Agenda

- IDEC Context – 10 min
- Leveraging Data for Storytelling– 30 min
- Grant Proposal Elements and Examples – 15 min
- Q&A – 5 min

Objectives

- **Understand common terms around data**
- **Learn how to find relevant broadband and digital equity data**
- **Explore ways to incorporate data in grant proposal writing for IDEC**
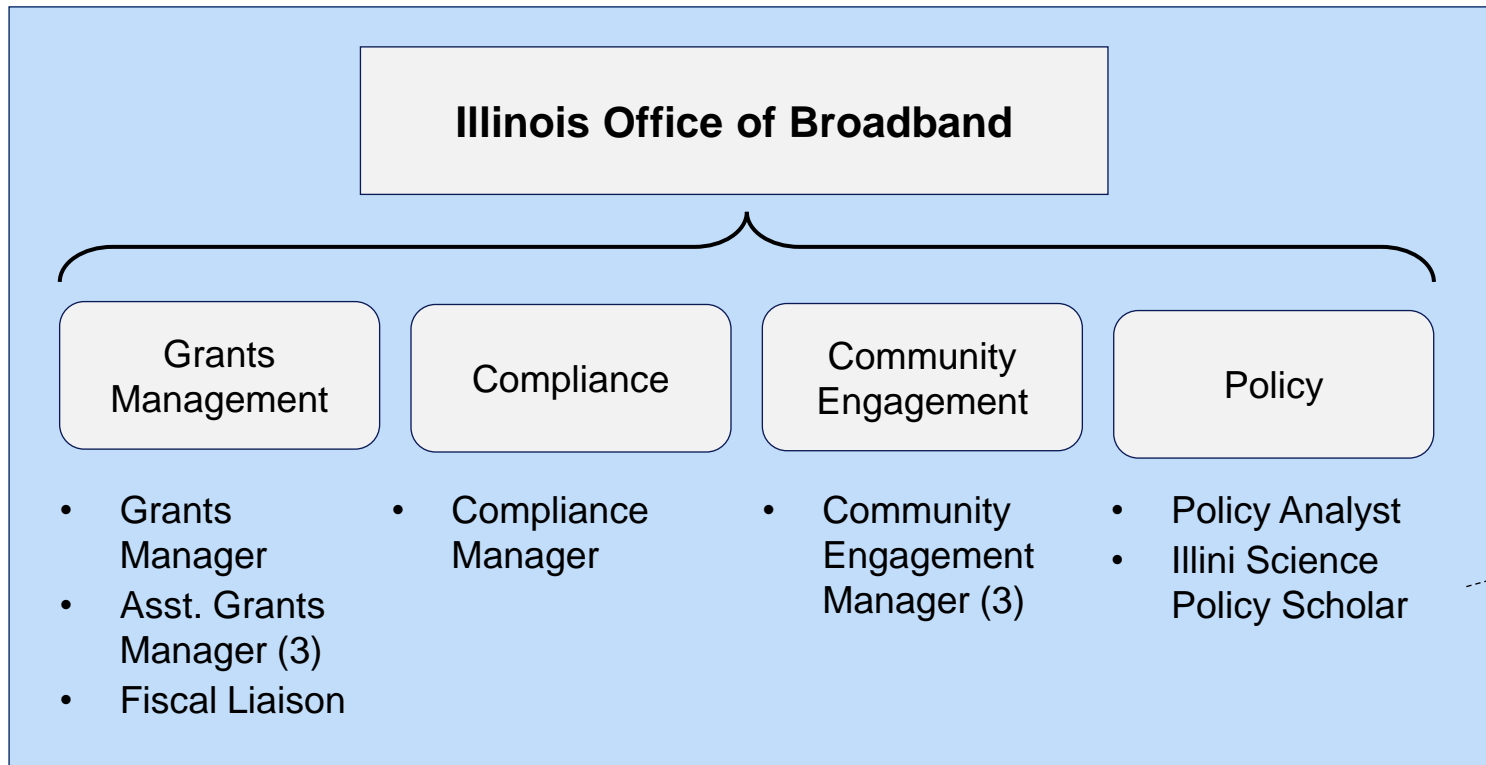- **See examples of how data is used in grant proposal writing**

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Illinois Digital Equity Capacity Grant (IDEC) Overview

Illinois Broadband Team

- The IOB was founded in 2019, yet is now one of the 50 state broadband offices tasked with **carrying out $1B+ in federal broadband infrastructure and digital equity programs**

- How?
  - ➤ Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program (2020 - 2024)
  - ➤ Broadband Equity Access & Deployment (BEAD) Program (2024 - 2029)
  - ➤ Digital Equity Act Capacity Grant (2024 - 2029)

Illinois Office of Broadband

Grants Management	Compliance	Community Engagement	Policy
• Grants Manager • Asst. Grants Manager (3) • Fiscal Liaison	• Compliance Manager	• Community Engagement Manager (3)	• Policy Analyst • Illini Science Policy Scholar

Illinois Broadband Lab at the University of Illinois System

- Mapping & Data
- Regional Engagement
- Digital Navigator Network

Digital Equity and Inclusion

Digital Equity: The condition in which individuals and communities have the information technology capacity that is needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States.

Digital Inclusion: The activities that are necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to and the use of, affordable information and communication technologies such as:

- Reliable broadband
- Devices
- Digital skills training
- Tech support
- Privacy and cybersecurity

When we use the word equity, we accurately acknowledge the systemic barriers that must be dismantled before achieving equitable outcome for all.
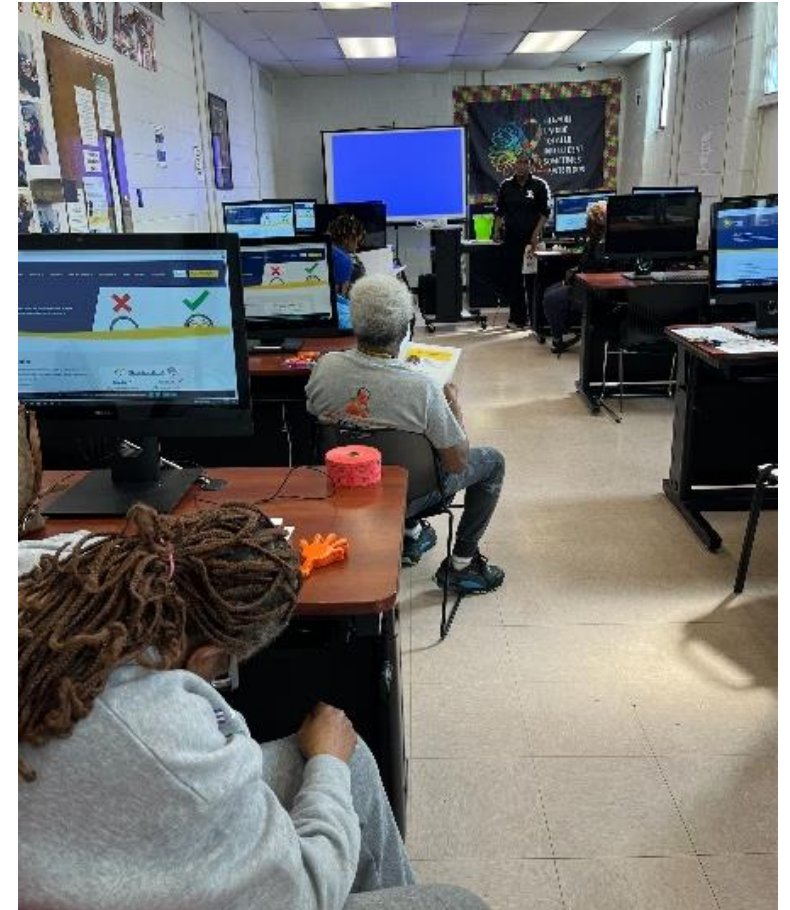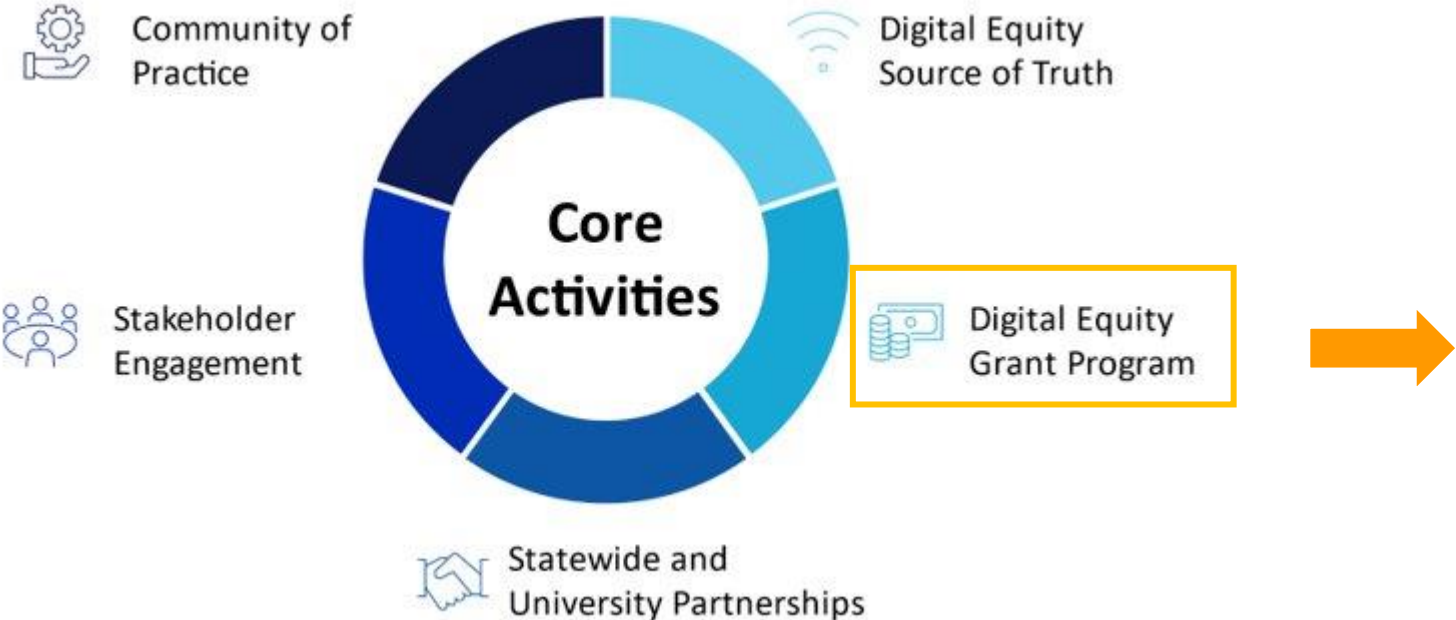

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Illinois State Digital Equity Plan

The **2021 Digital Equity Act** provides over $30 million to Illinois to implement the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP). The goals of the plan are to ensure that all people and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity needed to reap the full benefits of our digital economy. Core Activities of the SDEP include:

Community of Practice

Digital Equity Source of Truth

Core Activities

Stakeholder Engagement

Digital Equity Grant Program

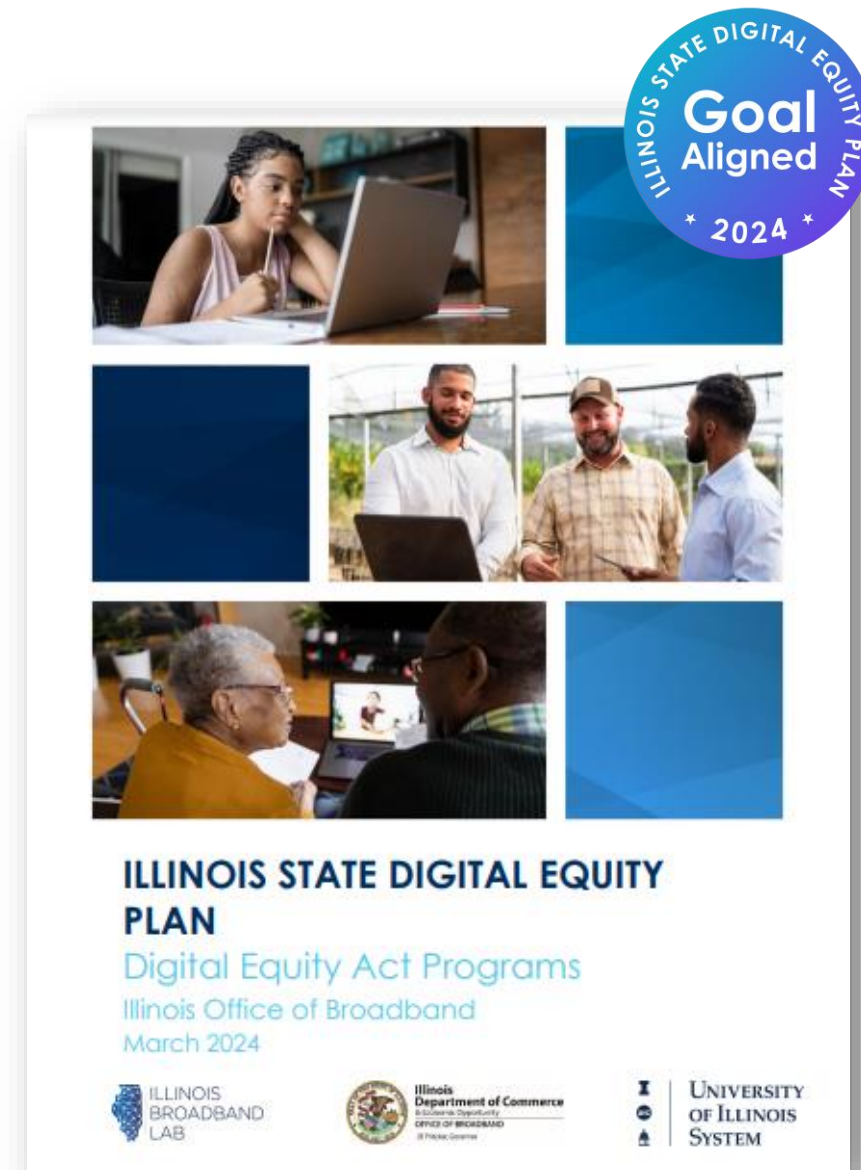Statewide and University Partnerships

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

State Digital Equity Plan Vision

- Ensuring universal access to high-speed broadband that is affordable, reliable, and fully scalable for residences, businesses, and community anchor institutions (CAIs) across Illinois by 2030.

- Leveraging new and existing resources to advance the adoption of internet use through targeted digital-inclusion strategies and sustainable broadband-equity outcomes to help communities identify and address current gaps in broadband equity.

- Empowering all Illinoisans to use and participate fully in an increasingly digital economy and society.

ILLINOIS STATE DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN
Digital Equity Act Programs
Illinois Office of Broadband
March 2024

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

Goal Aligned — ILLINOIS STATE DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN — 2024

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity OFFICE OF BROADBAND JB Pritzker, Governor

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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

80% of Illinoisans are part of these identity groups and communities disproportionally impacted by digital inequity

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Eligible Entities

A **foundation, corporation, institution, or association** that is a not-for-profit entity and not a school.

Entities that carry out **workforce development programs**

An **Indian Tribe, an Alaska Native entity, or a Native Hawaiian organization**

A local **educational agency**

Political subdivision, **agency** including those supervising adult education and literacy activities or for providing public housing

A **partnership** between any of the entities described above.

Community anchor institution, meaning a public school, housing authority, library, healthcare provider, higher education institutions and other nonprofit or community support organizations.

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IDEC Project Types

Digital Literacy and Skill Building	Classes, workshops, coaching, or other learning opportunities to help Covered Populations build digital skills.
Device Distribution	Distribution of devices, including laptops, computers, tablets, or other devices that address barriers faced by Covered Populations.
Digital Navigator(s)	Member of a community trained and designated to help Covered Populations enroll in high-speed internet service, navigate technology challenges, obtain devices, and find digital skill building opportunities.
Computer Center	Establish, improve, or expand community spaces with no-cost access to computers and the internet.
Local Broadband Planning	Resources for communities to create their own roadmaps to expanding broadband connectivity. This includes defining their access goals, assessing market and consumer dynamics, engaging internet providers, and exploring public-private partnerships and funding options.

One application may cover one or more project type.
Please refer to NOFO for details on each project type.

Application will require...

- Demonstrated Community Need and Service of Covered Populations
- Capacity of the Eligible Applicant
- Quality of the Proposal, including Alignment to State Digital Equity Plan
- Support from the Community
- Budget
- Plan for Sustainability

Application Review Criteria

Criteria	Description	
Community Need and Service of Covered Populations	The level of demonstrated need for improved broadband access, adoption, and/or use, and focus on serving one or more Covered Populations.	*Focus for Today*
Capacity of the Eligible Applicant	The level of commitment and appropriate skills of the lead organization to manage the project(s), particularly experience in similar digital equity programming, initiatives, or activities OR demonstrated knowledge of and experience serving Covered Population(s).	
Quality of the Proposal, including Alignment to State Digital Equity Plan	The level of specificity and clarity in the applicant's implementation plan, outreach to and service of Covered Populations, and alignment to specific State Digital Equity Plan goals and outcomes.	
Support from the Community	The level of demonstrated support from community stakeholders. Community support may be demonstrated through: letters of support; committed resources (i.e., space, funding); evidence of community-based planning, program design or input; or other meaningful showcase of support.	
Budget	Reasonable and viable use of funding that aligns with project priorities and evidence of need. If staff salary is included, demonstrate equity in compensation.	
Plan for Sustainability	The plan for program sustainability following the grant's period of performance.	

Consider language access, staff training, fair wages, and focus use of funding on direct community benefit.

Digital Equity Act Resources

Landing Pages, Links, & Resources:

State Digital Equity Plan

- **State Digital Equity Plan** (Final, Approved by NTIA April 10, 2024)
  - **Appendix**
- Executive Summary
  - **English**
  - **Spanish**
  - **Polish**
  - **Simplified Chinese**
  - **Tagalog**
  - **Arabic**

Digital Equity Plan Implementation

- **Webinars**
  - Grant Capacity Building Series
    - State Grant Basics – **Recording** | **Slides**
    - How to Write a Great Grant Application – **Recording** | **Slides**
    - How to Build a Strong Digital Inclusion Program – **Recording** | **Slides**
    - Building Digital Inclusion Coalitions – **Recording** | **Slides**
    - Equity in Digital Inclusion Project Implementation – **Recording** | **Slides**
    - Preparing for Grants – Deeper Dive into Grant Writing - **Recording** | **Slides**
    - Leveraging Data for Storytelling - **Recording** | **Slides**

- **Digital Equity Resources**
  - **Digital Skills Online Resources**
  - **Ventura County Digital Upskilling Training Program**
  - **Digital Equity Act Population Viewer**
  - **Free Digital Navigator Training by Community Tech Network**
  - **Free Digital Skills Library**
  - **NDIA's Digital Navigator Model**
  - **Data Sources**
  - **NDIA's Digital Inclusion Program Manual**

https://dceo.illinois.gov/broadband/digital-equity-act.html

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Why Data? Transforming Insights into Impactful Stories

- **Foundation of Decision-Making**, whether it's allocating resources, designing programs, or identifying community needs.

- **Driving Strategic Planning** to prioritize initiatives, monitor progress, and adjust strategies to meet goals more effectively.

- **Building Trust & Transparency** with stakeholders.

- **Empowering Communities** to better understand their challenges and participate in shaping solutions.

- **Unlocking Trends and Patterns** that can inform decision-making.

- **Building a compelling story** that can inspire action, drive policy, and secure funding.

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Common Terms

Data	Raw facts, figures, and details collected from various sources
Dataset	A collection of related data points organized in a structured format, often in tables, that can be analyzed.
Data Cleaning	The process of detecting and correcting (or removing) errors, inconsistencies, or inaccuracies in data to ensure its quality.
Data Analysis	The process of inspecting, cleaning, and modeling data to discover useful information, draw conclusions, and support decision-making.
Data Visualization	The representation of data through charts, graphs, maps, or other visual formats to make complex data easier to understand and interpret.
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Specific, measurable metrics used to track the performance and effectiveness of an organization, project, or process.
Quantitative Data	Numerical data that can be measured and quantified, often used for statistical analysis to identify patterns or trends.
Qualitative Data	Non-numerical data that provides descriptive details about characteristics, attributes, or qualities, often gathered through interviews, surveys, or observations.
Dashboards	Interactive visual displays of key metrics and data points that provide an at-a-glance overview of performance or status.
Infographics	Visual representations of information, data, or knowledge, intended to present complex information quickly and clearly.

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Respond in the chat...

How is your organization currently leveraging data?

What is the geographic area of interest for your data project?

Which data sources have you used in your data collection efforts?

Example of an Infographic from the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP)

Availability of broadband infrastructure

5%
5% of broadband-serviceable locations (BSLs) in Illinois do not have access to 25/3 Mbps internet service and are categorized as "unserved" by the FCC.[8] Some 4% of BSLs do not have access to 100/20 Mbps internet service and are thus categorized as "underserved."[9]

Affordability of internet subscriptions

17%
of Illinois residents find it difficult to afford their internet bill, and 14% have experienced interruptions in service because they had difficulty paying.[10]

Access to devices

~79%
or 3.9 million, of Illinois households have access to either a desktop or a laptop.[11]

Low levels of digital literacy

11%
of Illinoisans report that they have difficulty completing at least one of the surveyed tasks related to the internet.[12]

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Why Data Matters

Local Governments

- Informed, evidence-based policy development
- Optimal resource allocation
- Transparent performance tracking

Non-Profits

- Track program impact / effectiveness
- Identify target population and areas and optimize service delivery
- Strengthen advocacy and funding

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Illinois Digital Equity Capacity Grant (IDEC) Application Data Prep

Community Need and Service of Covered Populations
Socio-Economic Need

Context

- Demographic Data

- Socio-economic Need in the community. For example,
  - Educational attainment (Census Table s1501)
  - Poverty rate (Census Table s1701)
  - Participation in benefits program

Data Sources

Covered Populations by County and Census Tract- NTIA Digital Equity Act Population Viewer

Census Data | Census Quick facts (Census Tract or Census Places, County, State level data)

IPUMS* - US Census & ACS microdata (data intersectionality)

*Instructions for file extraction here

Dashboards

- Internet Adoption and Device Ownership based on various socio-economic characteristics by County Dashboard

- Broadband Access based on various socio-economic characteristics by County Dashboard

Program Eligibility showing need in the community

- ACP Eligible population (Zip Code)

- SNAP Congressional District Explorer

- National School Lunch Program eligibility (School District)

- SAIPE Data (School District, County, State)

- Distressed Communities List | Socially Vulnerable Communities

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Community Need and Service of Covered Populations
Broadband Availability data

Context

- Speeds Available

- Technology available

- Providers in the area

- Grant eligibility (Program-specific)

- Prior state or federal grant program areas

Data Sources

Illinois Broadband Map- also has a layer for the BEAD-eligible locations

FCC Broadband Map

USAC Connect America Fund Map

Broadband Funding Map

BEAD Eligibility Summary by County

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Community Need and Service of Covered Populations
Digital Equity- Adoption and Use Data

Context

- Broadband Affordability Data

- Barriers towards Adoption

- Digital Skills & Comfort

- Internet Use Trends

- Confidence with using technology

- Targeted Digital Equity Decision-making needs in Education, Workforce, Telehealth, Agriculture, Governance...

Data Sources

- Census data for internet subscription and access to devices

- NTIA Internet Use Survey

- Illinois CARE Connections Program Report, technology and assistive devices to older adults living in the community

- National Skills Coalition on Measuring Digital Skills

- School District Technology Survey, Learning Technology Center of Illinois

- Technology Use Survey on farms, USDA

- Local plans like economic development, education, and community health often contain valuable survey data and insights that directly link with specific industries

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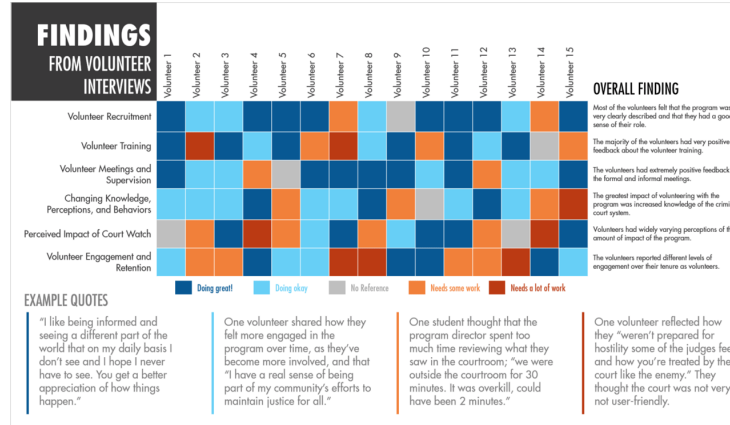
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Community Need & Service of Covered Populations
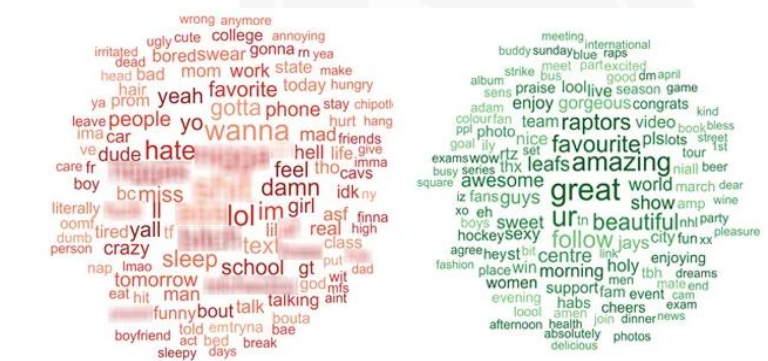
Qualitative Data

How to Collect Qualitative Data

- Interviews
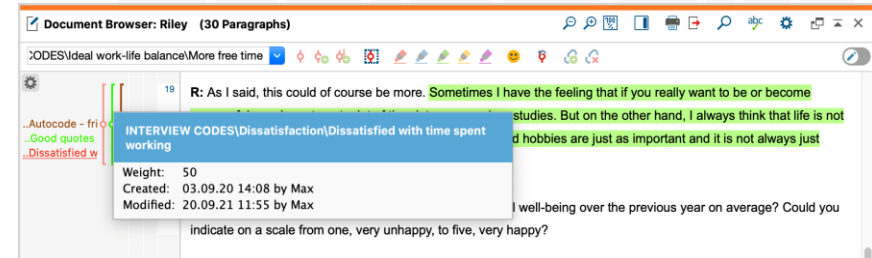
- Focus Groups

- Surveys with open-ended questions

Heat Table

Word cloud

Qualitative Data Analysis

- **Transcription**: Turning spoken words into text for analysis.

- **Coding**: Identify key themes, patterns, and concepts by labeling or "coding" chunks of text. This involves categorizing responses and highlighting significant points.

- **Thematic Content Analysis**: Group similar codes into broader themes to identify overarching ideas, trends, or patterns in the data to draw conclusions about the frequency or importance of specific ideas.

- **Triangulation**: Cross-check findings from multiple data sources or methods to ensure the validity and reliability of your conclusions.

Coding Stripes

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Capacity of Eligible Applicant

Things to consider when demonstrating capacity to successfully implement digital equity programs:

Considerations	Description
Alignment of the proposed project with the Organizational Mission	Clearly define how proposed project goals advance the mission of your organization and support broader digital equity objectives.
Proven Track Record of Digital Equity Impact	Highlight past project successes and measurable impacts, showcasing your expertise in delivering transformative results.
Commitment to Priority Communities	Showcase your experience serving Covered Populations and other priority groups, emphasizing deep community connections and trust.

Capacity of Eligible Applicant

Things to consider when demonstrating capacity to successfully implement digital equity programs

Leverage these metrics to showcase your organization's past successes and highlight the meaningful, measurable results achieved through previous Digital Equity initiatives:

- **Reach & Inclusion:** Total number of individuals served, broken down by Covered Populations, if possible; Detailed data on program participants to illustrate community reach.

- **Program Scope:** Number and types of programs implemented to address digital equity gaps.

- **Stories That Resonate:** Personal testimonies and anecdotes that vividly demonstrate the human impact of your work.

- **Broader Impact:** Demonstrated contributions to State or Territory goals, including:

  - **Economic Growth**: Job creation, workforce development achievements.

  - **Education Access**: Enhanced learning outcomes through technology.

  - **Health Improvements**: Improved telehealth access and health literacy.

  - **Civic Engagement**: Increased participation in democratic processes and social inclusion.

  - **Service Delivery**: Improved access to essential services like housing, transportation, and public benefits.

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Examples Demonstrating Impact of Digital Equity Projects

Example showing the impact of a digital literacy program

Example showing healthcare improvements through digital literacy efforts

Alignment with the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) goals

Appendix 3. Illinois's goals and objectives for broadband deployment and digital equity

Goal	Objective	KPI	Baseline	2027 target	2030 target	Area*	Interaction with state goals
	B1c. All Illinoisans possess the digital skills required to participate in the digital economy.	% Illinoisans with low digital literacy rate statewide	11%[116]	5%	0%	Digital Literacy	All state goals
		% racial/ethnic minorities with low digital literacy rate	15%[117]	8%	0%	Digital Literacy	All state goals
		% residents living in rural areas with low digital literacy rate	11%[118]	5%	0%	Digital Literacy	All state goals
		% residents with income <150% of the FPL with low digital literacy rate	28%[119]	14%	0%	Digital Literacy	All state goals
	B1d. Increased number of digital navigator programs, which provide critical technical support	# digital navigator programs offered across the state *From Connect Illinois BEAD Five-Year Action Plan	10	51	102	Digital Literacy, Availability of Technical Support	All state goals, especially civic and social engagement
	B1e. Increased number of digital navigator programs targeting covered populations	# digital navigator programs offered across the state, with a focus on covered populations	0	15	30	Digital Literacy, Availability of Techinical Support	All state goals, especially civic and social engagement
	B1f. Increased local government and	# counties with participants in statewide	38[120]	70	102	Digital Literacy	Civic and social engagement

The Illinois' goals and objectives for broadband deployment and digital equity table in the SDEP Appendix lists the goals and objectives that the Office wants to meet as part of the SDEP Implementation.

All goals have been assigned to one or more specific area(s):
1. Broadband Availability
2. Broadband Affordability
3. Digital Literacy
4. Device Availability and Affordability
5. Technical Support
6. Online Accessibility and Inclusivity

An understanding of this can help align your project goals with the broader state goals for digital equity.

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A section of the SDEP Goals and Objectives. Please visit the SDEP Appendix to see the full list.
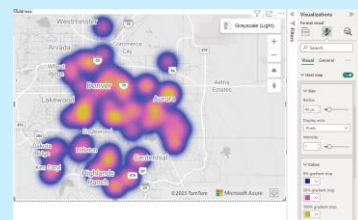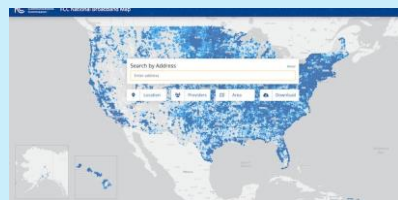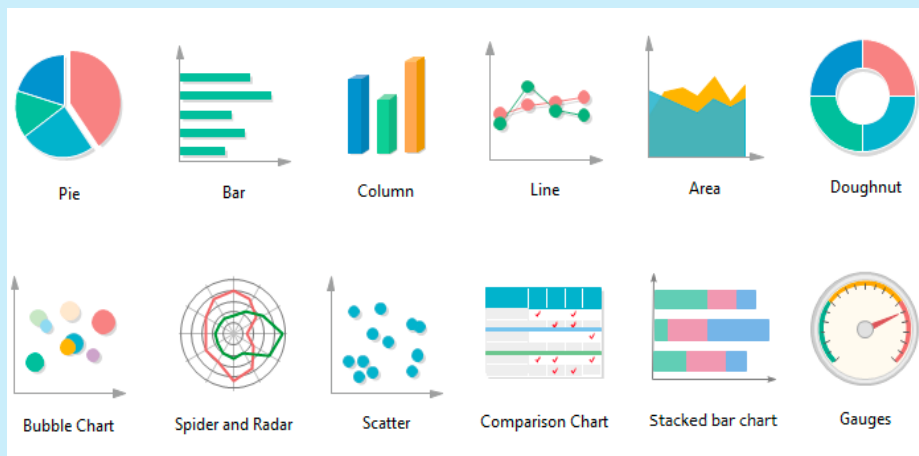
Turning data to visual stories

Why data visualization?
- Simplify Complexity
- Enhance Insight
- Drive Engagement

Best Practices in Data Visualization
- Clarity & Simplicity- Develop themes and guide audience through the data to get to a clear conclusion
- Share context

Common Visualization Types

Common Visualization Tools
- **Excel/Google Sheets**: Basic charting tools for quick, simple visuals.
- **Tableau**: Powerful tool for creating interactive and sophisticated visualizations.
- **Power BI**: Ideal for integrating data from various sources and building dashboards.
- **Canva**: Easy-to-use platforms for creating visually appealing infographics.
- **QGIS** : Open-source geospatial data analysis tool)

Examples of How to use Data in Grant Proposals

Community Need and Service of Covered Populations

Data can be used to demonstrate a community's need for improved broadband access, adoption, and/or use, and focus on serving one or more Covered Populations.

Applicants can consider telling their story using information such as...

- Demographic information, including percentage of Covered Populations

- Unemployment rate, poverty rate, education level and health insurance rate

- Additional socio-economic indicators such as segregation, crowded housing, median household income

- Access to 100/20 mbps internet, ownership of computing devices, % of individuals needing digital skills to access health, banking, education, social engagement, etc.

- Community stories and anecdotes on challenges accessing broadband and digital resources

Illustrative Example:

As a high economic hardship community, H township is rated among the lowest scores on six socioeconomic indicators: crowded housing, poverty, unemployment, percentage of adults without a high school diploma, percentage of the population under 18 or over 64 years of age, and per capita income.

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Capacity of the Eligible Applicant

Data can also be used to show the level of commitment and appropriate skills of the lead organization to manage the project, experience in similar digital equity programming, initiatives, or activities OR demonstrated knowledge of and experience serving Covered Population(s).

Applicants can consider telling their story using information such as...

- Description of existing programs, including:
  - Devices and services offered
  - Qualifications of service staff
  - Program outcomes, such as # of participants per program, # of participants completing program/certification, # of people gaining access to employment, telehealth, banking, and other essential online services because of the program
  - Success stories and thank-you letters from a participant about how your program has benefited them

Illustrative Example:

We've established the Digital Skill Building and Navigation program. This program represents a strategic partnership with A and B, symbolizing a collective effort to eliminate the digital divide. Here are some outcomes we achieved:

- *# participants enrolled in the Microsoft Office training, out of which # completed the training.*
- *# participants enrolled in the Google training, with # completing the program.*
- *# participants gained general access to computers and high-speed internet in the computer lab.*

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Quality of the Proposal, including Alignment to State Digital Equity Plan

Data can offer a level of specificity and clarity in the applicant's implementation plan. Data can show how applicant conducts outreach to and serves Covered Populations, and aligns to specific State Digital Equity Plan goals and outcomes.

Applicants can consider telling their story using information such as...

- Description of planned program, including budget allocation, staffing, services planned, outreach and marketing, data collection and reporting, and which goals and KPIs (key performance indicators) in the SDEP your program aligns with and your targeted outcomes.

Illustrative Example:

Digital Skill Building and Navigation program: *As part of this, participants will receive digital skills training, Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Training, job readiness training, and employment referrals. Advanced learners will have the opportunity to sit for the MOS Certification for Word and/or Excel.*

Impact: *In terms of quantifiable impact, we aim to enroll x participants in Microsoft Office Specialist training and y participants in digital skills program. We anticipate providing general access to computers and high-speed internet in our Community Technology Centers Open Lab and/or job search assistance to # unique participants. These outcomes will be tracked continuously using intake spreadsheets.*

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Quality of the Proposal, including Alignment to State Digital Equity Plan

Program and Objectives	Frequency	Target outcomes	SDEP Alignment
Establish a cohort model consisting of x virtual and y in-person participants.	# times a week from August 2025 through August 2028	1. # of digital skills training offered 2. # cohorts and participants (over the course of the grant) 3. # total participants (# virtually; # in-person) 4. % completion rate of course and # of participants 5. # of walk-in patrons served 6. # of tech support via phone	B1c. All Illinoisans possess the digital skills required to participate in the digital economy.
Walk-In Center on Fridays and helpdesk via phone	Weekly		B1g. Increased availability of free technical support

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Tips

Do

- Attend the specific grants webinars to know more about the scoring and application insights

- Read up on grant application resources

- Quantitative Data is a starting point. Integrate it with local knowledge

- Build data collection into your program design

- Qualitative Data Complements Quantitative Data: When used together, they provide a fuller picture, helping you understand not just the "what" but also the "why" behind the data.

- Data visualization after data collection and analysis plays a key role in driving impact and engagement.

Don't

- Use outdated data.

- Assume national or state level data trends apply locally without local context.

- Make conclusions or assumptions based on limited data.

- Minimize, invalidate or negate individual experiences due to larger data trends.

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NEXT STEPS

Ongoing Technical Assistance and capacity building webinars to help potential sub-grantees in their application process topics:

Registration: https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/illinois-digital-equity-capacity-grants-webinar-series

February 3 | 11 AM CT | Project Areas: Device Distribution/Digital Literacy/Tech Support

Learn from an organization that effectively implements learn-to-earn device distribution programs. You will also learn from one of the Illinois device distribution partners on how they manage providing devices for their partners.

February 7 | 11 AM CT | Illinois Digital Equity Capacity Grant (IDEC) Technical Assistance Webinar

This webinar will unpack the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) of the Illinois Digital Equity Capacity Grant (IDEC). You will get guidance on program requirements, budgeting and financial management and learn resources and tips to navigate the grant application process, project planning and compliance.

February 10 | 11 AM CT | Project Areas: Computer Tech Centers and Broadband Planning

Hear from organizations who have implemented computer technology center projects and community broadband planning projects and learn more about how to effectively plan and implement these projects.

February 14 | 11 AM CT | Project Areas: Digital Navigators

In this webinar, you will learn about setting up a digital navigation program and hear from organizations that host digital navigators, as well as digital navigators themselves about the essential services they provide to help communities achieve digital equity.

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Get support and stay in the know!

Not sure where to start? Email **broadband@illinois.gov**

For questions, guidance, or to schedule a guest presentation, contact your **Illinois Office of Broadband Community Engagement Manager**:

- Northern Region: Alicia.Ross@illinois.gov, 217-720-8149

- Central Region: Lingling.Liu@illinois.gov, 217-720-7718

- Southern Region: Hillary.Rains@illinois.gov, 217-720-4768

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Q & A