

Western New York Digital Equity Coalition Meeting Summary

January 15, 2025

Attendance

- Eileen Anderson; School Library System Director and Library Automation Supervisor; Erie 1 BOCES
- Ann Battaglia; Executive Director; Healthy Community Alliance
- Rachel Bonsignore; Director; Liftoff WNY
- Christine Carr-Barmasse; Executive Director; Mission:Ignite
- Courtney Deuro; Data Analyst; Center for Self Advocacy
- Katie Earl; Community Recreation Coordinator for the Aging; Erie County Senior Services
- Megan Farry; Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships and Communication; NYATEP New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals
- Matt Giordano; President; Villa Maria College
- Trent Hamilton; Coalition Community Member; Entrepreneur School of Thought
- Steve Heist; VP, Information Technology & CIO; OneBridge Benefits
- Nestor Hernandez; Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; People Inc.
- Kimberly Herrington; Founder; Western New York WiFi Warriors
- Amanda Horner; Coalition Community Member; At Large
- Nekia Kemp; Executive Director; Police Athletic League of Buffalo, Inc.
- Susan Kirkpatrick; Communications Consultant; Kirkpatrick Communications
- 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; Communications & Administrative Coordinator; Liftoff WNY & Nonprofit Support Group
- Katie Pieri; Director; Nonprofit Support Group
- Tianna Porter; Director of Economic Development; Native American Community Services
- Deborah Porter; Founder & President; YES Workforce
- Simone Ragland; Co-Founder/CEO; Bits & Bytes STEM Foundation
- Adrianna Seewaldt; Executive Community Relations Coordinator; Literacy West
- Abigail Smith; Digital Literacy Program Coordinator; Cornell Cooperative Extension, Orleans Digital Literacy Initiative
- Bob Spino; Director of Technology; Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES

- Andy Strohmeier; Integrating Special Populations Coordinator, Clinical and Translational Research Center; University at Buffalo
- Rolanda Ward; Director; Niagara University Rose Bente Lee Ostapenko Center for Race, Equality & Mission
- Heidi Ziemer; Outreach & Digital Equity Coordinator; Western New York Library Resources Council

Introductions and Announcements

- Several members introduced themselves:
- Nestor Hernandez, VP for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at People Inc.
- Jonathan Coupal, representing a Connect Buffalo, who is working to start a community-owned wireless ISP (WISP) cooperative in Buffalo
- Christine Carr-Barmasse, Executive Director Mission:Ignite
- Al Meyers, Safe Harbor Coordinator for Connecting Communities in Action in Cattaraugus County
- New York State Digital Equity Network advocacy day scheduled for January 27th in Albany
- Limited funding available for travel assistance
- There's a [ResistBot petition](#) available for those who cannot attend in person
- Contact Heidi Ziemer by January 22 if you're interested in attending
- Liftoff WNY (liftoffwny.org) will post an online advocacy opportunity focused on Digital Equity and Inclusion for children and families
- The February full-member meeting will feature Karen Kwandrens from Niagara University discussing their successful \$9.6 million NTIA grant with the City of Niagara Falls
- Al Meyers announced a free NEAR (Neurobiology, Epigenetics, Adverse-Childhood-Experiences, and Resilience) Science Trauma training on February 12th, 10 AM-12 PM.
- Virtual training via Microsoft Teams
- Contact Al at ameyers@ccaction.org if you're interested in registering

Steering Committee Updates

- Schmidt Future Grant has approximately \$3,300 remaining for community stipends. Once exhausted, stipends will be paid from the Moving Forward Together grant.
- Moving Forward Together grant has \$116,000 remaining, with \$1,100-1,200 in pending expenses
- The ConnectALL grant requires upfront spending of \$100,000 before a lump-sum reimbursement at the end of the grant period. This unexpected development requires us to secure an additional \$30,000 to front for grant expenses. Don is working on securing these additional dollars.

Project Status Updates

- Project status updates available at: [Project Status Page](#)
- Our Digital Equity Storytelling project is currently stalled

- Awaiting feedback on prompts for story collection
- Need to develop infrastructure for data storage and distribution
- Strategic Case Making project
 - Don's put some notes into the Google Slides deck, but hasn't made substantive changes to the slides themselves
 - Draft still in development

Digital Equity Technical Assistance Grant Updates

- The NYS ConnectALL Office reports that our contract is under a second round of review, delaying its release for signature. They hope to have it to us by the end of this week or early next week.
- The contract must be signed before we can begin spending for the project
- Grant activities must be completed by December 31, 2025 (though they've signaled that an extension is possible)
- The grant has five major components:
 - Centralized data repository using Clear Impact Scorecard
 - Developing program performance measures
 - Community-wide digital literacy survey and focus groups
 - Results-Based Accountability training
 - Covered population information sessions

Work Groups and Participation Opportunities

- Please refer to the included slide deck for additional information/details
- Clear Impact Scorecard configuration (3-4 people)
- Performance measures for digital literacy, broadband access, and equipment access (3-5 people per group)
- Survey and focus group planning
- RBA training (slots filled)
- Covered population information sessions
- Interested participants should email Don Matteson at dwmatteson@wnydigitalequity.org by February 7, 2025 to communicate interest in joining work groups. Don estimates the time commitment at 10-20 hours over two-to-three months.

Resources and Communication

- You can sign up for the Coalition's monthly newsletter at: [WNY Digital Equity Coalition Newsletter Signup](#)
- Submit program updates, upcoming events, requests for assistance, wins, highlights for inclusion in the newsletter at: [Submit News](#)

Action Items

- Interested participants should email Don at dwmatteson@wnydigitalequity.org by February 7 regarding workgroup participation

- Please submit questions for Karen Kwandrens (next month's speaker) to Don by January 31st
- Don will add information about the Digital Equity Technical Assistance grant to the [Coalition's project page](#) and continue to post other project updates there