

San Antonio and Greater Bexar County Community Digital Equity Plan and Roadmap

Initiative Details: Population Segments

August 2021

Disclaimer:

The information found in this portal is intended for public use. It reflects work produced and provided by the SA Digital Connects team and community members starting in January 2021 to the present.

Some information will reflect the moment in time when the work was done. Data, funding, maps and assumptions may fluctuate in the everchanging digital ecosystem.

Initiative Details

Population Segments

Closing the Digital Divide | E-Justice

Challenges

- Defendants and plaintiffs in online court are more likely to be digitally excluded or illiterate if unemployed, uneducated, disabled, elderly, homeless, indigenous or rurally located
- Those who are digitally excluded and unable to access justice have a greater likelihood of experiencing legal problems

Organizations already involved

Microsoft: Partnered with Argentine courts to develop an online portal that allows users to upload/download legal documents with digital signatures verified by Azure Active Directory

Zylab: Software company that creates digital knowledge platforms for both law firms and government entities which make it easy to obtain, view and use information

Solutions



Assisted digital support

- Offer multi-channel technical support that is tailored to different user needs, including face-to-face support, telephone help and web-chat assistance



Expansion of mobile access

- Create intuitive mobile applications for accessing justice services that focus should be on digitally excluded people for whom mobile devices provide a ubiquitous and affordable internet access point



Enhanced data gathering

- Conduct end-to-end pilots of online justice services, learning how best to meet that needs of participants at each stage of the justice process
- Research how people behave in an online environment and choose between assisted digital channels
- Collect and make available the widest range of data possible to support research by external experts

Closing the Digital Divide | Workforce development

Challenges

- As intelligent technologies (e.g., Big Data, AI, etc.) continue to proliferate, many workers face a **double disadvantage**—a higher risk of technological disruption from automation and fewer resources to embrace new career pathways
- **60%** of employers think that less than **25%** of their workforce is ready to work with new technologies and machines
- Today's skilling ecosystem focuses on the unemployed or those entering the workforce for the first time, rather than those at risk of becoming unemployed

Organizations already involved

The Markle Foundation: Developed an initiative to help American workers and employers adapt to the digital economy by fostering the adoption of skills-based talent management practices

Opportunity@Work: Increases economic mobility for underrepresented segments of the workforce by expanding inclusive, skills-based hiring among employers

Solutions



Career mapping

- Help workers **envision a different future** for their careers by exposing them to new career options, learning pathways, types of support and resources, and peers who have successfully made the same transition



Future-proof skills

- Facilitate a mutual transformation of expectations between employers and employees so workers receive the time, funding and support necessary to access **lifelong learning** opportunities



Putting skills into practice

- Enable workers to build work history and **'test drive'** new job opportunities / skills through short-term work placements that provide real value to employers



Networking

- Sustain workers' drive for lifelong learning by connecting them to skill-sharing, mentorship, networking and peer-to-peer support

Closing the Digital Divide | Telehealth

Challenges

- **34 million** Americans lack access to fixed broadband at speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (Mbps) for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads
- **22%** of Americans in rural areas and **28%** of Americans in tribal lands lack broadband coverage—as opposed to **1.5%** of Americans in urban
- People with **communication-related disabilities** may not be able to use video-based, remote services, leading to some telehealth initiatives reinforce rather than narrow the digital divide

Organizations already involved

La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE): Health on Wheels (HoW) program along South Texas border meant to broaden access to health care in low-resource communities

Methodist Healthcare Ministries: developed the Turning Point pilot program for diabetic patients that uses a smartphone digital app to monitor diabetes progress and offer real-time support

Solutions



Understand how the digital divide manifests in community

- Perform a simple digital needs assessment to screen for digital access and literacy during patient intake as well as collect patient demographic information



Make telehealth offerings accessible to vulnerable patients

- Offer phone / virtual visits outside of traditional working hours to increase access for essential workers and patients who lack access to video technology



Connect patients with the technology necessary for virtual visits

- Share low-cost broadband options in area with patients (e.g., Lifeline, Internet Essentials, etc.)
- Help connect patients who struggle to use manual technology with adaptive alternatives (e.g., assistive keyboards or mouse alternatives)



Build patients' digital literacy

- Partner with local community organizations, such as public libraries and community centers, to offer digital literacy courses



Raise community awareness of telehealth offerings

- Market the availability of telehealth options across multiple communication channels that will reach vulnerable patients

Closing the Digital Divide | Veterans

Challenges

- One of the pressing issues facing Veterans in rural communities is the lack of **fast, reliable internet service**, or any internet service at all
- According to VHA's Office of Rural Health, **42%** of rural Veterans enrolled in VA do not have internet access that would support their use of VA telehealth and other online services

Organizations already involved

Walmart and Philips: Set up remote clinics—known as Atlas sites—for Veterans to access telehealth services closer to their homes as well as lending iPads to Veterans without home internet

T-Mobile: Connected Veterans to their health care providers on a secure line from any location on all devices with free T-Mobile service that used up none of their data

Solutions



Mapping

- Undertake detailed mapping effort of available broadband in rural areas to develop an accurate data set of resources that can be dedicated to unserved communities where the need is greatest



Satellite technology

- Invest in **satellite internet connectivity** for rural areas that either have little to no available broadband or are cost prohibitive regarding potential buildout of fiber networks



Fixed wireless solutions

- Deploy **fixed wireless technologies** to cover the last mile to the customer where specific features of surrounding landscape or terrain (e.g., miles of wilderness or farmland) make deploying fiber prohibitive



Deliver low-cost connected devices

- **Wireless providers could offer bundling services** that would offer low-income subscribers connected devices with embedded Wi-Fi/other connectivity options at no additional cost
- **Business and community partners can be encouraged to help provide devices** for residents to connect to the internet

Closing the Digital Divide | Access for Older Adults

Challenges

- **One-third** of adults ages 65 and older report they've never used the internet, and **half** don't have internet access at home
- Of those who do use the internet, **nearly half** say they need someone else's help to set up or use a new digital device
- Even within their age group, there is significant variation in skills linked to people's education, income and autonomy of use, creating a "**second-level digital divide**"

Organizations already involved

Little Brothers Friendly of the Elderly: Tech Allies program offers older adults the opportunity to learn how to use a tablet device through an 8-week training course

Teeniors: Tech-savvy teens and young adults who help seniors learn technology (smartphone, computer, software) through one-on-one, personal coaching

Solutions



Goal-directed learning

- Research shows that that most older people have a **strong motivation to learn new skills** and to continue living fully through learning
- In order to get older adults to learn a new tech skill or more fully engage with technology, **they must see a clear reason for it**



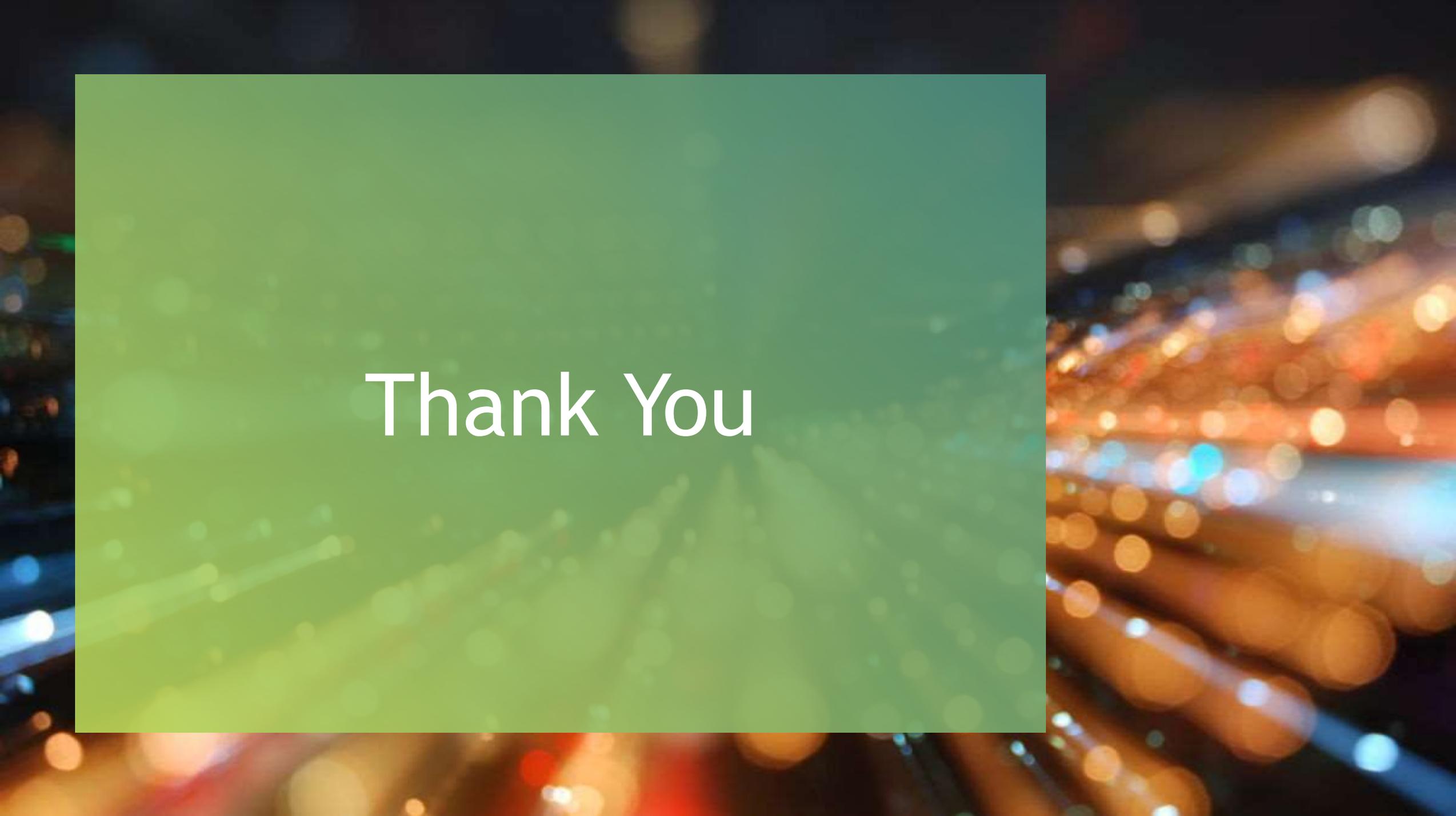
Patient practice

- Teaching older adults new tech skills requires time, patience and practice. When teaching older adults digital skills, **a well-written set of steps** are crucial to remind older people how to use a new skill online
- The **ability to practice new skills** is also key. Ideally, older adults would attend regular classes and be supplied with a tablet/laptop to practice on during the week



Tackling discomfort

- Though some older adults may express a lack of interest in technology, this can reflect an **underlying fear of technology and lack of skills** rather than a true lack of desire to use digital tools
- Appropriate training can help to quell those fears and generate interest by making the **elderly more comfortable with digital tools**



Thank You