Indiana Uplands Digital Inclusion Plan
Lawrence County

Digital Inclusion Plan

Goals & Strategies

Goal 1: Improve digital literacy and skills among all residents.

Strategy 1a) 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.

Organize partnerships with select community anchor institutions and other relevant organizations identified in the inventory.

Focus on expanding digital literacy efforts as a combined effort with these community anchor institutions.

Schools to reach out to include the North Lawrence Community Schools and the Lawrence County Independent School Corporations. Community organizations open to collaboration include StoneGate Education & Art Center.

Strategy 1b) 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.

Identify communities' largest technology and broadband knowledge gap.

Identify potential community broadband access hub and create marketing material to share with community members to increase awareness

Strategy 1c) 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.

Develop workshops for municipal entities to learn marketing & social media tactics

Strategy 1d) Partner with community organizations to address potential generational gaps by 1) defining digital literacy, 2) explaining the important of digital literacy, 3) providing resources to increase digital literacy among community members

Goal 2: Integrate digital inclusion strategies into community, economic, and workforce development.

Strategy 2a) 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.

Strategy 2b) 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.

> Organize to host Digital Ready Business Workshops through Extension and Digital Fellows

Strategy 2c) survey manufacturers and other businesses to better understand the barriers or workforce needs around the adoption of online presence and tools. Develop tools and resources to help organizations adopt and benefit from an online presence and online tools.

Strategy 2d) 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 2e) provide resources to farmers to adopt digital agriculture strategies (e.g., precision agriculture) and encourage and support farm-to-table programs

MAYBE INCLUDE:

Strategy 4b) identify facilities in the community that could potentially be transformed into business incubators, co-working spaces, telework nesting, and/or tech hubs.

Strategy 4c) in partnership with 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.
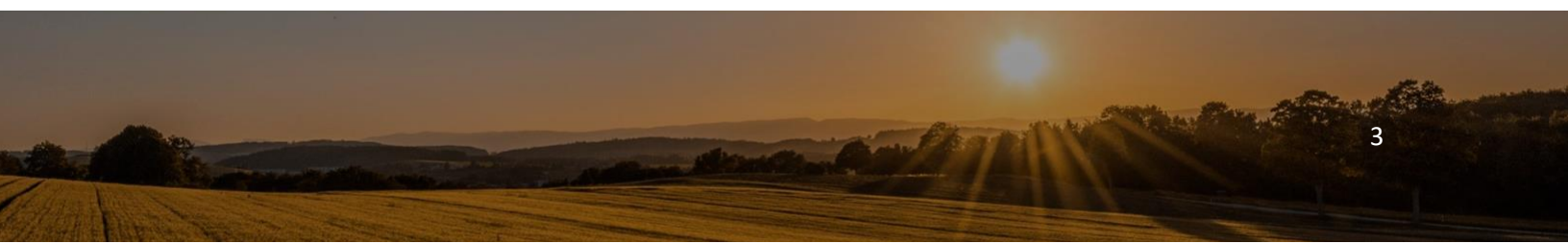
Goal 3: Strive to establish and sustain a digital equity ecosystem (Note: digital equity ecosystems are defined as the interactions between individuals, populations, and their larger socioeconomic and technical environments that play a role in shaping digital inclusion work).

Strategy 3a) create a digital advisory team into a broader coalition of digital inclusion stakeholders in the community. 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 3b) 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.

Explore funding opportunities to invest in devices

Expand device loan programs throughout the county

Strategy 3d) 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.

Meet with broadband providers and explore expanding infrastructure

Strategy 3e) ensure that digital inclusion is a community and economic development priority in addition to a social justice issue.

ALTERNATIVES TO SOCIAL JUSTICE: EQUITY, FAIR ACCESS TO BROADBAND

Goal 4: Build/upgrade affordable and adequate broadband connectivity throughout the community and improve adoption

Strategy 4a) 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 4b) 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 4d) identify or develop discounted internet service plans in partnership with internet providers, schools, and other key stakeholders.

Strategy 4e) 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 4f) Through the Next Level Connection Grant, explore options to streamline easements, rights-of-way, property tax abatements, incentives, and others to ensure ROI is maximized for providers. Research ways to 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.

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

Strategy 5a) identify businesses and organizations in the community that may be willing to donate devices including desktops, laptops, and tablets and build awareness of current device loan services in the community

Strategy 5b) expand existing device give-aways or loan programs in partnership with nonprofits, libraries and additional community entities. Device programs should be administered by local organizations and coordinated with donating businesses and organizations.

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