

# nten Building Connections to Change Lives

## DIGITAL INCLUSION FELLOWSHIP COHORT 8

The Digital Inclusion Fellows were an exceptional group of leaders deeply committed to promoting digital equity within their communities.

Throughout their year-long fellowship, these 15 individuals, spanning across the U.S., set ambitious objectives for themselves and their communities, driven by their empathic approach to bridging the digital divide. They offered critical support in terms of internet access, digital devices, and digital literacy skills and demonstrated a cultural competency that respected the diverse backgrounds of their community members.

Their leadership in community engagement was evident as they actively met their communities where they were, placing community involvement at the heart of their programming. This approach fostered a sense of belonging and resonated with the communities they

served. The fellows, hailing from various institutions, including libraries, housing organizations, and workforce development agencies, created innovative programs designed to cater to the unique needs of their respective communities.

Through their policy and advocacy efforts, they ensured that their communities had a voice in the digital landscape. These extraordinary nonprofit staff collectively served 9,000 cumulative participants and provided invaluable training to 1,227 staff and volunteers. Their dedication resulted in an impressive total of 14,118 training hours, leaving an indelible mark on the digital inclusion landscape and the lives of those they served.

## DIF by the Numbers

How the fellows brought digital equity to their communities



**14,118** Training Hours



**9,000** Unique Participants



**1,227** Volunteers and Staff Trained

Where our fellows live and work



### PROGRAM SPONSORS



**Oregon Innovation  
Foundation**



## PROGRAM MANAGER

### Inspiredu

Atlanta, GA

Pronouns: he/him

Andy is a nonprofit leader specializing in urban development and outreach. He has over 15 years of operational and managerial experience in nonprofit educational and workforce development programming. He earned a B.A. in multidisciplinary educational studies from West Virginia University and a M.S. in urban planning and policy from Hunter College. Originally from Brooklyn, New York, Andy is passionate about bridging the gap in social, economic, and health inequities with marginalized populations.

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### Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.

Inspiredu's mission was already to bridge digital divides throughout Georgia. The Digital Inclusion Fellowship project informed our approach so we could increase our capacity to serve more people and families. The project distributes devices, digital literacy training, and resources throughout underserved communities in Georgia.



### How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work? Has it increased the capacity to serve more or new people?

It was alarming to learn how many families and individuals rely on the library and other external resources for internet access. COVID-19 exacerbated the problem by causing more professional, government, and educational entities to require a device, digital literacy, and an internet connection to access resources.

The fellowship provided a useful template for identifying and evaluating partners. This collaboration emphasis led us to distribute more devices and serve more people than last year. So far, in 2023, we've collaborated with 32 partners, repurposed and gifted 1,273 devices, and had 1,362 learners from 964 families at our workshops.

### How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?

My previous jobs didn't have much to do with digital inclusion. Seeing so many students without a device or broadband connection during the pandemic opened my eyes to digital divides. Starting this

project as I began my position as a program manager at Inspiredu was great for my professional development. The project provided a new digital inclusion lens I'll use in my career.

### In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?

Overall, community engagement and participation have increased. Customer service phone calls helped increase workshop attendance and allowed us to answer questions. Partner selection and consistency in the community have also increased participation and our output.

### Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the fellowship?

To build trust, we need to be a consistent presence in the community. We'll continue partnerships and create new ones in underserved rural areas. We'll offer more online classes so we can hold multiple simultaneous workshops and reach far more people.

We'll encourage past participants and partners to refer people to our Family Learning Workshop so we can reach different audiences within the same community. We'll also continue to focus on customer service and expanding services to serve more people.

Next year, we're starting construction on a warehouse and training center where we can host more workshops.





**DIGITAL NAVIGATOR**  
**City of San Diego**  
**San Diego, CA**  
 Pronouns: he/him

Digital inclusion has been Armando's priority ever since witnessing how individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic struggled to switch day-to-day activities to remote. While building the Digital Navigation Program, Armando realized how disparate the impact of the pandemic had on those who were digitally skilled and those who weren't. His job has allowed him to work towards bridging the digital divide by helping community members access affordable internet, digital devices, and digital literacy courses. Ever since Armando began his quest to bridge the digital divide, he's had the privilege to work for the City of San Diego in SD Access 4 All, a government program working to create internet connectivity options. Aside from working as a Digital Navigator, he also works with San Diego City libraries to manage internet hotspot distribution.

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**Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.**

My project focused on increasing device accessibility to low-income households in the City of San Diego. After a rigorous assessment of device accessibility, it was clear affordability was the culprit. I secured a donation of 300 refurbished laptops from Computers 2 Kids. But people also needed digital skills to use the devices, so I did three workshops in English and Spanish about computer navigation. Participants filled out an application and got a laptop at the end of the workshop. We distributed 206 laptops, helping more than 200 households.

**How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work? Has it increased the capacity to serve more or new people?**

Before the project, the Digital Navigator program relied on library staff for marketing. After I learned about more effective strategies through the fellowship, we switched to digital advertising and reached more people.

**How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?**

Workshop participants, for the most part, were initially skeptical about the benefits of technology. This is a consequence of digital inequality — most people who have had access to technology are aware of its benefits, while those who haven't don't. Now, I know to start by helping people understand technology's net benefits.

**How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?**

Many participants gained confidence through the digital navigation classes. They learned popular digital applications and functions, but more importantly, how simple it is to navigate digital devices.

One person was surprised that the internet was one of the most straightforward platforms they'd ever used.



**In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?**

Many participants have become regulars in our digital navigator program, where they stay motivated to keep improving their skills. Participants have also used the laptop for computer classes we offer with San Diego Futures Foundation, where they engage with the community by working alongside people at libraries.

**Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?**

We've implemented strategies I learned to better assist people to get access to affordable internet, digital devices, and digital navigation classes. Distributing laptops for free isn't sustainable since suppliers are unwilling to donate many laptops year-round. But, my successful marketing and digital literacy approach is a model for helping more people gain access to the digital world.





## SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER, ADULT SERVICES

**Charlotte Mecklenburg Library**  
**Charlotte, NC**  
 Pronouns: she/her

Chantez is passionate about technology education, literacy in all its forms, and connecting our community through a variety of services and programs for adults. She's worked in public libraries for over a decade and serves as senior program manager for adult services at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. Chantez believes digital equity is one of the most important aspects of adult education and a key component to reducing barriers to access for all aspects of life. She started her career in libraries teaching digital literacy classes and instantly fell in love. Since that time, she's continued to hone her skills and moved into the work of coordinating adult programming for the library system. Chantez works with our adult librarians and support staff across the library system's 20 locations to ensure it's providing the educational resources and support that adults need to thrive in modern society.

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### Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.

I designed a mobile computer lab in uptown Charlotte, where our main library had recently closed. Rather than a full-service library, it provided computer access, digital literacy, and workforce assistance. We also designed and implemented digital literacy training for the MeckTech program, an existing project to distribute 20,000 refurbished computers with Emergency Connectivity Funds. This meant we had the largest audience for digital literacy the library system ever experienced.



### How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?

This project allowed me to focus on digital literacy, not just device and internet access. It increased awareness of our digital literacy program and is seen as a critical component of digital equity. The hands-on approach of going to library branches to teach classes myself also encouraged new staff to get involved in digital literacy.

### How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?

This project helped me look critically at our gaps in service and seek out connections. For example, the uptown location gap was an issue everyone acknowledged, but no action was being taken.

Without this project, I wouldn't have suggested I get involved since I hadn't been thinking about a library service gap as a digital inclusion issue.

### How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?

We served 193 adults over 38 class sessions at 6 locations. Many participants had never attended a library event before and were grateful for the opportunity. We shared our libraries' existing digital literacy offerings with participants and gave a free Bluetooth mouse to everyone who attended a session to use with their refurbished laptop. One attendee told us she'd been thinking about getting a laptop for a while but had been scared. Mrs. Connie said getting the laptop and mouse from us was "a blessing" that had "opened so many doors."

### In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?

We've seen an overall increase in registration and attendance to our computer classes.

### Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?

We received grant funding to expand and evaluate our entire digital literacy program. This includes rolling out a new targeted program for seniors and Spanish speakers. I'm hopeful this will go a long way toward expansion and sustainability.



# Dallana Nicole Camargo



## COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

### Empower House SA San Antonio, TX

Pronouns: she/her/ella

Dallana is the proud immigrant daughter of Colombian parents who gave up a lot to provide their children with access to opportunities. She is a queer Colombian-American woman who is part of a collective searching for social justice. She is a communications associate for Empower House, a local San Antonio, TX nonprofit. Dallana is pursuing a Master of Public Administration at The University of Texas at San Antonio. She graduated from UTSA with a B.A. in women's studies. She attributes her upbringing to better position her to understand the impacts of a lack of representation for low-income communities. This understanding fuels her to fight for intersectional equity. Dallana believes all beings deserve equal opportunities and representation in all spaces and mobilizes young people to demand the change they need. She looks forward to growing and learning from others to fight for social change.

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### Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.

Empower Connects is integrated with our Community Health Program, offering digital equity opportunities to community members. The program empowers individuals with crucial digital skills, such as internet navigation, accessing utility and school portals, and using online resources. We cater to specific needs through tailored workshops like downloading documents, creating emails, job searching, and budgeting. Our community computer station also gives people access to laptops, the internet, and printing. Our Donaldson location will provide a free public Wi-Fi hotspot.

### How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work? Has it increased the capacity to serve more or new people?

Empower Connects has revolutionized our community service approach. It was designed to bridge gaps in our Community Health Program while integrating digital inclusion into our response to community needs. Digital inclusion became a priority at Empower House, and the fellowship played a crucial role.

### How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?

The fellowship allowed me to create something that positively impacts people's lives. It pushed me out of my comfort zone, exposing me to the world of digital inclusion and providing insights into how others address this issue. I've learned what it means to develop a program from scratch with the community at the center of decision-making.

### How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?

My project focuses on addressing community needs while also emphasizing restorative justice. We aim to create a safe space where people can freely ask

questions, seek guidance, and foster a sense of belonging.

### In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?

Empower Connects has been instrumental in expanding our community resources, including workshops and a free public Wi-Fi hotspot. These have significantly increased engagement by providing valuable new resources for our community and helping us attract and better serve its members.



### Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?

To ensure program expansion and long-term sustainability, Empower House has actively pursued digital inclusion grants to enhance support beyond the fellowship. We're preparing for San Antonio's transition into a smart city by establishing workshops and partnerships to help residents navigate the city's evolving landscape. We remain focused on continuously creating new workshops based on our community's evolving needs and requests, with a strong emphasis on digital inclusion.





## TRAINING SPECIALIST AND DIGITAL NAVIGATOR

**Austin Public Library  
Austin, TX**

Pronouns: he/him

Dan Reddi is a training specialist and digital navigator for the Austin Public Library. With more than 10 years of experience in technology and academia, Dan applies his passion to bridge the digital divide in Austin communities. His passion for technology arose from an early age of tinkering and taking apart the family's TVs and other appliances. Dan has a strong sense of community due to his culturally diverse background. He is fluent in English, French, Creole, and Seychellois and continues to learn new languages to benefit his community through volunteer work. During his spare time, Dan is an avid runner and cyclist.

### **Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.**

Austin Public Library has partnered with several organizations, such as Austin Free-Net, Goodwill, and Capital Workforce, to provide digital navigation services, device distributions, and digital literacy classes to communities in Austin. The goal of the project was to address digital inequities by providing support to partners through community engagement, programs, and the use of library spaces. I assisted Austin Free-Net in providing digital navigation sessions to new and returning clientele. In addition, digital navigation sessions in French were held for Congolese refugees. With the help of Emergency Connectivity Funds, we distributed 300 devices. We also created lesson plans on using Chromebooks for partners to use when distributing devices.

### **How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?**

The library is committed to promoting digital inclusion by working closely with existing and new partners. It acts as a facilitator in connecting communities with the necessary services tailored to their needs. The library has seen a rise in digital navigation sessions across all its six branches located in Austin.

### **How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?**

Through my experience, I've enhanced my training skills and developed a greater awareness of how to cater to the specific needs of community members. Sometimes, individuals come to us with one issue, but through conversation, we uncover that the underlying issue is something else entirely. By partnering with key organizations, we can more effectively address the actual problem at hand.

### **How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?**

Here's an example. A Congolese refugee made significant improvements to her digital skills. Through the French digital classes, she learned how to use online programs and applications to construct her resume, set up a personal budget, and make better use of her smartphone. For instance, she downloaded the CapMetro app to her device to navigate Austin more efficiently. Before, she used to take two or more buses to get to our classes, but now she only takes one.

### **Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?**

Our goal is to continue promoting digital inclusion in the Austin area and seek additional volunteers to cater to the increasing volume of community members needing help. We're planning to work with PCs for People to purchase more devices. We also may expand some digital classes for advanced users.

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## Djimet Dogo &amp; Maria Lara



**DJIMET DOGO**  
**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**  
**Immigrant and Refugee**  
**Community Organization**  
**Portland, OR**  
 Pronouns: he/him

Djimet Dogo's community engagement work includes over 23 years of experience facilitating coalition building for refugee and immigrant communities. He has a Master of Public Administration from Portland State University and degrees in human rights, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and leadership. In 2006, he was pivotal in creating Africa House, a service center for African immigrants. He serves as its director.

**MARIA LARA**  
**DIGITAL NAVIGATOR**  
**Free Geek**  
**Portland, OR**  
 Pronouns: she/her

Maria Lara's digital inclusion journey began in 2021 as a Digital Navigator. Originally from Irapuato, Guanajuato, Mexico, she moved to Portland, Oregon, in 2019. Previously with Free Geek, Maria is now NTEN's Digital Equity Manager. She has a degree in communication sciences from Universidad de LaSalle Bajio.

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**Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.**

(This is a joint project between Djimet Dogo and Maria Lara, described by Mr. Dogo). Our project enhances digital learning among immigrants and refugees so individuals have the skills and capability to access the internet and use digital technology, as well as reduce or eliminate digital inequities.

**How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work? Has it increased the capacity to serve more or new people?**

This project changed the way IRCO approaches digital inclusion work. It increased our capacity by training 43 digital literacy navigators, 13 more than planned. Those navigators come from the diverse populations IRCO serves, giving us access to some hard-to-reach, underserved communities.

**How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?**

Djimet: This project changed my approach to IRCO's work, helping integrate digital literacy into all programs. It also contributed to my professional development in digital literacy, which was unknown to me two years ago. Being a fellow has given me access to training, conferences, and a network of people and organizations doing similar work.

**How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?**

Over 500 people have benefited from the project. Everyone who participated in the digital literacy skill training will receive a Chromebook device, one-year free internet service, and troubleshooting services. Participants also have unlimited access to our computer labs and tech support, plus device replacement from T-Mobile and Samsung.

**In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?**

Through this project, IRCO has registered over 500 participants. Most of the navigators who were trained are also community leaders who would like to see this project continue — a couple have applied for the next NTEN fellowship. Most success stories are our refugee seniors and single mothers who were victims of domestic violence who lacked access. Now, they use our computer labs to access information, watch news from their home countries, and video chat with overseas relatives.



**Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?**

Digital literacy will be included in our state-funded Refugee Employment Services and the Refugee Career Pathway program. We've also created a workgroup that is working to secure more funding for training. IRCO serves over 32,000 people a year and intends to make access to digital technologies a priority for its clients.



## DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

**Revolución Educativa  
Kansas City, MO**

Pronouns: she/her

Erika Garcia Reyes is the director of strategic initiatives for the Latinx Education Collaborative and Revolución Educativa. Erika is an experienced nonprofit leader with many years of experience managing projects, programs, and grants. She is passionate about developing others and advocating for the Latino community.

### Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.

My project focused on providing digital skills to parents, caregivers, and family members to increase communications with schools, doctors, organizations, and employers. All told, 78 people graduated from our digital skills classes, and we gave 86 devices to families in need to get connected. We also trained four people in the first cohort who are now teachers.



### How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?

This project changed how we view digital inclusion work and all the possibilities available to help, support, and uplift the community. Revolución Educativa has customized its learning approaches and continues to connect with other organizations to address challenges or better serve the Latino community.

### How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?

Before the fellowship, I knew there were digital divides, but I had not seen them myself. It was a great experience to be able to learn all the history, progress, and futuristic views of everyone who has been in this space. The approach also brought me closer to people, and I was able to also learn from past participants how to make this program a success.

### How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?

Our Latino families are now more confident because not only do they have the basic skills, they know where to go to ask for help, and some now have a device. One person from our classes shared that she is now able to communicate via email with a state agency that provides benefits for her child who has special needs.

### In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?

Community participation has increased significantly since we began to offer the classes. We now hear from aspiring participants, including some who live hours away and want to come learn with us. This fall, a family will be driving two hours to come to our program. All of our participants not only learn a new skill or tool but also lose fear of technology.



### Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?

We foresee being able to continue to train other community members to serve as instructors. We'll also continue to go into communities where we are able to partner with other organizations that already have a great community presence.

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**PROGRAM MANAGER**  
**Northwest Regional**  
**Telehealth Resource**  
**Center and Utah**  
**Education and**  
**Telehealth Network**  
**Salt Lake City, UT**  
 Pronouns: she/her

Jaleen Johnson is the program manager of the Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center. In her position, she provides technical assistance in developing telehealth networks and applications throughout the regions of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Previously, Jaleen served as the Telestroke Program Coordinator and Neurosciences Outreach Administrative Coordinator for six years at the University of Utah Health. Jaleen has participated in many research efforts and has presented on telehealth at several conferences, as well as contributed to several published works in peer-reviewed medical journals, including the Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare.

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**Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.**

My fellowship involved two projects. The first was a training on telehealth for digital navigation. I identified a deficit in tools meant to build digital health skills. The training wound up being a helpful introduction for anyone assisting a learner, patient, or loved one in accessing telehealth. The second project was adding a layer of Telehealth Access Points to our Find Telehealth tool. A TAP is a dedicated public space for people to access a telehealth appointment. We've located over 40 TAPs in the U.S. We won't stop until all TAPs are mapped!

**How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?**

We already knew digital inclusion and equity were important since we can't have telehealth without it. However, we weren't super active and were having trouble getting tools to the populations that needed them. The fellowship was a game changer for reaching people, strengthening content, and finding partners. It's been fun to see the pillars of digital inclusion, equity, and literacy catch fire among my peers.

**How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?**

We're building relationships that have garnered interesting collaborations we hadn't considered before. Additionally, being aware of the digital navigator model and what it can do for healthcare access has been critical. We're now

considered leaders in the space and are frequently asked to speak at events.

**How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?**

I've had feedback that the tools we created are very helpful. While presenting at the 2023 Nonprofit Technology Conference, I was amazed when an attendee mentioned how much they enjoyed the course. Nothing made me feel prouder and more accomplished.

**In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?**

Over the past year, we trained 70 people on the pillars of digital inclusion and their importance to healthcare, gaining 29 new partners. We spoke at more than 10 events, reaching over 500 individuals at healthcare organizations and community anchor institutions. We've had 168 enrollments in the digital navigation course. We continue to map TAPs across the nation.

**Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?**

We remain very active and have plans to move forward on several projects. We created a call to action for comments on state digital equity plans to include more partnerships with healthcare and telehealth entities. Our calendar is filling up with speaking engagements and training, so the work continues.



## OUTREACH ACTING MANAGER

### The County Library Salt Lake City, UT

Pronouns: she/her

Jennifer is an outreach acting manager at Salt Lake County Library, also known as The County Library. She loves working with a dedicated jail library team to provide library services for incarcerated individuals. She also enjoys working with other talented library staff to connect and engage with the community through a variety of trainings, programs, and events. Jennifer has been involved in the Utah Library Association since 2019, serving first on the Diversity Services Round Table and then as the ULA Program Chair. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Brigham Young University in 2008 and a Master of Library Science from Emporia State University in 2013. When not working, Jennifer can usually be found playing board games with family and friends, watching a documentary or reading a book, very slowly xeriscaping the yard, or wandering a bike path.

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### Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.

My project had two goals: increase library staff digital inclusion buy-in by providing system support resources in the form of materials and training and provide opportunities for three library branches to pilot digital literacy programs specific to the needs of each local community. To help get staff buy-in, we established a workgroup to survey the needs and interests of staff, research resources, create content, and provide training. The feedback provided by workgroup members was extremely valuable. We've realized we have some organizational challenges that we need to work on to improve our ability to resolve digital accessibility issues. For the three pilot projects, Tyler Library hired a presenter to teach computer skills, Holladay Library helped seniors develop and improve their technology skills, and Hunter Library partnered with Take Care Utah to help people sign up for Medicaid and related services.

### How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?

Managers participating in the pilot projects have shared feedback that their libraries are more willing to address digital accessibility going forward. I'm currently looking into an organizational subscription for NorthStar so libraries can use existing content to support their communities, adding efficiency to help us serve more people. We're also starting conversations about digital inclusion through the lens of accessibility to improve existing services and inspire more ideas.

### How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?

I now view digital inclusion through the lens of accessibility. I've also been amazed by the fellowship's networking opportunities. Because I participated in

this fellowship, the library has a seat at the table, and we're better able to coordinate with other organizations.

### In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?

We haven't yet seen a significant increase in engagement, but it has started a conversation within our organization. We've also had successes supporting individuals.



### Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?

Digital inclusion currently falls under our community engagement team. We're going through some organizational changes, so where it ends up is to be determined. Regardless, I'm optimistic that if we view digital inclusion as an accessibility issue, it will be more successful and easier for all staff to embrace. This model would naturally scale itself with continued support and promotion from library leadership.



## YOUTH CAREER DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

**Centro Cultural  
Washington County, OR**  
Pronouns: she/her

Jessica is the youth career development coordinator at Centro Cultural of Washington County, Oregon. She has a degree from Portland State University in child, youth, and family studies, which has supported her work in public services. In her current role, Jessica manages youth-centric programming for local in-school and out-of-school youth, as well as national youth programming to support workforce development. She serves as a resource and navigator and has experience in supporting individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities in overcoming the barriers that hinder their success using a holistic approach. In her downtime, Jessica enjoys spontaneous adventures and can be found exploring the coast or hiking the trails Oregon has to offer.

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### **Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.**

My project supported people to develop confidence in their digital skills so they can create a foundation that will allow them to succeed in the workforce. Many needed help navigating online systems, including employment application platforms and Google and Microsoft programs. My project also focused on people already on a career pathway who needed support navigating online platforms such as study resources, school blackboards, and financial support applications. Many needed language-specific services and culturally-specific services as well.

### **How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?**

Through this project, I discovered digital platforms to support our community that I didn't know existed. Our new digital literacy classes not only increased the number of people we serve but also allowed us to reach people with little to no digital skills and increase their knowledge and confidence.

### **How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?**

There were many times I was reminded how important digital skills are now. This fellowship helped me realize how often I took basic skills for granted. Focusing on community needs allowed me to develop confidence in my advocacy skills since I would be the bridge between resources and the people who need them.

### **How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?**

My project influenced people to have confidence in themselves and their skills when using digital platforms. Many people were placed into employment or completed career training where they got to use their new skills. I saw so many go from an "I don't know if I can do it" mindset to a "*Si pude*" or "I did it" mindset.

### **In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?**

Many of those we served got jobs, started careers, and learned skills that they can continue to develop as they continue their education and workforce experiences. We also saw an increase in self-sufficiency. By starting to learn new skills now, they can keep developing them on their own to support their goals.

### **Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?**

Centro plans to continue to provide culturally-specific services and do outreach in communities that do not have access to such resources. We'll also support our staff in developing their digital skills. I also plan to continue to research and connect with resources that will support digital literacy in the communities we serve.



# Laura Barragan



## **SOUTH FRANKLIN COMMUNITY CENTER MANAGER**

**United Way of Utah  
County  
Provo, UT**

Pronouns: she/her

Laura Barragan is South Franklin Community Center manager at United Way in Provo, Utah. She has a Masters in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management from Brigham Young University. In her current role, Laura helps increase the quality of life of the Utah County community by managing the classes the center provides and also by coordinating the digital inclusion program, where she serves as a digital navigator.

### **Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.**

South Franklin Community Center at United Way of Utah County provides computer literacy classes. Through the fellowship, we extended the digital inclusion program to more cities in Utah County. Our goal was to provide classes at our community center, expand through Utah County, and help people learn computer skills. We partnered with Early Learning Essentials and Pleasant Grove Public Library, setting classes using our curriculum. We opened two senior centers in American Fork and Pleasant Grove, bringing digital literacy classes to their members. In the past year, 169 people took digital inclusion classes for a total of 1,065 training hours. After graduation, they had the option to take a job skills class, get a refurbished computer, and learn more about the Affordable Connectivity Program.

### **How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?**

The fellowship helped me create awareness of digital divides. I've learned to be compassionate and aware of the world around me and how, with the help of a team of volunteers and donors, we can continue this great cause.

### **How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?**

The fellowship has helped United Way by opening more opportunities to serve, finding more funding, increasing its network, and reflecting all these by creating more resources for the community.

### **How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?**

Students from our classes feel they have achieved what at first seemed to be an impossible goal. They are proud of the skills they learned. Elizabeth, a writer from Mexico who had been using a typewriter to create poem books, took both levels of our classes. She now writes her books on the computer we provided on graduation day and uses the computer literacy skills she developed.

### **Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?**

Through different partnerships with libraries, schools, and senior centers, our classes are becoming more popular. Our idea is to fight digital divides and help the different groups of people who need digital literacy skills. United Way understands the importance of continuing the digital inclusion program and finding more partnerships to increase the impact.

The yearlong Digital Inclusion Fellowship provides nonprofit professionals with the knowledge and training they need to expand digital equity and literacy in their communities.

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## DIGITAL INCLUSION SPECIALIST

### Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority Cleveland, OH

Pronouns: she/her

Lurleen is a digital inclusion specialist at Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority. Lurleen has over 25 years of experience in technology training for large and small businesses in various industries such as education, financial, real estate, and non-profits. When Lurleen is away from her computer, she enjoys learning about technology, binge-watching a good series, riding her Harley-Davidson, and playing with her Yorkie named Harley!

#### Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.

The project provides a Digital Literacy Clinic along with affordable devices and internet resources throughout Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority's resident communities. The clinic's goal, customized for each community, is to guide participants toward digital literacy resources to get them to the online world so they can connect with jobs, schools, doctors, and more. The clinic covers topics including internet, email, Microsoft and Google programs, telehealth, online banking, keyboarding, and job search skills.

#### How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work? Has it increased the capacity to serve more or new people?

CMHA has been involved in digital inclusion work since 2014. Because of the pandemic, we quickly learned more about digital divides when the world closed. It became apparent that residents needed affordable devices, internet connections, and digital literacy training.

#### How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?

I've been in technology for the past 25 years, so I have always known the importance of digital inclusion. But now I have the support of upper management.

#### How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?

In May 2023, nine individuals graduated from our seven-week Grow with Google digital skills workshop series held at the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority - King Kennedy South Property. Each participant was excited to receive their certificate of completion and a "new" refurbished laptop.

#### In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?

We've seen an increase in engagement at most properties. Currently, there is a six-week computer basics class at Fairway Manor and the Woodhill Community Center. Additionally, tech support will take place at Addison Square, Scranton Castle, Riverview Tower, Bohn Tower, Miles Pointe, Miles Elmerge, Doris V. Jones, and Severance. Computer basics and job readiness classes will start in October 2023 at Lakeview Terrace, Olde Cedar, and Miles Elmerge, and we're in the planning stages for classes at Severance in November 2023.



#### Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?

Strategies include continuing digital literacy classes, tech support, events, and device distribution. We plan to partner with local organizations, add reliable connectivity to community rooms and green spaces, bring mobile or physical computer labs to properties, and secure funding. Our digital inclusion program will remain sustainable through dedicated staff, residents who share our passion for digital inclusion, and strong partnerships.

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## DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT MANAGER

**Smart Columbus  
Columbus, OH**

Pronouns: she/her

Ore is the digital inclusion project manager at Smart Columbus. Since joining Smart, Ore has been leading the efforts to pilot broadband technologies in disproportionately marginalized communities to ensure residents can connect to the internet affordably. She is also the administrator of the Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition, a group of 30 public-private institutions working to ensure digital equity in the Columbus region.

### Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.

I've been part of an exciting initiative that aligns perfectly with our organization's mission. For Smart Columbus' digitization efforts, our goal is to provide an equitable and prosperous future for residents. Our primary objective was to empower community leaders and social service organizations with resources, awareness, and support to actively engage in addressing digital divides. We've also laid the foundation for a robust digital navigator ecosystem that spans multiple organizations and serves as the backbone for pilot projects. Our efforts go beyond providing services — we're maturing a community-wide dedication to digital inclusion so that every individual has the chance to prosper in our rapidly digitizing world.



### How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?

My role has revolved around fostering engagement through events and webinars. This has instilled the importance of transparency in sharing resources and enlightened community leaders about how digital divides intersect with the people they serve. There are three pilot projects: a pilot to establish a retail access point for low-cost refurbished devices, a co-designed framework that allows organizations to express their device needs and receive bulk donations, and a digital skills pilot that combines skills training with the distribution of new devices.

### How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?

This project has reshaped my approach to work by broadening my understanding of the communal buy-in required to drive effective change. It is paramount we form alliances with organizations well-positioned to meet residents where they are. We also must equip partners with knowledge and resources to drive the solutions our residents need.

### In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?

Our project has significantly boosted the digital skills and confidence of the communities we serve. Community leaders have gained valuable tools to establish and strengthen digital inclusion programs through several engagement methods. These leaders, in turn, have positively impacted individuals.

### Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?

Our approach to digital inclusion is part of a broader digital equity agenda, outlining strategies for the next five years to close digital divides in Franklin County. As we implement these strategies, collaboration remains at the forefront of our efforts. It's evident our work will continue to grow, especially with the spotlight on digital inclusion through historic investments.



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## SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MISSION IMPACT

### Goodwill of North Georgia

Atlanta, GA

Pronouns: she/her

Stacy Rozier joined the Goodwill family in July 2009, initially completing one year of AmeriCorps service. It was during her service that she saw the need for digital skills training in the community. After completing her service, she became a career center manager in the Athens and Atlanta Career Centers, helping job seekers find employment. In 2015, she moved to Virtual Career Services, where her talents have been instrumental to Goodwill's progress in this critical business area. She served as director for four years, during which time she led the development of Goodwill of North Georgia's online presence for jobseekers, [careerconnector.org](http://careerconnector.org), and launched virtual job fairs. She is currently serving as senior director of mission impact, where she has added technical assistance to her duties. She also holds an MBA from Georgia Southern University. Stacy loves keeping up with the latest gadgets and helping people learn new skills.

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### Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.

I brought together the three main elements of digital inclusion for our job seekers and participants. We leveraged our partnership with Comcast to provide awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program to the community and our partnership with Indeed and PCs for People to provide devices. We continue to offer digital skills classes with the help of our instructor team.

### How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?

This project made us go beyond addressing digital skills and access just in our career centers. We now give out devices and help people get access to broadband. Our navigators who do workforce development outreach are now also trained digital navigators connecting people to the technology resources they need.

### How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?

This project allowed me to connect to and work with a new community. Before this fellowship, I didn't have the vocabulary to speak about digital inclusion. I've been able to present at conferences on the topic, talk to partners and funders, and coach my team. I now look at everything from an equity and inclusion lens.

### How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?

When we did our first digital ambassador training for community-based organizations, many had never heard of the Affordable Connectivity Program or digital inclusion. At the end of the presentation, hands flew up with questions about getting their participants signed up.

### In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?

We were able to train 11 digital navigators, as well as 60 digital ambassadors, to activate their organizations to support the Affordable Connectivity Program. We served almost 2,000 people through digital skills classes and formed 11 new partnerships. Though I don't get to work directly with clients as much as I'd like, one of my biggest successes has been hearing participants brag about the digital skills they've learned.

### Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?

We know one of the barriers to finding quality jobs is a lack of digital skills and access to devices and broadband. We'll continue to be an access point for the community, and our career services team will keep evangelizing digital inclusion. We have partners that can provide devices and trained digital navigators and instructors. We'll also use participant feedback to adapt our offerings to meet their needs.



**DIGITAL NAVIGATOR**  
**East Cleveland Public Library**  
 East Cleveland, OH  
 Pronouns: he/him

Troy Dillard is a digital navigator. He works in the City of East Cleveland at the East Cleveland Public Library. Troy is dedicated to helping the people of his community get the information, tools, and resources they need to be successful in their lives.

**Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow?**

We help adults and seniors of East Cleveland learn the digital skills needed to re-enter the workforce. We provided digital skills training, helped patrons use online applications, and partnered with organizations like PCs for People to provide devices. Although the program started small, we built a community of people eager to learn what they feared the most: the computer.



**How has this project changed the way your organization approached digital inclusion work?**

This project changed the way my organization views sensitivity. Understanding that everybody uses technology differently was a big lesson. Just because something is easy for us doesn't mean it's easy for everyone. Meeting the community where they are shows that we value them and care. We've increased capacity through new partnerships. Even people outside our city know about the important work we're doing.

**How has this project changed your approach to your work, provided you with a digital inclusion lens, or otherwise contributed to your professional development?**

Because I put myself into leadership roles, my professionalism increased significantly. Setting up meetings, speaking in front of groups, and managing a project helped me build much-needed strength

and courage — not only in my career but also in my life. What surprised me the most was learning how great a leader I am. Being calm under pressure and using positive energy ensured my success on this project.

**How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?**

Paula was one of my most eager students. She wanted to be able to operate devices without feeling like she would mess up. By putting in effort, she went from barely using a computer to browsing the internet and ordering things online. Paula made this project special because she was always encouraging other students to stick with it, reassuring them that, with a bit of time, the program works.

**In what ways has your organization seen an increase in engagement and participation from the community as a result of the project?**

We've increased the engagement of members who want to learn how to work jobs and get online support. I'd had the impression that it was only people who wanted to get back into the workforce. To my surprise, many wanted to learn to use the computer to continue their education or go back to school.

**Considering the success of your project, what plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand this approach to digital inclusion beyond the duration of the fellowship?**

This project was very successful for the library. I'm proud that the partnerships we've established are lifelong. Future workers and students will always have the opportunity to get assistance to make sure their needs are met for advancement.

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