Digital Equity Capacity Grant Webinar Series

Building Digital Inclusion Coalitions

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Agenda

- Welcome & Context
- Digital Inclusion Coalitions
  - *Presented.by.the.National.Digital.Inclusion. Alliance.(NDIA)*
- Q&A

Objectives

- Understand how digital inclusion coalitions are formed, operate, and continue to develop
- Explore the different roles and functions digital inclusion coalitions undertake
- Learn about coalition structure and roles

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Part 2 Digital Equity Capacity Building Series

Wednesdays, 1-2 pm

July 31 - **Building Digital Inclusion Coalitions**

August 7 - **Equity in Digital Inclusion Project Implementation**

August 14 - **Preparing for Grants – Deeper Diver into Grant Writing**

August 21 – **Leveraging Data for Storytelling**

Register at https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/digital-equity-grants-capacity-building-series

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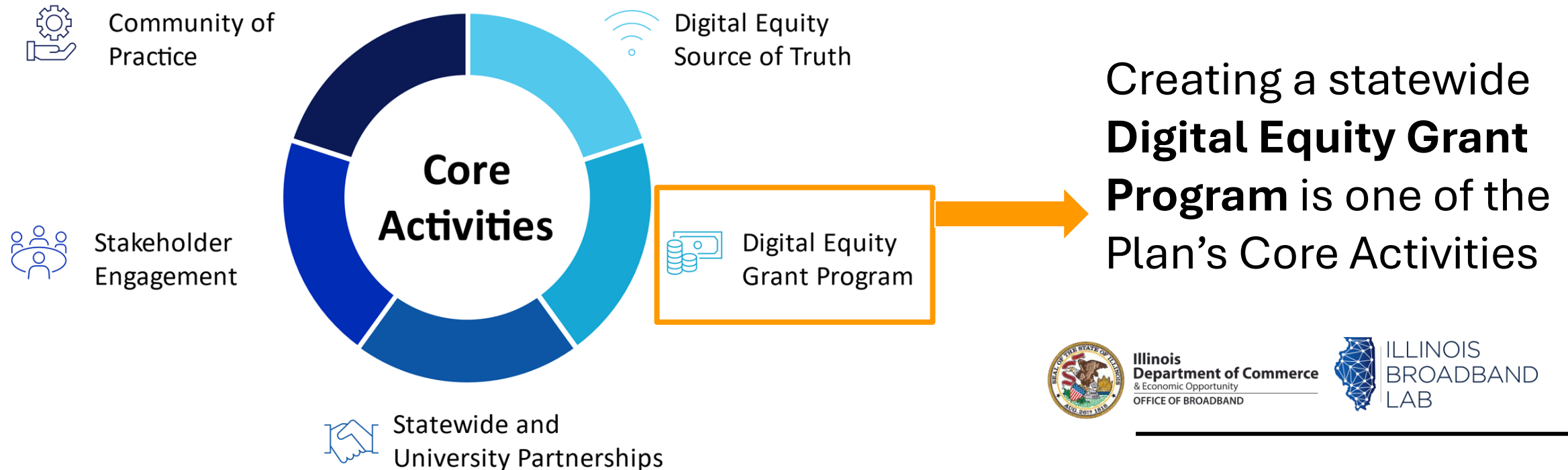# Context

State Digital Equity Plan has been approved!

Approval of the SDEP unlocks the opportunity for Illinois to apply for first Capacity Grant allocation from NTIA of $23.7 million to implement the plan.

Community of Practice

Stakeholder Engagement

Digital Equity Source of Truth

Core Activities

Digital Equity Grant Program

Statewide and University Partnerships

Creating a statewide **Digital Equity Grant Program** is one of the Plan's Core Activities

Illinois State Digital Equity Plan

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Foster partnerships and collaboration between new and existing organizations so that they may share their knowledge and resources to expand their impact.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Conduct and support stakeholder engagement across regions and in communities to ensure that the voices of residents and digital equity practitioners continue to be heard and to shape digital equity priorities and approaches.

DIGITAL EQUITY SOURCE OF TRUTH

Maintain and make available Illinois's digital equity data sets to serve as a common source of information.

DIGITAL EQUITY GRANT PROGRAM

Facilitate a statewide digital equity grant program to fund and provide resources for digital equity programs around the state.

NOFO estimated September 2024

STATEWIDE AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Coordinate programming on high-priority statewide and regional projects and establish research partnerships with universities and other state agencies.

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Illinois Digital Equity Capacity Grant Tentative Grant Project Types

Device Distribution Programs	Laptop, computer, or other device distribution to Covered Populations.
Digital Literacy + Skills Training	Classes, workshops, coaching, or other learning opportunities to help Covered Populations build digital skills and confidence.
Digital Navigation + Tech Support	Individuals embedded in community trained to help connect Covered Populations access affordable broadband, digital skill building, and other essential resources.
Broadband Affordability Program	Small infrastructure projects to increase affordability and choice within multi-dwelling units (MDUs), affordable housing, or other residential communities.
Access Expansion Feasibility Study	Opportunity for communities to chart their own broadband path through local coordination and planning.
Coalition Building	Seed funding for regional or local digital equity coalition formation, building, and growth.

Subject to change based on design process and adherence to program and agency requirements

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NTIA Requires Prioritization of Covered Populations

Low-income households

Incarcerated individuals

People with disabilities

Racial and ethnic minorities

Aging populations

Veterans

Rural inhabitants

People with language barriers

72% of Illinoisans are part of these identity groups and communities disproportionally impacted by digital inequity

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Digital Inclusion Coalitions

NATIONAL DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE

Paolo Balboa, Senior Program Manager

digitalinclusion.org | @netinclusion

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Today's Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Digital Inclusion Definitions
3. Barriers to Digital Inclusion
4. Two Types of Solutions
5. Joining the NDIA Community
6. Questions & Comments

Please Introduce Yourself

1. Name
2. Pronouns
3. Organization

About NDIA

National Digital Inclusion Alliance advances digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act.

1700+
Affiliates

50
States + DC, Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands

12
Tribal Entities

![NDIA logo]

If everyone had free access to fast and reliable internet, would that solve the digital divide?

Definitions

Digital Divide: The Issue

The gap between:

- Those who have affordable access, skills and support to effectively engage online

- Those who do not have access

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Digital Equity: The Goal

Condition where all individuals have the technology capacity needed to participate in:

- Society
- Democracy
- Economy

Why 'Digital Equity'?

Digital Inclusion: The Work

The activities necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to:

- Affordable home broadband
- Appropriate devices
- Digital Skills
- Tech Support
- Applications

Source: NDIA Definitions Page

Key Barriers to Digital Inclusion

Identifying Key Barriers

Reflect on the following question:

- What prevents people in your community from consistently connecting to the internet and using it effectively?

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Key Barriers to Digital Inclusion

BROADBAND

❌ Unaffordable

❌ Unreliable service

❌ Digital Redlining

DEVICES

❌ Unaffordable

❌ Outdated software

❌ Device not matching user's needs

DIGITAL SKILLS

❌ Limited skills

❌ Fear & shame

❌ Inaccessible trainings

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Solution: Digital Navigators

Digital Navigators

consistently provide holistic, individualized support through repeated interactions.

Affordable Broadband

Appropriate Devices

Digital Skills Training

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Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR)

The SOAR digital navigator program provides one-on-one support for devices, digital skills and support securing hotspots for residents in the eastern Kentucky region.

- Six Counties
- Travel Costs Built Into Program Design
- Three-Year Pilot

SOAR
SHAPING OUR APPALACHIAN REGION

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NDIA Resource:
Digital Navigator Page

Visit **NDIA's Digital Navigator Model** page to learn more about the open, flexible model & access:

- Skills Assessment
- Follow-up Survey
- Baseline Digital Navigator Job Description
- Intake Form & Exit Survey
- Digital Navigator Toolkit

Digital Navigator 101 Webinar

Digital navigators consistently provide holistic, individualized support through repeated interactions.

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Solution:
Digital Inclusion
Ecosystem

Digital Inclusion Ecosystem

A **digital inclusion ecosystem** is a combination of programs and policies that meet a geographic community's unique and diverse needs. Coordinating entities work together in an ecosystem to address all aspects of the digital divide, including affordable broadband, devices, and skills.

Digital Inclusion Coalitions

- Are a **collective** of organizations

- To raise **funding** for digital inclusion programs

- To **raise awareness** about digital inequities and the impact on your communities

○ Local Coalition
▬ Statewide Coalition
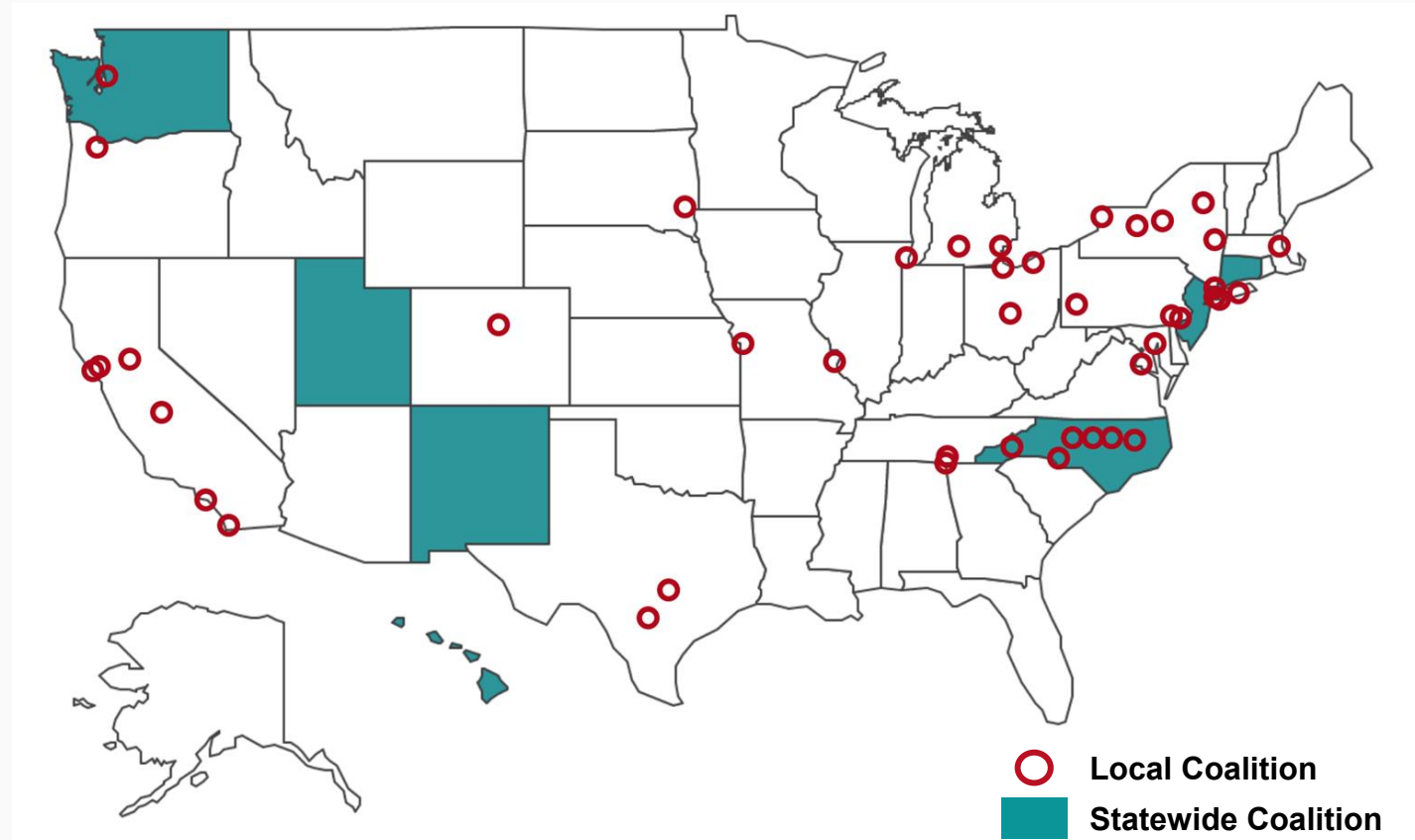
Role of Coalitions

THE ADVOCACY EFFECT

Coalitions raise the profile of digital inclusion for their communities' media, opinion leaders, and the general public.

THE ALIGNMENT EFFECT

Coalitions create a framework to align the perspectives of community players that share a concern about digital inclusion.

THE NETWORK EFFECT

Coalitions set the stage for member organizations to better understand each others' perspectives and discover opportunities.

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Who Is Involved in Coalitions?

Category	Value
Non-Profits	49
Libraries	46
Education (Higher)	42
Education (K-12)	40
Local Government	40
Workforce	39
Community Members	36
Economic Development	36
Health	33
Housing	31
Philanthropic/Financial	29
Internet Service Providers	27
State Government	23
For Profit Organizations	22
Regional Government	22
Other	5

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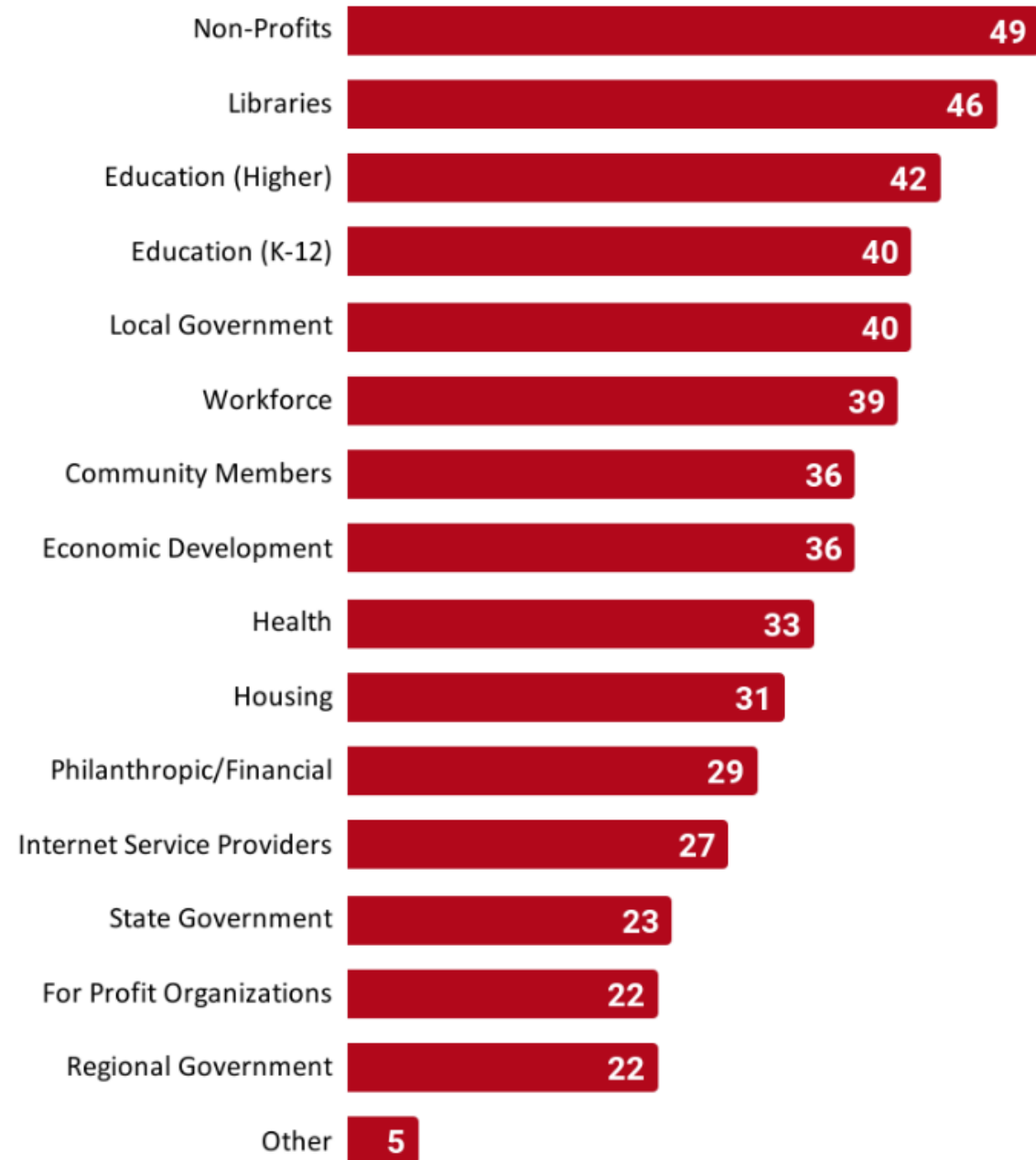
STRUCTURE

Coalition Structure
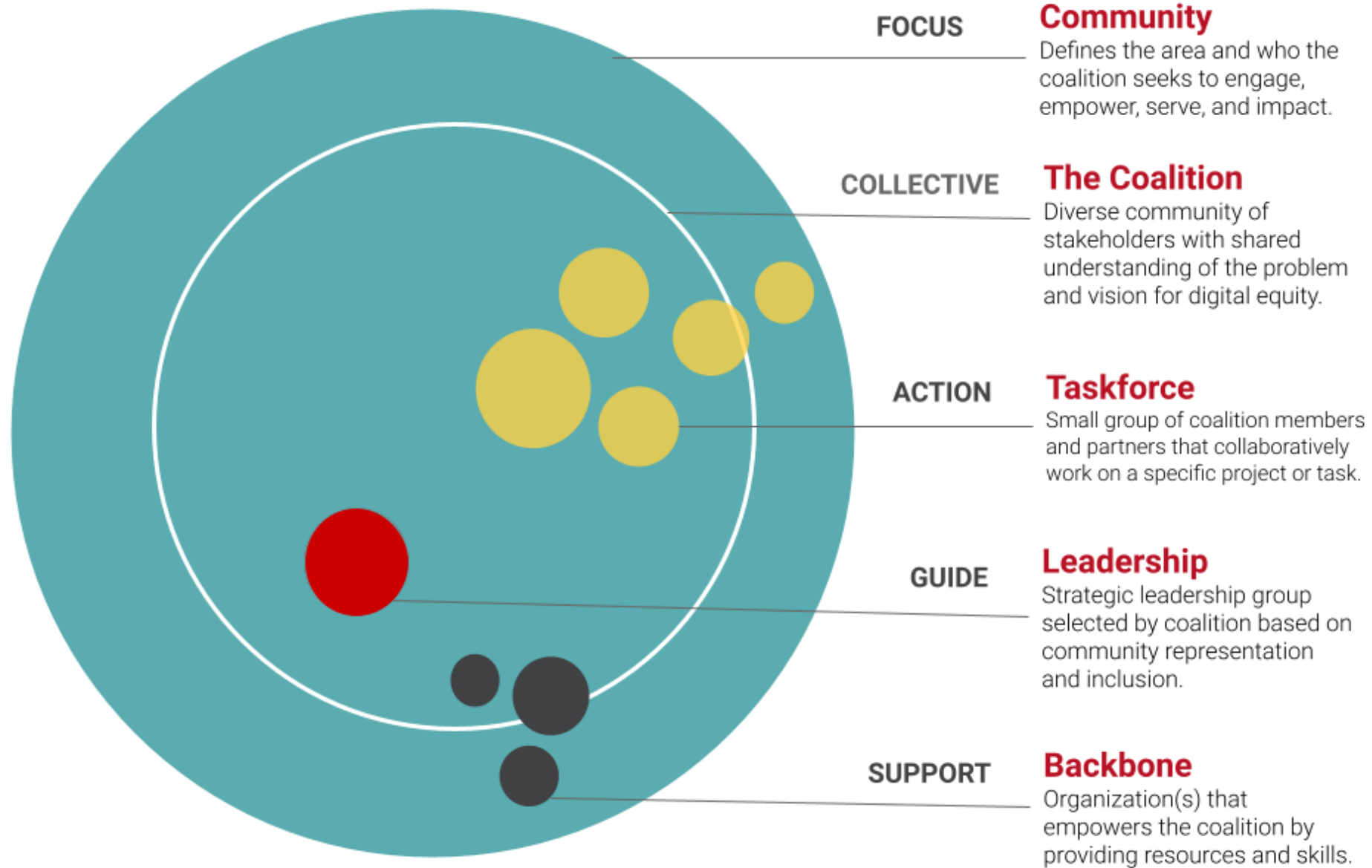
FOCUS — **Community**
Defines the area and who the coalition seeks to engage, empower, serve, and impact.

COLLECTIVE — **The Coalition**
Diverse community of stakeholders with shared understanding of the problem and vision for digital equity.

ACTION — **Taskforce**
Small group of coalition members and partners that collaboratively work on a specific project or task.

GUIDE — **Leadership**
Strategic leadership group selected by coalition based on community representation and inclusion.

SUPPORT — **Backbone**
Organization(s) that empowers the coalition by providing resources and skills.

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Coalitions In Practice

Best Practices: Y-Zone

☆ Establish a digital equity ecosystem driven by a coalition of committed local stakeholders, including residents and program youth

☆ Help eligible residents receive free or low-cost digital resources through these partnerships

☆ Collaborate with the community to identify adoption barriers and needs

Source: yzone.info

Best Practices: Greater Cleveland

- Launched officially in 2022, but organizations had been engaged in "the work" long before

- Community Asset Mapping key to developing stakeholder network

- Digital Navigator the program that partners across the region execute with shared resources

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Emerging Trends

Regional Leadership in Less-Resourced Areas

- ⭐ **DRIVE** economic development organization in central Pennsylvania developing local asset mapping tool

- ⭐ **Thrive Regional Partnership** tri-state non-profit leveraging cross-sector partnerships for coalition-development

- ⭐ **Generation WV** statewide workforce development agency supporting digital equity planning locally
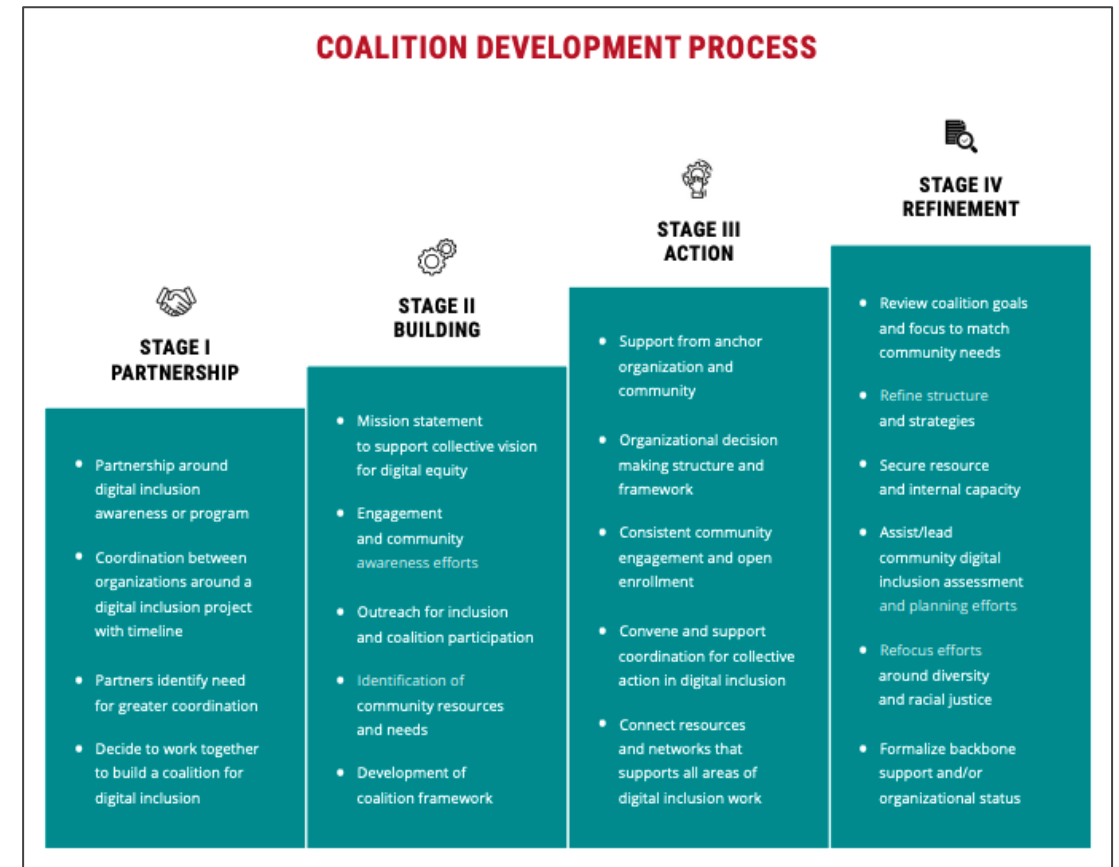
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Resources

Digital Inclusion Coalition Guidebook

Our **Digital Inclusion Coalition Guidebook** provides an in-depth look at successful models across coalitions.

- How coalitions form and are structured
- Keys to successful coalition operations
Ways coalitions adapt over time

COALITION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

STAGE I PARTNERSHIP
- Partnership around digital inclusion awareness or program
- Coordination between organizations around a digital inclusion project with timeline
- Partners identify need for greater coordination
- Decide to work together to build a coalition for digital inclusion

STAGE II BUILDING
- Mission statement to support collective vision for digital equity
- Engagement and community awareness efforts
- Outreach for inclusion and coalition participation
- Identification of community resources and needs
- Development of coalition framework

STAGE III ACTION
- Support from anchor organization and community
- Organizational decision making structure and framework
- Consistent community engagement and open enrollment
- Convene and support coordination for collective action in digital inclusion
- Connect resources and networks that supports all areas of digital inclusion work

STAGE IV REFINEMENT
- Review coalition goals and focus to match community needs
- Refine structure and strategies
- Secure resource and internal capacity
- Assist/lead community digital inclusion assessment and planning efforts
- Refocus efforts around diversity and racial justice
- Formalize backbone support and/or organizational status

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NDIA Resource: Digital Inclusion Trailblazers

Digital Inclusion Trailblazers are municipal, county or regional governments that are paving the way and providing excellent models for digitally inclusive communities.

Visit the page to learn more about the 2023 awardees. You'll find:

- Job Descriptions
- Survey Templates
- Digital Equity Strategies
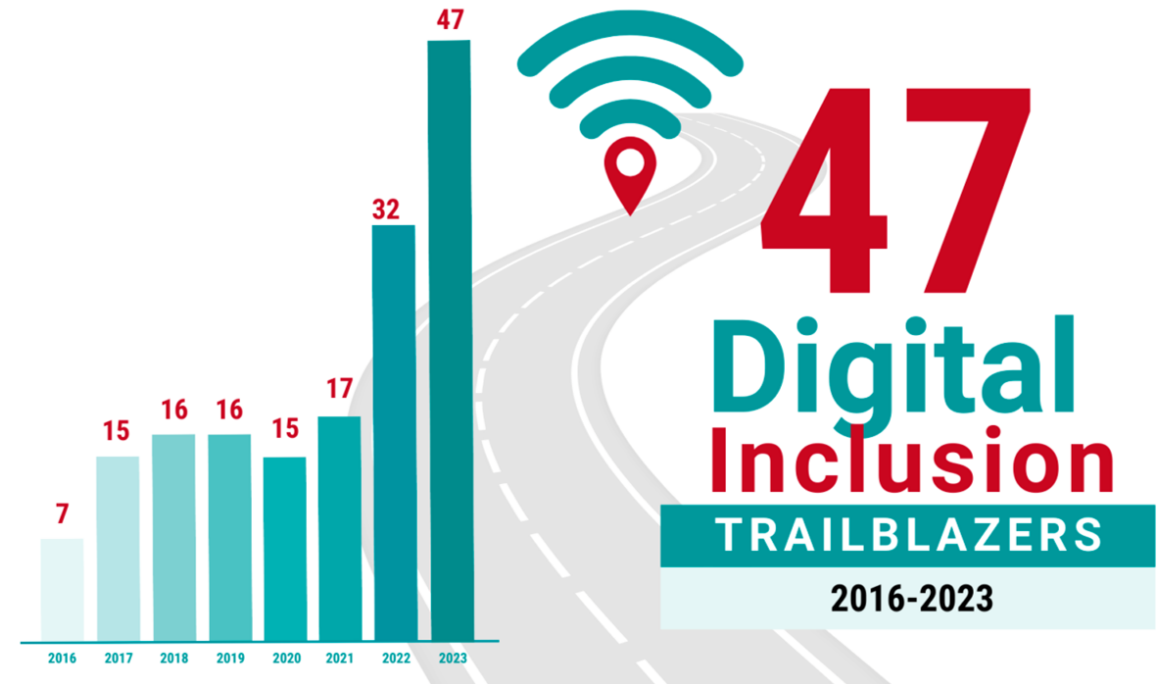
Join the NDIA Community

Become an Affiliate and get free access to:

✓ NDIA listserv with free resources, research and tools

✓ Monthly Community Calls

✓ Monthly Newsletter

✓

![NDIA Affiliate]
![NDIA Affiliate+]
![NDIA Friend]
![NDIA Corporate Supporter]

Join NDIA: **digitalinclusion.org/join/**

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THANK YOU!

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https://bit.ly/m/IllinoisBroadband

Broadband@Illinois.gov