# Digital Equity Forum At-Large Meeting #2

June 9, 2022, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

The following meeting notes are intended to convey the key ideas and discussions that occurred during the meeting. For those interested in accessing the full meeting, [you can view a Zoom recording online](https://wastatecommerce.zoom.us/rec/share/yh9XsGlMh4WHHCpQZVbXOCW6lJ-v58P_Uu0G4Ja74MhoTUsfXkguE7Prw22_e04P.DEYfnTxwgyPPyzZc?startTime=1654805027000%20Passcode:%201!@5dNLX) by using the passcode 1!@5dNLX . The meeting was also recorded by TVW and [you can watch the TVW recording of the meeting here](https://tvw.org/video/digital-equity-forum-at-large-meeting-2022061093/?eventID=2022061093) and [you can listen to the TVW audio recording of the meeting here](https://invintus-audio.global.ssl.fastly.net/9375922947/db696c1c2cce9d0fd688b7b78f3bd291aa5536eb_audio.mp3).

## Attendees

### Panelists

* Mark Vasconi (he/him), Director, Washington State Broadband Office
* Carolyn Cole (she/her), Assistant Director for Equity Access, Washington State Office of Equity
* Erika Henry (she/her), Deputy Director, Washington State Broadband Office
* Sean Ardussi (he/him), Digital Equity Supervisor, Washington State Broadband Office
* Mark Detrick (he/him), Digital Equity Specialist, Washington State Broadband Office
* Devin Gombosky (he/him), Digital Equity Specialist, Washington State Broadband Office
* Tevin Medley (he/him), Consultant, The Athena Group
* Dr. Anthony Campbell (he/him), Consultant, The Athena Group

### Accessibility Support

* Angie Parsons, ASL Interpreter
* Donna (no last name shared), ASL Interpreter

### Digital Equity Forum members

* Agaiotupu Viena, Co-Chair, Washington State LGBTQ Commission
* Amanda Six, Director, Libraries of Stevens County
* Anna Zivarts (she/her), Disability Mobility Initiative, Disability Rights Washington
* Bre Urness-Straight (she/her), EdTech Director, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
* Cindy Aden (she/her), Professor of Practice (and former State Librarian) University of Washington, iSchool
* Darryl E. Hunt, King County Informational Technology Regional Services, King County Department of Information Technology
* David Keyes (he/him), Digital Equity Manager, City of Seattle Information
* Elizabeth Gordon (she/her), Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
* Eu-wanda Eagans (she/her), Senior Vice President of Workforce Development, Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region
* Jennie Harvell, Washington Healthcare Authority
* Jesus Hernandez (he/his), CEO, Family Health Centers
* Jon Claymore, Executive Director, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of Native Education
* John Sheller, Government Relations Manager, King County Library System
* Laura Ruderman (she/her), CEO, Technology Alliance
* Lisa Rosenblum, Executive Director, King County Library System
* Senator Lisa Wellman, Washington State Senate, 41st Legislative District
* Maria Siguenza, Executive Director, Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs
* Representative Matt Boehnke, Washington State House of Representatives, 8th Legislative District
* Representative Mia Gregerson, Washington State House of Representatives, 33rd Legislative District
* Sameth Mell, Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
* Senator Shelly Short, Washington State Senate, 7th Legislative District

### Members of the Public (entry based on what attendee shared via chat introductions)

* Betty Buckley
* Cassie Jones
* Chris Cullivan
* Courtenay Burns (she/her)
* Elizabeth Iaukea (she/her)
* Erika Borg
* Jim House (he/they), Director/Manager, Coalition for Inclusion Equity Planning
* Jodi Ruback
* KC
* Angela Kleis
* Jamie Robbins
* Jon Morrison Winters
* Karie Nicholas
* Pete Kolbusz
* Will Durden
* Marisol Tapia
* Mitchel Shook
* Rhonda Weaver
* Mitch
* Stefany Zalepuza
* Tom Farmer
* Melissa Van Gorkom
* WendiG

## Meeting Details

Meeting began at approximately 1:05 to allow people to get into the Zoom meeting room and get settled after there were some technical difficulties related to the Zoom meeting link in the initial invitation.

### Welcome and Acknowledgments

Carolyn Cole (she/her), Assistant Director for Equity Access, Washington State Office of Equity welcomed attendees to the meeting, explained that Co-Chair Dr. Karen A. Johnson (she/her/Beloved) would not be in attendance due to a death in her family. Carolyn delivered a land acknowledgment and then introduced Mark Vasconi (he/him) Co-Chair, Director, Washington State Broadband Office. Mark V. introduced himself, discussed the importance of this group’s work, and expressed appreciation for everyone in attendance. Mark V. invited members of the public to reach out and share any feedback with the Digital Equity Forum by sending an email to digitalequity@commerce.wa.gov and visiting the [Digital Equity Forum website](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/digital-equity-forum) to learn more about the effort. Mark V. transitioned to the next phase of the meeting (How to Participate on Zoom or By Telephone) by introducing Tevin Medley (he/him), Consultant, The Athena Group.

### How to Participate on Zoom or By Telephone

Tevin expressed appreciation for all the meeting attendees and provided detailed guidance on how attendees could best participate in the meeting. Tevin provided a clear overview on the active accessibility features, including but not limited to raise hand feature, chat, muting, video on/off, brief orientation to communication services being provided today, and building in pauses for phone participants to contribute. Tevin introduced both ASL Interpreters (Angie Parsons and Donna). Tevin explained that raised hands would be monitored by Mark Detrick (he/him) Digital Equity Specialist, Washington State Broadband Office and that the facilitators would be deliberate about taking pauses for anyone attending by phone to make statements or ask questions. Tevin reminded attendees that they may send their comments by email to digitalequity@commerce.wa.gov if time runs out. Tevin transitioned to the next phase of the meeting - Public Comment

## Public Comment

Tevin Medley introduced himself and then shared the meeting goals.

* Goal 1: Review Forum member input received in April 2022, including our revised Mission, Vision, and Values.
* Goal 2: Learn about the Washington State Broadband Office’s (WSBO) programs and how the Digital Equity Forum will help to inform future statewide and local efforts.
* Goal 3: Report to Forum members on what we have heard from our community listening sessions and small group workshops to date.
* Goal 4: Communicate the process Forum members will use in our summer 2022 workshops to develop recommendations for the final report to the Washington State Legislature.

Tevin asked members of the public to use the raise hand feature and wait to be called upon (Mark D. monitored for raised hands).

Tevin informed everyone that pauses will be taken for anyone that who is attending by phone to provide their public comment. Tevin requested that members of the public keep their comments between 2 – 3 minutes maximum. Tevin offered that, “We want to have as many people provide public comment as possible. If needed, I will remind commenters to conclude their comments.”

Tevin opened the floor for public comment.

* Jim House spoke first and disclosed that he/they is deaf, so the ASL interpreter (Angie) spoke for Jim. Jim expressed “I am the Director/Manager for the Coalition for Inclusion Equity Planning and one of our goals is to have equity in communication for all folks. Related to the broadband plan, I’m wondering if you are allowing enough bandwidth to support ASL users in remote meetings. Often there is low bandwidth, and it really limits communication with sign language because video is needed to show signs and see movements.”
* Chris Cullivan spoke second and asked, “Who would be the best person to talk to about getting funding help for customers who want fiber internet built out to their area?”
* Ann Chenhall spoke third and asked, “Will there be a public option for internet, or will this all be private companies driven by their profit motives?” Ann expressed “I hope that there will be education sessions at Senior Centers so the elderly will also have equity as far as being able to use internet.”

Tevin concluded the public comment period and then introduced Sean Ardussi (he/him), Digital Equity Supervisor, Washington State Broadband Office who oversaw the Introductions phase of the meeting.

## Introductions

Sean Ardussi introduced himself and the other staff members from the Washington State Broadband Office, as well as the consultants from The Athena Group. Sean invited Digital Equity Forum members who are attending via Zoom and can use the chat feature to submit their name and pronouns in chat. Sean invited any members attending via phone or who cannot use Zoom chat to share their name and pronouns. Sean provided an overview of how members’ feedback and suggestions from the April 7th At-Large Meeting had been honored. April 7th At-Large Meeting had been honored. Please access the [June 9th Digital Equity Forum At-Large Meeting Presentation Slides](https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/June-9-Digital-Equity-Forum-Presentation.pdf) to learn more. Sean then transitioned to the next phase of the meeting (Revisions to Mission, Vision, and Values) by re-introducing Tevin Medley

## Revisions to Mission, Vision, and Values

Tevin introduced the revised Mission, Vision, and Values. Please access the [June 9th Digital Equity Forum At-Large Meeting Presentation Slides](https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/June-9-Digital-Equity-Forum-Presentation.pdf) to learn more. Tevin explained how the Mission had been revised to align with the Washington State Legislative Proviso that initiated the creation of the Digital Equity Forum, as well as how the Vision and Values had been revised based on accumulated feedback from Digital Equity Forum members.

Tevin invited reactions and questions from Digital Equity Forum members.

* Senator Lisa Wellman, Washington State Senate, 41st Legislative District asked about whether there were going to be benchmarks to gauge whether efforts are successful.
	+ Senator Wellman asked, “How will you know you’ve done what you’ve said you will do? We’ve been here before and we need to make sure we have mechanisms to ensure we make progress.”
	+ Senator Wellman asked, “Is one of the values to track changes?”
		- Darryl Hunt, via chat, expressed “Good point Senator Wellman - we a value around tracking and measuring activities to track progress.”
		- Agaiotupu Viena, via chat, expressed “I agree. Accountability is a value missing.”
* Senator Shelly Short, Washington State Senate, 7th Legislative District, said, “Recognize that these are 30,000-foot statements, but something we cannot lose sight of… we need to really make sure we don’t forget those who don’t have any service. We need a value to focus on those who don’t have service.”
* David Keyes (he/him), Digital Equity Manager, City of Seattle Information, expressed that it is “Important to continue measuring what we’ve done and success.”
* Laura Ruderman (she/her), CEO, Technology Alliance expressed frustration about the lack of engagement with questions and the desire to make sure meeting time is used in the most effective manner.
* Jennie Harvell, Washington Healthcare Authority, recommended including as a value: education and support to enable use of broadband internet technology.
* Agaiotupu Viena, Co-Chair, Washington State LGBTQ Commission, expressed that they shared Laura’s frustration about the lack of conversations, sharing that if this meeting format does not allow for conversations, then that needs to be clearly expressed and addressed.
* Eu-wanda Eagans (she/her), Senior Vice President of Workforce Development, Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Region, said, “I also think we should have a value around innovation. I also agree with the conversation we have had; values should be a part of how we ultimately guide decision making for recommendations and it seems like there are still a lot of questions around them.”
* Jon Claymore, Executive Director, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of Native Education spoke about the urgency of who has and has not been heard from during this effort. Jon said “My reaction is we cannot wait any longer. I hear passion from the members and that is a good thing”

Tevin concluded this phase of the meeting by expressing that dialogue and discussion are essential to the success of this group, and that every effort will be made to make sure everyone feels engaged and heard. Tevin then transitioned to the meeting break.

## Meeting Break

A meeting break took place from 1:50 pm until 2:00 pm.

## Updates from the Washington State Broadband Office (WSBO)

Tevin introduced Mark Vasconi (he/him), Director, Washington State Broadband Office. Mark V. explained how members had previously expressed wanting to know more about the past and current work within the WSBO, as well as current and future funding opportunities, so this section of the meeting would be focused on honoring their curiosity and request for more information. Please access the [June 9th Digital Equity Forum At-Large Meeting Presentation Slides](https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/June-9-Digital-Equity-Forum-Presentation.pdf) to learn more. Mark V. presented on a wide range of issues, both providing updates and responding to assorted statements that had been made by members during the meeting.

Mark V. articulated the complexities and importance of “Universal Service,” as well as how lessons can be learned from previous pursuits in the areas of electricity and telephone service. He discussed how funds were generated and used for previous accessibility efforts related to electricity and telephone service. He historically situated the pursuit of universal service and then built a specific “bridge” between the broader goal and digital equity. Mark V. emphasized the necessity of a long-term commitment to address this complex program. He asserted how “Broadband has grown up in a competitive market structure, as opposed to the telephone industry that grew up in a monopoly environment,” and how that is an important contextual factor as digital equity is pursued in the 21st century. Mark V. provided an overview of current programs (federal and state resources). He addressed benchmarking and its importance for effectiveness. He provided an update on how funding has been approved to hire a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist, as well as the creation of a digital equity dashboard. He concluded by expressing that “Digital Equity Mapping is just beginning, but optimistic that this will get to the intersections of barriers to digital equity.”

Mark V. then invited questions and reactions from Digital Equity Forum Members.

* Darryl E. Hunt, King County Informational Technology Regional Services, King County Department of Information Technology offered, “When we think about broadband to households, know that only 35% of subscribers use fixed broadband and 63% use mobile. The value proposition for people is having mobility. When we think about values, services should meet people where they are or how they choose to use or access services.”
* Agaiotupu Viena, Co-Chair, Washington State LGBTQ Commission, shared, “Treating broadband as a lifeline and a basic need significantly improves the quality of life of Washingtonians. We have seen how digital access during the pandemic has pushed government / businesses to be innovative in the way they care for and serve the public. ex: telemedicine, building personal wealth, accessing community resources to meet their basic needs, personal safety, etc.”
* Amanda Six, Director, Libraries of Stevens County, offered “I would suggest that Digital Navigation is not a new thing in Washington. Public Libraries across the state have provided these services for decades.”
	+ Senator Shelly Short, Washington State Senate, 7th Legislative District, expressed “Yes they have - and quite successfully!”
* David Keyes (he/him), Digital Equity Manager, City of Seattle Information, offered, “The State also provided help with grant writing for applications to the federal Connecting Minority Communities grants.”
* Darryl Hunt said, “You've covered a lot of info Mark.” Darryl expressed agreement that the digital equity map is critical to setting a baseline, and targeting areas for purposeful investments and measuring activities.
* Amanda Six asked Mark V. “How will WSBO help rural parts of the state overcome blockages to FCC funding?”
	+ Mark V. expressed appreciation for how the FCC won’t be tasked with IIJA funds, but how there is also a need for equity when addressing issues that cannot be completely solved via the pursuit of economic efficiency. He addressed the importance of the state plan being deliberately connected to the federal plan, so that when NTIA looks at state plan they can clearly see how projects are being funded and are serving community needs. Mark V. expressed support for long-term commitment and how libraries will always have a role in addressing this issue.
* Senator Lisa Wellman, Washington State Senate, 41st Legislative District, expressed “I Didn’t hear reference to CERB and Public Works Board. Hope that WSBO will be on the lookout for new technologies.” Senator Wellman expressed the importance of thinking in a holistic way, “Hopefully an MOU, driven by WSBO, with CERB and PWB – what money should go where and how can the communities be best served.”
* Darryl Hunt asked Mark V. about BEAD funding, “How do you intend to use this group?”
	+ Mark V. offered that “DEF is essential in providing to us information and valuable guidance in crafting a state plan, but there won’t be a great need to engage the members in the submission stage.”
* Jon Claymore, Executive Director, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of Native Education shared some buzz words in native education that could have impact as this work continues – “resolve” and “restore.”
* Representative Matt Boehnke, Washington State House of Representatives, 8th Legislative District expressed excitement to work with Mark V. and WSBO. Representative Boehnke shared that “Lots of actionable items have been covered, some dates and quantifiable measures would be great.” Representative Boehnke expressed support for doing more GIS and having a digital equity dashboard, “Always great to be able to go to one central location and see all of the important data and trends.”
* Elizabeth Gordon (she/her), Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, shared that “If we are centering this work on those who are farthest from opportunity, how is their voice being heard? Virtual meetings may not be viable if they do not have broadband access, are there other methods of community engagement?”
* Bre Urness-Straight (she/her), EdTech Director, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, expressed that it is “Important to recognize Representative Gregerson’ s leadership in creating the OSPI K-12 focused DEI grants. Really making a difference for schools and students!”
* Amanda Six offered, “I would suggest an additional value that is something along the lines of: Don't reinvent the wheel. If entities/agencies are providing successful programs that address digital literacy in communities, let's help those local agencies meet the needs of the local communities.”
	+ Amanda’s offer was seconded by Darryl Hunt and Senator Short
* David Keyes shared, “I want to note that there is the BEAD letter of intent (due 7/18) which is the $5 mil. and there is also the Digital Equity Act - State Digital Equity Plan grant (July 18) and NTIA requires BEAD plan to be coordinated with that effort.”

Mark V. expressed deep appreciation for all the comments and questions, as well as encouraged members to reach out to him directly if they would like to schedule a meeting and continue the conversation about this important work. He explained that a meeting break would be held, and then the next phase of the meeting (Community Engagement Update).

## Meeting Break

A meeting break took place from 3:03 pm until 3:13 pm.

## Community Engagement Update

Dr. Anthony Campbell (he/him), Consultant, The Athena Group, provided an overview of how the community of stakeholders had been engaged with so far in the project, as well as how what had been heard had been analyzed. Please access the [June 9th Digital Equity Forum At-Large Meeting Presentation Slides](https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/June-9-Digital-Equity-Forum-Presentation.pdf) to learn more.

Anthony shared the 12 emerging themes that have been identified as of June 9, along with representative quotes.

1. Too few internet service provider options.
2. Need for basic minimum service standards.
3. Affordability is an issue, but quality of service (reliability and stability) is equally important.
4. Digital literacy and skills training is needed.
5. Accessibility must be a focus
6. Mobile devices are just as important as desktops and laptops
7. Government must have a larger and more impactful role.
8. Need a more accurate understanding of digital connectivity in WA
9. Cultural awareness is needed
10. Success will require all sectors to be involved
11. Don’t forget about organizations that need better connectivity
12. Internet service quality has not kept pace with people’s expectations and needs.

Digital Equity Forum members were then invited by Anthony to share any reactions to what had been shared, as well as any additional thoughts based on their personal and private experiences.

* David Keyes shared “It seems that there needs to be an awareness of the ecosystems of connections that people are using to staying connected at home.”
* David Keyes asked, “Were privacy and trust a theme or did they just come up peripherally?”
	+ Anthony responded with, “They were discussed in the context of the value of training and helping people avoid violations of privacy and trust; however, they were not brought up as stand-alone issues that rose to the level of being a theme.”
* Jennie Harvell asked, “On one of your slides you highlighted or acknowledged the statement that, you know, the person appreciated that affordability is an issue…and I’m trying to remember the rest of the statement that was included, but if quality is not adequate or quality is equally important to price.”
	+ Anthony responded with, “Affordability was certainly discussed, but I think that a function of who were we were able to meet with on Zoom resulted in us hearing from people who are connected and quality is, in many cases, more important than affordability. It’s not that it’s a non-issue, I think it’s just a function of who we heard from in those meeting spaces.”
	+ Jennie responded with, “my comment is that other than the inclusion of the word "affordability," there was-- and I’m wondering if it came up in the comments, in earlier conversations, but there was no real focus on how variability and rates might be addressed and how affordability could be addressed.”

Anthony concluded this section by providing an update on the forthcoming Digital Equity Community Survey. It was developed based on the expertise of the leadership and staff within the Washington State Broadband Office and the Washington State Office of Equity. The survey will be available in 17 languages, including American Sign Language videos for each question. Washingtonians will have the option to receive and complete the survey in large print or braille (English and Spanish). Accessibility review and testing of the survey are ongoing. The survey is expected to go live in the next two weeks. Digital Equity Forum members were asked to help promote the survey in their communities and your networks.

Anthony invited questions regarding the community survey.

* Darryl Hunt asked, “Will we be using social media platforms to make people aware of this survey?”
	+ Anthony responded with “I know that a Facebook promotional campaign has been designed and will soon be deployed. In addition to that we’re really hoping that all of you members and others on this call can help us spread the word through your various professional, personal, and community networks.”
* Jennie Harvell, Washington Healthcare Authority, asked when the survey would close.
	+ Anthony offered that “No specific date has been determined. The goal is to get as much engagement from Washingtonians, which will take a lot of different approaches and time.”

Anthony then transitioned to the next phase of the meeting – Recommendations Development Framework.

## Recommendations Development Framework

Anthony provided an overview of the steps that will occur between the June 9 At-Large Meeting, the development of recommendations by members in July and August, concluding in the finalizing of recommendations during the Digital Equity Form At-Large Meeting on October 20, 2022. Please access the [June 9th Digital Equity Forum At-Large Meeting Presentation Slides](https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/June-9-Digital-Equity-Forum-Presentation.pdf) to learn more. Anthony narrated a walkthrough of the recommendations development process using the graphic below Titled Recommendations Development Overview. Flow chart reads: At-Large Meeting June 9th. Recommended Development Small Group Workshops July 14 and 20th. Recommended Refinement Small Group Workshops August 10 and 17th. At-large Meeting September 15. At-large Meeting Final Recommendations October 20th. State Broadband Office and Office of Equity Daft Report to the Legislature between October and December. Key input for future digital equity planning.



Anthony then provided a detailed overview of what will occur during the July Recommendations Development Small Group Workshops. Digital Equity Forum members are provided the community engagement data (log, emerging themes, and survey data) in advance of the meeting. Groups of 2-3 members will go to breakout rooms and start developing first draft recommendations based on the community engagement data and their own experiences and expertise. Intermittently, members will come back to the primary room and report out, with a focus on trying to create a diversity of recommendations. Recommendations will be captured through a combination of note taking by small group members and workshop facilitators.

The Recommendations Refinement Small Group Workshops in August was then discussed by Anthony. Digital Equity Forum members are provided the compiled first draft recommendations from the Recommendations Development Small Group Workshops, as well as a survey data update. Groups of 2-3 members (ideally the same as the previous groups) will go to breakout rooms and start refining draft recommendations. Intermittently, members will come back to the primary room and report out, with a focus on trying to create a diversity of refined recommendations. Refined recommendations will be captured through a combination of note taking by small group members and workshop facilitators. Each small group will select a spokesperson whose responsibility will be to present the refined recommendations at the September 15 at-large meeting.

Asserting that the expertise of the digital equity forum members will ultimately guide recommendations development, Anthony provided a basic example of how a theme identified via data collection could ultimately become a draft recommendation and then be refined within the small group workshops.

Anthony concluded this section by sharing the Recommendations Development Schedule, and then handing off to Sean Ardussi to discuss next steps.

## Next Steps

Sean expressed appreciation for all the engagement and ideas that had been shared during the meeting. He conveyed that Digital Equity Forum members will be asked to join one of the Recommendations Development Small Group Workshops in July, as well as one of the Recommendations Refinement Small Group Workshops in August. Sean explained that it would be ideal if members could attend both A (first in July and first in August) sessions or both B (second in July and second in August) sessions, but it is understood that schedules might not allow all members to take that approach. Sean emphasized the importance of Digital Equity Forum members for helping “spread the word” about the Community Engagement Survey, and that some promotional language would be shared along with the link when the survey is finalized.

Carolyn Cole also expressed appreciation for the individuals who attended the forum and provided feedback, as well as provided an overview of important upcoming dates. The Recommendations Development Small Group Workshops will be held on July 14 and July 20. The Recommendations Refinement Small Group Workshops will be held on August 10 and August 17. The next At-Large Digital Equity Forum Meeting will be September 15 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm.  Carolyn then transitioned to the Closing Remarks and Adjournment phase of the meeting.

## Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Carolyn Cole, speaking on behalf of Dr. Karen A. Johnson, discussed the value of the passion and enthusiasm held by DEF members, as well as appreciation for all the presenters and staff who contributed to the development, delivery, and management of the meeting.

Mark Vasconi, Co-chair, Director, Washington State Broadband Office, expressed appreciation for presenters, members, and the public who attended the meeting and made contributions. He reiterated the importance of being deliberate about listening to all voices and balancing equity with efficiency, effectiveness, and economics. Mark V. concluded by sharing that, “truly the test of our success will be the degree to which our plans and services meet the needs of our various communities.”

The At-Large Digital Equity Forum meeting concluded at approximately 4:00 pm on June 9, 2022.