ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Denver Digital Equity
Coalitions and Committees

Denver Digital Equity Steering Committee

Denver Digital Equity Internal Committee

Denver Digital Equity Coalition

Anya Dickson-Arguello
Digital Equity Program Manager
Mayor’s Office of Social Equity & Innovation

Jessica Calderon
Director of Operations and Innovation
Mayor’s Office of Social Equity & Innovation

Tracy Treece
Digital Inclusion Manager
Denver Public Library

James E. Roina
Career Services Program Manager
Denver Economic Development & Opportunity

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Employer Services Liaison for IT & Healthcare
Denver Economic Development & Opportunity

Research Partners

Joining Vision and Action
Daniels College of Business
University of Denver

U.S. Department of Treasury
American Rescue Plan Funding
Mayor Michael B. Hancock and The Mayor’s Office of Social Equity and Innovation are active in a nationwide movement that amplifies the need for digital inclusion. To further underscore Denver’s commitment to equity, Mayor Hancock declared October 3 to 7 as Digital Inclusion Week in the City and County of Denver and formalized this by issuing a proclamation.

“Lack of digital connectivity, resources, and education continues to be a barrier for many of Denver’s most vulnerable residents. This is an opportunity to elevate the need to close that gap and collaborate on how we, along with our community partners, can bridge the digital divide.

MAYOR MICHAEL B. HANCOCK

INTRODUCTION
**KEY TERMS**

**Digital Divide**
The gaps (economic, educational, and social) between those that do not have digital access (i.e., computers and the internet) and those that do.

**Digital Equity**
When an individual’s neighborhood of residence, race, age, gender, immigration status, primary language, education, or income level does not determine their ability to access the internet, possess suitable devices (e.g., smartphone or computer), or use technology to meet their needs.

**Digital Inclusion**
The activities necessary to reach digital equity, and includes the following pillars:

- **Affordable, high-speed, and reliable internet service**
- **Internet-enabled devices such as computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones**
- **Access to digital skill support, such as classes and quality tech support**

Definitions informed by *The National Digital Inclusion Alliance*
DIGITAL EQUITY IN DENVER

Percentage of Denver Population Within Each Income Bracket Without an Internet Subscription
Source: US Census Bureau, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Bracket</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $34,999</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $74,999</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 or more</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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</table>

What communities are impacted by the digital divide?
Data shows that specific communities and neighborhoods have more people who lack access to the Internet and devices than others.

- **10.4%** or **30,000** Denverites do not have access to the internet
- **5.1%** or **14,500** Denver homes do not have access to smart devices
- **1 in 5** American Indian and Alaskan Native Denverites do not have access to smart devices
- **12%** Black or African American people and Hispanic or Latino people do not have access to smart devices
Students Without Internet Access
Using data from 1.21.21

A map of where mobile hotspots were distributed by Denver Public Schools to students who do not have internet access at home shows these students primarily live in the neighborhoods of Montbello, East Colfax, Sun Valley, and West Denver.

1 in 3
Denverites who make less than $20,000/year that do not have internet access

22%
Of Denverites with a high school degree or less lack internet access

Source: American Community Survey 2020 5-year Estimates and DEDO Digital Equity in Denver: Community Opportunity Assessment
Denver began donating devices for recycling and refurbishment

2019–2021
Digital Equity Opportunity Assessment completed

2022
- Hired Digital Equity Program Manager
- Began Ongoing Community Listening Sessions
- Mayor Hancock signed Digital Inclusion Week Proclamation

2019
Denver Digital Equity Coalition Created

2021
ARPA Emergency Funds allocated for Digital Equity response

2023
- City Internal Cross-Agency Committee launched
- Digital Equity Plan is Released
DENVER’S IMPACT
PROVIDING DEVICES TO THOSE IN NEED & PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

For the last seven years, the City and County of Denver has donated our technology to our partner PCs for People, which deletes all data, refurbishes, and distributes the devices at no or low cost to eligible customers with low incomes.

- **11,645** People Supported, Including **5,927** Children
- **92,426** lbs E-Waste Saved from Landfills
- **7,445** Computers Received
- **844.94** MTCO2e (Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent) Saved from the Atmosphere
- **4,665** Computers Distributed

*That is equivalent to the annual emissions of 167 passenger cars or 88,428 gallons of gasoline!*
Customer Demographics

$18,300/year
Average Income

3.1
Average Household Size

41%
Did Not Own a Computer

55%
Unemployed

Race & Ethnicity

PCs for People offers and respects the choice for customers to not share their ethnicity or race. This data represents the race or ethnicity of customers who did choose to self-report.

- **31%** of customers chose not to share their race or ethnicity
- **19%** of customers are African American or African
- **26%** of customers are Caucasian/White
- **19%** of customers are Latino/Hispanic
- **3%** of customers are Asian or Pacific Islander
- **1%** of customers are American Indian/Alaskan Native
- **1%** of customers are Middle Eastern
OUR APPROACH

PHASE 1
Identifying Barriers with the Community

The Digital Equity Program Manager identified barriers faced by community by conducting community listening sessions, along with reviewing 32 informal interviews done previously with key stakeholders. These informal interviews and discussions are representative of areas identified with having the lowest rate of home internet connection and with communities most burdened by the digital divide, such as people of color, older populations, people with disabilities, students and families, communities with language barriers, and people with income restriction. Barriers identified by discussions and the report can be categorized into three themes:

- Affordability
- Technical/Digital Literacy
- Lack of Awareness or Interest

PHASE 2
Understanding Existing Community Resources

Over the past several years, Denver has developed a robust digital equity ecosystem, with many non-profit, public, and private sector organizations offering internet, devices, and digital skillset support. In designing a plan to close the digital divide, the Digital Equity Task Force took a strengths-based approach, which included asset mapping of existing resources. Such resources identified by the task force can be identified on the following page. Although this list encompasses only a fraction of the remarkable efforts taking place in Denver, it illustrates the city’s robust network of digital equity providers and establishes a basis for achieving the objectives outlined in this report.

PHASE 3
Creating Solutions Together

Once the task force had a better understanding of the digital divide challenge and existing resources, they invited The University of Denver’s Social Good Program to review the findings and make recommendations on how we can address this issue as a city. The first draft of these digital equity recommendations was then circulated among the Denver Digital Equity Coalition, the Steering Committee, and the Internal Committee to ensure the plan accurately captured the community’s thoughts, concerns, and ideas.
PHASE 1 IDENTIFYING BARRIERS WITH THE COMMUNITY

In addition to an extensive research report conducted on lack of access in Denver, The Mayor’s Office of Social Equity and Innovation solicited a stakeholder engagement approach to ensure that people impacted by the digital divide were centered and empowered from the start. We have found that the digital divide in Denver most deeply burdens communities of color and communities historically deprived of economic resources; within these communities are older adults, families, students, those with intellectual and developmental abilities, and those experiencing a language barrier. Engaging members of these communities ensures we accurately understand the challenge, along with existing strengths, and ultimately partner to co-create solutions to address digital disconnectedness.

Our office deeply engaged representatives from different parts of the digital equity system, including government agencies such as Denver Public Library and non-profits such as PCs for People to understand the full scope of resources and networks that already exist and are tackling this issue. Kicking off in June 2020, we embarked on three phases of community solution design:

- **Identifying barriers that communities are facing**
- **Understanding existing resources**
- **Cultivating solutions among stakeholders**

In research and development of this plan, The Mayor’s Office of Social Equity and Innovation has sought to keep communities impacted by the digital divide at the core. In onboarding, the Digital Equity Program Manager conducted 17 community listening sessions. In these sessions, staff, community leaders, and impacted community members shared their experiences and ideas for digital equity advancement.
PHASE 2 EXISTING DIGITAL EQUITY
ASSET MAPPING

Internet Access

- Affordable Connectivity Program
  $30 / Month Internet Bill Credit
- Providers include Comcast (Xfinity, Internet Essentials), T-Mobile (Metro and Assurance), and Lumen CenturyLink

Device Access

- PCs for People and Community Computer connection (C3)
  Reduced-cost refurbished devices and hardware
- Denver Public Library
  Accessible computers in all libraries, Chromebooks, and hotspots to check out, along with free printing, scanning, and fax services
- Denver Economic Development and Opportunity (DEDO)
  Workforce centers

Digital Education & Training

- Denver Public Library
  Digital navigators, 1:1 appointments, tech classes, and drop-in tech help support
- Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) by AARP
  Digital skills and technology classes
- Denver Housing Authority’s ConnectHome Denver
  Low-cost internet resources, computer labs, computer classes

Scan here to connect to our office!
Goal 1

Denver will have a governance structure for digital equity programming to advance digital equity in Denver.

Strategy

Create and oversee the citywide digital equity program including the Digital Equity Plan and provide advocacy to uphold digital inclusion efforts across the city.

Maintain engagement and involvement in state and federal digital equity initiatives to ensure Denver remains at the forefront of digital equity efforts and strategies.

Convene and co-facilitate an external coalition of stakeholders comprised of city staff across agencies and external partners such as non-profits and community organizations that interact with community regularly and are trusted by community.

Convene an internal committee which consists of city leadership who will work on digital equity policy, solutions and initiatives, and advise the mayor on digital equity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 2</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denver will create an internal database of projects and partnerships to provide resources and support to our stakeholders.</td>
<td>Create and maintain an internal database of projects and partnerships to map resources that currently exist across the city.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 3</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denver will have a community resource website that contains digital equity resources and ensures resources are accessible.</td>
<td>Maintain OSEI website to contain digital equity resources that community practitioners and residents can reference for access to affordable, high-speed internet, access to devices, and digital literacy support.</td>
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### Goal 4

Denver will expand successful digital equity programs, innovate, and scale new programs and seek promising practices to advance digital equity.

<table>
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<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand current digital equity programming in Denver and track outcomes and impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand existing navigator programs in Denver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovate digital equity programming to close equity gaps and scale successful programs and partnerships.</td>
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### Goal 5

Goal 5: Denver will integrate digital equity resources into existing assistance programs in Denver to expand digital equity.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze qualitative and quantitative data to determine success of existing programming.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuously meet with city staff and leaders to learn their offered services and existing programs.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The City and County of Denver is committed to digital equity. As said by Mayor Hancock, “Digital connectivity is no longer a luxury but a necessity for participation in today’s world.” We look forward to carrying out these initial goals and finding new solutions to close the digital divide. In addition, we look forward to upcoming pilot projects:

**Community Device Loaner Program**
A reservable collection of laptops that is intended for group education and training purposes. Unlike the current library check-out system, which allows cardholders to check out one laptop or hotspot at a time, this collection would be reservable as a kit, ranging from 2-30 laptops for the community to use on a short-term basis.

**Neighborhood Mobile Pop-Ups**
Mobile tech hubs provide devices, internet sign-up support, and digital learning opportunities directly to the community. The mobile hub events will meet the community where they are (churches, mosques, markets, schools, rec centers, cultural centers, etc.)
Are you impacted by the digital divide? Are you committed to closing it?

Join us!

Visit www.DenverGov.org/SocialEquity
or email SocialEquity@denvergov.org