



Kansas City Fed recognizes Digital Inclusion Week

October 02, 2023

Learn how the Kansas City Fed continues its efforts to promote digital inclusion.

Since 2019, digital inclusion has been a focus area of the Kansas City Fed's Community Development team. For this year's [2023 Digital Inclusion week](#), we want to highlight several ways the Bank continues its efforts to help ensure all individuals and communities have not only access to the internet, but also the devices and skills to use it.

Digital Inclusion Research Forum

Researchers continue to make progress collecting data on digital inclusion and analyzing the efficacy of initiatives to promote it. However, this research doesn't always reach the community development practitioners and policymakers who can develop practical applications from the work.

This is why the Federal Reserve Banks of Atlanta, Dallas, Kansas City and Philadelphia are hosting the [Digital Inclusion Research Forum](#), Oct. 2 in Dallas, Texas. At this event, academics and researchers will convene with community practitioners and policymakers to discuss the practical applications of digital inclusion research. Attendees will also discuss broadband policy, data collection and analysis and the real-time demand for digital job skills in the labor market. Learn more [here](#).

Broadband data walk



In many neighborhoods, people who can subscribe to broadband don't. They know that access to the internet is essential to survival, and that without it they lack access to health care, jobs and government services. It is possible people don't subscribe because it's too expensive, or they may not have broadband access at all. In 2022, the Kansas City Fed's Community Development team engaged one unsubscribed neighborhood in meaningful conversation. These community conversations culminated with the September 6, 2023, release of [Crossing the divide: What we learned from a disconnected neighborhood](#).

This research project identified three main themes:

- Historical and continuing disinvestment: Being an historically redlined and disinvested neighborhood comes with ongoing challenges.
- Trust: Few residents trust internet service providers (ISPs) to serve their best interests.
- Community empowerment: Residents want to better understand technology.

Read the full report [here](#).

State digital equity plan workshops

In 2021, the passing of the Infrastructure and Jobs Act outlined \$2.75 billion for state, U.S. territories and tribal governments' digital equity programs. This was the first major investment in this kind of programming, creating a “once in a lifetime” opportunity for digital inclusion work. Because this pot of funding had no existed before, federal, state and local leaders were all starting from scratch in creating their plans.

With this in mind, in 2022 and 2023, The Kansas City Fed and eight other Reserve Banks hosted digital equity planning workshops across the country. Participating Reserve Banks informed state leaders about the workshops, identified where states were in their hiring process and who within state government should be invited. The Banks sought to invite states to the workshop closest to them both to make travel easier and to help foster regional cohorts.

Of the 56 states and U.S. territories that received digital equity planning grants, 47 attended the workshops.

"At a high level, the role of the Federal Reserve is to support a strong economy. Most people see this through our work regulating banks, managing payment systems, and setting monetary policy. But we also know that that the economy is strongest when everyone has access to jobs, education and commerce," said Jeremy Hagle, Kansas City Fed assistant vice president and community affairs officer, whose work has focused on digital equity.

“This is where the Federal Reserve’s community development efforts come into play.”

A recording of the New York workshop is available [here](#).

Stay up to date on the latest digital inclusion work from the Kansas City Fed [here](#).

Media

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<https://youtu.be/X1L0MsIQL4Y?si=MPWIFVaTDEG24t2w>