Indiana Uplands Digital Inclusion Plan for Brown County

Digital Inclusion Plan Crawford County

Goals & Strategies:

Goal 1: Build/upgrade affordable and adequate broadband connectivity throughout the community and improve adoption

Strategy 1a) develop a county broadband comprehensive plan in conjunction with their housing initiatives

Strategy 1b) relying on primary or secondary data sources (including school district data), identify broadband investment priority areas (BIPAs) in the community. These may include areas in need of broadband investment to upgrade existing service and/or stimulate competition.

Strategy 1c) draft a request for proposals (RFP) for providers to invest in the BIPAs. This RFP should establish a minimum level (e.g., internet speed available) desired. RFP should result in an estimated cost to invest in the BIPA at the level required.

Strategy 1d) secure buy-in from local government and other stakeholders to provide funds and other resources to providers investing in the BIPAs. This includes identifying potential local, state, or federal sources.

Strategy 1e) streamline easements, rights-of-way, property tax abatements, incentives, and others to ensure ROI is maximized for providers. Offer help to providers that have secured federal or state funds to invest in your community so they can begin construction/upgrades as soon as possible.

Strategy 1f) identify or develop discounted internet service plans in partnership with internet providers, schools, and other key stakeholders.

Strategy 1g) design and implement an awareness campaign of discounted service plans (if any) as well as efforts to increase adoption among community residents, businesses, and organizations.

Strategy 1h) look into alternative funding options for broadband infrastructure in high density populated areas.

Goal 2: Strive to establish and sustain a digital equity ecosystem (Note: digital equity ecosystems are defined as the interactions between individuals, populations, and their larger socioeconomic and technical environments that play a role in shaping digital inclusion work).

Strategy 2a) expand the digital advisory team into a broader coalition of digital inclusion stakeholders in the community. Partner with schools, library branches and community locations that have broadband to develop this coalition. This coalition can monitor implementation of the plan and review progress twice per year, coordinate networking around digital inclusion, and serve as a liaison to additional community coalitions.

Strategy 2b) gather more timely and detailed information regarding internet access, availability, cost, and utilization. This data should continue to inform the implementation of the plan and monitor progress in reducing digital exclusion in the community.

Strategy 2c) constantly update inventory of a) facilities conducive to digital literacy workshops; b) businesses and organization donating devices; c) existing digital literacy workshops and topics available.

Strategy 2d) ensure that digital inclusion is a community and economic development priority in addition to a social justice issue.

Goal 3: Improve digital literacy and skills among all residents.

Strategy 3a) inventory community anchor institutions and other relevant organizations (e.g., libraries, bookstores, community colleges, churches, etc.) with access to fast internet and devices that are better positioned to host digital literacy workshops and/or provide public access to devices and internet.

Strategy 3b) inventory existing digital literacy workshops and classes to identify gaps and niches to be filled including but not limited to efforts conducted by schools, nonprofits, community colleges, local economic development organizations, etc.

Strategy 3c) once locations conducive to hosting digital literacy workshops and existing efforts are identified, jointly develop a schedule to offer frequent workshops for free or at a discounted price targeting multiple groups in the community.

Strategy 3d) develop a digital inclusion workshop targeted to parents to support the school systems.
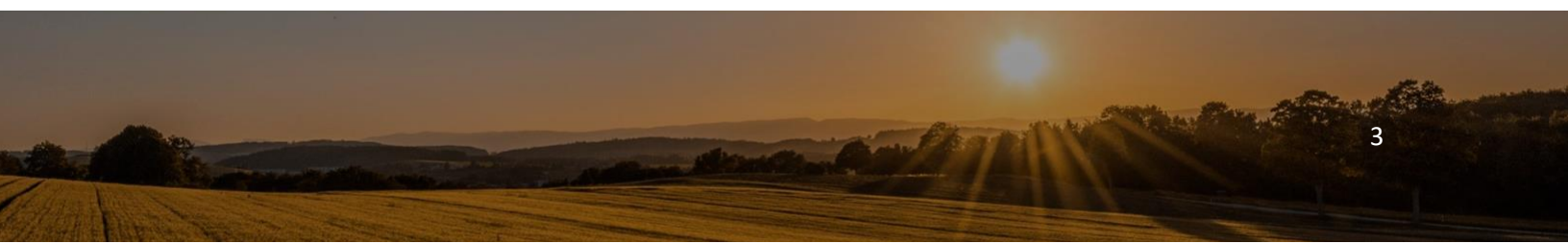
Goal 4: Integrate digital inclusion strategies into community, economic, and workforce development.

Strategy 4a) in partnership with the local economic development organization, chamber, and/or main street association survey existing businesses to identify their information technology and workforce needs. The local community joined together to obtain Broadband Ready status in XXXX.

Strategy 4b) convene stakeholders related to Telehealth (Ex: IU Health, Columbus Regional, Centerstone) to understand existing resources and challenges. Institutionalize connections between this sector and the broader digital equity ecosystem.

> a) Work with the community foundation to expand telehealth opportunities.

Strategy 4c) continue to support the existing efforts from the LEDO, chamber, and/or main street association develop and implement an entrepreneurship ecosystem with an emphasis on developing products and services more aligned to the digital economy (e.g., artificial intelligence startups, app development, online services, consulting, data analysis, etc.) as well as assess and improve business and organization's online presence.

Strategy 4d) deploy incentives to a) subsidize home internet subscriptions for remote workers; b) provide a nesting and/or co-working facility to remote workers (see Strategy 4b); c) make it easy for businesses to allow and/or hire remote workers; d) potentially subsidize outside employers to hire residents as remote workers.

Strategy 4e) assess the community's online presence and reputation; develop and implement a digital engagement plan to a) improve online presence; b) proactively manage community's online reputation; c) and leverage digital platforms to increase civic engagement, trust and responsiveness.

Strategy 4f) survey manufacturers and other businesses to better understand the barriers or workforce needs around the adoption of artificial intelligence. Develop tools and resources to help organizations adopt and benefit from artificial intelligence.

Strategy 4g) provide resources to farmers to adopt digital agriculture strategies (e.g., precision agriculture) and encourage and support farm-to-table programs

Strategy 4h) provide support to schools to develop programs that will help incentivize recruitment.

Goal 5: Ensure residents have access to quality and reliable devices.

Strategy 5a) partner with local nonprofits involved in the delivery of social programs to potentially identify community residents in need of devices and/or digital literacy workshops. Likewise, work closely with schools to identify families in need of devices as well.

Strategy 5b) research and secure grants to offer incentives to volunteers and help support the device program in the community.

Strategy 5c) work in partnership with schools, LEDO's, chamber and local organizations to develop awareness regarding resource opportunities for reliable devices & broadband access for families.