

North Carolina Network of Grantmakers Digital Equity Webinar (Code: ncng)

January 2023

The North Carolina Network of Grantmakers (NCNG) and the North Carolina Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) Philanthropy Liaison collaborated to plan this virtual session for NCNG members and others. Speakers shared an overview of the state's efforts to ensure digital equity and inclusion for all North Carolina households and discussed opportunities for state government and philanthropy to work collaboratively to close the state's digital divide.

Speakers

- **Dawn Charaba**, Executive Director, Reidsville Area Foundation
- **Joy Vermillion Heinsohn (moderator)**, Philanthropy Liaison, OSP
- **Sarah Thompson**, Vice President-Economic Opportunity, Dogwood Health Trust
- **Maggie Woods**, Digital Equity Manager, North Carolina Office of Digital Equity and Literacy, North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT)

Key Terms

- **Digital equity*** means that everyone has technological capacity to participate fully in society, democracy, and economy.
- **Digital inclusion*** is the way to achieve digital equity. Inclusion encompasses access to affordable high-speed internet; devices that meet the needs of users; digital literacy training; quality tech support; and applications and online content that enable self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration in a digital world.

*As defined in [NCDIT \(January 2023\). "It's Time to Close the Digital Divide," slide 3](#).

Key Takeaways

- **NCDIT's Office of Digital Equity and Literacy is leading state efforts to ensure digital equity and inclusion for all North Carolina households.** NCDIT is deploying \$1.2B from federal American Rescue Plan Act (2021) funds, including \$971M to build infrastructure and awareness and \$50M for building capacity for ensuring digital literacy among all North Carolinians (see [NCDIT \(January 2023\). "It's Time to Close the Digital Divide," slide 7](#)) and anticipates additional federal funding opportunities.
- **Philanthropy is uniquely positioned to facilitate public-private partnerships needed to realize digital equity and inclusion for all communities.** Given their positions of trust in North Carolina communities, foundations may leverage their expertise, networks, flexibility to innovate, and ability to elevate community voices to convene stakeholders and facilitate collaboration. They may apply collective action informed by NCDIT's plan to ensure that North Carolina becomes the most digitally equitable state in the US by 2030.
- **The Reidsville Area Foundation and the Dogwood Health Trust reflect two foundations - different in terms of assets and staff capacities - employing different strategies for supporting digital equity and inclusion.** The Reidsville Area Foundation exercised its convening authority to spearhead the community getting organized and putting resources into broadband infrastructure. The Dogwood Health Trust, a regional funder, focused on building capacity to develop and implement plans for ensuring internet access and affordability in each of the 18 counties it supports.

Resources

The following resources were shared or elevated during the program. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of information or resources.

Slide decks featured in the webinar:

- [NCNG Digital Equity Slide Deck](#)
- [NCDIT & OSP Digital Equity Slide Deck](#)

[Dogwood Health Trust](#)

The Dogwood Health Trust exists to dramatically improve the health and well-being of all people and communities in Western North Carolina's 18 counties and Qualla Boundary. Established in 2020, Dogwood focuses a large portion of its work on four key strategic areas: housing, education, economic opportunity, and health and wellness.

[NC Department of Information Technology \(NCDIT\)](#)

The NC Department of Information Technology creates and manages technology systems and applications that support state agencies and services they provide. NCDIT also oversees a planning framework for developing policies, practices, and standards governing state agencies' use of technology.

- The [Office of Digital Equity and Literacy](#), established in 2021 as the first office of its kind in the nation, supports NCDIT's implementation of broadband access, digital inclusion, and digital literacy.

[Reidsville Area Foundation](#)

The Reidsville Area Foundation serves Rockingham County. Through its grantmaking to nonprofit, local government, and other community-based partners, the Foundation seeks to support transformation in early childhood and public education, health and wellness, and community development.