Uptake and Impact of Digital Inclusion Programs

Erezi Ogbo, PhD
Assistant Professor at North Carolina Central University

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Importance of Broadband

- Supporting education
- Lowering costs and barriers to healthcare
- Stimulating economic growth
- Strengthening social ties
The gap between those that have affordable and reliable access to high-speed internet as well as the skills and support to effectively engage online and those who do not.
Covered Populations

- Low-income families
- Aging individuals
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- People with disabilities
- English learners
- People with low literacy
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Rural residents
Digital Equity “Equation”

Availability + Affordability + Adoption = Outcomes

Access to reliable high-speed internet connection.

Ability to afford the cost to access the internet, including costs of service, devices (laptops, smartphones, tablets), and fees (installation, routers).

Having the requisite skills, resources, and support to meaningfully use the internet.

The effects of broadband connectivity on people and their communities.

To achieve digital equity, we need initiatives that address availability, affordability, and adoption barriers with a clear goal to improve the everyday lives of the recipients.
Digital Inclusion Programs

**Government**
- Federal: Affordable Connectivity Program
- State: Alabama Broadband Connectivity Program
- Municipal: Chicago Connected

**Private companies**
- Comcast’s Internet Essentials
- Spectrum’s Internet Assist

**Nonprofits**
- Basic computer skills, digital literacy training, hotspots loaner programs by libraries, community centers, senior centers, etc.
Federal Digital Inclusion Programs

The Mosaic of 25 Federal Programs with Broadband as a Main Purpose, as of November 2021, by Purpose Category

Source: GAO analysis. | GAO-22-104611

Broadband: National Strategy Needed to Guide Federal Efforts to Reduce Digital Divide
(Mostly) Low Uptake in Digital Inclusion Programs

Adapted from: Connecting Low-Income Families Using Broadband Vouchers
Designing Effective Digital Inclusion Programs

- Build coalitions with anchor institutions
- Intentional outreach in the right language, culture, and with trusted community leaders
- Design to meet the community’s needs
- Communicate measurable impact
Percentage of digital literacy training literature addressing covered populations

- Veterans: 2%
- People with low literacy: 7%
- People with disabilities: 7%
- Incarcerated Individuals: 8%
- Aging populations: 8%
- English learners/not native speakers: 9%
- Rural residents: 16%
- Racial or ethnic minorities: 20%
- Low income populations: 24%

Digital Literacy and Equity: A Synthesis of Findings for Covered Populations
### Gaps – Evaluating Program Success

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<tr>
<th><strong>Outputs</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outcomes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Impacts</strong></th>
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<td>Direct products such as total recipients, hours of training completed, subsidized devices, subsidized connections.</td>
<td>Short- and medium-term effects such as increased confidence in digital skills, job placement, increased internet use, including telehealth.</td>
<td>Long-term effects such as economic development, improved overall health, and reduced recidivism rates.</td>
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Thank you. Connect with me to follow my work.