

Hello DIN members,

We are canceling this week's DIN meeting due to planning team capacity limitations and a lack of specific agenda items for discussion.

The next DIN meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2:30-4:00. Have a topic you'd like to discuss at the next meeting? Add it to the agenda [here](#).

Updates

ARPA Funding for Digital Equity

The City of Portland allocated \$3.5 million of the City's ARPA funding to expand the CARES Act Tech kit project. Portland City Council directed the Office for Community Technology to work with the community to determine how to prioritize the limited funds, which are also subject to stricter federal oversight requirements. An RFP for a community decision-making facilitator (Community Facilitator) is expected to be released in the next few weeks - we'll keep you posted and encourage all interested parties to apply.

Please continue to have a voice in how these limited resources will be used. There are several upcoming opportunities to have your voice heard:

- **Consider the role of Community Facilitator.** As noted above, the RFP is expected to be released soon.
- **Join the Stakeholder Collective.** The Stakeholder Collective will define priorities for spending the ARPA funds. You may recall that [CARES Act Tech Kit](#) dollars (\$5 million in total) were spent primarily on devices and internet assistance cards, with smaller amounts allocated for community partners to assist with distribution and training. With just \$3.5 million in ARPA funding, there will be some tough decisions. Stay tuned for a call to join the Stakeholder Collective. Anticipated engagement period: November-February.
- **Participate in the executive decision-making committee (Executive Committee).** The Executive Committee will take the guidance provided by the Stakeholder Collective and make final decisions about the spending plan and will define and implement evaluation/selection criteria for contracting opportunities with community partner organizations. Once on board, the Community Facilitator will put out a call to build the Executive Committee. If you are interested in potentially applying for resources, you'll want to avoid the Executive Committee so as not to create a conflict of interest; you are encouraged to still participate in the Stakeholder Collective. Anticipated engagement period: January-June.
- **Apply to be a Community Partner.** As with the CARES Act Tech Kit project, we'll likely be looking to contract with community partner organizations to help distribute the resources. We anticipate the community partner application process might open up around March 2022.

Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB)

The [Emergency Broadband Benefit](#) is still a resource available to residents who qualify.

5.5 million households nationwide have signed up for the EBB so far, which demonstrates a high demand for a broadband subsidy program. To date \$378 million has been allocated, leaving \$2.7 billion still available to help low-income households get internet service at a reduced cost.

National-wide enrollment: 5.5 million households

State of Oregon enrollment: 45,278 households

Multnomah County enrollment: 9,605 households

-Source: [USAC Enrollment and Claims Tracker](#)

The program is not without design/administration challenges, nevertheless, we want to get the word out about the program's availability so residents can decide if it's right for them.

[Spread the word!](#)

When possible, please try to pair outreach for EBB with other social services being provided. Check out our repository of outreach graphics, talking points, videos, and flyers [here](#).

[Future of the program](#)

Right now the Emergency Broadband Benefit program has \$3.2 billion allocated to it so when funds run out they run out and subscribers receiving the discount will need to decide to keep the service and pay the full cost, work with their provider to downgrade service, or disconnect service.

There is a possibility, however, that the Infrastructure bill passed by the Senate and up for consideration by the House on October 1, **if passed**, would bolster the program with \$14 billion in additional funding, expand eligibility to more households who fall under Federal Poverty guidelines (in place of the COVID-related loss of income criteria), and require internet service provider participation, but at a reduced monthly subsidy level of \$30/month for 5 years as opposed to the current \$50/month benefit.

Acting Federal Communications Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel said she's pleased that the Senate infrastructure deal would codify the pandemic relief program, but she is wary about the reduction in the monthly internet subsidy. "I do think it would be challenging for the agency to reduce the support from \$50 a month to \$30 a month," she said. "But we will take whatever [the] legislation hands us." She is not alone in questioning the implications of slashing the benefit and her views could prove influential among Capitol Hill negotiators eyeing future FCC funding. House Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone (D-NJ) [called the proposed cut](#) a source of "real concerns."

Digital Inclusion Week

[#DIW2021 is October 4-8.](#)

Digital Inclusion Week is an annual campaign that recognizes local digital inclusion organizations and special events that promote digital equity across the country.

[Here's how it works:](#)

- Create and [promote](#) an activity that builds inclusion by providing computer training, media literacy, affordable devices, or internet access to people on the wrong side of digital divides – or builds public awareness of the barriers to digital equity.
- Use the [social media kit](#) to raise awareness around the digital divide and the incredible work your community is doing to reach digital inclusion.

- Connect with colleagues around the country by using hashtags **#DIW2021** and **#digitalequityNOW** during the week of October 4th to join the conversation and celebrate progress.

Net Inclusion 2022

[Mark your calendars!](#)

Net Inclusion 2022 is in-person in Portland February 15-17th, 2022!

[Registration opens October 11.](#)

Registration costs: \$180 Nonprofit/government one-day pass / \$380 Nonprofit/government full conference / Forprofit one-day pass \$250 / Forprofit full conference \$520

[Become a Net Inclusion 2022 Sponsor](#)

Sponsors are essential to keeping registration costs low and making Net Inclusion a well-curated experience. Please consider joining the City of Portland in becoming a **local sponsor**.

Policy/Advocacy

Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock of Georgia and Congressman A. Donald McEachin of Virginia introduced **The Device Access for Every American Act of 2021**. The bill allocates \$5 billion to create:

- A \$400 device voucher for low-income residents to purchase connected devices like laptops and tablets at retail locations
- Permit up to two low-income individuals per household to receive a voucher, so families can receive multiple devices
- Require the FCC to establish minimum standards for connected devices, including both new and refurbished devices
- Direct the FCC to collaborate with retailers, eligible individuals, and community-based organizations participating in the program

Last week our friends at Public Knowledge circulated a sign-on letter in support of this bill. It was a short sign-on period, so we appreciate all who were able to quickly move on it. Read the letter [here](#).

City of Portland Office for Community Technology Staffing

[The Office for Community Technology is hiring!](#)

- **Digital Equity Coordinator Position** - the Digital Equity Coordinator position posting closed August 30. Good luck to the candidates! We are looking forward to announcing the new hire.
- **Admin Specialist Position** - We're hiring an **Admin Specialist** and hope you might consider joining our team or sharing this opportunity with your networks. The deadline for applications is September 27.
- **Community Partners for DIN Governance Positions** - We apologize for the delay in getting these positions off the ground. We are looking to get these positions going as soon as our Digital Equity Coordinator position is onboard. As a reminder, as part of our digital equity anti-racism work, we are looking to hire 2-4 people on a limited term basis to help us re-imagine the governance, decision-making, and influence of the Digital Inclusion Network. Stay tuned for more to come.

Bureau of Planning and Sustainable Development is hiring!

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Data and Reporting Analyst (Analyst II) – The **ARPA Analyst** is a limited duration position that will support the data management, data analysis, equity analysis, transparency, and public reporting needs of all City of Portland ARPA projects. The deadline for applications has been extended to September 27th.