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# PENN STATE EXTENSION's DIGITAL LITERACY & EQUITY PILOT

*Key takeaways and lessons learned from building community partnerships and delivering basic computer workshops for senior populations*

Prepared by Cristy Halerz Schmidt, MPPM

# PILOT PROJECT CO-LEADS

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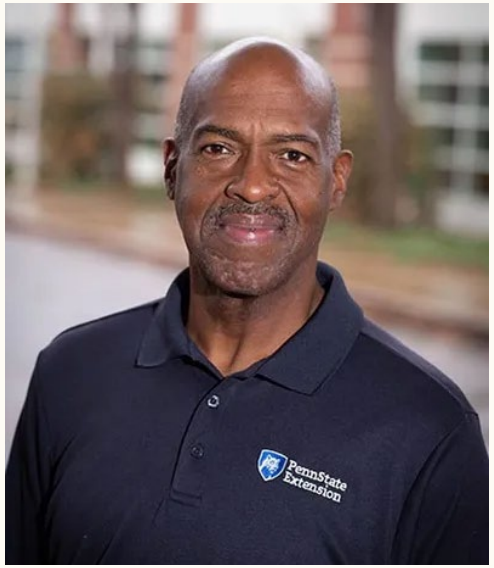


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# SESSION AGENDA

- Background
- Project timeline
- Process
- Curriculum
- Program delivery
- Key takeaways & lessons learned
- Looking ahead
- Q & A

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# What does **Digital Literacy** *mean*?

**The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) via the American Library Association (ALA):**

- ***"Digital Literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills."***

*Source: https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/*

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# What does **Digital Equity** *mean*?

**NDIA defines Digital Equity as:**

- ***"a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services."***

*Source: https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/*

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# What does **Digital Inclusion** *mean*?

**From NDIA:**

- ***"Digital Inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)."***

*Source: https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/*

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# Penn State Extension's Digital Equity Working Group

- ✓ FORMED IN JUNE OF 2022
- ✓ CROSS-DISCIPLINARY TEAM
- ✓ MEETS MONTHLY TO PLAN, ORGANIZE, + ACTIVATE DIGITAL ADOPTION/ UTILIZATION STRATEGIES
- ✓ HOPES TO LEVERAGE BROAD NETWORK OF TRUSTED EDUCATORS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS ACROSS PA

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# Penn State Extension's Digital Equity Working Group

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- All efforts and initiatives will be community driven or co-created with residents and stakeholders.
- We are committed to "meet people where they are" – a place-based approach centered on the individual or community's unique needs, experience, resources, and capacity.

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# Penn State Extension's Digital Equity Working Group

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- We will serve in a supporting role (such as convenors, facilitators, listeners, educators, grant writers), drawing on our resources to help strengthen the community's capacity to address digital in/equities.

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# Penn State Extension's Digital Equity Working Group

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- **We will approach our work from a holistic perspective, recognizing and giving attention to any structural barriers that may contribute to (or further exacerbate) digital inequities.**

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# Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority

## Penn State Extension contracted to:

- ✓ Explore mapping & spatial analysis tools relevant to stakeholder needs.
- ✓ Inform the PBDA about potential FCC broadband access challenge areas.
- ✓ Develop online tools for broadband deployment cost estimation.
- ✓ ***Explore options to expand digital literacy & equity.***

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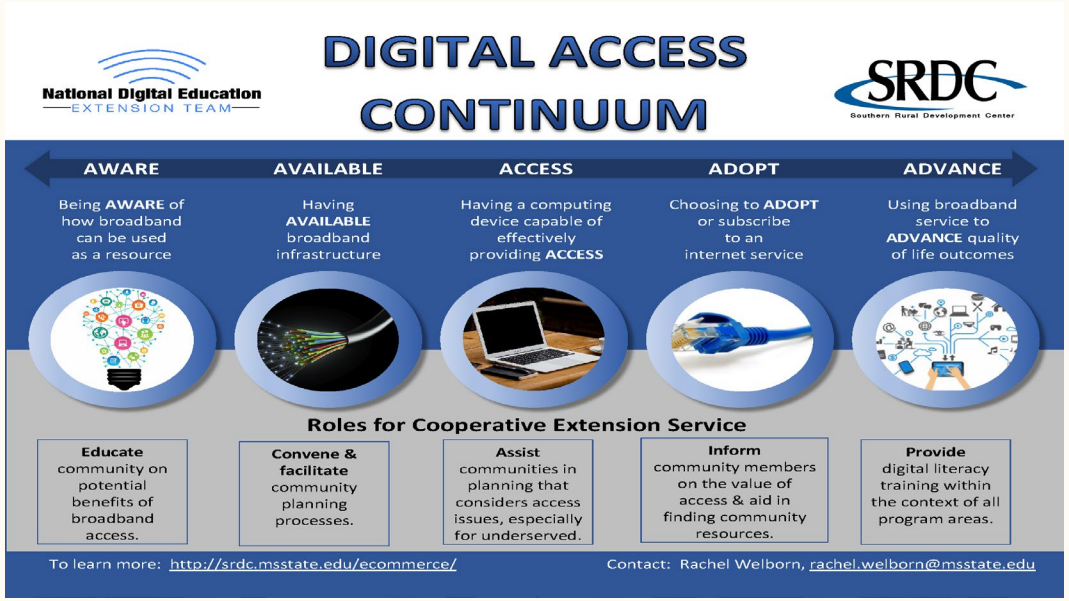
# CHALLENGE: What is possible within a 6-month timeline???

## OUR INITIAL APPROACH

1. **Digital Coalition Building (with communities) – NDIA Guidebook**
2. **Basic Computer Literacy Classes**
3. **Affordable Connectivity Program**




https://www.digitalinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NDIA_Coalition-Guidebook_vFINAL_RGB.pdf

# CHALLENGE: What is possible within a 6-month timeline???

## THE REVISED APPROACH

1. Basic Computer Literacy Classes
2. Affordable Connectivity Program
3. Cybersecurity & Internet Safety

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# Digital Literacy & Equity Pilot TIMELINE

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# Digital Literacy & Equity Pilot OBJECTIVES

## TARGET AUDIENCE

- Covered populations as defined by the Digital Equity Act (DEA)
- People with little to no experience using a desktop computer or laptop
- Adults 18 years and older, senior citizens

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Leverage Extension's positionality and resources as trusted members of the community in every PA county
- Target partnerships with stakeholder organizations serving "covered populations"
- Strategic to include a variety of geographic locations and rural- peri-urban, and urban communities

https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/DE-FAQs.pdf

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# Digital Literacy & Equity Pilot OBJECTIVES

## INTENTIONALITY

- Community partners must secure meeting space, WI-FI, at least 10 participants, return intake forms two weeks prior to workshop, and provide transportation for participants.
- Workshops scheduled for a day and time convenient for participants, including morning, afternoon, evening, weekdays, or weekends.
- Extension provides snacks/meals that are culturally appropriate and meet the needs of community partners and participants.
- Guardians and parents are welcome to bring children to the workshop if they do not have access to childcare.

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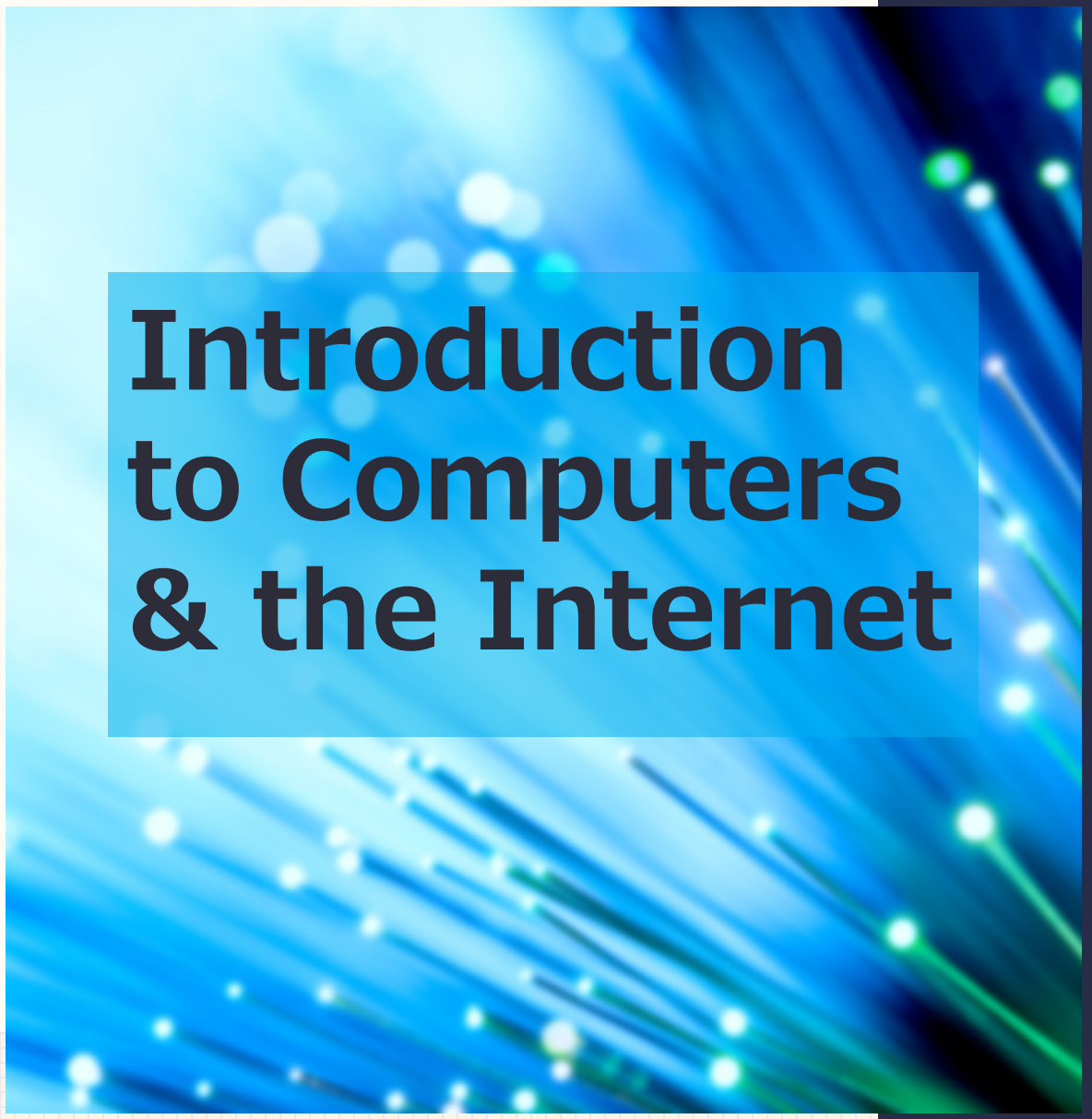

# Introduction to Computers & the Internet

## Learning Objectives

*Workshop participants will:*

- Develop a basic understanding of computer devices hardware
  - History of computing devices
  - Types of computing devices
  - Parts of a computer
- Develop a basic understanding of the internet
  - History of the internet
  - Infrastructure of the internet
  - Products
  - Receive flash drive with additional interactive modules to continue building skills

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## Learning Objectives

*Workshop participants will:*

- Gain awareness of ACP benefits + eligibility requirements
- Develop a basic understanding of the ACP application process
- Have an opportunity to apply for ACP on site with assistance
- Receive a packet of information (English and Spanish) including ACP paper applications and instructions, ACP service providers for zip code

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# Cybersecurity & Internet Safety

## Learning Objectives

*Workshop participants will:*

- Gain a general awareness of cybersecurity and internet safety practices
- Receive paper handouts for future reference, with relevant information sourced from FTC, Homeland Security (English and Spanish).

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# SALVATION ARMY NEW KENSINGTON CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER

- New Kensington, PA
- Participants: 9
- Covered Populations:
  - Aging individuals
  - Low-income households
  - Individuals with disabilities
  - Racial or ethnic minority group

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# JUNIATA COUNTY LIBRARY

- Mifflintown, PA
- Participants: 13
- Covered Populations:
  - Aging individuals
  - Individuals with disabilities
  - Veterans
  - Rural residents

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# CHESTER CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY – CHATHAM SENIOR VILLAGE

- Chester City, PA
- Participants: 10
- Covered Populations:
  - Aging individuals
  - Racial or ethnic minority group
  - Low-income households
  - Individuals with disabilities
  - Veterans
  - Individuals with language barriers

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# NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (CDC)

- Sharon Hill, PA
- Participants: 17
- Covered Populations:
  - Aging individuals
  - Racial or ethnic minority group
  - Low-income households
  - Individuals with disabilities
  - Veterans

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# EVALUATION & FEEDBACK

- Rhoda Burrell from Neighbor-to-Neighbor CDC says, “Thank you for a great computer session.  The feedback has been wonderful.”
- Quineice Harris from Chester City Housing Authority says, “I just got off the phone with Phyllis (Chatham Resident Leader). She is singing you and Bert's praises; she said they all enjoyed the class and can't wait for you to return.”
- A participant from the Juniata County Library called the Lewistown Sentinel hotline to praise the class in Mifflintown, which was published in the local newspaper.

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# EVALUATION & FEEDBACK

- Regarding behavior change, when asked how comfortable they feel about doing these things on a computer after completing the workshop, respondents noted they feel “very comfortable”:
  - Turning on a computer (75 %)
  - Using a keyboard and mouse (80%)
  - Understand some basic computer terminology (75%)
  - Navigating a website (75%)
  - Using a search engine to find information (75%)
  - Using email to communicate (75%)
  - Shutting down the computer (75%)
- About three quarters of respondents plan to apply for ACP

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# Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

**There is significant demand for digital literacy and computer training among our Pilot's Senior participants.**

# Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

**Teaching people with little to no experience to use a computer requires patience, compassion, face-to-face interaction, and plenty of time.**

# Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

**We scheduled 3-hour sessions for the Pilot, however we ran out of time at every location.**

**Varying levels of skill around the room required personalized technical assistance. More than one technical assistant is needed.**

# Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

**Curriculum pieces should be broken down into shorter sessions over time rather than completing 3 hours of training in one day - especially for Senior audiences.**

# Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

**We did not take mice with us to the pilot, though we wish we had. Many new computer users had difficulty using a touchpad.**

# Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

**Be mindful that new computer users may have some anxiety or fear about learning new technology. Extra compassion and patience are key.**

# Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

**Two of the four Pilot locations did not have reliable Internet which prevented us from completing the full curriculum.**

**Visit location in advance to test broadband connection and wifi.**

# On the horizon...

- Adapt curriculum and approach based on evaluation and lessons learned from pilot. Consider how to scale-up. Purchased an additional 10 laptops.
- Continue follow-up sessions with pilot participants.
- Cristy attending NDEET's Advancing Digital Access Train-the-Trainer Workshop as part of the Northeast Cohort in October.
- Help **convene and facilitate "Digital Inclusion Coalitions"** as sustainable community-led ecosystems (using NDIA's Digital Inclusion Coalition Guidebook).
- Plan to work with Chester County Housing Authority to create a computer lab and ongoing trainings + tech support for Chatham residents.

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# LINKS

- NDIA Digital Inclusion Coalition Guidebook

- **Affordable Connectivity Program links:**
  - Application intructions (online and paper)
  - ACP Providers (search by location)
  - ACP Consumer Outreach toolkit

- **Cybersecurity & Internet Safety links:**
  - How to recover your hacked email or social media account (FTC)
  - Cybersecurity for older Americans (Homeland Security)
  - How to recognize and avoid phishing scams (FTC)
  - What to know about romance scams (FTC)
  - Password checklist (FTC)
  - Use two-factor authentication to protect your accounts

# LINKS

- Opensource curriculum/resources
  - https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/basic-computer-skills/
  - https://oercommons.org/authoring/11481-computer-skills-curriculum-for-adult-learners/view
  - https://www.digitalinclusion.org/blog/2022/02/11/five-digital-literacy-resources-you-need-to-know-about/

# Thank you!

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# Questions?

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