

# Institute for Emerging Issues

## Our Vision

A North Carolina where people connect and collaborate to build a vibrant and prosperous future for all.



## Our Values

- Partnership
- Inclusion
- Engagement
- Impact
- Leadership

## What is BAND-NC?

Our goal is to equip counties and regions with the tools to build more digitally equitable communities. We provide technical assistance and planning capacity to support every county in developing and implementing a digital inclusion plan.

## How do we accomplish this goal?

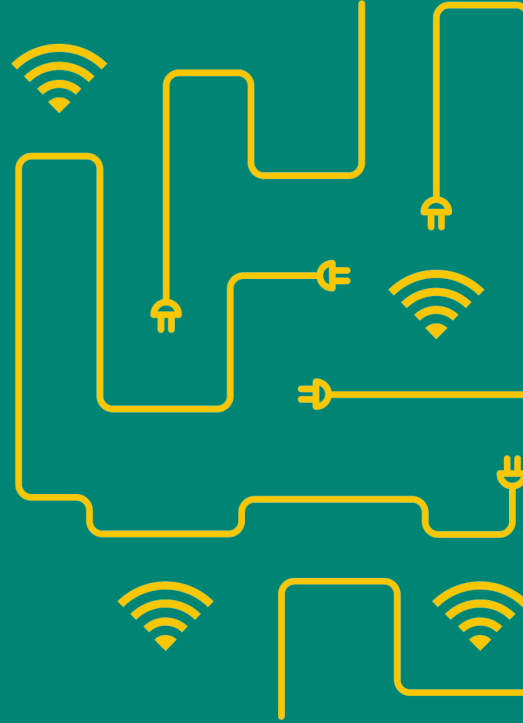
- Host monthly peer-sharing network meetings
- Host webinars on digital inclusion topics
- Create opportunities to convene around digital inclusion
- Provide an online Digital Inclusion Resource Hub
- Offer direct technical assistance
- Keep up to date on state and national digital inclusion efforts

# Current BAND-NC Partners and Sponsors



Digital divide is the issue.  
Digital equity is the goal.  
Digital inclusion is the work.

- National Digital Inclusion Alliance Definitions



# Digital Divide: The Challenge

The gap between those who have affordable access, skills, and support to effectively engage online and those who do not.

Disproportionately affecting people of color, Indigenous peoples, households with low incomes, people with disabilities, people in rural areas, and older adults.

# Digital Equity: The Goal

Where all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.

# Digital Inclusion: The Work

Activities necessary to ensure all individuals and communities have the following:

- Access to affordable high speed internet
- Access to a device that meets the needs of the user
- Access to digital skills training
- Quality technical support
- Apps and online content designed for self-sufficiency



# Why Does Digital Inclusion Matter?

## Economic Development

- Rural households subscribing to internet realized 1% increase in employment rate, >1% increase in income for avg. household benefits of \$2,222 or 4x cost of the service
- Rural areas obtaining 100 Mbps service see increase of business births at least 5 years; 250 Mbps even greater increase, but results with 1G service less clear
- E-Commerce – 18% compound annual growth 2000-2019, and accelerating since pandemic

# Why Does Digital Inclusion Matter?

## Workforce and Employment

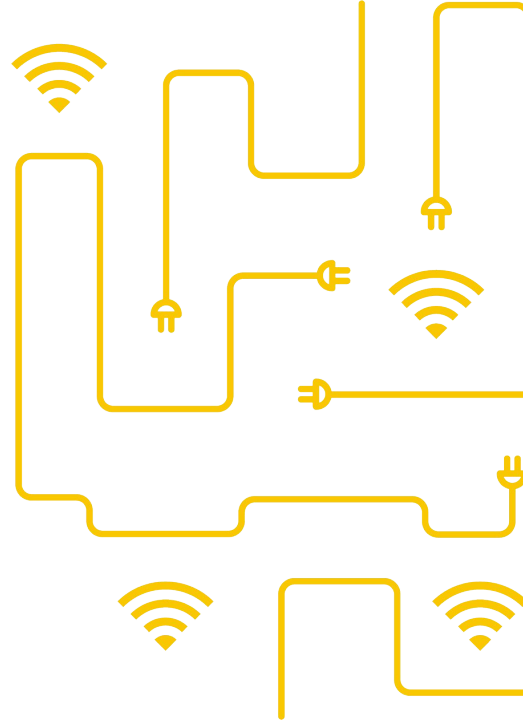
- 80% jobs openings posted online, 84% employers use social media to recruit with additional 9% planning to start
- Only 14% of folks with limited digital skills think the internet is important for job searches
- Jobs requiring 1 digital skill earn 20% more (avg \$8,000)
- Jobs requiring 3 digital skills earn 45% more, generating \$1,363-\$2,879 in additional tax revenues

# Why Does Digital Inclusion Matter?

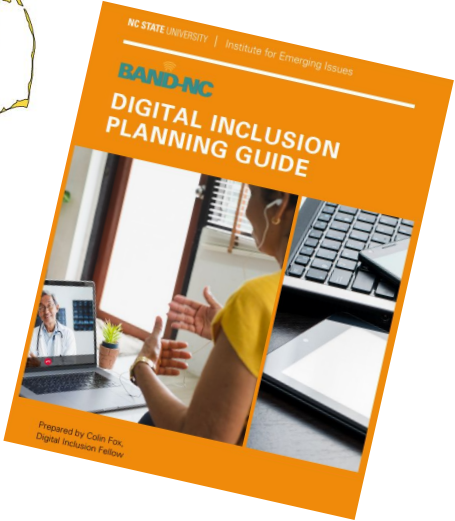
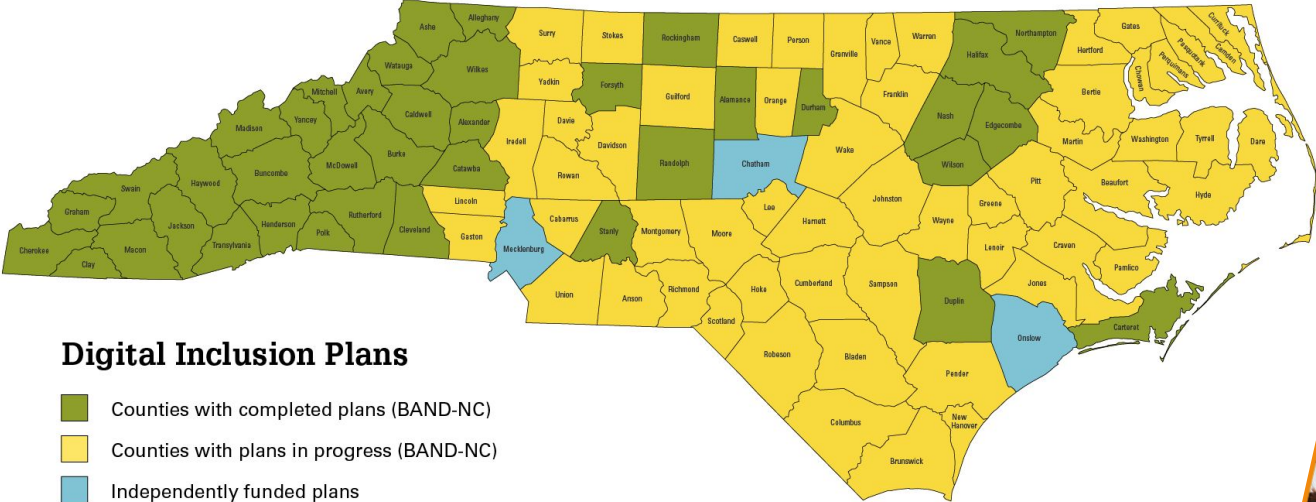
## Telehealth

- Telehealth can result in 67% fewer ER and urgent care visits
  - Telehealth consult \$41-\$49
  - Urgent Care \$98-\$163
  - ER Visit \$368-\$1,596
- 5 rural Indiana hospitals implementing telehealth generated > \$3.5 M in direct cost savings and benefits captured by communities
- Chronic disease incidence in rural communities is inversely correlated with broadband availability and even more strongly related with broadband adoption

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



# Regional Planning at a Glance



# Digital Inclusion Plan

A community strategic plan that addresses the components of digital inclusion and work to close the digital divide.

# Promising Practices: Health and Recovery Groups

The High Country Council of Governments is supporting digital inclusion with Wilkes Recovery Revolution:

- Helping navigate employment, housing, education and recovery is a mostly digital process
- Through grants, the program set up a computer lab, technical training, and is constantly adding digital skills to their classes and trainings offered to members
- Find out more through [Project H.O.W.](#)



**PEER NAVIGATORS**  
substance use disorder is isolating and lonely - a peer navigator can help you access resources and be successful in your recovery

**EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**  
we are committed to educating local businesses and agencies on the values of recovery through our *Recovery Friendly Workplace Toolkit* - many have already committed to working with individuals in recovery

**EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION**  
from soft-skills trainings, to fully funded certification courses at Wilkes Community College, we want to prepare you for a fulfilling career

**CRISIS ASSISTANCE**  
whether you need help right now, or are looking for crisis prevention tools, our staff at R3 Recovery Center are here to help

R3 Recovery Center is located at 1907 West Park Drive, N. Wilkesboro - Call us at 336-818-1909



SAN FRANCISCO

# Digital Equity Plan for Older Adults & Adults with Disabilities

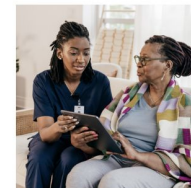
2024-2028



## Patrons, Patients, and Constituents: Health Equity in Aging

October 10 @ 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. PT

This webinar will focus on the unique role of digital navigators working with aging populations. Experts will discuss the specialized skills needed to address the digital literacy challenges in these environments, highlighting the importance of understanding both the technology and the specific needs of older adults. Attendees will also learn about the devices and tools that can enhance health equity for aging communities, making digital inclusion more accessible and effective.



### State Digital Inclusion Implementation Workshop

*Sponsored by AARP and in partnership with Pew Charitable Trusts*

Digital equity staff from 28 States, Territories, and the District of Columbia gathered in person and online on October 29 and 30 NDIA's workshop. This event was designed to support states in implementing their digital equity plans and developing sustainable, robust statewide digital equity ecosystems.

Thank you to AARP and Pew Charitable Trusts for supporting this workshop and digital inclusion work nationwide.





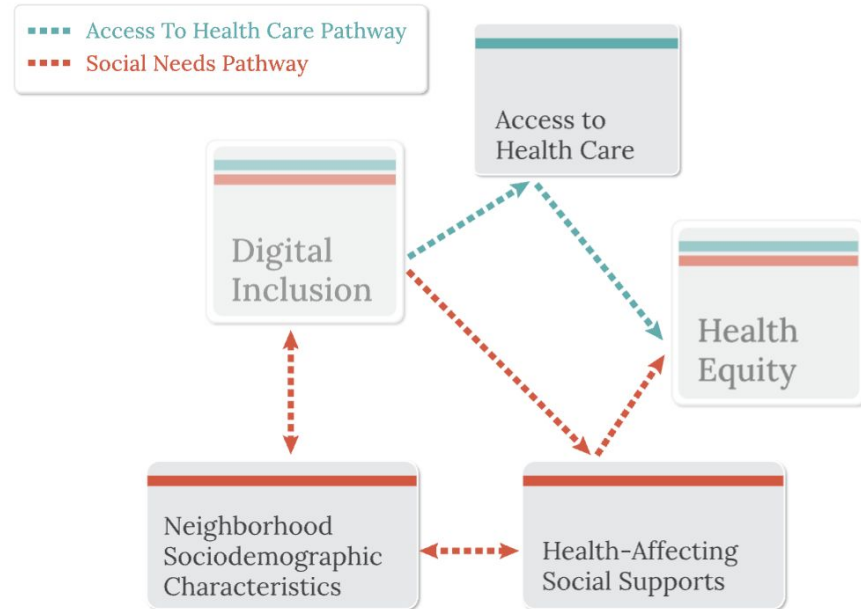
# Pillars, Policies, And Plausible Pathways Linking Digital Inclusion And Health Equity

[Amy R. Sheon](#), [Elaine C. Khoong](#)

Digital inclusion and health equity are connected through direct and indirect pathways. Strengthening both pathways will require broad policy and structural reforms to eliminate geographically based sociodemographic segregation and create conditions for people to use the internet to thrive.

## EXHIBIT 1 Pathways linking digital inclusion to health equity

Click on the boxes, arrows, and pathway labels below to learn more about the two pathways between digital inclusion and health equity.

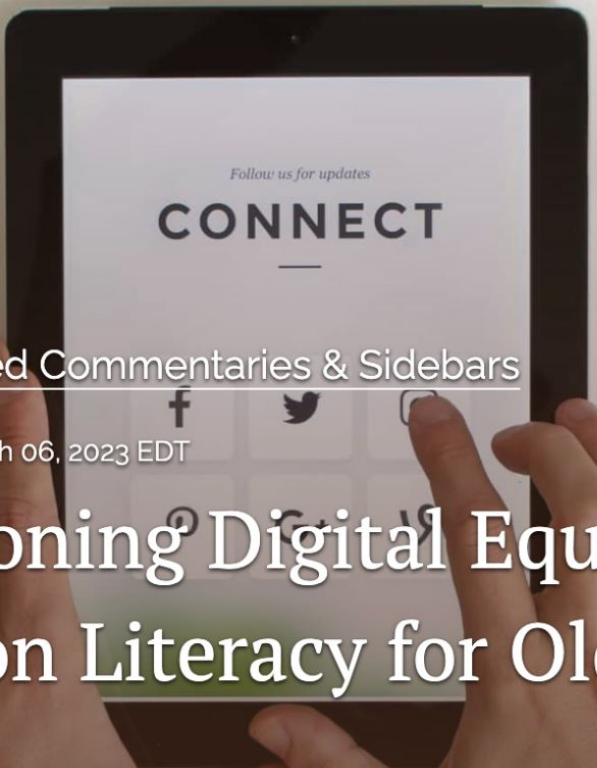


## Digital Champion Grant

### GRANT CYCLE NOW CLOSED

The Digital Champion grant program awarded more than \$30 million to community service, nonprofit, higher education and regional organizations to expand digital equity to North Carolinians. All projects must develop or expand digital equity programming and address at least one of the following elements of digital inclusion: affordability of reliable high-speed internet; provision of internet-enabled devices (computer, laptops, etc.) that meet users' needs; access to digital literacy and skills training; quality technical support; or applications and online content designed to increase accessibility and inclusivity.

This program establishes partnerships with organizations across the state to implement digital equity solutions that positively impact target populations identified in the Digital Equity Act, including low-income households; individuals who primarily reside in a rural area; older Americans/aging residents; incarcerated or justice involved; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals with a language barrier; and individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.



Policy Forum: Invited Commentaries & Sidebars

Vol. 84, Issue 2, 2023 • March 06, 2023 EDT

# Re-envisioning Digital Equity and Connection Literacy for Older Adults

Zachary White, PhD

digital equity

digital literacy

healthy aging

zachary white

Queens University of Charlotte



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# Resources

Digital Inclusion Resource Hub - <https://iei.ncsu.edu/digital-inclusion-resource-hub/>

State Digital Equity Plan - <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/digital-equity-plan-final/download>

BAND-NC Digital Inclusion Planning Guide - [go.ncsu.edu/digital-inclusion-planning-guide](https://go.ncsu.edu/digital-inclusion-planning-guide)

BAND-NC completed plans and workshops - <https://iei.ncsu.edu/band-nc/resources/>

Digital Champion Grantees- <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/digital-champion-grantees>

Digital Equity Grantees- <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/DEgrants-gov>

Social Bridging NC- <https://socialbridgingnc.org/>

Aging Connected- <https://agingconnected.org/>

NTIA Possible Grantees-

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yS54Zn3jxHasyV-l1edlXp57mg05hDWmX8\\_Mx2djG1k/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yS54Zn3jxHasyV-l1edlXp57mg05hDWmX8_Mx2djG1k/edit?usp=sharing)

# Questions?

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