

# ***Digital Inclusion Efforts in South Carolina***

**11<sup>TH</sup>** **Annual Telehealth  
Summit of South Carolina**  
**December 4 - 6, 2023**  
Hyatt Regency Greenville  
Greenville, South Carolina



# *Session Goals*

1

Understand what digital inclusion means

2

Know which statewide efforts exist

3

Mobilize your organization in digital inclusion efforts

4

Stay connected to fortify a collective SC effort

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# Speakers



- **Paola Gutiérrez**

Director of External Engagement  
SC Office of Rural Health

- **Stacey Lindbergh**

Co-Manager- Low Country Digital Inclusion  
Coalition

- **Ashlee Parra**

Digital Navigator- Palmetto Care Connections

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# ***Define Digital Inclusion***



Image credit: Ruby Guillen with Humanistic Technologies, Inc.

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# Timely "RUR4L" Digital Inclusion



The Digital Equity Collaborative invites you to help identify all partners and activities, together closing the digital divide.

**An initiative of:**  
SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF  
**RURAL HEALTH**  
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# ***Digital Inclusion Outcomes***

- Meetings
  - Virtual
  - In-Person
- DEE Communities
- Jobs Created



**Not enough!**

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# ***Digital Inclusion as a Health Measure?***

When **any** community member is able to **utilize** digital tools to enhance **their** well-being, digital inclusion is achieved.

When digital inclusion is achieved, the community is **healthier**.

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# Rural DI Products



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## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our team empowers communities to address the root causes of poor health and the social challenges they're facing on a local level. We employ proven strategies and offer support throughout the planning and implementation processes.

## PROVIDER SERVICES

Our staff offers technical assistance, education, live and virtual training sessions, and staff development for rural healthcare providers.



3127: Digital opportunity for well-being: High-touch, high-tech model raising the bar for vulnerable populations in Florida and South Carolina

## CLAFLIN PATHWAYS FROM PRISON PROGRAM

Author: Ruby Guillen, La Mirada, CA, USA  
Author: Boomer Rose, UX-UI Expert, Tarpon Springs, FL, USA  
Author: Joseph Powers, La Palma, CA, USA  
Presenter: Paola Gutierrez, Director of External Engagement, Lexington, SC, USA

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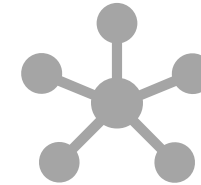
# JOIN



SCORH's Rural  
Focus



Digital Equity  
Collaborative



Digital Economy  
Ecosystem Network

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# Palmetto Care Connections

Palmetto Connect's  
Digital Literacy Program  
and Digital Navigator  
Work





# ***Palmetto Connect***

- Palmetto Connect is PCC's Digital Literacy Program.
- Mission is to help close the digital divide for residents in rural and underserved areas of SC by increasing internet access and affordability, digital literacy trainings, and connecting individuals to quality-of-life resources such as telehealth through digital inclusion.



# ***Digital Literacy Classes***

- Palmetto Connect has provided classes in 15 counties since launching.
- Senior pilot project/ Social Isolation Pilot
- Family Solutions
- Refresher classes
- Call Center





## TESTIMONIALS

*"This class was awesome. I was lost, but now I know the basics. I want to find online work. This class will help me connect through telehealth to my oncologist in Bluffton. I love Facetime and love to travel and this computer will help me do that."* **Tonia Murray, Allendale**

*"My wife handled all of the bills and finances. When she passed away from cancer in 2021, I had to learn how to do it myself. This class helped me so much. Learning the basics on the computer, email and how to safely use the internet has been very beneficial."* **Travis Thomas, Bamberg**

## Participants



As of 09.12.23

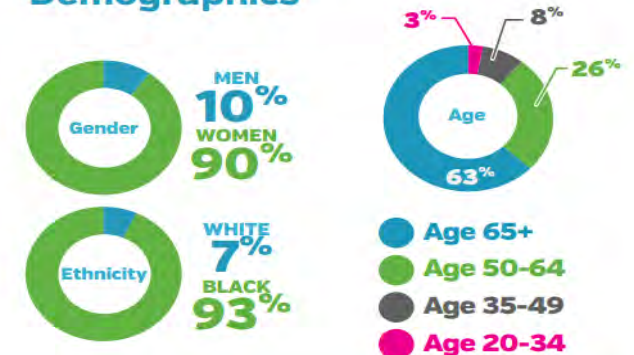


### Telehealth Utilization



As of 09.12.23

### Demographics



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# ***Palmetto Connect Online Modules***

- PCC has developed our own set of online digital literacy modules.
- Modules are available to those who cannot attend class in person and previous participants.
- Module subjects currently include...
  - Telehealth, Laptop Basics, Email Basics, Internet Safety, Healthcare Literacy, and Zoom.





# ***Digital Navigator***

- Palmetto Connect's Digital Navigator Program was established in Oct. 2022.
- Digital Navigator: A trusted guide who assist community members in internet adoption and the use of devices.
- Assists participants with Lifeline/ Affordable Connectivity education and application, class follow-up calls, and locating an internet provider.



# ***Affordable Connectivity Program***

- FCC program that helps individuals/ families struggling to afford internet service.
- Also known as ACP.
- 1 benefit per household.
- Up to \$30 off of monthly internet for eligible households.
- As part of our trainings, participants are provided education regarding Lifeline and ACP and application support.





# ACP Qualifications

- SNAP (food stamps)
- Medicaid
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing
- Veterans and Survivors Benefit
- Pell Grant Recipient
- Free & Reduced-Price Lunch/ Breakfast program
- Community Eligibility Provision School (CEP)
- Income at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Level



# ***Digital Navigator Work***

- Host in person enrollment events with FCC and other partners such as Office on Aging.
- Digital Navigator Training with LDEC partners- In-person and virtual.
- Resource Guide developed for all counties: includes free Wi-Fi locations, ISPs, ACP info and where to purchase devices.
- Other ACP resources available on PCC's website.





# Digital Navigator/Call Center Data

## Digital Navigator Assistance



As of 09.12.23

## Call Center Support



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# ***Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant***

- PCC was awarded the grant in Sept. 2023 for a year.
- Includes outreach, education and enrollment assistance.
  - In-person outreach events and digital literacy classes.
  - ACP flyers through mail and food service partners
  - Press releases and Social Media
  - ACP outreach videos
  - In-person enrollment events







LOWCOUNTRY DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

# ***Lowcountry Digital Equity Coalition***

**Stacey Lindbergh, LDEC Co-Manager**

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# ***Lowcountry Digital Equity Coalition***



- Public-Private Partnership
- Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester County
- Responsible for setting and conducting strategic priorities of digital inclusion
- Broadband Lead Agent – One Region Roadmap

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# ***LDEC Work Focus Areas***

- Outreach & Engagement
- Partner & Distribute Devices
- Lead & Promote
- Motivate & Train
- Collaborate & Connect



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# ***LDEC Efforts:***

## **Digital Inclusion Advocacy**



LOWCOUNTRY DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

## **Digital Navigator Pilot**



## **Fundraising**



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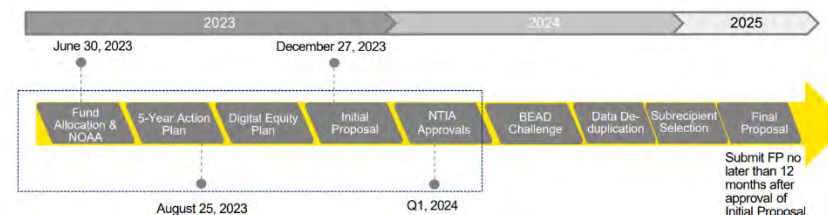


# SC Broadband Office – Public Comment Periods

	BEAD Five-Year Action Plan	BEAD Initial Proposal	Digital Equity Plan
Overview	Establishes State's broadband goals and priorities and serves as a comprehensive needs assessment that will inform future plans such as the Initial and Final Proposals.	Establishes how the State will ensure that every resident has access to reliable, affordable, high-speed broadband and the competitive process for selecting subgrantees.	Establishes a State's vision, goals and strategy for digital equity, with broadband affordability and adoption as key tenets.
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documenting resources available</li> <li>Needs and gaps assessment</li> <li>Evaluating current and future state</li> <li>Identifying priorities and activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline long-term objectives</li> <li>Describe how Community Anchor Institutions were determined</li> <li>Describe challenge process</li> <li>Provide climate threat assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder outreach</li> <li>Documenting assets and existing plans</li> <li>Needs assessment (emphasis on covered populations)</li> </ul>
Key Sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision, goals and objectives</li> <li>Existing programs</li> <li>Partnerships, asset inventory</li> <li>Obstacles and barriers</li> <li>Key execution strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volume I Volume II Initial Proposal Templates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy and objectives</li> <li>Asset inventory</li> <li>Coordination and outreach strategy</li> <li>Implementation strategy</li> </ul>
Submittal Date	<a href="#">Five-Year Action Plan</a>	Due Dec 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Est. February 15, 2024

- BEAD Initial Proposal I & II – October 30-Nov 30
- Digital Equity Plan - TBD

## BEAD Projected Timing



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# ***Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)***

- ACP funding scheduled to run out Spring 2024
- Biden Administration requested \$6B to fund through Dec 2024
- January & February 2024 are critical
- ACP popular program – 21 million households enrolled, 4 million seniors, 800,000 veterans
- FCC – two step funding scenario – notice to ISP, enrollees



# 2024: What's Next from National Stage

## ACP Funding Extended:

- Continue ACP outreach and awareness work and build toward another national Week of Action in Spring 2024
- Provide training and support around additional topics like recertification and helping community members stack their benefits with Lifeline

## ACP Funding Not Extended:

- Shift to supporting organizations as they help consumers transition out of ACP and on to other low-cost plans.
- Help identify opportunities for schools to make use of other funding sources to support student connectivity
- Work with coalition members to push for state-based solutions where possible.



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# Stay Connected



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# Questions?



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