the better part of four years.
- Amanda Horner will continue managing the newsletter until she secures full-time employment.

Coalition Community Member Updates

- Job description has been updated with two main changes:
 - Removed the total stipend cap.
 - Added requirement for bimonthly meetings with the Facilitator to find out what Coalition Community Members have been sharing with their communities and what they're hearing in terms of digital inclusion/digital equity needs.
- Current Coalition Community Members will be asked to re-commit to the role under the new job description and the related terms.

NYS Digital Equity Technical Assistance Grant

- Received initial approval; awaiting formal notification.
- Preliminary planning can begin for non-monetary aspects:
- Identifying two people who would like to complete RBA Certified Professional Training and RBA Train-the-Trainer. (Don is in the process of securing the RBA Certification and will complete the Train-the-Trainer course.)
- Begin identifying organizations who can provide education sessions relating to covered populations.
- Work groups for common performance measures.
- Christine and Don are both concerned about timelines, as formal award paperwork for state grants is often slow to be processed.
- Christine offered to inquire with the ConnectALL Office about contract timeline expectations.

2025 Planning

Convening Events

- Discussion about funding for statewide convening:
- Previous statewide event cost approximately \$3,400-3,500.
- WNY convening cost about \$3,300-3,400.
- Need to determine if coalition will fund statewide event again.
- Need to set dates for:
- Western New York convening.
- Potential statewide convening. Don will inquire with the NYSDEN email list about both prospective dates and plans for funding it.
- Digital Inclusion Week activities.

Next Meetings

- Full member meeting scheduled for next Tuesday.
- No December meetings for either the Steering Committee or the full-membership.