Digital Navigator Toolkit

Digital US

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Digital US

Toolkit Overview

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Digital Navigators: Connect to Opportunity

Digital navigators are all the more needed now as recovery efforts must include supporting millions of Americans to access information and services online

The Digital Navigator program is "an adaptation of traditional digital inclusion programming[1]." Its goal is to ensure residents receive on-demand tech support and relevant information to secure internet access and devices, as well as the opportunity to build foundational digital skills, learning, and job training. This is done through providing much-needed just-in-time, one-to-one and small group dedicated support via phone service, email, text, video chat, and other communication methods that work for the learner-worker. Digital navigation can also be provided in-person or blended formats. The model is a solution to address both digital access as well as learning and upskilling, and at scale.

With funding from Walmart, the EdTech Center @ World Education is working with some of its Digital US Coalition partners, including National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), National Association of Workforce Boards, and others, to develop new models for offering "digital navigator" services to help learner-workers connect to the internet, secure equipment, acquire foundational digital skills, and access upskilling and job opportunities. The project is identifying key features and best practices to facilitate the adoption and successful replication of models across the country[2].

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[1]Ed Tech Center @ World Education: "Digital Navigators: Lynchpin in Equitable Reskilling & Recovery Efforts".

[2] Ed Tech Center @ World Education: "Digital Navigators: Lynchpin in Equitable Reskilling & Recovery Efforts".

This toolkit was developed by

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Why start a Digital Navigator Program?

The development and scaling of digital navigator services meet the immediate needs of learner-workers and their families, helping them find and apply for safety net services and to reskill or upskill[3] to stay employed or find new work opportunities during the recession.

There is a great inequality that exists in our modern world — digital exclusion. Digital exclusion locks many people, particularly black and brown communities, out of opportunities, with considerable costs to them and our wider society. Digital exclusion refers to those who lack access to technology and foundational digital skills training.

Access
18 million

households do not have internet access

including 14 million low-income households in urban areas and 4 million in rural areas.[17]

Skills
32 million

adults can't use a computer

and 1/3 of U.S. workers and 1/2 of Black and Latino workers have limited or no digital skills.[18]

Resilience
1/2

of Americans aren't comfortable using technology to learn

and OECD found that 72% of US lack sufficient digital problem-solving skills, including 58% of millennials.[19]

When some of US are not able to:

- Apply for jobs online
- Use basic operations software at work
- Use technology for continuous learning
- Work online

- Access health, financial, government or other services online
- Sell or buy new or upcycled things online
- Monitor water or electricity use online

- Participate in children's schools' communications systems
- Engage with civic issues online
- Access resources to be an informed citizen

It impacts all of US[4]

Before the pandemic and since the early- to mid-1990s, digital inclusion programs have focused on improving digital skills through classroom training and public computer lab access through community technology centers/labs. Despite these efforts, the gap in digital skills remains[5].

In addition, the pandemic response has severely reduced libraries and other community organizations' ability to offer their traditional digital inclusion programs. Face-to-face training classes, public access computer labs, and walk-in support services have been unavailable for several months or longer. As programs at libraries and community-serving organizations adapt to the new environment, the Digital Navigator model is being adopted and can become part of the services being offered going forward remotely or face-to-face.

The social distancing measures needed to tackle the pandemic have put the digitally excluded in a precarious situation. Unable to attend community technology centers or education and training labs, many lack access to connectivity, digital devices, or the required digital skills to access essential services, which have rapidly moved online. At a time when technology innovation requires all of us to develop digital resilience, a lynchpin in developing a more equitable ecosystem for reskilling and upskilling to ensure economic recovery will be offering more accessible, just-in-time digital navigator services at scale[6].

The Digital Navigator model is a comprehensive model that addresses multiple layers of becoming digitally included, which traditional classes and other services in the past might not have addressed completely. In addition, the Digital Navigator model is appealing as it offers flexibility not only in terms of where, how, and when services are offered but also who provides the service. Digital Navigators can be trained staff or volunteers that help learner-workers (whether through phone, virtual hotlines, or at drop-in locations) secure affordable internet access, devices, and foundational training so they can meet their goals. Foundational digital skills can be offered directly or through referrals to learning programs that can help learner-workers upskill, access critical services, and search for or apply for a job.

A business or organization could embed digital navigator services into its HR and L&D departments to ensure that all its employees have personalized support to secure affordable access to the internet and devices and develop foundational skills to navigate online programs for learning and managing operations.

Examples of how the Digital Navigator model[7] can be implemented include the work that NDIA is piloting with Rural LISC sites in Appalachia and Salt Lake City Public Library sites. In Philadelphia, three local organizations CLC, SEAMAAC, and DREXEL, received government grants to provide digital navigator services, and the model is now expanding citywide. Connect Arizona is another good implementation example. Similarly, EdTech Center and Digital US are working with partners in California, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Washington DC, and South Dakota to pilot the model.

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[3]National Skills Coalition "The New Landscape of Digital Literacy"

[4] Digital US: "Building On-Ramps to Digital Resilience" pg. 9

[5] https://www.burning-glass.com/research-project/digital-skills-gap/

[6]Ed Tech Center @ World Education: "Digital Navigators: Lynchpin in Equitable Reskilling & Recovery Efforts".

[7] https://edtechbooks.org/-xxq

Starting a Digital Navigator program

This toolkit serves as a high-level guide and offers a starting point for partners currently planning to pilot digital navigator services across the country. Our implementation is being informed by guidance from the Digital US members and our partners in the adult education and workforce development field. The project leadership continues to contribute to and learn from the Digital Navigator working group, coordinated by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, and partially underwritten by Digital US. Members of the group can be found here. Highlighted in this document are contributions made by participants of the group.

This tool kit covers five important elements in program planning and design[8]:

- **Program Goal** - What is this program interested in accomplishing? What problem is it intended to address? Who is the target population?
- **Program Description** - What activities will you be doing to achieve the desired program outcomes? What service(s) will you offer?
- **Measurement and Evaluation** - What does success look like, and how can we measure it? What metrics will your agency use to track results?
- **Implementation Plan** - Are there training and startup requirements? What current resources can you leverage and or will you need additional resources?
- **Building a digital equity ecosystem** - Do you know potential partners offering complementary, wrap-around, or supportive services? What strategic alliances with businesses, governments, and other organizations or institutions, can be made to ensure digital inclusion?

Quick guide

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[8] Adapted from NCSL Standing Committee on Health & Human Services "Evidence-Based Policymaking: Achieving Efficient & Effective Programs"

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https://edtechbooks.org/digital_navigator_toolkit/starting_a_digital_n.

Program Goal

Program Goal: What will this initiative accomplish? What challenges will it mitigate/address?

What is the need in your community?

To develop an effective Digital Navigator plan, we need to understand and articulate the digital access and digital literacy needs of the community. To do so, draw on information about the general need for expanding the implementation of the Digital Navigator model mentioned in this guide. Then, make this relevant for your work by identifying the magnitude of the need for a Digital Navigator program in your community or program. For example, ask yourself (and others) questions like:

a. What is the number of students without reliable access to the internet in your district[9], or region?
b. How many learner-workers in your program only have mobile phone access, what is their level of digital literacy or comfort using technology?
c. What is their level of awareness, skills, agility, and confidence to be empowered users of new technologies
d. Is the need widespread, or are particular demographics areas of your community most in need of support to cross digital divides?

In addition to the worksheet created by Arizona State Library, this community tool box by the University of Kansas can help you determine need in your community.

What is the purpose of your program?

Your program's focus will depend on the community's needs, organizational goals and priorities, and the capabilities and resources of your organization or community. The end goal of your program is to establish a Digital Navigator service that responds to the community's needs and leverages the capabilities and resources.

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[9] Created by Arizona State Library, this worksheet offers a structured process for collecting and sharing information about what the digital divide looks like in a geographic area.

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Program Description

Program Description: What activities will you be doing to achieve the desired program outcomes? How many people will be served?

Most Digital Navigator programs concentrate, at least initially, on providing information about low-cost internet access, devices, and tech support. However, there is an opportunity to use the model to provide foundational digital literacy skills and warm referrals to adult education and upskilling programs. The extent to which these additional supports are provided, and the strategies used to do so, will impact a program's ability to build digital resilience in our communities[10].

Digital resilience signifies having the awareness, skills, agility, and confidence to be empowered users of new technologies and adapt to changing digital skill demands. Digital resilience improves capacity to problem-solve and upskill, navigate digital transformations, and be active participants in society and the economy

Who will you serve?

Will Digital Navigators can provide services to seniors, people with disabilities, learner-workers, residents of a specific zip code or neighborhood, youth, unemployed, underemployed, and dislocated people, immigrants, young women? Or is your program open to anyone calling your line?

It is important to define the group of people for whom you are designing the program. Identifying your target population will help you with recruitment, ensure services meet the needs, and help with retention efforts.

"At a library, Digital Navigators could be serving both general and specific audiences, sometimes at the same time. It just depends on their community and who asks for help, or if the library determines on its own to help a target group or offer programs to the general public." Heidi Ziemer at Western New York Library Resources Council.

→ Demographic Characteristics

What demographic characteristics define the population you serve? What is the size, or how large is your target population? How many people in the category/categories identified will need your services? This informs the need for your program. The target demographic will also influence the kind of support requested, and as a result, the services and information digital navigators need, in order to help learner-workers achieve their goals.

→ Degree of Reach

How many people are you looking to serve? Realistically, what percentage of that population will your program be able to reach given available resources? This tells us why your program is important and how many people will be served.

→ Assets: Participants Strengths and Capacities

We tend to look at target populations from a deficit perspective. We often think of "them" as people lacking or not having something. However, it is important to identify and recognize the internal and external strengths of the people we work with. Internal assets can be things like commitment to learning and growth mindset, motivation, or positive attitudes about technology. External assets can be peer or family support systems, community bonds, etc.

→ Challenges

Just as important as identifying the assets is thinking about the challenges in reaching and retaining people in your program. For example, in working with homeless people, you can assume that they will have difficulties keeping an address or securing reliable contact information. Working with seniors may mean providing support to mitigate memory, eyesight and dexterity issues. In general, working with people who lack internet access and technology could mean a lack of exposure and unfamiliarity with jargon and terms commonly used by those who are more familiar with the technology. Thinking about the risks or barriers allows you to create strategies to counteract the challenges the target community faces and help you be more strategic and proactive about partnerships with agencies and organizations that can provide support or wrap-around services.

→ Program eligibility and other requirements

This goes hand in hand with the target population you identified. For example, you may restrict services to people that belong to a determined program (public housing development, etc.), age bracket, or geographic area (of the city, urban or rural areas, etc.) Other categories may include unemployed, attending an adult education program, single parents, returning citizens, etc.). Are there additional requirements for your program? (benefit recipients, legal status, etc.).

The Nebraska Library Commission developed a target audience guide that can be helpful to identify Audience & Assess Resources.

What specific services or activities will you provide?

What services will Digital Navigators provide:

1. information about low-cost internet access options
2. information about free, low cost or refurbished devices
3. tech support
4. referrals to digital literacy programs
5. supports for developing basic digital literacy skills
6. referrals to job training or online education options
7. upskilling | job readiness program
8. all of the above
9. other (telehealth, etc.)

Digital Navigators can be the first step to get internet access, equipment or receive quick technical assistance. They can also be a one-stop service center making referrals to programs and facilitating enrollment in virtual digital literacy classes, workshops, and upskilling opportunities.

→ How often and how frequently will services be offered?

Planning needs should be driven by exploration or reflection that covers the following questions:

a. How often are these activities/services being provided?
    i. For how long?
b. Would your program exist after the pandemic is over?
    i. Will you add an in-person component?
    ii. At what intensity?
c. Are there expectations about following up with callers?
d. If Digital Navigators are expected to schedule small group coaching or teaching for other digital needs like downloading apps, or how to use them; offer support for learning digital or other skills in online programs; how often would workshops be scheduled?
    i. How many sessions will you offer?
    ii. Will it be drop-in or scheduled?

→ What are your service hours?

The answer to this question may depend on the number of trained staff or volunteers you have, the needs of the population you seek to serve, and the number of phone lines and equipment available. All of these will impact the service you can offer.

Learner-Worker centered approach

The goal of the digital navigator is not only to provide accurate information about equipment, connectivity or foundational education options but to offer support that addresses the particular needs and goals of learner-workers receiving the service.

To effectively address learner-worker needs, digital navigators need to be familiar with technology, be willing to learn new tools, have up to date information about connectivity and equipment, be familiar with resources available in the community, and need to be culturally competent. Being culturally competent means having the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures and who may follow different norms and traditions, perceive, think, interact, behave, speak, have physical conditions different from your own.

→ Support for people with disabilities

Assistive technology (AT) is equipment or software used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. Digital Navigators should be familiar with basic tools to enhance communication and access and have available resources at hand with information to provide learner-workers. Helpful information is provided by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, also helpful are these guides created by Temple Institute on Disabilities.

→ Language access services

Language access allows English Language Learners (ELL) individuals access to a wide range of services. An ELL person does not speak English as their primary language and is yet developing proficiency with reading, speaking, writing, or understanding English. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 21 percent of the U.S. population speaks a language other than English. Of that percentage, more than 40 percent speak English less than "very well."

"Technology can provide a platform for deeper inclusion and engagement of those who remain on the periphery of social, economic, and political life. However, digital services that fail to incorporate language translation risk rendering these platforms inaccessible for marginalized groups, such as immigrants[11]."

Newly arrived immigrants are some of the most vulnerable in society and often need support settling in and connecting to information about local services and jobs. However, these groups are often thought to be digitally, linguistically, and culturally excluded, and the move by governments and agencies to online platforms could exacerbate existing barriers

to accessing public services. Furthermore, these groups may lack the necessary digital skills and host-country language ability to take full advantage of digital services available[12].

Planning needs should be driven by exploration or reflection that covers the following questions:

a. What languages, besides English, are spoken in your community?
b. What percentage of the population you intend to serve speaks English "less than very well"?
c. How can you provide and secure services for these communities?
d. How would you let these communities know they are welcome to call your line and that services will be provided in their first language?
e. Would you need to translate printed materials?
f. Would you need to recruit bilingual volunteers?
g. Would you partner with other immigrant-serving organizations?

Creating a Language Access Plan

What protocols will you set in place to identify and redirect these calls to bilingual interpreters?

Your plan should address and set procedures for:

- Assessing client language needs
- Identifying staff language capacity
- Training staff and volunteers who interact with clients

- Using interpreters (Consider recruiting bilingual volunteers)
- Serving clients with limited English proficiency through outreach (consider translating flyers and providing information in different languages on your website)[13].
- Continuing to evaluate language access policies and procedures

The Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles' Language Access Procedure Manual [14] has practical instructions for staff that work with clients. It includes step-by-step processes for walk-ins, call-ins, and verbal and written communications. For more information and resources, go here[15]

→ Plain Language

Also important is to acknowledge that those seeking services may have low literacy skills. This means that any printed material should use plain language[16] to ensure people can access this information.

"Research with refugees suggested that focused instruction on the vocabulary of technology terms supported success on Northstar Digital Literacy tests and supported learner engagement because it gave them language they could use to ask questions and understand instructions. " - Jen Vanek[17]

In sharing information about technology, you should also be aware of jargon. Avoiding jargon altogether in digital navigation can be difficult. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that using technical terms may be a barrier to effective navigation. You can find more information and tips to avoid jargon at plainlanguage.gov.

How would you let people know you exist and the services you offer?

One of the challenges you may face is reaching out to those that need this service the most. In general, these are the people that do not have internet access or equipment, and as a result, traditional online channels may not reach them. The pandemic also restricts face-to-face interaction. Thinking about ways to ensure the communities that need it most know about your services is key.[18-19]

In general, campaigns must communicate "why I should participate," "where I can get trained," "how will this help my family," and "how can these tools help me at work and in my life[20]"

What communication channels do you have available, or which do you need to create? What communication channels are currently used and trusted in the community? **Relying on social media may not give the results you seek**, especially if you are trying to reach emergent users of technology who are not yet users of social media**.**

Reaching out to schools, youth organizations, food pantries may be a better way to reach the target population. Create partnerships with local community groups, churches, etc. who can help get the word out -even through text if they have contact info for people. Also, studying media sources used by the target population -like the local convenience store, tv, radio, or their local newspaper, as well as local barbershops- is advisable. For "hard-to-reach" communities, a strategy worth considering is engaging *community outreach advisors* or *community outreach ambassadors*. They are members of the target community, and as such have valuable social networks and are trusted messengers in the community.

Planning needs should be driven by exploration or reflection that covers the following questions:

a. For those who have access to the internet, would you have a form that learners can complete online to request services?
b. Would you like learner-workers to reach you via phone?
c. Would you have an available landline with a message? Or would you use a Google phone?
d. How soon would you respond to messages?
e. What other ways of contact would you promote?
    i. Who would manage those, and how often would those requests be answered?

For examples of what organizations are doing visit: Community Learning Center[21], Drexel ExCITe Program[22], SEAMAAC[23], Chicago Public Schools[24] and Connect Arizona[25]; or use this template to help you create a communications strategy to guide your outreach for new students[26].

What are your program principles?

These are the fundamental norms, rules, and values that guide the program (e.g., being inclusive, client-focused, etc.). These principles should be part of the training of Digital Navigators and be embedded in your program's activities from the way calls are answered to the way services are offered, and the way referrals are made.

The way you interact with callers can be an important recruitment and retention tool. Most times, callers satisfied with the experience, will tell friends and family to contact you to get assistance. The experience also influences the likelihood of participants to seek more services, participate in other training activities, complete training, and achieve goals. **Don't underestimate the importance of quality service in attracting new learner-workers to your program and to further engage in services.**

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[10]Digital US: "Building On-Ramps to Digital Resilience"

[11]*Immigrants in the Smart City: The Potential of City Digital Strategies to Facilitate Immigrant Integration*

[12]Migration Policy: "Immigrants in the Smart City: The Potential of City Digital Strategies to Facilitate Immigrant Integration"

[13]Legal Services Corporation: "Language Access & Cultural Sensitivity"

[14]The Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles: "Policy and Procedures on Providing Legal Services to Limited English Proficient Clients".

[15]Limited English Proficiency.gov

[16]United States Government: Federal Plain Language Guidelines.

[17]Vanek, J. (2017). Second Language Proficiency, Academic Language, and Digital Literacy for LESLLA. In J. Sacklin & D. McParland (Eds.), Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) (p. 136). Portland.https://edtechbooks.org/-wXms

[18]See the Right Question Institute for suggested ways to help people self-answer why they should participate: https://rightquestion.org/

[19]"Digital Inclusion Imperatives Offer Municipalities New Social and Economic Opportunities" white paper by Maria E. Wynne and Lane F. Cooper Sponsored by Microsoft Corporation, Office of Economic Development and Innovation, U.S. Public Sector.

[20] https://rightquestion.org/

[21]Community Learning Center Digital Navigators

[22]Drexel University: ExCITe Center Digital Navigators

[23]SEAMAAC Digital Navigators

[24]Chicago Public Schools Parent Tech Support Center

[25]Connect Arizona Tech Access Phone Line

[26]https://edtech.worlded.org/mlearning_resource/communications-planning-template/

Measurement and Evaluation

Measurement and Evaluation: What does success look like, and how can we measure it? What metrics will your agency use to track results?

While testing or implementing the program, it is important to learn what's working well and what isn't. A data collection strategy is key here. A sound data collection system will let the people you serve, your partners, and the community, in general, know the outcomes of your work.

Outcomes

Planning needs should be driven by exploration or reflection that covers the following questions:

a. What are the changes that you can reasonably expect the target population to experience as a result of receiving your services?
b. How will they be different or better off as a result?
c. Are the outcomes logically related to and likely to result from the core program activities you will be conducting?
d. Are your outcomes realistic and attainable given the level of intensity and duration of the program?
e. What skills, behavior, knowledge are you expecting people to gain after receiving services?
f. What other data do you need to collect to capture impact for continued sustainability? More about outcomes can be found here[27].

"Consider scheduling weekly or biweekly calls with Digital Navigators to share success, challenges and to brainstorm solutions " Karisa Tashjian at National Cristina Foundation

Data Collection

Planning needs should be driven by exploration or reflection that covers the following questions:

a. How would you measure those outcomes?
b. While the number of calls answered per month is a relatively easy metric to capture, how would you capture skill or knowledge attainment?
c. How would you know if callers served by the Digital Navigators can secure connectivity or devices?
d. How would you collect this information?
e. What methods will you use?

A suggested intake form can be found here. Here is another sample intake form created by SEAMAAC in Philadelphia.

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[27] Learning for Action https://edtechbooks.org/-dXak

Implementation Plan

Implementation Plan: Are there training and startup requirements? Can you do this with current resources, or will you need additional resources?

Internal Asset Mapping

It is important to identify the assets that exist in your community and build a database or directory with information that can be used to help people get the services, devices, information, as well as the digital and job training[28] they need.

Planning needs should be driven by exploration or reflection that covers the following questions:

a. What partners do you already have that can help your efforts?
b. Do you know of any refurbishing programs in your community, or do you know of any digital literacy programs offered at your library?
c. Do you know of any services available in your community for people with learning disabilities?
d. Are there any upskilling programs you can connect learners to?
e. Are there any agencies working with immigrant communities that can help you recruit or help with language access?
f. What low cost connection services are available in your area? This asset mapping guide developed by Digital Promise[29] can be helpful.

→ Digital Learning Curriculum

In addition to identifying equipment needs and assets in your community, you also want to identify digital learning curriculum. SkillsBase provides relevant material and valuable learning resources. You can find more here. Diverse organizations and employers, both big and small, would benefit greatly from national sharing of research and best practices in instruction and assessment in developing both essential technology skills and digital resilience[30].

What do you need to provide services?

Needs	Who provides?	Cost
EQUIPMENT		
Telephone lines		
Email		
Internet		
Desktop/ laptops/ tablets/ smartphones		

Training materials
(handouts, videos, digital
resources)

HUMAN RESOURCES

Paid Staff

A coordinator

Volunteers (bilingual staff
and volunteers)

Training

**MONITORING AND
EVALUATION**

Free or paid Database

Data entry

Creating reports

Tally request for services

Collecting successful stories

MARKETING

Social media

Website

Local newspaper

Translation services

Where do you plan to establish the Digital Navigator program?

It could be embedded into an existing community institution or established organization, like a library, a housing authority, school, a retail store, laundromat, or a social service agency; or it could support another program agenda, like workforce training, adult literacy, health services, financial literacy, public childhood education, or some other kind of existing program. If the answer is "standalone community Digital Navigator program," then who's the "owner"? Is there a sponsoring organization in place?

"This is where we inspire people to be creative. Digital Navigator services can be provided in diverse locations around the community to make services more accessible -laundromats, DVM, retail stores, barber shops, etc." Alison Ascher Webber at Digital US.

Do you plan to raise money to support the program?

This will depend on the needs of the program and the expenses associated with it. What aspects can be sponsored by a partner organization? What data do you need to capture impact for continued sustainability?

Who will provide services?

Professionals, educators, trained staff, or trained volunteers? How would you recruit? What characteristics do they need to have? What skills do they need? How would you provide the training required?

Digital Navigators are trained staff or volunteers that help learner-workers (whether through phone or virtual hotlines or at drop-in locations) secure affordable internet access and/or devices and learn to use them to help meet their goals, such as to find and use an online learning program to reskill, to access critical services, or search for or apply for a job. The Digital Navigator works from home, or when social distancing is not necessary, they will work from an office or facility in group settings. This program can also be adapted for house calls and site visits.

If working from home, they will need a dedicated phone line, headset, internet subscription, and computer. Interactions happen by phone, video phone, and additionally via remote desktop once the client is online.

→ Digital Navigator Responsibilities:

The Digital Navigator acts as a liaison, providing individualized or small group assistance regarding connectivity services information, devices and foundational digital skills. The Digital Navigator educates learner-workers so they can make their own decisions, resolving any emerging problems that learner-workers might face with accuracy and efficiency. This assistance is provided primarily by voice telephone but may also include in-person, email, text, video chat, and other communication methods that work for the learner.

More specifically, a Digital Navigator will

- Identify and assess learner-workers' needs
- Build relationships and trust with the learner-workers through open and interactive communication
- Provide accurate, valid and complete information regarding access, devices and connectivity using the right methods/tools
- Offer foundational skills or make referrals to education programs where learner-workers can upskill, and search or apply for jobs.
- Keep records of learner-workers interactions, process learner-workers records, and file documents
- Follow up with learner-workers to ensure goals have been met
- Data entry (as needed)

→ Digital Navigator Profile:

A competent Digital Navigator:

- Is comfortable with technology
- Has the ability and desire to learn and teach basic technological concepts related to internet services, computer and device characteristics, online services, and applications.
- Has the ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures
- Is able to build trust with clients
- Is patient, compassionate and supportive
- Is a creative problem solver, and negotiates and handles stressful situations in a positive manner
- Is service oriented, conducting itself in an approachable and professional manner

→ Digital Navigator Job Description

To help stakeholders, the NDIA has developed a [baseline job description](#) for staffers to do Digital Navigator work that can be tailored to meet local needs. Sample job descriptions from [TLC Philly](#) and [Digital US](#) are also available.

→ Digital Navigator skills and competencies and Training needs

 A Navigator's professional training will include:

- Understanding Digital Equity, Digital Inclusion, Digital Resilience, and Digital Literacy
- Strategies to effectively identify learner-workers' needs, and goal setting
- Strategies to provide basic procedural training and support to learner-workers over the phone or online, using remote learning tools and strategies, including ELLs.
- Information about assistive technology tools (like Apple [VoiceOver](#), [Google TalkBack](#), [Microsoft Narrator](#), [Screen Magnifiers](#), among others[31].)
- Fundamentals of Adult Learning and Trauma-informed coaching

Digital US will soon make available an online Digital Navigator training that could be customized to your needs. For more information, please contact Priyanka Sharma at [priyanka_sharma@worlded.org](#)

→ Volunteer Recruitment

Digital Navigators can be full or part-time staff or volunteers. For more information on how to establish a volunteer program at your organization, see [this guide](#). This [article from NTEN](#) also provides good information. Another good source of information is VolunteerMatch; you can find a list of webinars related to volunteer management [here](#).

Universities can be a good way to recruit volunteers. Immigrant advocacy agencies can also help you recruit bilingual volunteers able to provide services in the languages spoken in your community.

A volunteer job description with specific time commitments, will set the expectations clear from the beginning. Volunteers can be and often are highly committed individuals, but they need clarity and support. Connecting them with callers soon after training is important to keep them motivated.

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[28] In addition to equipment and access, it is important to consider the available digital learning curriculum. [SkillBase](#) is an interesting resource to explore.

[29] Digital Promise: "[Asset Mapping: A Guide for Education Innovation Clusters](#)".

[30] Digital US: "[Building a Digitally Resilient Workforce: Creating On-Ramps to Opportunity](#)" Pg. 27

[31] [Temple Institute on Disabilities](#) has developed these [Tech Owl guides to using ipads](#) | [Voice over on iPhone](#) | [Magnifier](#)| [Setting up iPhone for Blind Low Vision](#) | [Using iPhone for Blind Low Vision](#)

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Access it online or download it at
https://edtechbooks.org/digital_navigator_toolkit/implementation_plan.

Building an Ecosystem for Digital Resilience

Building an Ecosystem for Digital Resilience: Do you know potential partners offering complementary, wrap-around, or supportive services? What strategic alliances with businesses, governments, and other organizations or institutions, can be made to ensure digital inclusion?

As mentioned earlier, programs might address only one or two of the elements of digital inclusion. As a result, collaboration within organizations is fundamental to help community members be fully connected.
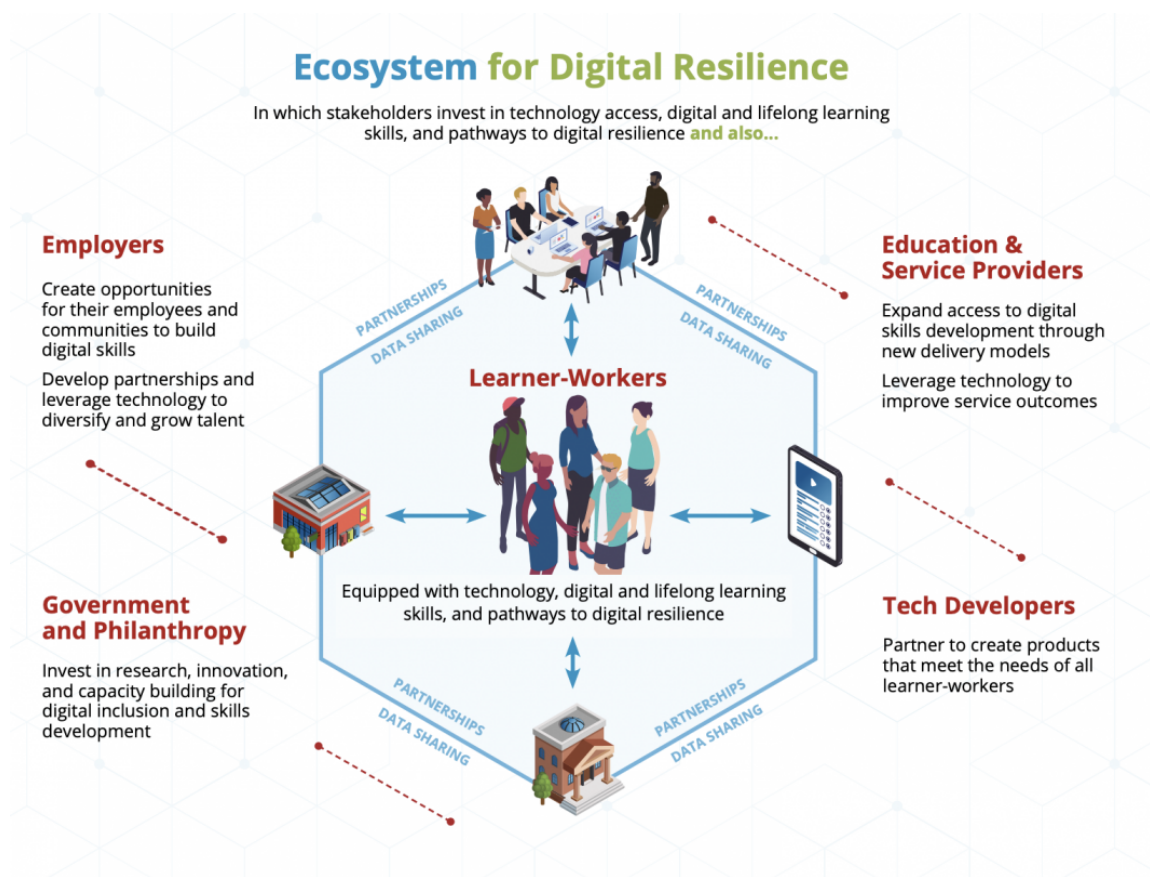
In building this ecosystem, it is important to consider how the people you serve will be able to access all of the elements of digital inclusion (affordable connectivity, affordable devices, digital literacy skills, or tech support). Do you know potential partners offering complementary, wrap-around or supportive services? What strategic alliances with businesses, governments, and other organizations or institutions, can be made to ensure digital inclusion? Also, consider whether your program might duplicate or even compete with existing community efforts.

"Today, siloed funding and limited coordination across employers, education and service providers, government, philanthropy, technology developers, and other stakeholders impacts learner-workers' ability to pursue digital learning and upskilling opportunities.[32]*"*

A successful strategy requires building innovative partnerships. Alliances among government, private sector, philanthropic and community leaders, adult education and workforce organizations, libraries, and other systems need to participate in order to ensure no citizen is left out.

Some important actors to consider are:

Senior city officials, technology players in the community, advocates/representatives of underserved citizens, economic development agencies, health care providers, immigrant advocacy organizations, legal agencies and clinics, financial sector players, chambers of commerce and entrepreneurs, school system members, public library system leaders, academics, not-for-profit executive directors (technology centers), foundation executives, among others.

Ecosystem for Digital Resilience

In which stakeholders invest in technology access, digital and lifelong learning skills, and pathways to digital resilience **and also...**

Learner-Workers

Equipped with technology, digital and lifelong learning skills, and pathways to digital resilience

Employers

Create opportunities for their employees and communities to build digital skills

Develop partnerships and leverage technology to diversify and grow talent

Government and Philanthropy

Invest in research, innovation, and capacity building for digital inclusion and skills development

Education & Service Providers

Expand access to digital skills development through new delivery models

Leverage technology to improve service outcomes

Tech Developers

Partner to create products that meet the needs of all learner-workers

PARTNERSHIPS DATA SHARING

Digital US: "Building a Digitally Resilient Workforce: Creating On-Ramps to Opportunity"

More ideas can also be found on this Coalition Guidebook [33] developed by NDIA. This white paper[34] from Power Up: The Campaign for Digital Inclusion also offers relevant information.

Join the Virtual Community of Practice

The Community of Practice (CoP) is a professional learning space. This community is a place where programs, partners, and practitioners can seek help from peers, collaborate, network, share knowledge and resources, identify and share best practices in implementing Digital Navigator models in diverse contexts and communities.

→ Guiding principles of this community of practice:

Vision: This community of practice exists to ensure that every resident of our community has home internet access, basic equipment and technical support, and foundational skills to access information and resources to improve themselves, their families, and their communities.

Mission: We work together to promote the recruitment, training, deployment, and effective use of the Digital Navigator model to address digital inclusion needs in multiple settings, organizations, and communities. We exist to advocate for universal, affordable broadband access and basic digital literacy and/or upskilling through coordinated public and community initiatives.

Objectives: We share experiences, challenges, and best practices in piloting Digital Navigation efforts across the country. We share resources and collectively learn and identify best practices for future implementations. We promote programs that utilize Digital Navigators as a strategy to secure and expand equitable internet access, digital literacy, and digital inclusion. We share resources and experiences to improve our practice and to expand the Digital Navigator model.

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[32]Digital US: "Building a Digitally Resilient Workforce: Creating On-Ramps to Opportunity"

[33]National Digital Inclusion Alliance: "The Digital Inclusion Coalition Guidebook"

[34]Digital Inclusion Imperatives Offer Municipalities New Social and Economic Opportunities" white paper by Maria E. Wynne and Lane F. Cooper Sponsored by Microsoft Corporation, Office of Economic Development and Innovation, U.S. Public Sector.