Centri Tech Foundation
Digital Integrators Pilot Study
Preliminary Findings

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Community-Based Solutions for Digital Advancement

September 20th, 2022

Digital Equity Research Center

Digital Equity Research Center
Metropolitan New York Library Council

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DERC engages in community-based and participatory digital equity research to advance social, economic, and racial justice

Our Work

The Digital Equity Research Center (DERC) at the Metropolitan New York Library Council works with communities to better understand and co-design meaningful responses to local digital equity challenges. Toward this goal, DERC engages in community-based and participatory digital equity research to advance social, economic, and racial justice.

DERC

https://dercenter.org/

- asset based
- power aware
- respect focused
- justice centered

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Pilot Program Evaluation

Evaluation Goals

- To design and implement an impact measurement framework used to evaluate the DI Pilot Program.

- To use the framework to identify opportunities for programmatic scale and to provide DI Partners with qualitative analysis about their work.

Evaluation Areas of Focus

VALUE OF CTF SUPPORT	CONTEXT FOR IMPLEMENTATION
Funding/Resources	Demographics
Evaluation	Removing Barriers to Access + Adoption
Cohort Experience	Goals + Conceptions of Equity
DI Partner Organization Impacts and Lessons Learned	Workforce Development
DI Pilot Process Evaluation	Project Design
CTF Lessons Learned	

Digital Advancement

"To leverage investments in digital access and adoption to promote economic justice in the digital economy."

- Centri Tech Foundation

https://www.centritechfdn.org/

Research Study

Research Questions

- How are Digital Integrators leveraging existing programs to promote digital advancement in their communities?

- How might the Digital Integrators pilot program foster innovation within motivated digital equity community organizations?

Research Framework

Digital Equity Ecosystems

- Interactions between individuals, populations, communities, and their larger sociotechnical environments that all play a role in shaping the work to advance more equitable access to technology and social, economic, and racial justice.

Growing Healthy Digital Equity Ecosystems During COVID-19 and Beyond

Colin Rhinesmith and Susan Kennedy
Published by the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society
November 2020

https://www.benton.org/blog/impacts-covid-19-digital-equity-ecosystems
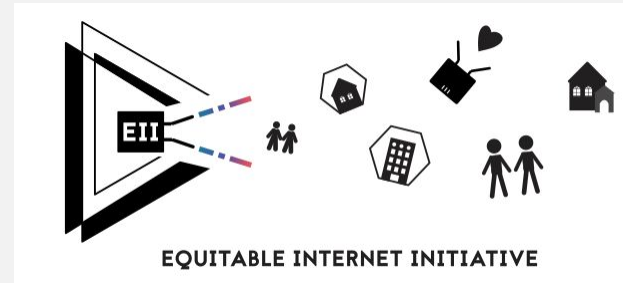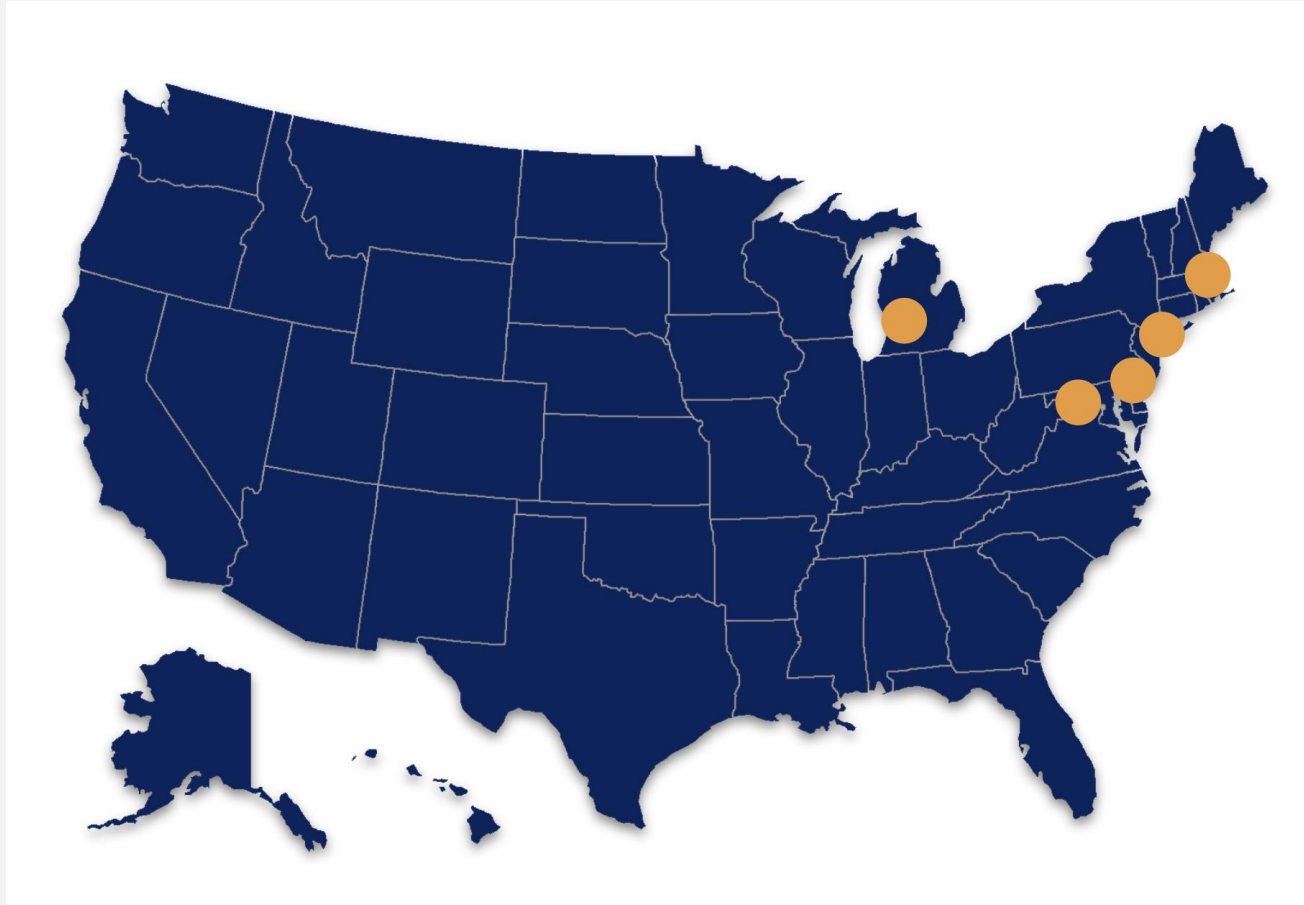
Digital Equity Ecosystems

CREATING HEALTHY DIGITAL EQUITY ECOSYSTEMS IN NYC:

Maximizing the Benefits of the Internet Master Plan

SIPA Capstone Report

https://www.sipa.columbia.edu/academics/capstone-projects/guide-fighting-digital-redlining

Digital Integrator Ecosystems

Three Key Areas

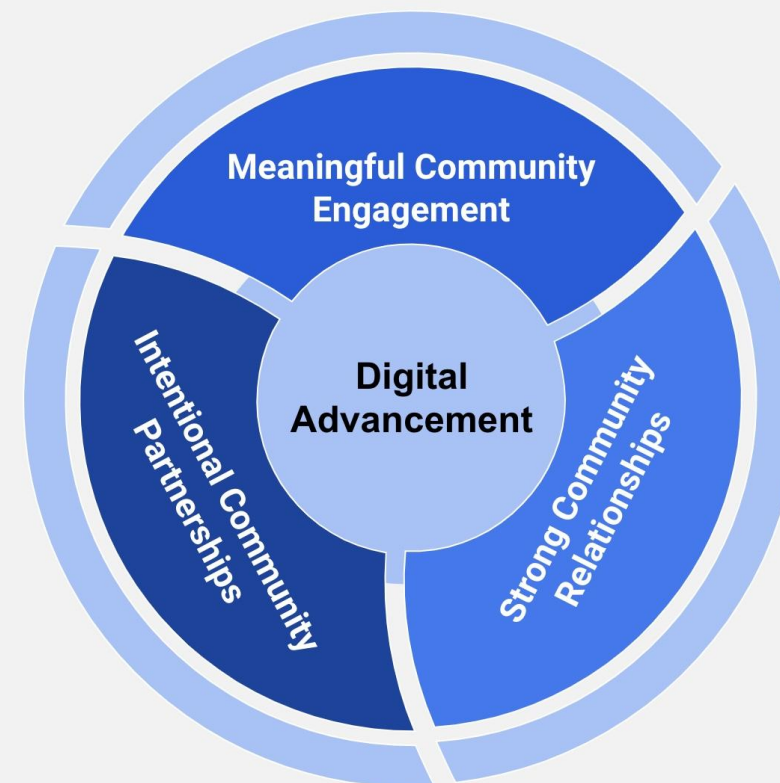- Workforce development

- Project design

- Evaluation

Evaluation Areas of Focus

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DERC

Meaningful community engagement, intentional community partnerships, and strong community relationships are key to achieving digital advancement.
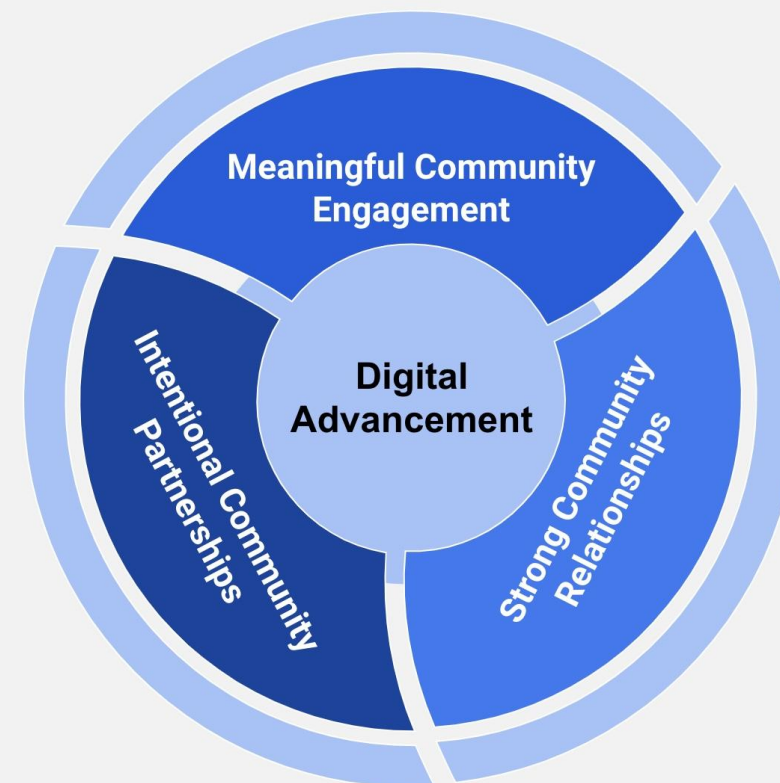
Definition - Community-based organizations center community members in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs to ensure their needs and aspirations are considered.
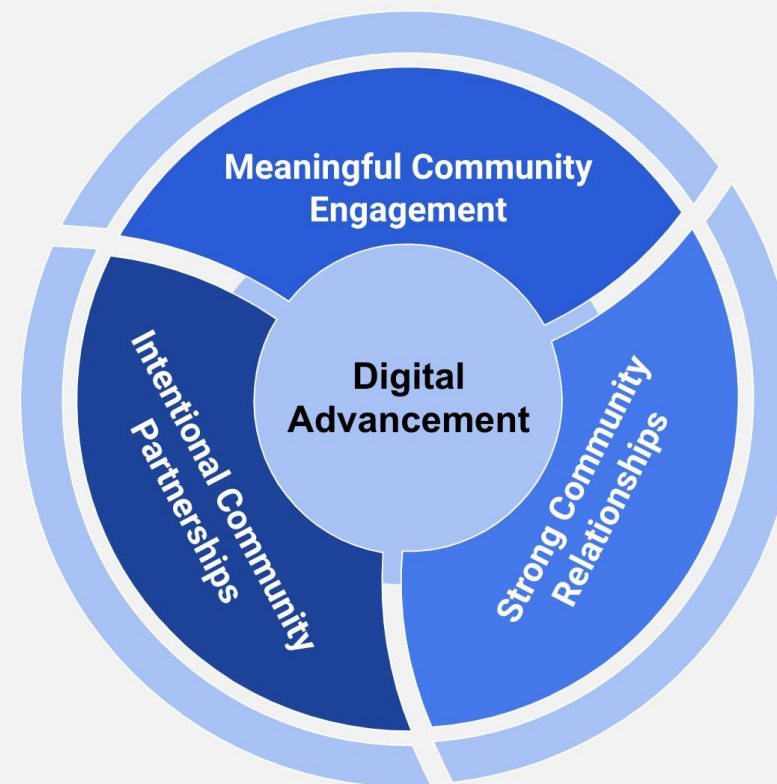
Intentional Community Partnerships

Definition - Community-based organizations listen to the needs and aspirations of their community partners and, in response, develop mutually beneficial partnerships that advance common goals.

Strong Community Relationships

Definition - Community-based organizations center the "entire person" in their support of community members, as they work together to achieve digital advancement.
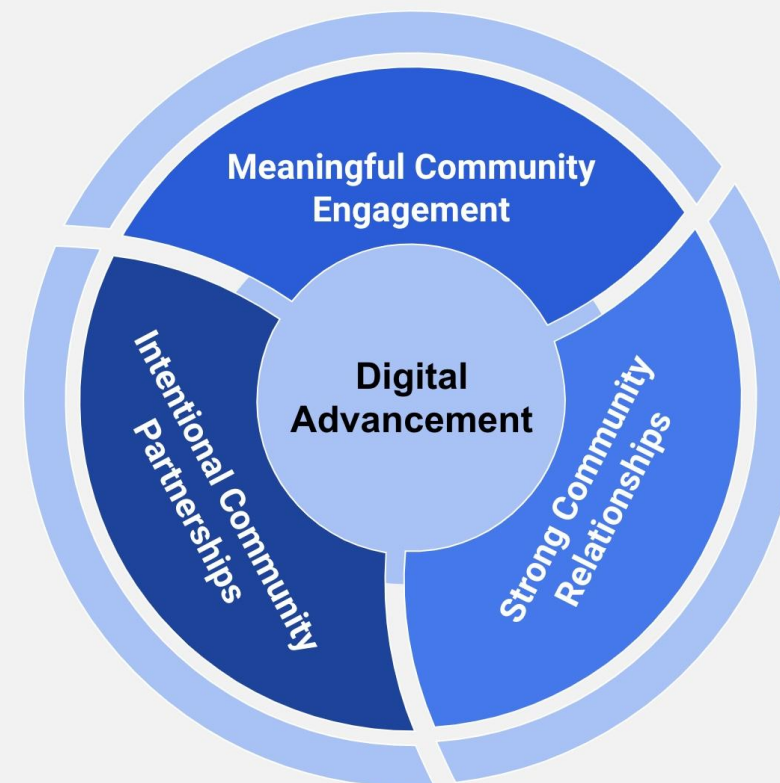
Meaningful Community Engagement

Digital Advancement

Intentional Community Partnerships

Strong Community Relationships

Digital Advancement

		Meaningful community engagement	Intentional community partnerships	Strong community relationships
1	Workforce development	✓	✓	✓
2	Project design	✓	✓	✓
3	Evaluation	✓	✓	✓

Meaningful Community Engagement: Byte Back

DERC

Community engagement	Project design	Community partnerships	Digital advancement (sample) indicators
"**We listened to our community partners**. **And their needs over the summer** are often, 'We have caretakers and we have youth and we have children, and what can we do where everybody is served at the same time, whether in two rooms or one room?' **And this creates the equivalent of Family Literacy. So it's family digital literacy.**" - Sharon Morgenthaler	**2-gen model** – **digital skills training designed for primary caregivers and their children.**	**Training delivered by Byte Back at Martha's Table in DC,** which offers education programs, pairs healthy food access with physical and mental health services, and promotes family success by investing in family leaders. "**In their own words, the community told us what they need, what they hope for, and what they entrust Martha's Table to act on.**" (https://marthastable.org/about)	• % of primary caregivers and their children who have received digital skills • % of youth who have developed clear pathways from high school to college • % of youth who have pursued technology-based careers • % of adult caregivers who can participate in the digital economy

Intentional Community Partnerships: LIFT-NY

Project Design	Community partnerships	Community relationships	Digital advancement (sample) indicators
Technology coaching to help LIFT-NY's member parents build "foundational digital skills" and gain successful career and education pathways	**LIFT-NY partnerships with Master of Social Work (MSW) programs** (CUNY, Fordham, NYU, Columbia, etc.) **to provide MSW students with field work** and **to provide member parents with coaching and wraparound support**	"We are launching for the first time a paid internship… **we're extending the length of coaching to promote stronger relationships**, especially in the virtual space, **really important to be with folks longer and get to know them.**" - LIFT-NY Staff	● % of member parents who have gained foundational digital skills ● % of parents who have deepened ties with coaches & organization ● % of parents who have achieved career and educational goals

Strong Community Relationships: Equitable Internet Initiative (EII)

Community partnerships	Community engagement	**Community relationships**	Digital advancement (sample) indicators
EII partnered with 123Net (www.123.net) **to launch an apprenticeship program**, which includes (1) a network field technician position and (2) entry level sales position. Also, partners: **Grace in Action in Southwest, Church of the Messiah in Islandview, and the North End Woodward Community Coalition**.	"Our 8 week Digital Steward training includes a few lessons around engaging neighbors through community meetings, events, survey…In the training, **we actually spend the 1st few weeks focused on community organizing - not the tech** - **to really let students see how important the community engagement process will be throughout** their work as a steward." - Janice Gates, Director	"**I think with our workforce development strategy, we're trying to think about the entire person**… it's just meeting people where they are… **we don't just look at them as employees**. **They are still from the neighborhood**, and we still want to offer them the same types of services that they would offer residents in their community" - Janice Gates, Director	% of community members closest to the issues affecting their community are involved in generating solutions and making decision % of community members who have enhanced their skills (networking and community organizing) % of community members who have enhanced their quality of life

Key Takeaway #2

Digital advancement, rooted in meaningful community development strategies, promotes healthy digital equity ecosystems.

https://www.sipa.columbia.edu/academics/capstone-projects/guide-fighting-digital-redlining

Key Takeaway #3

Centering digital advancement can help states be more thoughtful and intentional in identifying digital equity barriers and **co-designing** measurable objectives **with those most impacted by digital inequalities** in IIJA State Digital Equity Planning.

Community Engagement

Digital Advancement

Community Partnerships

Strong Community Relationships

Thank you!   Questions?

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