MISSION The Charlotte Digital Inclusion Playbook provides a comprehensive road-map of key strategies for reducing Charlotte’s digital divide from 19% to 9% by 2026.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sec. 00 | Introduction–Executive Summary ........................................... 02
Sec. 01 | Background ........................................................................ 04
Sec. 02 | Purpose of this Playbook .......................................................... 14
Sec. 03 | Defining Charlotte’s Digital Divide ............................................. 16
Sec. 04 | Defining Big Goals ................................................................. 20
Sec. 05 | Areas of Focus ..................................................................... 22
Sec. 06 | ACTION: The Plays ................................................................. 27
Sec. 07 | Calls to Action .................................................................... 44
Sec. 08 | References ............................................................................. 46
Sec. 09 | Current and Past Members of Digital Inclusion Alliance .......... 48
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUGUST 2017

The Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance, supported by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, is focused on strengthening digital equity in the Charlotte community. Development of actionable strategies to achieve goals remains paramount. Much like efforts and policy-based programs put forth by cities like Portland, Seattle, Kansas City and New York City, the Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance seeks to develop an iterative Playbook of strategies that can be adopted by local leaders and community organizations.

The alliance is comprised of several long-standing community stakeholders and organizations, individuals and entities who have provided a range of social services to residents over several decades and have been diligent in their work to address inequality, poverty, and digital access across the county.

By formalizing strategies and creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, the CDIA has developed several recommended “plays” to close Charlotte’s digital divide. The development of this playbook for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community provides an assessment of current barriers to digital equity and inclusion, a timeline of local and national initiatives addressing these barriers, and how stakeholders are making progress on digital equity.

Additionally, this Playbook expounds what the Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance has defined as the official “plays” for realizing milestones toward digital equity within Charlotte. These plays are comprised of six areas of focus, including access, technology, digital literacy, standards and policy, advocacy, and opportunity.

It is the intent of the CDIA to provide a foundation of data, research, and activity to realize its goals of closing the digital divide and ensuring digital access to all Charlotteans.
The information in this document is iterative and should be revised periodically as needed to reflect the changes and progress of the Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance toward digital inclusion and equity in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County. This document outlines and defines the current state of digital equity and digital literacy in Charlotte, assesses how local organizations are addressing digital equity, and provides a series of actionable solutions for reducing the city’s digital divide for the most vulnerable residents.
01 / BACKGROUND

01.0 / BACKGROUND

The road to internet access adoption and digital equity has been a long-standing conversation in the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and throughout the nation. Dating back to as early as 2013, Charlotte officials recognized the social and economic value of digital access and digital literacy for all residents to participate fully in society.

Making technology accessible to everyone through digital and media literacy equips community members with the tools to use technology in useful ways to improve their quality of life from employment opportunities to education to economic mobility.

Expanding on this notion, a report, written by Renee Hobbs with support from the Aspen Institute Communications and Society and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, reveals:
“When people have digital and media literacy competencies, they recognize personal, corporate and political agendas and are empowered to speak out on behalf of the missing voices and omitted perspectives in our communities. By identifying and attempting to solve problems, people use their powerful voices and their rights under the law to improve the world around them.”

—RENEE HOBBS

The following timeline shares significant events and ongoing efforts spearheaded by local leaders and organizations in support of digital inclusion efforts throughout the city of Charlotte.

2013

MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

MARCH 21

Charlotte Mayor Anthony R. Foxx declared March 21, 2013, to be the first Digital Media Literacy Day.

The proclamation highlighted a resource and connected learning laboratory housed under the James L. Knight School of Communication at Queens University in 2011, to raise the digital media literacy rate in Charlotte and partner with community leaders and municipal agencies to unleash the power of technology to improve the lives of Charlotte residents.

The proclamation also noted that digital media literacy is a core community need. Furthermore, it noted that universal access to digital technology and a unilateral ability to analyze and use digital technologies are key to closing the digital divide and creating strong democracies.

2015

GIGABIT CITY

Google Fiber was expanding its gigabit service and inviting new cities to submit an application. As Charlotte prepared for the possibility of service, leaders became concerned that all areas of the City be wired for service, that no neighborhood be left behind. Google Fiber’s previous methodology for providing gigabit service was through neighborhood rallies, where only neighborhoods with sufficient demand were fully wired for high speed service. Charlotte needed a plan to bring all neighborhoods along for this resource.

The City of Charlotte’s Neighborhood Cabinet convened digital inclusion stakeholders to discuss an inclusion strategy. The Cabinet was composed of representatives from nonprofits and governmental agencies across the city,
including United Way, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), Parks and Recreation, Mecklenburg County, educational institutions, Central Piedmont Community College, Arts and Science Council (ASC), Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, the Charlotte Housing Authority. As it began to work the Cabinet realized that only a sustained and coordinated effort to address inclusion would work. The Neighborhood Cabinet decided to use the coming year to focus on this issue alone.

The City convened a large stakeholder meeting, then asked for key stakeholders to help work on a strategic plan. CMS, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Knight Foundation, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Urban League of Central Carolinas, and Goodwill of the Southern Piedmont began work on that plan. After quickly realizing that devoted staff was needed to manage the effort, the Knight Foundation provided necessary funding to hire staff to manage the digital inclusion effort.

Google Fiber announced its Charlotte fiber optic cable project on January 27, 2015, making Charlotte one of few select cities in the nation to build the high-speed internet technology infrastructure.

Construction got underway in June of 2015, and internet service speeds reached up to one gigabit per second. To help Charlotte residents and businesses keep abreast of this project, the City of Charlotte launched the Google Fiber Project Page to keep residents and business owners abreast of the fiber deployment and development.

**DIGITAL INCLUSION FELLOWSHIP**

The Nonprofit Technology Network, seeded by Google Fiber and the Knight Foundation, introduced its Digital Inclusion Fellowship pairing fellows with community organizations to help build digital inclusion programs in Google Fiber cities. From leading digital literacy courses to training volunteers, fellows selected in Charlotte have worked at the Urban League of the Central Carolinas, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership to close the digital divide in their communities. Next Century Cities

A June 17, 2015 memo from the Charlotte City Council provided details about Charlotte becoming a part of the Next Century Cities initiative. Next Century Cities, a national nonprofit organization with 80 member cities, supports communities and their elected officials as they seek to ensure that all residents have access to fast, affordable, reliable internet.

With Charlotte poised as a gigabit city, membership within NCC on the municipal level to learn and share best practices across the country toward digital equity is invaluable.
CHARLOTTE DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE (CDIA)

Originally formulated as the Charlotte Digital Inclusion Steering Team, the CDIA core organizing principles focus on connecting Charlotte residents with online resources, bringing together community, neighborhood, and faith leaders together with organizations working to ensure everyone has affordable broadband access in the home—as well as the resources to take advantage of it.

CDIA includes representatives from the following organizations and public entities: City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Digital Charlotte, a project of Queens Knight School of Communication, E2D—Eliminate the Digital Divide, Urban League of Central Carolinas, Charlotte Housing Partnership, Charlotte Works, Charlotte Hearts Gigabit, and Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont.

Governance
As members, these organizations have made the following commitments:
• Regularly attend meetings.
• Come prepared and ready to engage in conversation and planning that advances the CDIA’s collective ability to achieve the organizing principle.
• Actively promote the work of the CDIA to their respective organizations and networks where they serve.
• Come to meetings with the mindset that everyone is approaching the challenges at hand in reducing Charlotte’s digital divide with good intentions and there is a mutual respect for every member.
• Be able to recognize and understand the personal and organizational biases that impact the ability to deliver equitable action plans.

Membership
Community leaders and organizations interested in joining to help expand the voice of the communities they serve within this playbook are encouraged to visit CharlotteDigitalInclusionAlliance.org/interest or call 704.688.2896.

Management
Charlotte’s first city-wide digital inclusion project manager, Bruce Clark, joined the community-focused Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance—housed under the auspices of the Digital Charlotte initiative—in August 2015 to develop a comprehensive plan for internet connectivity for all in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County.
BEST MINDS CONFERENCE

In February 2016, the Queens Knight School of Communication partnered with AT&T and Wethinknext to host Best Minds #CityJamCLT. At #CityJamCLT, representatives from Queens University, Johnson C. Smith University, AT&T, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library system, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the City of Charlotte, Code for Charlotte, local nonprofits and neighborhood organizations gathered to take ideas from prototype to playbook. Prior to the event, the hosting team spent months visiting neighborhoods affected by the digital divide to build an accurate body of knowledge to bring to the event. The “jam” engaged community members around solving the digital divide by creating prototypes based on collected research over 48 hours. At the event conclusion, teams presented prototypes aimed at closing the digital divide in Charlotte. The research and prototypes generated by the Best Minds Conference informed the work of the CDIA.

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

During spring 2017, the Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance hosted a series of community forums with leaders and organizations to examine new ways to incorporate digital literacy into existing local programs. These topical discussions included conversations addressing workforce development, healthcare, seniors, students and youth, community building and social change, housing, and will include an upcoming forum addressing non-native English-speaking households.

“Healthcare”

This session opened dialogue about opportunities to foster digital equity within the context of meeting the healthcare needs of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County community.

The following reflect discussion outcomes on how technology/internet access impacts health care and potential opportunities for digital inclusion organizations to work side-by-side with local healthcare providers:

- Personal technology could help encourage and track prevention efforts by individuals and groups, but preventive care is typically not a priority nor paid for by insurance companies and programs.
- Software applications that present and archive test results have enormous potential to educate patients and show progress over time, but people need to be educated on their use, and to change behaviors of how they access medical information.
- Collaboration among competing health care systems also could make medical records more easily digestible and accessible.
- Some version of a technology “genius bar” could provide education and resources on how people can access information, records, costs, bills, and test results.
“Crossing the Digital Divide at 55+”
This forum aimed to gather feedback from organizations and individuals who serve Charlotte-Mecklenburg County’s senior citizen population.

The following reflect what opportunities exist to better equip senior citizens with digital media and technology skills:
• Partnerships with internet service providers, YMCAs, recreation centers, and AARP identified as opportunities to create and distribute training.
• Recruitment of seniors to participate in training programs could begin in places of worship, healthcare facilities, and grocery stores.
• Pairing students with seniors at libraries could prove to be effective as seniors are more likely to go to the library as opposed to a senior center.

“Students and Youth”
In partnership with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Youth Council and GenerationNation, this forum spoke with youth about how access to internet and digital tools impacts their education and economic opportunities.

Feedback from these sessions revealed the following:
• Students use computer devices and/or access internet at school, their local library, coffee shops, or at home where available.
• At school, many websites (e.g. YouTube) are blocked, limiting students’ access to retrieving information.
• Chief concerns about privacy and security were identified for students using public wifi spaces in which they noted the potential for viruses or being hacked.
• Digital access to online applications for scholarships, textbooks, job applications were listed as important for students.

“Community Building and Social Change”
This forum addressed how communities can build digital equity in Charlotte-Mecklenburg in order for communities to grow and individuals to build digital skills.

Attendees identified organizations they felt were leading change to address the digital divide as well as social change within the community.

• Charlotte Action Research Project A project of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the program forges partnerships between the University and marginalized communities in Charlotte. By integrating teaching, research, and action, the project aims to work towards a larger agenda of social justice, enable neighborhoods to advocate for themselves, and create sustainable neighborhood coalitions to implement structural change.

• Charlotte Uprising Charlotte Uprising is a coalition of community members, local and state organizers committed to ensuring the safety of their communities, and advocating for police accountability, transparency and social and economic equity.
• **DigiBridge** Nonprofit organization that aims to equip shareholders with the means to foster optimal use of technology in the learning environment, ensuring that all 21st century learners have opportunities to succeed in the digital age. DigiBridge hosts STEM classes within Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, summer programs for families and students, and hands-on robotics events on weekends for youth.

• **Leading on Opportunity Task Force** The coalition established in 2013 by Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, Foundation for the Carolinas, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the John M. Belk Endowment, comprises of a 19 volunteer member group which seeks to broaden economic opportunities for everyone in Mecklenburg County with a focus on affordable housing, job training and education.

Over the course of 18 months, the taskforce developed a study measuring intergenerational poverty and economic opportunity across Mecklenburg County, releasing a report in 2017 providing recommendations for improving outcomes in the lives of the county’s most vulnerable residents.

**“Housing”**

The Housing forum discussed the needs of internet service and digital access opportunities among residents living in supportive and affordable housing programs. It looked at recent initiatives from internet service providers such as Comcast and Google Fiber to provide low-to-no-cost internet solutions to public housing in cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, Austin, and Charlotte.

Currently, Charlotte’s housing challenges include barriers to the development of affordable smart housing options and a lack of infrastructure to support high-speed internet access across the city.

---

**OPPORTUNITY “SYSTEM” STRATEGY**
“Data is the new water. We don’t really give landlords the option to provide water services to their tenants. We have determined that water is part of making a place habitable. Data has become such an important resource in homes that we really need to start looking at it as the new water.”

-GERALD WRIGHT
Vice President for Family Services
Habitat for Humanity Charlotte

“Business and Entrepreneurship”
This forum brought together entrepreneurs and organizations to examine digital equity factors needed to foster new businesses, along with the interplay between digital literacy and entrepreneurship, the role of privacy and security, and existence of programs to teach technology skills. In 2016, the first Charlotte Entrepreneur Growth Report found that the Charlotte area has been a booming hub of growing companies with billions of dollars of income, however it is still considered a work in progress in terms of its start-up community.

The following reflect discussion outcomes on how technology/internet access impacts entrepreneurship in the Queen City:

• Centralized programs focused around building entrepreneurship are vital to ensure resources are available in a digital platform and citizens know how to navigate digital resources available.
• Coworking spaces play a critical role in providing technology access and fostering entrepreneurial growth.
• Connecting youth to mentors is critical to boost entrepreneurship in the next generation.

“More internet access means more people have access to resources to try their hand at entrepreneurship. We could do so much if we’re coming together to solve this one problem.”

– JUAN GARZON
Founder, Garzon Co.
“Workforce Development and Economic Mobility”
This forum examined the ways in which the emerging workforce is prepared to be digitally literate and possess computer technology skills to meet the demands of the 21st century economy. Organizations working to empower clients to attain financial stability in a global economy understand the importance of digital literacy in today’s workforce.

The following key points reflect discussion on how technology/internet access impacts workforce development and economic mobility:
• Job searching is done almost exclusively online. However, applying for a job on a phone is virtually impossible. Desktop/Laptop technology is needed for the employment application process.
• Online banking versus using a check cashing service can result in higher economic mobility by reducing financial transaction fees.
• Information technology, security and engineering are in high demand in our region. These 21st century skills are a critical part of workforce development.

“I would like for us as a community to embrace the idea that access is critical to creating opportunity and upward mobility. We’ve identified opportunity and mobility as priorities, but we also need to commit to supporting the infrastructure and programming that will support such goals.”

-AMY CHIOU
Executive Director, Queen City Forward

“New Americans” - Upcoming session.
The New Americans Community Forum will tackle the digital divide conversation within the population of households that speak English as their second language. According to US Census data, roughly 18.8 percent of residents in Mecklenburg County speak a language other than English at home. Thus, acquiring the necessary technical skills for educational and employment opportunities in a the digital economy, present barriers to individuals who are new to America.
COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS
OVERVIEW OF OUTCOMES
Listening sessions were free and open to the public and hosted in various locations within the Charlotte community.

Notes were taken to document conversations, provide a vehicle of access to the greater Charlotte community, and were subsequently shared in the DigitalCharlotte.org digital newsroom for public consumption.

To garner and document feedback, attendees were also asked to complete handouts to share their perspective on challenges and opportunities on the session topic.

“When we did do asset mapping and asked the question of ‘What are you already doing?’, people had a lot of programs and great ideas of things that were already going on. You don’t know what you don’t know.”

-CHRISTINE EDWARDS
Community Relations Coordinator, Mecklenburg County

HOW TO HOST A SESSION
Community leaders and organizations interested in hosting a listening session to help expand the voice of the communities they serve within this playbook are encouraged to visit CharlotteDigitalInclusionAlliance.org or call 704.688.2896.

8 Sessions hosted
115 individuals attended general stakeholder convening sessions
188 individuals from the community attended the spring listening sessions
02 / PLAYBOOK PURPOSE

02.0 / PLAYBOOK PURPOSE

The Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance (CDIA) is dedicated to closing the digital divide across Mecklenburg County.

This Digital Playbook provides several core strategies for increasing digital equity and inclusion, ensuring that all community members will have the necessary resources for full participation in the economic, political, and civic opportunities available within the city.
The details of this playbook are meant to evolve and expand as the CDIA committed to documenting progress and incorporate new learnings about the needs of residents throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Within a growing New South community, Charlotte’s digital equity landscape is ripe for change.

According to the recent “Leading on Opportunity” report by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force, Charlotte continues to attract nearly 50 new people a day moving to the city. Charlotte was ranked 14th best place to live in the country by U.S. News and World Report on February 7, 2017.

However, despite the opportunity available to some, a 2013 study from Harvard University and UC Berkeley ranked Charlotte-Mecklenburg 50th out of 50 in upward mobility for children born into our lowest income quintile.

In response, the Leading on Opportunity report calls for a culture that expands opportunities across the entire community. The sought-after result is that young people gain access to the experiences, education, resources and support necessary to succeed as adults.

Critical within this work is access to digital resources. The CDIA, working with its partners, is creating a community-wide database of services and organizations working to address this problem. Internet access is directly related to economic mobility, education, workforce development, and civic engagement, amongst other critical factors. CDIA begins to connect the resources in our community working to address this challenge.

Despite Charlotte’s being named a top city for the nation’s sought-after technology jobs due to rapid growth in high-tech business service sectors, a significant portion of residents are unable to take part in Charlotte’s most prosperous business industries.

Part of this challenge is attributed to the lack of internet access within low-income households. Estimates show that nearly 20 percent of residents (roughly 50,000 households) in Charlotte do not have internet at home or the means to purchase it in the future.

Studies from the U.S. Census Bureau cite broadband access as a necessary bridge to education, employment, healthcare, and civic participation—all of which provide inroads to upward social and economic mobility.

The work of the CDIA has been to establish a baseline understanding of how far and how deep the digital divide is in the Charlotte community. By surveying residents, hosting community listening sessions, and working closely with local civic groups reporting and analyzing income inequality across the city, such as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force, the CDIA has endeavored to correlate our goals with the overarching goals of addressing poverty within Charlotte.

As a team, the CDIA is working to be a voice for digital inclusion in Charlotte. For Charlotte to realize an inclusive community where residents have full economic, educational, and civic participation, solving the barriers to internet and device access remains a top priority.
03 / CHARLOTTE’S DIGITAL DIVIDE

03.0 / DEFINING CHARLOTTE’S DIGITAL DIVIDE

To better understand the depth and scope of Charlotte’s digital divide, it is important to highlight that digital equity means much more than just having access to the internet.
The ability to purchase electronic equipment or access training to use these devices effectively along with the internet largely depends on whether or not an individual has the economic and geographical resources to afford these tools.

In Charlotte, which boasts a higher percentage of internet users than the national average (81% compared to 78%), statistics do not reflect internet adoption by all residents.

Disproportionality is reflected among the lower counts of internet access adoption rates for African American and Hispanic residents in Charlotte.

Who is Most Affected in Charlotte’s Digital Divide?
- African Americans and Latinos
- Age 55+
- Adult residents with incomes under $40,000
- High school graduates with no degree and adults with no high school diploma
- Adults in zip code 28208 in West Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Smartphones are primary use of internet access by communities of color and young adults under the age of 35
- 19% of residents do not have access to the internet
- Estimated 24,000 households in CMS do not have computers at home

Statewide Demographics
North Carolina’s broadband deployment rate ranks slightly above the U.S average (93 percent) and is the highest deployment rate among southeastern states. However, adoption of broadband is uneven across several demographics.

For households earning less than $15,000 per year in North Carolina, over 70% do not own a home computer and 78% do not have at-home internet access. A larger percentage of urban dwellers use broadband at home (72%) than rural residents (58%).

Internet adoption rates by race show significant disproportionalsities, with Asian (81%) and white (74%) residents skewing higher compared to their Hispanic (56%) and African American (55%) counterparts.

Challenges Ahead
Connecting more homes to the internet remains an important policy priority for Charlotte as a route to economic mobility and opportunity for the most vulnerable of the city’s residents. Absent this connectivity, individuals cannot take advantage of the educational, professional, and entrepreneurial commerce activities that continue to define a digitally-advanced 21st Century society.

Despite the ubiquity of smartphone ownership and mobile internet access across the world, access and use of these devices do not equal equity. Nearly 10 percent of Americans own a smartphone but lack high-speed internet access at home.

A 2015 study, Searching for Work in the Digital Era, conducted by the Pew Research Center, revealed that lower-income individuals and those lacking college experience are more likely to use their phones for advanced job-related tasks, such as creating resumes, and completing job applications (61% vs. 37% among college graduates). This demographic is nearly three times as likely to report that they do not have broadband service at home.

Those who are smartphone-dependent for internet access, largely low-income minority groups, face distinct challenges in their job search. The Pew research contends that these phone-only internet users risk disconnection related to data-cap limits or when they don’t have the money to pay their bill. Employment opportunities are also challenged when users attempt to complete job applications that are not formatted for mobile devices or attachments are required.
Turning the tide
In early 2017, CDIA developed a series of community listening sessions engaging community nonprofits, civic organizations, public school administrators and local residents. The purpose of these sessions was to gather first-hand knowledge of best tactics to increase digital literacy within local organizations with existing programs aimed at closing the divide.

The Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance is committed to measuring its progress against their goals as a group and as individual organizations. By streamlining information and documenting the resources available to communities across Charlotte, the insights from the listening sessions and various surveys provide a frame for the CDIA to identify what residents feel are the main opportunities for addressing barriers to internet access within their communities.
INTERNET ACCESS IN CHARLOTTE NEIGHBORHOODS

How do Charlotte households internet access compare across races?

Across different income levels, how many don't have any internet subscription?

Across different ages and education levels, who is connected in Charlotte?
04 / DEFINING BIG GOALS

04.0 / DEFINING BIG GOALS

This playbook and the ongoing work of the CDIA is guided by the following set of principles that further the commitment to ensuring a more digitally inclusive and equitable Charlotte.
Provide a Space to Convene
CDIA members and the broader community engage in the discussion about what digital equity means in Charlotte, how individual organizations are addressing the issues, and what opportunities might exist to support each other’s efforts.

Since its launch in late 2015, the CDIA has hosted two stakeholder convenings in partnership with the City of Charlotte. The team has also conducted several listening sessions and community focus groups—data and feedback collected to further guide work on their initiatives.

Share Ideas and Best Practices
The work of the CDIA seeks to connect resources and people within the greater ecosystem of supporters of digital inclusion. Thus, networking is a large part of how ideas are shared to reach the goal of ensuring digital equity throughout Charlotte.

Additionally, resources produced by partners will be shared with the team and those partners will help promote those resources when appropriate.

The team will accomplish and further propel sharing by developing strong partnerships with community events, assisting with promoting programs of our partners. For example, the CDIA partner worked closely with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library to train volunteers for the library’s DigiLit program working to expand the capacity of their programs and take the weight off staff resources.

Be a Voice for Digital Inclusion
The CDIA takes on the responsibility of ensuring digital inclusion throughout our community. This responsibility is shaped by collective efforts to communicate with and advocate on behalf of residents; support policy work by informing elected officials on digital inclusion efforts, strategies and opportunities, and build consensus through listening sessions and town halls where feedback is generated in real time from the community.

Lead Ongoing Initiatives
The CDIA will continue to lead digital inclusion efforts throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Ongoing work includes the continued development of this Playbook, supporting initiatives like the Sprint OneMillion Program to provide over 25,000 hotspots over the next five years to CMS students, and enable leadership and new voices in Charlotte’s digital inclusion efforts.

Develop Strategy for the Region
The CDIA is working to create a strategy for regional leadership in digital inclusion. These efforts are emboldened by some of the more recent “Active Plays” in motion which include the Sprint 1Million, ongoing listening sessions, and continued advocacy efforts.

Additionally, part of this strategy includes improving the understanding of digital inclusion and equity within Mecklenburg County. The CDIA has collaborated with other initiatives like the Opportunity Task Force and the DigitalCharlotte.org resource to provide public and private access to resources available for connecting to additional leadership efforts and document our progress toward the goal of reducing the divide by 2026.

By streamlining the ecosystem, documenting success, and sharing resources internally and throughout the community, The CDIA is well equipped to use these principles to reach critical goals.

FY18 CDIA Goals
Through a process defined in the CDIA charter, a FY18 program of work was created to clearly define the activities of the CDIA over FY18. They include:
• Publishing of the Digital Inclusion Playbook
• Creating a community wide public service announcement campaign
• Continue to improve the playbook by hosting additional listening sessions
• Expanding the voice of the CDIA by onboarding new community leaders and organizations to the CDIA.
Establishing a defined structure to the work of CDIA required defining key areas of focus to measure progress against the overarching goal: reducing Charlotte’s digital divide.

The following six areas of focus will guide ongoing efforts of the CDIA: Access, Technology, Digital and Media Literacy, Advocacy, Opportunity, and Standards and Policy.
“The type of information we’re moving out must be easily available to the public. Many of us take for granted that all constituents have access to the digital world, but in reality they may not. It is kind of a wakeup call.”

- JEFF SMITHBERGER
  Director, Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Management
**ACCESS**

**Defined**
Affordable broadband internet in the home, complemented by robust public access.

**Topline Goal**
For access to be within reach to all residents throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, affordable options for internet service must be available at scale.

**Secondary Goals**
- Examining cost and rates of broadband in the home
- Establishing no cost public wifi areas
- Ensuring access to a range of internet services at an affordable cost
- Ensuring transparency of internet provider offerings
- Analysis of internet offerings in our community
- Investigate subsidies for the delta between household need and ability to pay
- Expansion of public access for 21st century development and gap coverage

---

**TECHNOLOGY**

**Defined**
Low-Cost devices are available to allow residents to meet their goals, with emphasis on education and employment.

**Topline Goal**
Every resident has needed devices in the home and community.

**Secondary Goals**
- Creating a sustainable device refurbish and reuse ecosystem in Mecklenburg County
- Ensuring every public no-cost computer lab is recorded and info is available to the community
- Ensuring ubiquitous access to affordable devices that allow users to accomplish their goals

---

**DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY**

**Defined**
An individual’s comfort level and preparedness in using technology and navigating online spaces.

**Topline Goal**
Every resident has competencies required for full participation in a knowledge society.

**Secondary Goals**
- Ensure that everyone in Mecklenburg County has access to free digital literacy basics training
- Ensuring universal curriculum access for language and cognitive barriers
- Support the community of digital literacy trainers with curriculum and professional development resources
- Establish a Digital Citizen checklist
- Develop a continuum of digital literacy goals; and establishing a Digital Citizen certification that is recognized by mining cost and rates of broadband in the home

---

“We’re trying to lift up our labs to meet the needs of the community. We’re working diligently to get there. We need to break down these barriers of access. That’s our goal.”

-AL BANGOURA
Recreation Center Superintendent, Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation
**ADVOCACY**

**Defined**
Advocacy seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, are able to have their voice heard on issues that are important to them, defend and safeguard their rights, and have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.

**Topline Goal**
The community has a voice representative of its digital inclusion needs and is supported with the skill development to have those voices heard by the community at large and organizations and policies it wishes to impact.

**Secondary Goals**
- Further develop the digital equity components of this playbook
- Support ways to increase community engagement in civic and business spaces
- Create letter-to-the-editor campaigns that support digital inclusion goals
- Leverage DigitalCharlotte.org in continue to provide a space for community voices to be represented and shared
- Support preparing community members to speak in front of city/county government or at business events in support of digital inclusion efforts

**OPPORTUNITY**

**Defined**
As defined by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force, a community of opportunity is one in which systems and structures effectively tackle intergenerational poverty and break down barriers to economic opportunity.

**Topline Goal**
Digital inclusion and civic engagement ultimately enable economic and social mobility.

**Secondary Goals**
- Support increasing civic engagement using technology
- Share information and support the development of skills needed to navigate the healthcare system
- Support the pathway created by technology for economic and workforce development
- Monitor and support infrastructure deployment to align with community technology needs
- Support educational institutions, parents, and students use of technology
- Support the understanding and skill development to ensure public and personal safety when using technology and the internet
- Leverage technology to create cultural and social connections

**STANDARDS AND POLICY**

**Defined**
Government and legislative policy; corporate business standards.

**Topline Goal**
Legislation, policy and corporate business practices align with digital inclusion goals of the community.

**Secondary Goals**
- Establish a city/county technology recycling policy that supports the technology needs of the most vulnerable communities
- Ensuring North Carolina internet service providers participate in the federal Lifeline program
- Developing baseline standards for access, technology, and digital literacy
- Understanding the technology recycling policy of government and regional businesses
- Encouraging policy that attracts internet service provider entry into our market
- Ensuring privacy and security of individuals within the community is protected in existing and new policy and standards of government and business entities.
The plays highlight key digital inclusion activity in the Charlotte Mecklenburg area and provide community leaders and organizations the opportunity to learn from and connect with the organizations conducting this activity.
CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG HOUSING PARTNERSHIP (CMHP)

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Advocacy, Opportunity

BY THE NUMBERS
350 trained in digital literacy in CMHP’s first year of operation

SECTOR
Nonprofit

WHO
Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership (CMHP)

WHAT
Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership (CMHP) is nearing the end of the first year of a pilot digital inclusion program that has provided digital literacy training to over 350 people. Our digital inclusion program primarily serves seniors, low-income adults, and minorities. On top of providing digital literacy training, CMHP has partnered with local device refurbishers (Eliminate the Digital Divide, Kramden Institute) to provide low cost devices to students. We also connect students to affordable internet options when available. CMHP also strives to support advocacy efforts as a member of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Steering Committee (to be Digital Charlotte Alliance).

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
We have delivered programs throughout the city of Charlotte proper, however programming has been especially focused in our core geographic areas, which include the Statesville Avenue Corridor (within the future North End Smart District), West Charlotte, and selected areas of Northeast Charlotte.

HOW
Our digital inclusion program primarily serves seniors, low-income adults, and minorities. We have worked with a variety of partners to deliver programming, however we have a specific focus on residents of our affordable housing units. CMHP recruits participants primarily from our affordable housing units and the neighborhoods within which we have long established partnerships. CMHP has received national recognition for its participant focused approach and curriculum, that takes a starting point in identifying the goals, knowledge, and life experiences of each learner. We strive to encourage students to become volunteers so that they are able to stay engaged in the work while refining their own skills.

WHY
CMHP entered the digital inclusion landscape because we see the clear intersections of digital inclusion and housing. In order for people to be truly hooked into the digital world, they must have internet connectivity and a device, and the know-how to utilize them. Those resources need to “live” somewhere, and it is clear that true connectivity becomes challenging without first securing access to a safe, stable, and affordable home.

MEASUREMENT
CMHP administers pre and post surveys to measure student learning. We also build relationships with participants to stay engaged with them through other programs at the Housing Partnership. Through that sustained engagement, we are able to identify new needs and evaluate the program.
DIGITAL LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY CLASSES AT THE LIBRARY

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Opportunity

BY THE NUMBERS
3,034 technology programs and one-on-one sessions planned for FY18

SECTOR
Public

WHO
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

WHAT
The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library offers digital literacy and technology classes. Programs include: Computer Basics, Email Basics, Facebook Basics, Google Searching, HTML Basics, MS Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint (Basic & Intermediate)

WHEN
Monthly

WHERE
All library locations and through community outreach

HOW
The library has a calendar of events which includes digital literacy programming. Some programs require sign up, others don’t. All are free.

WHY
Libraries have been providing digital literacy programming for decades. The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library provides over 25,000+ programs annually in three focus areas – literacy, educational success and economic opportunity. Digital literacy programs generally fall under economic opportunity. These programs help fulfill the library’s mission to “improve lives and build a stronger community.”

MEASUREMENT
We use ProjectOutcome.org to measure outcomes. We will survey the participants in 18-20 digital literacy programs each month.
ONE NUMBER EQUALS ACCESS

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Advocacy, Opportunity

BY THE NUMBERS
147,000 CMS learners and their families, 19,000 CMS staff and their families served annually

SECTOR
Public

WHO
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools / Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

WHAT
ONE Access, or “One Number Equals Access,” is a partnership between Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library. With their ONE Access account, students can:
• Access library research databases
• Borrow digital materials such as e-books, e-audiobooks, magazines, music and video
• Borrow up to 10 print or audio books (no DVDs or music CDs)
• There are no overdue fines for ONE Access accounts, but users are responsible for fees on lost or damaged books.

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
Charlotte-Mecklenburg

HOW
The program uses students’ school identification numbers instead of separate library cards.

WHY
To encourage access to library resources, print and digital

MEASUREMENT
Measuring logins, which top 150,000 during school year 2016-17

ONE NUMBER EQUALS ACCESS
STUDENT MOBILE HOTSPOT LENDING

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Advocacy, Opportunity

BY THE NUMBERS
25,000 wifi hotspots to be deployed in the next five years

SECTOR
Public

WHO
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

WHAT
Student Mobile Hotspot Lending

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
CMS high schools

HOW
As part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ commitment to digital inclusion, efforts have been underway for several years to support access to internet connectivity to students without home internet access so they can complete research and other homework assignments. In partnership with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library, a pilot program was launched in fall 2016 to provide wifi hotspots to 150 CMS students. Five libraries at Beatties Ford Road Regional, Hickory Grove, Scaleybark, Sugar Creek and West Boulevard, partnered with West Charlotte, West Mecklenburg, Garinger, Harding and Vance high schools to publicize opportunities for students to check out wifi hotspots for home use, just like checking out a book.

Building upon the proof of concept experience with C-M Library’s lending program, CMS wrote a grant for additional wifi hotspots to support learners at West Charlotte High School. In January 2017, 250 wifi hotspots were deployed to WCHS students.

Building upon the successful pilot at WCHS, CMS wrote and earned 25,000 wifi hotspots to be deployed over the next five years to high school students who do not have access to connectivity at home.

WHY: To address the digital divide and increase homework completion.

MEASUREMENT: Data use is monitored by technology facilitators at the high schools
CMS PARENT UNIVERSITY

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Advocacy, Opportunity

BY THE NUMBERS
147,000 CMS students and their families

SECTOR
Public

WHO
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

WHAT
CMS Parent University

WHEN
Periodic

WHERE
Schools, churches

HOW
CMS Parent University builds parent engagement by providing training for parents on how to:

• Access their students’ data on line and monitor assignments, behavior,
• Access digital tools for extending math and reading skills anytime, anywhere
• How to recognize signs of cyber bullying
• Digital citizenship, etc.

WHY
To increase parent engagement with their digital learners

MEASUREMENT: Attendance at trainings; Engagement of families in students’ digital lives; Increase in extended learning time as measured by usage of digital tools outside of school time
THE CARE3 ENGAGE–EMPOWER–EMPLOY PROGRAM

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Opportunity

SECTOR
Nonprofit

WHO
Charlotte Works

WHAT
The CARE3 Engage–Empower–Employ program partners with community faith-based, government, and educational institutes located throughout Mecklenburg County and provides them with technology, workforce development services and resources for individuals needing access to internet and technology. Most of the partners are serving those with barriers to employment, unemployed and/or underemployed.

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
More than 25 partner sites, including Latin American Coalition, SAFE Alliance, Men’s Shelter of Charlotte, Charlotte Refugee Resettlement Agency, Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office, Charlotte Housing Authority and Department of Social Services

HOW
We serve and support our community partners who in turn serve those with barriers to employment.

WHY
The program was developed to expand technology, internet access, resources and services in communities/neighborhoods via community partners that had limited or no access. Providing safe and convenient place for the job seeker to have support, easy access to internet and technology and workforce development resources.

MEASUREMENT
Number of visits at our CARE3 partnerships site visits; job opportunities provided through the access of internet; technology devices provided to community partners at no cost.
CITY OF CHARLOTTE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
TECHNICAL TRAINING

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Opportunity

SECTOR
Public

WHO
City of Charlotte Housing & Neighborhood Services

WHAT
Through a technical training program designed to provide neighborhoods with the skills they need to come together and successfully build a flourishing community, the City partners with Digital Charlotte to offer classes to teach residents how they can harness social media to be more effective in the leadership of their neighborhoods, and promotes community partner events that advance digital equity.

WHEN
Periodic

WHERE
Queens University and locations throughout the City

HOW
City staff offer trainings using available equipment at Queens and community centers.

WHY
Neighborhoods are the fabric of our City. While we can create amazing infrastructure, the people are what make a community. By offering opportunities to invest in people, we are able to make giant leaps forward in the health and wellbeing of our greater Charlotte community.

MEASUREMENT
Participant feedback on exit surveys; tracking engagement by participant and neighborhood/organization.
TRAIN THE TRAINER PROGRAM

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Advocacy, Opportunity

SECTOR
Public-Private Partnership

WHO
Digital Charlotte

WHAT
We serve the Charlotte citizens who sign up for volunteer teacher’s assistant training to learn how to be a volunteer in digital inclusion classes. Additionally, creating a database of volunteers allows us to notify them of digital inclusion opportunities our partners have and allows Digital Charlotte to help empower these organization with volunteer resources.

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
We hold these volunteer trainings at Queens University of Charlotte which is where Digital Charlotte operates. The trainings are public and people from all around Charlotte are welcome.

HOW
Digital Charlotte staff offer trainings as part of a public-private partnership funded by the James L. Knight Foundation at Queens University.

WHY
Digital Charlotte sought to allow interested citizens to get involved in closing the digital divide by creating a training curriculum for the Charlotte community.

MEASUREMENT
Volunteer database
E2D’S RE-IMAGE CHARLOTTE PROGRAM

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Opportunity

BY THE NUMBERS
1,000 computers distributed annually to Charlotte Mecklenburg students

SECTOR
Nonprofit

WHO
E2D

WHAT
E2D’s Re-Image Charlotte program focuses on continuing to eliminate the digital divide for all Charlotte Mecklenburg students while bridging the gap between low-income youth and 21st century careers. The goal of Re-Image CLT is to graduate 100% of E2D techs from high school and to help these students achieve access to higher education opportunities and/or find sustainable tech jobs.

WHERE
Re-Image CLT, is currently located on the campus of West Charlotte High School and is known as Re-Image CLT West. The generous investments from Google Fiber, Pennyappeal USA, Lowe’s Corporate, and the Wells Fargo Foundation; gave us the ability to transform a CMS “mobile classroom” into a state-of-the-art technology learning lab.

HOW
E2D receives 100 percent of its laptops from the generous donations of local businesses and corporations. Without the donation of laptops from both private and public companies, E2D would not exist and ending the digital divide would not be possible.

WHY
In January of 2017 E2D launched Re-Image CLT, in response to the 2014 Harvard University/UC Berkeley report that ranked Charlotte 50th out of 50 cities in terms of upward mobility for its poorest citizens.

MEASUREMENT
E2D aims to help all students forge new pathways to opportunity and success for the future. The primary goals for Re-Image CLT include: refurbishing 1,000 computers annually for distribution to CMS students; providing IT Training and real workforce experience for 12 West Charlotte students; and generating IT workforce development through the E2D Technology Academy for hundreds of members of the CMS community.
GOODWILL INDUSTRIES’ TECHNOLOGY CURRICULUM

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Opportunity

SECTOR
Nonprofit

WHO
Digital Charlotte

WHAT
Goodwill Industries’ technology curriculum provides training from the most basic computer training through more advanced training. Classes include: basic computer training; internet; basic Word and Excel; intermediate Word and Excel; and Microsoft Office Certification in Word and Excel.

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
Goodwill Opportunity Campus

HOW
The Technology Curriculum is open to all Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont clients. The client base is focused on individuals with obstacles to employment, the unemployed and underemployed.

WHY
The curriculum has been developed for two purposes: (1) provide clients with the basic computer skills needed to support a job search, and (2) for those clients who are interested, providing training and skills that can lead to entry into a technology career path.
PUBLIC WIFI IN COUNTY FACILITIES

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Opportunity

SECTOR
Public

WHO
Mecklenburg County Government

WHAT
Public wifi in County facilities including the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center (CMGC)

WHEN
November 2017

WHERE
Uptown Charlotte

HOW
Developed in coordination with the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County Information Technology Services

WHY
When patrons enter the CMGC building to work, pay utility bills, and attend public meetings, they are faced with a choice to connect with corporate wifi. If they are not an employee, they do not have access. Now, patrons will be able to connect to public wifi in the building. Mecklenburg County currently offers public wifi in the Land Use and Environmental Services Agency building and the Mecklenburg County courthouse which simplifies customer interaction and provides a greater level of access needed for more efficient service provision.
KINSHIP CARE PROGRAM

AREAS OF FOCUS
Technology, Digital Literacy, Opportunity

WHO
Mecklenburg County Government

WHAT
Kinship Care Program

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
Goodwill Opportunity Campus

HOW
Mecklenburg Kinship Care, a Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) program, is a support program for grandparents and kinship family caregivers. Kinship Care refers to the care of children by relatives in an informal or formal arrangement. In addition to Food & Nutrition Services, Medicaid for children and adults and Work First Family assistance, DSS social workers work with families and resources partners to remove barriers to technology. Social workers have assisted high school graduates in securing laptop computers for college.

WHY
There are an estimated 6 million children in the US living in families headed by a grandparent or other relative caregiver. Social Services requires intimate knowledge of clients’ needs and issues and does not always provide one-sized-fits-all solutions. When a child is in the custody of an elderly relative who may be on a fixed income; these are instances where a child may need technology to complete homework assignments and ultimately to make the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

MEASUREMENT
The ultimate goal is high school graduation and a post-secondary plan.
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Digital Literacy, Opportunity

SECTOR
Public

WHO
Mecklenburg County Government

WHAT
Workforce Development Program

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
Mecklenburg County

HOW
Workforce Development Activities are extended to families receiving Work First Family Assistance and/or Food and Nutrition Services. These workforce development activities seek to qualified recipients in becoming self-sufficient and free of long term dependence on public assistance. This is accomplished by providing recipients with basic education, skills training and supportive services such as day care, counseling, transportation and job referrals.

Applicants for Work First or Food and Nutrition Services are referred to these programs at the time of application. Sometimes, these services include computer certification trainings offered at Goodwill and Urban League. DSS has a Care1 Site locate on their Kuralt Campus. These sites, along with several other sites across the county allow clients to access free computer labs to assist with the completion of resumes and job applications.

WHY
The Work First Employment Program is a federal mandate, while the Food and Nutrition Services Program is a volunteer Workforce Development program. The County has developed these programs to help improve the quality of life for residents of Mecklenburg County.

MEASUREMENT
The ultimate goal is employment.
CAPTURE THE FLAG HACKATHON

AREAS OF FOCUS
Access, Technology, Opportunity

SECTOR
Nonprofit

WHO
NC Hearts Gigabit

WHAT
"Capture the Flag" Hackathon

WHEN
November 2017

WHERE
Westminster, MD and Wilson, NC

HOW
North Carolina Hearts Gigabit is a nonprofit working to attract and support universally available, affordable, reliable, high-capacity internet to network resilient local economies across North Carolina. An ethical cybersecurity gaming challenge will connect high-school and college-age students in two Gigabit cities to provide an introduction or deeper dive into careers in technology.

WHY
Encourage entry into technology careers.

MEASUREMENT
Number of attendees
FIBER OPTIC BROADBAND AND PREMISE CABLING CERTIFICATION

AREAS OF FOCUS
Technology, Digital Literacy, Opportunity

BY THE NUMBERS
Six high school seniors earned their certification in the last class, during the 2016-2017 spring semester.

SECTOR
Nonprofit

WHO
Urban League of Central Carolinas

WHAT
Fiber Optic Broadband and Premise Cabling Certification Program

WHEN
Ongoing

WHERE
Our main location in Charlotte is where our adult class is held. This program is also offered at Myers Park High School to seniors.

HOW
The Urban League’s Entry Level Fiber Optic/ Broadband curriculum is designed to develop skills in the theory and real world application of broadband telecommunication technology, including the use of hand tools, various cable installation techniques, the use of computerized equipment, and safety regulations and concerns. This course is specially designed in two phases for both entry level and experienced individuals. Upon completion, participants are prepared to sit for the Certified Premise Cabling Technician and the Certified Fiber Optic Technician exams offered through the Fiber Optic Association (FOA).

A dynamic team of instructors will also prepare FOA Clients with the “core skills” needed for employment such as interviewing and resume writing. FOA is the international professional society for fiber optics. Members are certified fiber optic or premises cabling technicians. The FOA CFOT® is the certification for most fiber optic technicians. It is based on the knowledge, skills and is recommended for anyone involved in the design or management of fiber optic communications systems.

WHY
Many women, minorities and low-income individuals fail to gain access to living wage careers due to limited exposure to the industry. ULCC was aware of the growing workforce demand and the earning potential. ULCC’s goal for the program is to ensure a diverse pool of qualified applicants for these living-wage careers. We start as early as high school to build a pipeline of individuals who are ready to work, provide talent to companies and effectively support their families.

MEASUREMENT
We measure impact with key metrics that include but are not limited to: class size, completion rate, certification pass rate, placement, graduate pay rates, retention, client and employer testimonials.
TECHCHARLOTTE

AREAS OF FOCUS
Digital Literacy, Opportunity

SECTOR
Public

WHO
TechCharlotte serves 16-24 year old residents living in the City of Charlotte or attending a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools K-12 institution of learning.

WHAT
An initiative of the City of Charlotte’s Housing & Neighborhood Services (HNS), TechCharlotte aims to provide 16-24 year old residents with technology experiences, industry education and application and career pathways.

WHEN
November 2017

WHERE
The program serves all residents living in the City of Charlotte or attending a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools K-12 institution of learning.

HOW
To learn more about various TechCharlotte experiences, visit charlottenc.gov/youth, follow the HNS Facebook and Twitter (@HNSCharlotte) sites or call 704.336.3380. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools high school students can learn more about TechCharlotte from their school’s Career Development Coordinator (CDC).

WHY
TechCharlotte was developed in an effort to connect residents with opportunities to engage in technology coursework and pursue careers in the 21st century. This initiative will address an immediate need in North Carolina, where approximately 18,000 technology jobs are currently unfilled.

Further, creating environments where young people can explore their innate curiosities while simultaneously gaining new applicable knowledge and skills will address issues of economic immobility in our city.

MEASUREMENT
TechCharlotte is leveraging a digital tool to track and support youth engaged in industry education and application. With project output reports ongoing, currently, plans for a five year outcomes assessment are being developed.
In a technologically advanced society where education, economic mobility, and quality of life is severely tied to positive social outcomes for those with access to basic computer equipment and digital tools, the sense of urgency to address Charlotte’s digital divide is an urgent milestone.
The work conducted thus far by the CDIA, its affiliates, and local stakeholders, are part of a larger ecosystem that requires a continued concerted effort to ensure that every resident in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County has access to the tools they need to participate in society.

For these goals to be realized, action is required. As a guide to immediate action steps individuals and organizations can take, the following are first-starts to participation.

**PARTICIPATION**
- Take part in public library programming
- Join the Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance
- Become a Digital Advocate
- Volunteer with a CDIA nonprofit
- Donate used electronics to an eligible nonprofit

**ADVOCACY**
- Support letter signing
- Make phone calls to public officials

**REPORTING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARE**
- Provide empirical research, studies, and evaluations of programming taking place to address digital equity in our city
- Discuss this Playbook as a community at gatherings, within working groups, etc.
- Contribute to Digital Charlotte online tools -- access to community events, workbooks and kits to be used in your communities, database share and resources
American Community Survey. U.S. Department of Commerce, 2017


“Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action.” The Knight Foundation, 10 Nov., 2010,


“Four Years of Broadband Growth.” White House Office of Science & Technology

Knight Foundation. John and James L. Knight Foundation, 2017,

Leading on Opportunity. Leading on Opportunity, 2017,


Pew Research Center, 1 April, 2015.
09 / DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE

09.0 / CURRENT AND PAST MEMBERS OF THE DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE
SECTION NINE: CURRENT AND PAST MEMBERS

ALLIANCE MEMBERS

City of Charlotte
Charlotte Hearts Gigabit
Charlotte Housing Partnership
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library
Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Schools
Charlotte Works
Digital Charlotte–Queens Knight School of Communication
E2D-Eliminate the Digital Divide
Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont
Mecklenburg County
Urban League of Central Carolinas

PAST MEMBERS

EveryoneOn
Media Democracy Fund

SUPPORTING MEMBERS

Charlotte–Mecklenburg Community Foundation–Opportunity Fund
Knight Foundation

THE PLAYBOOK
>> PAGE 49

VERSION 03.0

CHARLOTTE DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE