nten
Digital Inclusion Fellowship — Cohort 9
Building connections to bridge digital divides

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

The ninth cohort of Digital Inclusion Fellows tackled the digital divide with innovative solutions tailored to their communities' unique needs. From supporting incarcerated women with employment-focused tech education to designing bilingual initiatives for seniors, their projects empowered individuals often overlooked in digital equity efforts.

These fellows demonstrated the power of community-driven leadership by meeting people where they were and addressing barriers to access, skills, and confidence. Whether launching mobile computer labs, creating multilingual resources, or developing curriculum for refugees, their work emphasized inclusion and collaboration. Fellows engaged partners, recruited volunteers, and built programs that reflected the cultural and practical realities of those they served.

Together, this year's fellows bridged gaps and opened doors, proving that digital inclusion is about more than technology—it's about connection, opportunity, and belonging. Their achievements set a powerful example for what's possible when empathy and innovation lead the way.

DIF by the Numbers

How the fellows brought digital equity to their communities

19,159 Training hours

5,068 Unique participants

835 Volunteers and staff trained

160 Leadership activities

Where our fellows live and work

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
Digital Inclusion Program Manager

Salt Lake City, UT
Funder: Google Fiber

Julie Heller is the Digital Inclusion Coordinator for the International Rescue Committee. She has recruited, trained, and managed Tech Squad volunteers to support clients with digital needs. Julie has overseen language-specific digital inclusion classes and supervised the Digital Inclusion team. She is experienced in data management, providing internet access for newly arrived refugees, and redesigning curricula to enhance learning outcomes. Additionally, she has facilitated the distribution of laptops and provided technical training to help new arrivals navigate digital tools effectively.

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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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
My project focused on distributing digital devices and training community members to use them. We had a plan to distribute cell phones within the first 48 hours and laptops at cultural orientation within two weeks. Through the federal Affordable Connectivity Program, we ensured families consistently received Wi-Fi. However, we faced challenges with digital literacy classes—too often, we found unused equipment tucked away due to a lack of know-how.

To address this, **we shifted our focus to building clients' confidence and skills through a personalized approach**. We began by taking an inventory of existing digital literacy classes, which were offered monthly in different languages. Unfortunately, limited staff capacity made it difficult to address individual learning gaps. This was a significant obstacle, as providing devices and Wi-Fi proved ineffective without foundational digital literacy.

Our central question became: how can we create a productive space for consistent skill-building throughout the resettlement journey? We decided to pilot a volunteer Tech Squad program, with success defined by one-on-one connections between volunteers and clients in their homes. The program was built around four pillars: recruiting skilled volunteers, providing thorough training, maintaining effective reporting, and ensuring ongoing support.

How has this project changed your organization's approach to digital inclusion?
Our Tech Squad program emphasized community involvement, starting with an intentional recruitment strategy we called "mining for volunteers." We had the advantage of a volunteer coordinator in our organization and consistently received a few new volunteers each month from our website and other outreach efforts. We also contacted local universities, specifically the language departments where students were eager to develop their speaking skills. We partnered with other nonprofits, such as TechMoms, an organization with skilled graduates whose mission aligned with ours. Many community anchor organizations also proved to be viable partners.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
Refocusing efforts around relationship-building with unexplored or overlooked organizations was key to capacity building. It was surprising how much oversight running Tech Squad required. Hearing during our cohort calls each month how other fellows were experiencing similar and different issues within their program was so beneficial.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
With clients receiving one-on-one assistance through the new Tech Squad program, their digital literacy skills improved much faster than in a large classroom with a one-size-fits-all approach. They showed remarkable gains in confidence, enabling them to apply for jobs, participate more fully in ESL programs, and communicate effectively with their children's school officials.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
Our organization underwent a reorganization, resulting in the loss of about two-thirds of our digital inclusion staff and volunteers. However, the processes and practices gained through this program will serve as the foundation as we rebuild and continue to support newcomers in their digital inclusion journey.

SHALOM COMMUNITY IMPACT CENTER
Digital Community Navigator

Des Moines, IA
Funder: Google Fiber

Mr. Jean Claude Mbonigaba is a Digital Community Navigator with the Shalom Community Impact Center. A skilled ICT engineer with expertise in networking and information technology, he is dedicated to leveraging his technical knowledge to support community development. Passionate about advocating for the rights of children and youth with disabilities, Mr. Mbonigaba combines his professional skills with his commitment to inclusivity and social impact.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
The digital inclusion project I worked on focused on teaching and supporting refugees in Des Moines, Iowa, to develop beginner and advanced digital skills. Participants learned how to use MS Office, navigate cloud platforms, and build resumes, with the ultimate goal of enabling them to become integrated and active members of the community.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
This project has transformed our approach to digital inclusion by increasing visibility and reaching more beneficiaries. Support from digital inclusion partners provided essential resources and strengthened our ability to serve the community effectively.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
This project has engaged me more and provided opportunities to connect with different organizational partners.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
This project has influenced my approach by opening up new ways of learning digital skills, including group presentations, individual presentations of homework, and more hands-on practice.
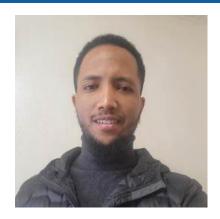

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
My organization plans to apply for funding to expand the project and continue serving more clients.

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION (IRCO)
Housing Stability Specialist

Portland, OR
Funder: City of Portland

Abel Beyene is a Housing Stability Specialist at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). With a degree in sociology from Portland State University, Abel supports new immigrants, asylum seekers, and U.S.-born citizens in accessing housing and career development resources. Recognizing the growing importance of technology in daily life, Abel has been dedicated to bridging the digital divide within his community.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
I worked on creating a platform where former immigrants, new refugees, and asylees could join to learn and acquire basic computer skills, including G-Suite, Android basics, and online safety. Throughout the year, I recruited new participants, staff members, and volunteer associates from different backgrounds and levels of education. Our main goal was to train 60 seniors, 25 adults, and 25 youths, and **we ended up training more people than we had planned.** In my time at the Fellowship, I trained 12 volunteers and 150 participants.

The participants were introduced to computers' basic hardware and software components, and taught to use the web to apply for jobs, housing, governmental benefits, pay bills, and reserve online appointments. By the end of the project, we distributed 16 Samsung 9th-generation tablets. Free Geek, the Eritrean and Ethiopian Community Resource Center, and IRCO Youth and Senior departments were among the main collaborators of this project.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
This project has shifted perspectives among IRCO staff, program coordinators, and leaders. While many recognized the importance of computer skills for the community, they lacked direction on securing funding, recruiting professionals, or starting initiatives. This project provided a clear path, enabling IRCO to advocate for funding and distribute digital tools. As a result, IRCO has developed a strong network and actionable plan for digital inclusion, leveraging strategic partnerships built over the years.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
This experience has broadened my horizons, strengthened key relationships, and enhanced my leadership skills. I've learned to develop strategic plans, nurture programs, and implement new ideas. Participating in digital inclusion events connected me with diverse communities, and I've gained valuable insights on networking and building trust to positively impact my environment. This project has been pivotal in my professional growth.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
Our main objective was to create a platform where the community could come together to learn and share their digital and computer skills, which greatly influenced our community's digital skills and confidence. The organization's leadership has paved the way for us to effectively utilize available materials and tools, demonstrating our commitment to continue to foster this community.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
Our organization is pleased with the work we've accomplished throughout the year and is committed to continuing the digital transformation within the organization. The plan is to incorporate the digital inclusion program as a dedicated department. The strategy includes bringing necessary digital facilities, tools, and devices into the community to enhance learning and attract more participants. Additionally, they are focused on recruiting professional trainers and building partnerships to exchange information about digital skills. As our motto says, no one should be left behind.

ORANGE LITERACY
Program Coordinator

Durham, NC
Funder: Google Fiber

Andrea Melendez is the Program Coordinator at Orange Literacy. She holds an M.A. in Educational Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship from UNC Chapel Hill and a B.A. in Education from Mexico City. Andrea is passionate about bridging the digital divide, a challenge she encountered firsthand while managing an ESOL program during the COVID-19 pandemic. At Orange Literacy, she focuses on family and digital literacy, helping students achieve their educational goals and addressing barriers to digital inclusion.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.
I developed a Digital Navigator course hosted on Canvas to train new digital navigators for Orange Literacy Organization. This program aimed to empower community members to teach essential digital literacy skills to students in our area.

I designed the curriculum to be accessible and engaging, incorporating interactive modules that cover everything from basic computer skills to navigating online resources effectively. The goal was to equip our navigators with the knowledge and confidence to help others thrive in a digital world.

In addition to the course, I added a collaboration forum to foster a supportive community among the navigators. This collaboration not only enhanced their teaching skills but also built a network of peer support that is vital for ongoing growth. By the end of the program, we successfully trained a cohort of enthusiastic navigators who were ready to make a meaningful impact on their students' digital journeys.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
This project has shifted our organization's approach to digital inclusion by emphasizing the importance of coming together to help our student population – not only in utilizing their knowledge and digital skills, but also guiding them toward teaching and building a strong community. The program is steadily growing, and now the focus is on building capacity and reaching more students.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
This project and the fellowship have equipped me with a stronger sense of community and an immense support network ready to help. Everyone, from the fellows to the organizers and the people you meet while working on your project, is there to help ensure your plans succeed, because we are all working together toward the same goal: digital equity and inclusion.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
Our student population is slowly growing by understanding that they own their learning journey. They will set up their own goals and see themselves reach them. Students can join community activities they didn't before and it has helped tremendously build a stronger more confident sense of community.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
The next step of the project is to expand our reach across the county and assist more students by ensuring a sustainable influx of digital navigators. We've hired a new Digital Literacy Program Coordinator, who is also a 2025 NTEN Fellow, to continue the work we've started. Additionally, we are proud recipients of the NC Digital Champion grant and are excited to use these funds to build capacity and further grow the program.

DOTTIE ROSE FOUNDATION
Education Program Manager

Charlotte, NC
Funder: Google Fiber

Ivanna Gutierrez is an educator and advocate for gender equality in technology. As a CTE Software Development High School Teacher at Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, she designs curricula for courses like Game Art & Design and AP Computer Science. She serves as the Education Manager at the Dottie Rose Foundation, empowering women in computer science through programs in arts, robotics, and coding. With a Bachelor's in Software Information Systems and a Master's in Teaching Technology Engineering, Ivanna combines technical expertise with a passion for education. She holds certifications in Scrum and Database Fundamentals, furthering her impact in tech education and advocacy.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
It started as a year-long, once-a-month in-person session for upper middle school students and their parents called "Digital Glow Up." In these sessions, we taught both students and parents in Spanish and English digital skills essential in today's world. Topics included digital footprint, internet safety, digital presentations, Google Shop, Microsoft Suite, digital media (photography & video), exploring Python, web development, and AI. We also hosted one-day events and summer camps focusing on coding. Additionally, we expanded our StackBytes HS program to 22 girls, teaching them full-stack development, data analytics, personal branding, networking, and resume building.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
Digital Glow Up was the first time our organization had offered dual language workshops. **Creating content in multiple languages and relevant to diverse cultural backgrounds helps make digital spaces inclusive and welcoming.** We now consider this as an organization when we develop new programs.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
Leading this initiative involved project planning, budgeting, team management, and problem-solving, all of which helped me develop strong organizational and leadership skills. I have expanded my professional network from the conferences I have attended through the NTEN cohort and have built strong community connections, allowing me to implement more programs this past year.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
The project has significantly boosted the digital skills and confidence of the communities we served. By offering workshops on topics like using the internet, managing emails, navigating Google/AI, and coding, **we have helped participants feel more competent and reduce anxiety around technology**. This foundation has empowered them to use digital tools independently. By demystifying technology, we give students and families the confidence to explore tech-related careers—which can create pathways for economic growth and social mobility, particularly in underserved communities.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
We plan to use the data collected from this project to secure ongoing funding, ensuring the continued success of our digital literacy efforts. Our goal is to expand our online training materials, recorded workshops, and other resources created for the program, and implement more digital literacy programs. We also aim to leverage volunteers and community advocates to maintain enthusiasm and support for our initiatives. Additionally, we will encourage participants who've benefited from the project to return as volunteers, creating a cycle of giving back.

KU CENTER FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION
Digital Navigator

Kansas City, MO
Funder: Google Fiber

Tanesha Whitelaw is a Digital Navigator for the KU Center for Digital Inclusion's Technology Education Program. In her role, she supports women transitioning from jail or prison, or those with justice involvement, by teaching technology and computer skills. Using an online Learning Management System, Tanesha guides participants through instructional videos, activities, and interactive lessons, covering topics such as Computing Introduction, Microsoft Office, and coding. In addition to her work in digital inclusion, Tanesha is a licensed cosmetologist.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
My project centered on technology education for justice-involved women (currently or formerly incarcerated) through the KU Center for Digital Inclusion. As a Digital Navigator for the Center, the fellowship enabled me to acquire 10 laptops for our education program, which serves women at a correctional facility in Kansas City. This program helps women gain employment-focused technology skills.

How has this project changed the way your organization approached to Digital Inclusion?
Our KU Center for Digital Inclusion has always centered our program participants' interests and needs in developing digital skills sessions for underserved and marginalized populations, including justice-involved women. Our Center uses co-design principles in conducting interviews and surveys with program participants and in building educational modules that meet their needs and interests. In particular, we use a train-the-trainer model through which a select number of former program participants serve as paid peer mentors for current program participants. The fellowship project has helped us refine our approaches to each area.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
As a woman who was incarcerated, I am now able to provide peer mentor support to other women with criminal justice involvement in their technology learning and reentry. The fellowship project has helped me further develop my understanding of key issues related to digital inclusion.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
Justice-involved women in our KU Center for Digital Inclusion program feel more confident in their technology use and other employment-related skills. They are able to gain employment and get promoted thanks to the skillsets that they obtained through our technology education program. Some women have started their own business by utilizing website creation and digital content development skills they gained through our program.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
Our Center's train-the-trainer model allows us to expand the number of digital navigators – former program participants who support other justice-involved women's technology learning. Our Center has also expanded partnerships with community organizations, including public libraries and workforce centers so that they can utilize our resources in supporting people with criminal justice involvement or other underserved populations.

SAN ANTONIO PUBLIC LIBRARY
Learn Library Assistant

San Antonio, TX
Funder: Google Fiber

Brianna 'Bri' Glass (BFA) believes access to technology is essential to a basic and healthy quality of life. Since 2018, Bri has been helping urban patrons at Central Library in downtown San Antonio, Texas. Her department, Learn@Central, serves the community through outreach and curated resources emphasizing job support, social services, and digital literacy. With her colleague, Daniel González, Bri provides weekly "Computers and Creative Learning" classes that incorporate zine making, creative writing, and online scavenger hunts into their curriculum. These approaches offer patrons structured lifelong learning support to enhance digital mastery, confidence, analytical skills, and educational imagination. She understands the limitations and frustrations raised by the invisible barriers that technology fosters at all levels of our institutions. She is passionate about meeting people where they are at by cultivating working relationships with patrons in which they are able to voice their frustrations and find learning opportunities in a judgment-free environment.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
My project is twofold! One part is creating computer and device how-to zines for bilingual seniors. The other is a six-month initiative where I visit three San Antonio senior centers once a week for one hour, alongside colleagues, to assist seniors one-on-one with their device and computer questions. I named this weekly drop-in hour Bilingual Computers y Creative Learning, aimed to serve bilingual seniors and adults.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
At my urban downtown library, we see a lot of folks in need of one-on-one assistance with a variety of technology questions. My approach to digital inclusion is definitely very customer service-oriented rather than device-oriented. Teaching and learning together in a thorough way has been the guiding force in my fellowship project. It has been constantly shown that library staff that express thoroughness, trust, and build coalition with folks promotes non-judgmental spaces to learn about computers and devices. A non-structured learning approach at senior centers made folks less stressed and actually emphasized their desire to learn in a supportive, judgment-free environment. **Adding bilingual zines to the mix encouraged small how-to lessons that promoted digital life as fun and accessible.**

Further, my project has changed the way my organization approaches digital inclusion to include non-structured and creative ways of learning that break from traditional classroom settings and encourage meeting folks where they are at.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
This project has emphasized that I am doing good work in my department at the central downtown urban public library in San Antonio. And, that nothing can be perfect, and that is okay. This project has given me confidence in my time management and public speaking skills–all within a year! That's pretty cool.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
The San Antonio bilingual senior community has had a very positive response to my project! Time and time again, my colleagues and I are complimented for our kindness and patience when assisting bilingual folks with their computer and device questions. It has reinforced that trust, respect, and kindness should be at the forefront of digital inclusion projects.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
To keep the project alive, I'd like to dedicate a specific block of time each week for my colleagues and me to go to the closest senior centers to us. Specifically, the seniors at West End have welcomed us in, like family, and are very appreciative of our time and dedication to serving them. I'm also hoping to write an article about my experience and patron success stories during my fellowship and how I creatively used zines to assist in bridging the digital divide. I look forward to learning Spanish through a local San Antonio University so I can continue greeting and assisting Spanish-speaking folks coming to our library.

REFUGEE EMPOWERMENT CENTER / IMMIGRANT LEGAL CENTER
Education Program Manager

Omaha, NE
Funder: Google Fiber

Tim Walker is the Education Program Manager at the Refugee Empowerment Center in Omaha, Nebraska. With 15 years of experience in education, he has taught both Spanish and ESL. Tim is dedicated to supporting educational programs for refugees and immigrants, empowering them through language and skills development.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
I work for the Center for Immigrant and Refugee Advancement (formerly Immigrant Legal Center + Refugee Empowerment Center) in Omaha, Nebraska. My project aimed to support our refugee clients in building their digital literacy skills. It included curriculum development to include digital technology information and usage in our Cultural Orientation class, as well as specialized Digital Literacy classes and workshops for our clients. We were also able to donate laptops to many clients through a partnership secured by our Matching Grant employment team.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
The project has brought the ideas of digital inclusion and digital literacy to the forefront of how we think about supporting our refugee clients and their successful integration into United States culture and society in this 21st century.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
I have learned a lot about the concepts of digital inclusion and digital equity, and I am more aware of the digital divide that exists for many of our communities across the United States, as well as the ways various governmental and non-governmental entities and organizations are working to bridge this gap in access and education. It has also helped me network with other individuals and organizations in Omaha and across the nation who are working to support these same efforts.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
Our clients are beginning to gain more digital literacy skills, enabling them to feel more comfortable using devices such as smartphones and computers. This, in turn, is helping them access more opportunities in education, employment, health care, banking, and digital communication across the board.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
We have secured another grant through Google Fiber to purchase laptops and hotspots for many of our future clients. We have also begun networking with other organizations in Omaha to address the digital literacy and internet access needs in our community. We also plan to continue with our newly developed Cultural Orientation curriculum and practices, emphasizing digital literacy education and technology usage. As our organization goes forward, digital literacy and inclusion are at the forefront of our minds, for it's essential for our refugee clients as they look to integrate into the United States and thrive in this ever-changing technological age.

SOMALI AMERICAN COUNCIL OF OREGON (SACOO)
Digital Equity Coordinator

Portland, OR
Funder: City of Portland

Abdilfatah "Abdi" Nur is the Digital Equity Coordinator at the Somali American Council of Oregon (SACOO). A 2021 graduate of Portland State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Business: Marketing, Abdi is dedicated to bridging the technology gap for underserved communities. His work focuses on helping elder clients develop essential technology skills to navigate the digital world. Outside of work, Abdi enjoys staying active by going to the gym 3 to 5 times a week and is an avid soccer fan, never missing a Chelsea FC match, regardless of time differences.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.
As part of my Digital Inclusion Fellowship, I worked on a project to enhance digital literacy in underserved communities. We organized a series of one-on-one sessions and small workshops, teaching participants essential skills like navigating the internet, using productivity software, and understanding online safety. The project not only empowered participants but also fostered a sense of community, as many individuals helped each other along the way.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
The Digital Inclusion Fellowship project significantly transformed our organization's approach to digital inclusion. **Previously, our efforts were fragmented, focusing on isolated initiatives. However, through this project, we recognized the importance of a holistic strategy that combines access, education, and community engagement.** This experience highlighted the value of ongoing support and training, leading us to develop sustainable programs that empower individuals with the skills and resources they need to thrive in a digital world. Overall, it has fostered a deeper commitment to inclusivity and community-driven solutions within our organization.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
The Digital Inclusion Fellowship project has profoundly influenced my work and contributed to my professional development in several ways. It enhanced my understanding of the barriers faced by underserved communities, allowing me to approach digital inclusion with greater empathy and insight. I also developed valuable skills in community engagement and collaboration, learning how to effectively partner with local organizations to create impactful programs.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
The project had a profound impact on the digital skills and confidence of the communities we served. Through our hands-on workshops, participants learned essential skills such as internet navigation, using productivity software, and understanding online safety. These sessions were designed to be interactive and practical, allowing individuals to apply what they learned in real-world scenarios.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
To sustain and expand the digital literacy project beyond the fellowship, we plan to secure ongoing funding through grants and partnerships with tech companies. Additionally, we will engage local schools and libraries to build a supportive network and train volunteers to ensure the program's continuity and growth.

THE CENTER FOR DIGITAL EQUITY
Program Director

Charlotte, NC
Funder: Google Fiber

Amy Crippen is the Program Director at The Center for Digital Equity. With extensive experience in program design and implementation across both corporate and non-profit sectors, she brings a wealth of knowledge to her new role in digital inclusion. The Digital Inclusion Fellowship marks Amy's first venture into the field, where she is focused on promoting digital equity and bridging the digital divide.

Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.
I worked on redesigning our organization's ecosystem and partner engagement strategies. This involved restructuring how we connect with and support our partners, ensuring we meet their specific needs—whether related to services, strategy, or project development.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
This project has enabled us to engage partners in a way that aligns with their needs, ensuring we offer more tailored support. We now have a more flexible and responsive approach to digital inclusion that can adapt to various partner goals and priorities.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
Collaborating with a diverse team of individuals brought a variety of perspectives and solutions to the table. This has expanded my ability to approach challenges from different angles and has strengthened my professional skills in strategic planning, collaboration, and problem-solving.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
Although this project wasn't directly focused on digital skilling, it has helped us better understand the specific requests from our partners, allowing us to identify where we can expand digital navigation services and address the digital needs of our community more effectively.

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MILL CREEK PROMISE PROGRAM
Promise Economic Wellbeing Coordinator

Mill Creek, UT
Funder: Google Fiber

Collyn Mosquito is the Promise Economic Wellbeing Coordinator at Mill Creek Promise Program. Born and raised by a Navajo mother and a Black and Alaskan Native father in Anchorage, Alaska, Collyn moved to Utah in 2012, where he earned a bachelor's in political science from Brigham Young University and a Master of Arts in Community Leadership from Westminster University. Starting his career in campaigns, Collyn later served as the Public Policy Coordinator for the Utah Nonprofits Association for two and a half years before transitioning into program management and resource navigation at Mill Creek Promise. In his current role, he oversees the digital inclusion initiative, teaching six-week basic digital skills courses at community centers around the city to help empower individuals with essential technology skills.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
I created a six-week basic digital skills course for residents of Millcreek City. The curriculum was designed using elements from various digital skills programs maintained by companies and organizations like Microsoft and The Digital Skills Library.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
Digital inclusion was only a small part of the work that Millcreek Promise and I did prior to my fellowship. With this fellowship and the completion of my project, **we now view digital inclusion as more than just an internet connection; it encompasses devices, affordable internet, and digital skills**. When I sit down with my supervisor now, we consider all of these factors and plan with them in mind.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
When I think about other aspects of my job, like financial stability and housing, I now consider the digital skills involved in achieving financial stability and finding and applying for affordable housing. This fellowship has also helped me develop stronger project development and management skills, as well as expand my network among digital inclusion professionals nationwide. Additionally, I have learned how to seek and apply for funding, a skill that will be valuable for any future programming I pursue for my organization.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
I have brought my course to seniors, low-income residents, New Americans, immigrants, and refugees. Seniors have shared that they learned skills they didn't know before and plan to use them to stay connected with family and access benefits. One lower-income resident told me she was able to go back to school and start her own sexual wellness business. New Americans learned skills that helped them find better job opportunities, which was a common reason they gave for attending. One New American from Peru joined not only for the free laptop but also to gain digital skills she could use in a potential office job and at the local community college she's attending.

What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
We will continue to partner with Housing Connect (Salt Lake County's Housing Authority), Utah Nonprofit Housing Corporation, Corky's organization in South Salt Lake, and others to continue offering digital skills courses to residents. I am working with the Utah Digital Opportunity Network to apply for the Digital Equity Act competitive grant funding and will be applying for Capacity grant funding through the state as well. We maintain contact with Comcast and Google Fiber to see what other support they are willing to give to my program. While we hope for more laptops, the classes will continue with or without them.

SOUTH SALT LAKE CITY
Community Opportunity Center Coordinator

South Salt Lake City, UT
Funder: Google Fiber

Courtney "Corky" Reeser (she/her) is the Community Opportunity Center (Co-Op) Coordinator at Promise South Salt Lake. In this role, Corky has been serving the community for over a year, providing a space for learning opportunities, meetings, interviews, and connecting individuals with essential services. She values working in an environment that fosters learning about the diverse cultures, experiences, and needs of the community. Outside of work, Corky is an avid baseball fan with a love for art and music, and she looks forward to continued learning and growth alongside the community.

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Tell us about the project you worked on as Digital Inclusion Fellow.
My project evolved into a Digital Navigator Handbook and Resource Guide, designed to help volunteers and participants work on digital skills together. It includes fraud prevention classes, career navigation, and workforce development. We used well-known resources from South Salt Lake to provide training on web security, and expanded our relationship with TechCharities (started by a DIF alumnus) to continue providing access to affordable refurbished devices.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
My original project was to create a train-the-trainer guide and develop a volunteer base to teach individuals in senior centers, community centers, nursing care facilities, and possibly medical rehab how to use their phones and apps to order transportation, food, and access medical information. After collaborating with community partners and listening to the needs of participants, we were able to provide desktops for the community to use, start a career pathways program, and work one-on-one with neighbors who needed support filling out job applications and other online forms.

I have also learned that there is a rather large community that does not want digital access, and they are not able to connect with services that are essential to their livelihood (such as SNAP, Medicare, Social Security, public safety, and housing). Although I have been able to create email addresses with them, they do not want the responsibility of remembering a password and would rather have information mailed directly to them. Unfortunately, paperless options are the only way for communication with most of these services.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
I have been able to connect with the Utah Broadband Center, the Utah Digital Opportunity Network, and the Governor's Economic Opportunity programs. I have worked with a variety of people in various capacity that are also working to close the gaps with digital inclusion.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
The Co-Op is able to help connect our community with more digital skills and opportunities. There are five desktops available daily from 9 am to 8 pm. Partner groups know we have affordable devices for them and classes to help them use their new products. We are also able to provide fraud and online safety education in a way that does not intimidate people from using the technology.
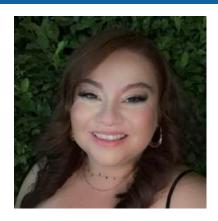
What plans or strategies does your organization have in place to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
South Salt Lake and Millcreek have a shared Digital Mobility plan. We will continue to foster this relationship and work together to provide services and opportunities to our communities. There is so much room for growth in skills development, workforce development, and entrepreneurship.

We are working on soundproofing our breakout rooms and adding a privacy screen on the doors so we can become part of the Telehealth Network as a TAP spot. This will provide another way for our community to access medical appointments and other activities that may need privacy.

Promise South Salt Lake also has the Best Buy Teen Tech Center for youth in our afterschool programs. We look forward to expanding programs that will continue to connect our residents and businesses with the opportunities needed to thrive.

GUADALUPE CENTERS
Development Director

Kansas City, MO
Funder: Google Fiber

Gladys Esmeralda Jaggers is the Development Director at Guadalupe Centers, where she has spent two decades serving low-income families and individuals. As the Director of Workforce Development and Adult Education, she focuses on empowering communities through education and financial literacy. Mrs. Jaggers enhances programs through fund development, networking, and collaboration with various organizations. She advocates for digital literacy as a critical skill for education, employment, and accessing services. With a background in housing counseling and civil rights, she is dedicated to supporting underserved communities and fostering inclusive, supportive environments.

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

nten.org/dif

Tell us about the project you worked on as a Digital Inclusion Fellow.
I focused on launching a digital skills mobile computer lab and integrating digital skills programs into our existing workforce development and adult education programs. With funding support, we were able to distribute 100 laptops by the end of 2024 through a partnership with AT&T and LISC. Google Fiber helped expand our digital skills mobile lab, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield donated 30 laptops, ensuring that all our program participants had access to our lending library for digital skills programs and Grow with Google career certificates.

How has this project changed the way your organization approaches digital inclusion?
For our organization, this project changed the way we integrated digital skills into our existing workforce and adult education programs. We incorporated a two-week digital skills training component into our English language learner curriculum, and added digital skills instruction into our Grow with Google curriculum. We ensured that participants learned how to navigate a computer, create emails, and use Google Sheets for budgeting and money management before moving on to more advanced tools. We also implemented community drop-in computer lab hours and launched a digital skills program using the Northstar Digital Literacy program, where students graduated with a Northstar certificate of completion. Previously, we worked in standalone programs, but now we have fully integrated digital skills into our core offerings.

How has this project influenced your work or contributed to your professional development?
Digital equity and inclusion will always be a passion of mine. The fellowship allowed me to get involved with our local digital drive programs and become deeply committed. Even though I am no longer overseeing the programs, I continue to be an advocate and serve on our local committee.

How has your project influenced the digital skills and confidence of the communities you served?
We received great feedback from our community. They have really embraced the program and the computer lab hours, which have significantly boosted their digital skills and confidence.

What plans or strategies does your organization have to sustain and expand the project beyond the duration of the fellowship?
From what I know, the organization is continuously seeking funding to support the computer labs and the program, ensuring its sustainability and growth beyond the fellowship.