Invest in Digital Navigators to Close the Digital Divide

Digital navigators consolidate all of the components of digital inclusion - internet, devices, and skills - by providing digital navigation to existing social services, reaching diverse and multilingual communities most impacted by digital inequities through multiple one-on-one interactions.

Digital Navigators are critical in closing the digital divide, connecting people to the internet through three key channels:

**Triage, assess, and connect people to existing opportunities**
- Ex. walk a family through signing up for Comcast’s low-income program Internet Essentials; help someone connect a computer to wifi; assist someone in signing up for unemployment online; support an elder in setting up a tele-health appointment; connect a student to a computer through their school district

**Directly provide qualitative and quantitative data to the Office of Broadband, OSPI, Department of Health, school districts, etc. about technology and digital literacy needs of those farthest from digital equity**
- Ex. identify people who cannot afford or access existing programs and distribute wifi hotspots, laptops, tablets, and/or other devices

**Connect students, families, and elder to Multilingual Tech Support**
- A multilingual call-in center and technology hotline, opening February 2021, provides a workforce development pipeline for young people of color looking to move out of gig work and into the tech field. Call-in center staff will be recruited from Black, Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, low-income communities of color who have been most impacted by digital inequities in Washington. After completing the training and serving for one year, call-in center staff will receive certification from local community and technical colleges, as well as interviews with technology companies in the area, serving as a career pipeline into lucrative industries for BIPOC communities.

Digital navigators are cross-trained, experienced, multilingual, multicultural, trauma-informed social service providers, housed in community-based organizations, community centers, senior centers, school districts, and/or other nonprofits and public institutions, embedded in and speaking the languages of the communities they serve.

Governor Inslee has committed $6 Million into digital navigators in his 2021-23 Budget. We respectfully request that the Legislature include Governor Inslee’s Digital Navigators Program within their own budget as well.
Support the Governor’s Equity Budget allocation for $6.1 Million to provide digital navigation services statewide and join hundreds in the call to close Washington’s digital divide.

WA Representative Mia Gregerson
WA Senator Mona Dos
WA Representative Tana Senn
Seattle School Board Director Brandon Hersey

- AARP Washington State
- AFT Washington
- Children’s Alliance
- Concrete School District
- Highline Public Schools
- Edmonds School District
- Faith Action Network
- OneAmerica
- Seattle Art Museum
- Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness

Adoptees for Justice
ALL of US or NONE Eastern WA
Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition
ArtsEd Washington
Big Brother Big Sisters of Puget Sound
Cambodian American Community Council of WA
Casa Latina
CHOOSE 180
Chuukese Women Association
Communities in Schools of Kent
Communities in Schools of Seattle
Connect Casino Road
Debre Mihret Kidus Mikael
Denise Louie Education Center
Education Reform Now
Educators for Justice
Geeking Out Kids of Color
Gethsemane Lutheran Church
Global Artists Collective
Grandview Early Learning Center
India Association of Western Washington
Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center
International Community Health Services
Iraqi Community Center of WA

WA Representative Debra Entenman
WA Representative Kirsten Harris-Talley
WA Representative Laurie Dolan

- Southeast Seattle Education Coalition
- Southwest Youth and Family Services
- Statewide Poverty Action Network
- Technology Access Foundation
- Teach for America
- United Way of King County
- University of Washington
- Vancouver Public Schools
- Washington Nonprofits

- Kent Community Development Collaborative
- Khmer Community of Seattle/King County
- Kitsap Strong
- L.I.H. Law
- Literacy Source
- NAMI Seattle
- Northwest Education Access
- Rethink Manhood
- Snohomish County Mutual Aid
- Somali Parents Education Board
- Sharing Teens and Elders Project
- Spean Rajana
- Tulalip Tribes
- U.T.O.P.I.A. Seattle
- Urban Native Education Alliance
- Wallingford Indivisible
- Washington Coalition for Gifted Education
- Washington Low Income Housing Alliance
- Washington LTC Ombudsman Program
- Washington Multicultural Services Link
- Washington State Parent Ambassadors
- WashMasks Mutual Aid
- Youth Development Executives of King County
- YouthCare

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