DIGITAL INCLUSION : COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Brought to you by:

The Forsyth County Digital Equity Steering Committee

ABOUT THE FORSYTH COUNTY DIGITAL EQUITY COMMITTEE

- The Forsyth County Digital Equity Steering Committee is a diverse group of community stakeholders who have come together to tackle the Civil Rights Issue of the 21st Century: Bridging the Digital Divide.

- In collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Information Technology and NC State University's Institute of Emerging Issues, Forsyth County is among a growing number of communities across the state who are working to ensure that every local resident has the tools, knowledge, infrastructure, and financial ability to access high-speed Internet in their homes.

- The North Carolina Department of Information Technology has set a goal of making NC the first state in the nation in which every county has a digital inclusion plan in place. We seek to develop a comprehensive Digital Inclusion plan for Forsyth County. We believe that, by making Internet adoption an option for every local resident, we will be able achieve Digital Equity in Forsyth County.

ABOUT US

Mission: The Forsyth County Digital Equity Steering Committee exists to bring awareness and change through community collaboration to ensure that information technology is accessible, affordable, and relevant for all Forsyth County residents, especially those in underserved communities.

Vision: Forsyth County is a thriving, inclusive community where all residents- especially residents of underserved communities- have equal access to learn, participate, and contribute to society through robust and digital information technology.

OUR VALUES

❖ Transparency

❖ Sustainability

❖ Equity

❖ Access

❖ Inclusion

❖ Integrity

WHAT IS THE DIGITAL DIVIDE?

- The Digital Divide refers to the gap between those who have access to technology, the internet, and digital literacy training and those who do not.

DIGITAL INCLUSION

- Digital Inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, especially underrepresented populations, have access to and use of information and communication technologies.

- Digital Inclusion requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional, and structural barriers to access and use technology.

- Digital Inclusion is the path whereby a community achieves Digital Equity.

5 COMPONENTS OF DIGITAL INCLUSION

1) Affordable, robust broadband internet service;

2) Internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user;

3) Access to digital literacy training;

4) Quality technical support; and

5) Applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.
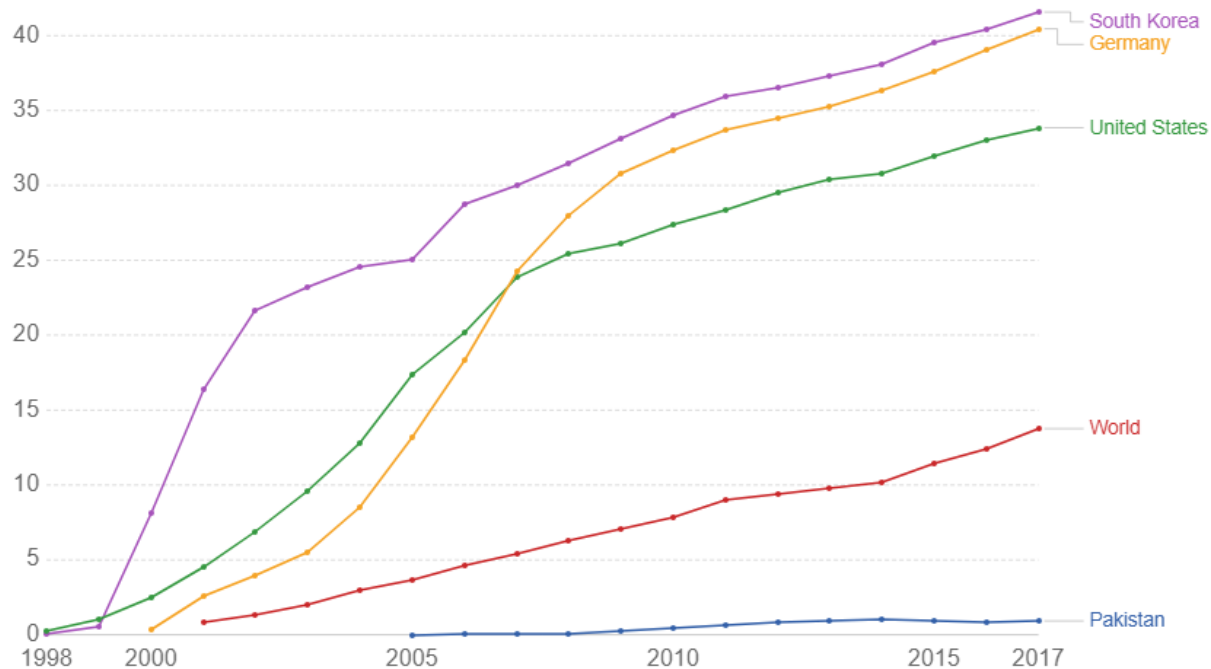
DIGITAL EQUITY

Digital Equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy. Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

Broadband subscriptions per 100 people

WHAT IS INTERNET ADOPTION?

Internet Adoption refers to the percentage of the population that subscribes to a broadband service.

WHY DOES INTERNET ADOPTION MATTER?

• Being able to access high-speed Internet in the home gives individuals the ability to connect to valuable educational, healthcare, and employment resources that can improve their social mobility as well as their quality of life.

• Research shows that high levels of broadband availability are associated with lower total unemployment and higher numbers of businesses and jobs in community.

STATISTICS IN NC

❖ Statewide, only 62.6% of households subscribe to high-speed Internet services.

❖ Nearly 6% of North Carolina households rely on smartphones solely for their Internet access.

❖ More than 12% of North Carolina households have no computers or Internet-capable devices in the home

Source: American Community Survey, 2018

NEXT STEPS FOR THE FORSYTH COUNTY DIGITAL EQUITY COMMITTEE

- [Engage a consultant](#) to assist in the creation of a Digital Inclusion Plan for Forsyth County

- Inform our community of the work of the Steering Committee through a public launch

- Assess current state of digital inclusion in Forsyth County, including asset and needs inventories

- Engage the community members (especially those from underserved communities) in sharing data, stories, and resources to shape and inform the plan

- Create comprehensive plan for digital inclusion including recommended strategies, necessary resources, implementation strategies,

- Publish the completed plan in a public platform for community

- Collaborate on action plans to implement plan recommendations

JOIN US!

The Forsyth County Digital Equity Committee needs your help!

Here are some ways you can support the effort to increase digital inclusion in our community:

- Get informed about the issue. (Please follow up with the FCDE Committee for more details on the local effort!)

- Advocate for policies and programs that promote digital inclusion.

- Spread the word about the need for digital inclusion among your networks.

- Help publicize and promote the planning process to ensure the best possible community engagement.

- Support the rollout of the plan.

Together, we can make Digital Equity a reality in Forsyth County!

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

If you are interested in learning more about the local digital inclusion effort, the Forsyth County Digital Equity Committee, or how you can partner, we want to hear from you! Please contact one of the FCDE Committee leaders below to schedule a virtual chat or phone call.

- Layla Garms, lgarms@wsfoundation.org or 336/607.5123

- Tom Kureczka, tomk@cityofws.org or 336/747.7005

- Martha Allman, allmanmb@wfu.edu or 336/758.5175

- Adam Hill, adam@forsythfutures.org or 336/701.1700 ext. 102

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FORSYTH COUNTY DIGITAL EQUITY STEERING COMMITTEE

- Adam Hill, Forsyth Futures
- Alana James, Wake Forest Baptist Hospital
- Caitlin Burke, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
- Calvin McRae, Greater Winston-Salem, Inc.
- Charlette Lindell, The Forsyth Promise
- Darlie Dudley, Housing Authority of Winston-Salem
- David Kwiatowski, Forsyth County
- Effie McMillan, Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools
- Joel Saahir, Community
- Kellie Easton, Action4Equity
- Kevin Sherrill, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

- Katura Jackson, Child Care Resource Center
- Layla Garms, The Winston-Salem Foundation
- Linda Carter, Neighborhoods Empowered Through Technology (NETT)
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- Tom Kureczka, City of Winston-Salem
- Tonya Bellanger, Quality Education Academy
- Trina Stephens, MDC
- Veronica Bitting, Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods
- Yolanda Bolden, Forsyth County Public Libraries

We appreciate your consideration!