INTERNET FOR ALL

State Digital Equity Plan

External Best Practices

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Note: *This document is intended to provide external examples of well-formed digital equity plans that may serve as helpful references to States/Territories in the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program. The examples featured in this document are third party resources and thus do not adhere to the requirements of the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Each State/Territory should review the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance document and speak with their designated Federal Program Officer (FPO) prior to referencing this document. This document does not and is not intended to supersede, modify, or otherwise alter applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, or the specific requirements set forth in the program's NOFO. In all cases, statutory and regulatory mandates, and the requirements set forth in the program's NOFO, shall prevail over any inconsistencies contained in the guidance below.*

Table of Contents

How to Use this Document 3
Examples: Executive Summary 3
Examples: Introduction and Vision for Digital Equity 5
  Vision 5
  Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes 1
  Strategy and Objectives 2
Examples: Current State of Digital Equity 4
  Asset Inventory 4
  Needs Assessment 5
Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement 6
  Coordination and Outreach Strategy 6
Implementation 7
  Implementation Strategy & Key Activities 7
  Timeline 8

Internet For All

How to Use this Document

This resource compiles third-party resources that demonstrate existing practices and tools to complete your Digital Equity Plans. Users of this document should consult the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the State Digital Equity Plan Template, and the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance in order to write their plans in accordance with program requirements. Read through the examples and click on the provided links. While these documents are examples of generally accepted best practices for building comprehensive digital equity plans, they were created before the Digital Equity Act and NOFO requirements were published and should be referenced with that in mind. The examples are not intended to be prescriptive nor are they intended to communicate new requirements. The State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO supersedes any guidance or references featured in this document.

Examples: Executive Summary

Refer to Section 1 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance.

The State should provide a clear and concise summary of the Digital Equity Plan. The Executive Summary should restate the purpose and summarize the key points of the Digital Equity Plan.

Tips for writing the Executive Summary include:

1. Write the Executive Summary at the end of the planning process. This an opportunity to focus on key highlights of the entire plan. Waiting to write at the end helps to summarize important information
2. Keep it brief and outline the high-level goals and objectives
3. Use positive language. The summary can create excitement about the plan
4. Identify the target audience. Tailor the summary to the people who are expected to read the plan and how it will be socialized

Examples:

Vision Statement	Reference
The New York City Internet Master Plan presents the importance of Internet affordability and outlines the vision and principles of the plan to enhance broadband infrastructure and service in the city.	The New York City Internet Master Plan
The City of Bloomington's executive summary for the Digital Equity Strategic Plan outlines the high-level goals of the plan and sets a common definition of the term "digital equity" in order to help the reader understand the problem the plan was developed to mitigate.	City of Bloomington, IN Digital Equity Strategic Plan

Examples: Introduction and Vision for Digital Equity

Vision

Refer to Section 2.1 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance.

A vision statement is a brief description of the long-term goals and objectives for the Digital Equity Plan.
In developing the vision statement for your State here are some questions to consider:

1. What will digital equity look like within the context of the state's goals and objectives?
2. What are the broad goals that should be accomplished in executing the plan?

Examples:

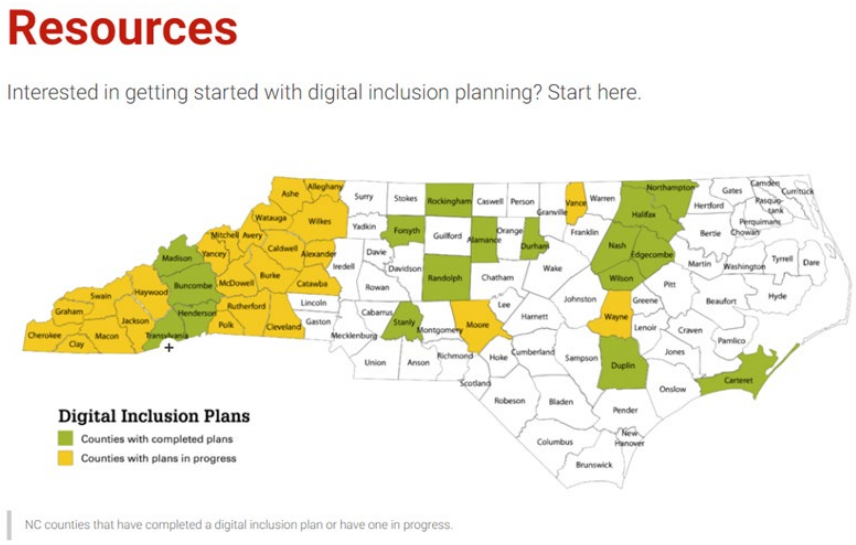
Vision Statement	Reference
"Forsyth County is a thriving, inclusive community where all residents—especially residents of underserved communities— have equal access to learn, participate, and contribute to society through robust and digital information technology."	Forsyth County, NC - Digital Equity Plan
"Ensure all residents, businesses, and organizations can participate in and benefit from the prosperity and culture of innovation in Silicon Valley." "Broaden access to basic digital infrastructure to all residents, especially our youth, through enabling free or low cost, high-speed, 1 gigabit or faster broadband service in several low-income communities, and increasing access to hardware, including tablets and laptops, for low-income students."	San Jose, CA - Digital Equity Plan
"All residents of Portland/Multnomah County will have barrier -free access to high-speed broadband Internet at home and school, and affordable computing device and the training to use them effectively."	Portland, OR Digital Equity Plan
"We want every Detroiter to have affordable, reliable, and abundant digital access that elevates local communities and accelerates opportunities."	City of Detroit, MI Digital Access Infrastructure Overview

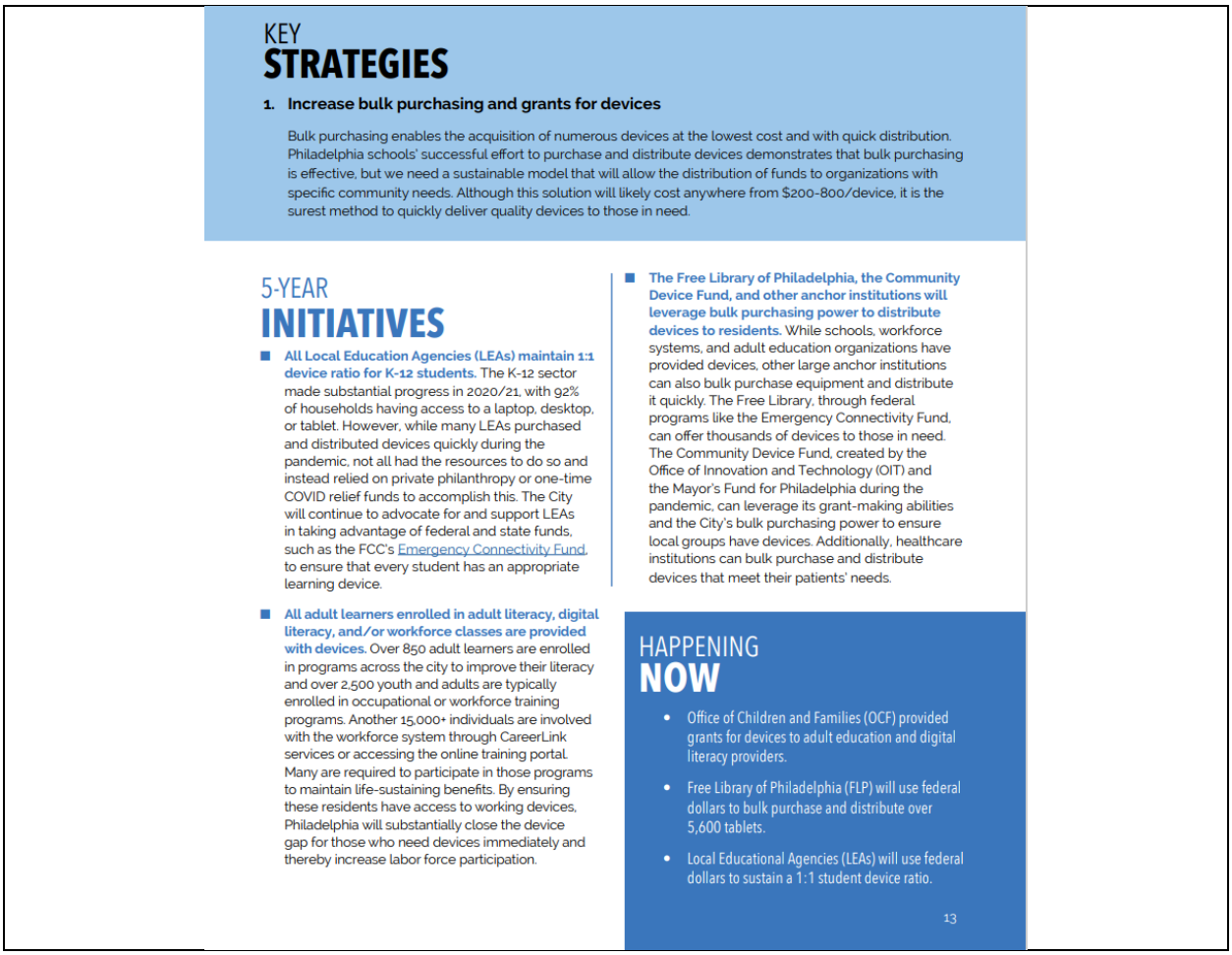
Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes

Refer to Section 2.2 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance.

The purpose of this section is to describe how the Digital Equity Plan is aligned to the State's priorities and other existing or planned efforts in the State, and how the State will coordinate its use of funds from the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, and/or any other federal or private sources. States should detail how the stated objectives for digital equity will impact and interact with the broader efforts and goals of the State.

Examples:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">North Carolina</th></tr>
<tr><th>Description</th><th>Reference</th></tr>
<tr><td>In North Carolina, efforts are underway to track the various digital equity plans in cities and counties throughout the state, using the map as a visualization.</td><td>North Carolina State University – Institute for Emerging Issues Resources</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"> 
</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Philadelphia</th></tr>
<tr><th>Description</th><th>Reference</th></tr>
<tr><td>The City of Philadelphia's digital equity plan provides its key and long-term strategies for its device distribution and ownership goal. The plan also details its work with other government agencies, current programs, and how the work will be sustained. Also outlined in the documents are additional strategies for each goal.</td><td>City of Philadelphia Office of Innovation and Technology: Digital Equity Plan</td></tr>
</table>



KEY
STRATEGIES

1. **Increase bulk purchasing and grants for devices**

Bulk purchasing enables the acquisition of numerous devices at the lowest cost and with quick distribution. Philadelphia schools' successful effort to purchase and distribute devices demonstrates that bulk purchasing is effective, but we need a sustainable model that will allow the distribution of funds to organizations with specific community needs. Although this solution will likely cost anywhere from $200-800/device, it is the surest method to quickly deliver quality devices to those in need.

5-YEAR
INITIATIVES

- **All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) maintain 1:1 device ratio for K-12 students.** The K-12 sector made substantial progress in 2020/21, with 92% of households having access to a laptop, desktop, or tablet. However, while many LEAs purchased and distributed devices quickly during the pandemic, not all had the resources to do so and instead relied on private philanthropy or one-time COVID relief funds to accomplish this. The City will continue to advocate for and support LEAs in taking advantage of federal and state funds, such as the FCC's Emergency Connectivity Fund, to ensure that every student has an appropriate learning device.
- **All adult learners enrolled in adult literacy, digital literacy, and/or workforce classes are provided with devices.** Over 850 adult learners are enrolled in programs across the city to improve their literacy and over 2,500 youth and adults are typically enrolled in occupational or workforce training programs. Another 15,000+ individuals are involved with the workforce system through CareerLink services or accessing the online training portal. Many are required to participate in those programs to maintain life-sustaining benefits. By ensuring these residents have access to working devices, Philadelphia will substantially close the device gap for those who need devices immediately and thereby increase labor force participation.
- **The Free Library of Philadelphia, the Community Device Fund, and other anchor institutions will leverage bulk purchasing power to distribute devices to residents.** While schools, workforce systems, and adult education organizations have provided devices, other large anchor institutions can also bulk purchase equipment and distribute it quickly. The Free Library, through federal programs like the Emergency Connectivity Fund, can offer thousands of devices to those in need. The Community Device Fund, created by the Office of Innovation and Technology (OIT) and the Mayor's Fund for Philadelphia during the pandemic, can leverage its grant-making abilities and the City's bulk purchasing power to ensure local groups have devices. Additionally, healthcare institutions can bulk purchase and distribute devices that meet their patients' needs.

HAPPENING
NOW

- Office of Children and Families (OCF) provided grants for devices to adult education and digital literacy providers.
- Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP) will use federal dollars to bulk purchase and distribute over 5,600 tablets.
- Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) will use federal dollars to sustain a 1:1 student device ratio.

13

Strategy and Objectives

Refer to Section 2.3 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance.

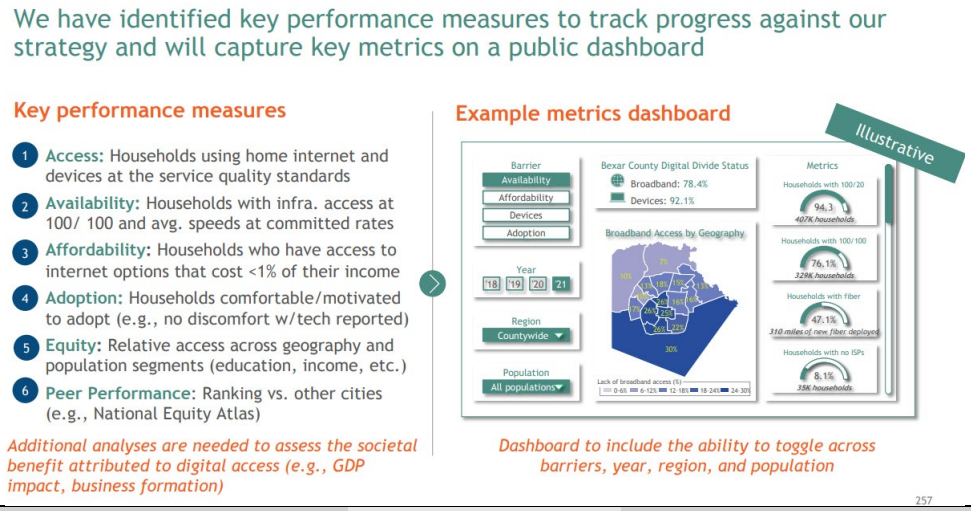
Consider using **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound (SMART) Goals** to develop the State Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for digital equity.

Questions to consider when creating measurable objectives:

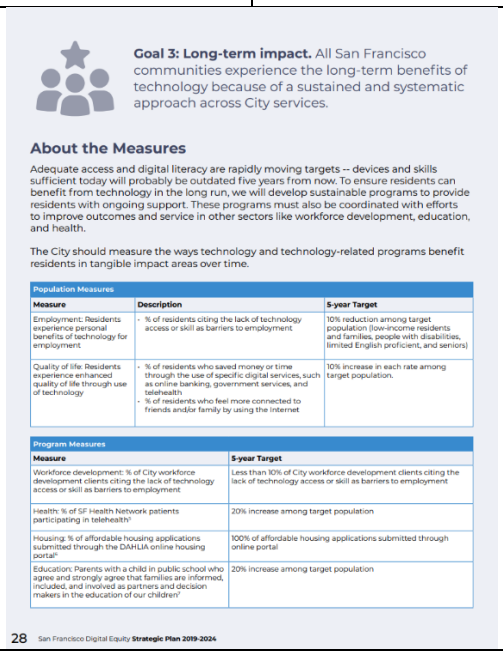
- What does your state want to achieve in one year? Five years?
- What is needed to do to achieve it?
- What is within scope and what is out of scope?
- Among the covered populations, what is a priority for your state?
- Are there other groups, including and beyond the covered populations, that your plan will serve?

Examples:

San Antonio and Bexar County	
Description	**Reference**
This digital equity plan uses KPIs to track how the City of San Antonio will measure its progress toward digital equity and shares how the KPIs will be tracked in a dashboard made available to the public.	San Antonio and Bexar County Digital Inclusion Roadmap



San Francisco, CA	
Description	**Reference**
The strategic plan provides metrics by which the City of San Francisco will measure its achievement of digital equity goals and intended outcomes in the areas of workforce, health, and education.	San Francisco Digital Equity Strategic Plan 2019-2024



Goal 3: Long-term impact. All San Francisco communities experience the long-term benefits of technology because of a sustained and systematic approach across City services.

About the Measures

Adequate access and digital literacy are rapidly moving targets -- devices and skills sufficient today will probably be outdated five years from now. To ensure residents can benefit from technology in the long run, we will develop sustainable programs to provide residents with ongoing support. These programs must also be coordinated with efforts to improve outcomes and service in other sectors like workforce development, education, and health.

The City should measure the ways technology and technology-related programs benefit residents in tangible impact areas over time.

Population Measures

Measure	Description	5-year Target
Employment: Residents experience personal benefits of technology for employment	• % of residents citing the lack of technology access or skill as barriers to employment	10% reduction among target population (low-income residents and families, people with disabilities, limited English proficient, and seniors)
Quality of life: Residents experience enhanced quality of life through use of technology	• % of residents who saved money or time through the use of specific digital services, such as online banking, government services, and telehealth • % of residents who feel more connected to friends and/or family by using the Internet	10% increase in each rate among target population.

Program Measures

Measure	5-year Target
Workforce development: % of City workforce development clients citing the lack of technology access or skill as barriers to employment	Less than 10% of City workforce development clients citing the lack of technology access or skill as barriers to employment
Health: % of SF Health Network patients participating in telehealth[1]	20% increase among target population
Housing: % of affordable housing applications submitted through the DAHLIA online housing portal[2]	100% of affordable housing applications submitted through online portal
Education: Parents with a child in public school who agree and strongly agree that families are informed, included, and involved as partners and decision makers in the education of our children[3]	20% increase among target population

28 San Francisco Digital Equity **Strategic Plan 2019-2024**

Examples: Current State of Digital Equity

Asset Inventory

Refer to Section 3.1 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance, as well as the NTIA Asset Mapping Guide.

The purpose of this section is to catalogue the applicant's unique assets that promote digital equity for each of the State's covered populations, including current resources, programs, and strategies. Both publicly and privately funded assets should be included. The asset inventory should also include existing digital equity plans and programs among municipal, regional, and Tribal governments.

The asset inventory will identify the resources available to implement the Digital Equity Plan and to address the needs and gaps to achieve the State's goals and objectives for digital equity. An asset mapping resource will be released to aid States in documenting digital equity assets.

Examples:

Description	Reference
The Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD) is located at the Steans Center for Community-Based Service Learning at DePaul University in Chicago, IL, offers comprehensive resources for community asset mapping.	Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD)
This guide describes the elements essential to effective asset mapping, as well as how to speak with community residents and stakeholders to understand how to effectively engage and mobilize existing assets.	Benton Institute for Broadband and Society - Getting a BEAD on Community Asset Mapping
In Seattle-King County, the Workforce Development Council created a visualization of their digital equity asset inventory to help community members locate programs with digital skills training, access to affordable devices, and technical support and to advocate for digital inclusion and identify service gaps.	Seattle-King County, WA - Digital Equity Asset Map
Connect Chicago used their asset inventory to map their network of more than 250 places in the city where Internet and computer access, digital skills training, and online learning resources are available—for free.	Chicago, IL - Connect Chicago
In Chapter 4 of its Digital Inclusion plan, Carteret County describes all the assets it inventoried to characterize the state of	Carteret County, NC - Connecting Carteret

broadband in the county. Chapter 5 of the plan also identified the gaps with a needs inventory.	

General Sources of Data on Broadband Adoption:

- American Community Survey
- FCC 477 Form
- Digital Equity Population Viewer
- Broadband USA Indicators of Broadband Need Map

Additional metrics and data sources may be available through ISP partnerships, community partners and other stakeholders.

Needs Assessment

Refer to Section 3.2 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance.

A needs assessment follows the collection of this information and focuses on the analysis of this inventory to identify gaps in support throughout the state and community ecosystems.

Examples:

Description	Reference
The Brooklyn Public Library conducted their needs assessment using demographic data research and human-centered design methodologies such as community partner workshops, tabling activities, and collective mapping.	Brooklyn, NY the Brooklyn Public Library
The Land of Sky region encompasses Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties in North Carolina. Their plan identifies the needs assessed by and across counties.	Land of Sky Regional Council, NC Bridging the Digital Divide

Examples: Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

Coordination and Outreach Strategy

Refer to Section 4.1 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance and the State Broadband Office Interview Guides for guiding questions.

Collaboration and stakeholder engagement is the activity through which you leverage the assets identified in your asset inventory (section 3.1) to meet the needs identified in your needs assessments (section 3.2).

To begin, have an idea of:

- Key external collaborators you think are missing
- Covered populations that are not being met by existing assets
- Key external collaborators that provide a high level of support to the covered populations in a geography
- Other local funding that you might be able to leverage in support of a state, local or community strategy

This information should be used to determine who should have a seat at the table when discussing the implementation of a coordinated strategy to close the digital divide.

Examples:

Description	Reference
In Rockingham County, they included quotes from people with lived experience in their Digital Inclusion Plan to highlight community voices.	Rockingham County, NC Digital Inclusion Plan

Examples: Implementation

Implementation Strategy & Key Activities

Refer to Section 5.1 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance.

To develop the strategy and key activities for implementation: identify measurable goals, objectives, covered populations, potential gaps, and metric(s) and resource(s) needed to implement the strategy. Consider how the strategies tie into the digital equity outcomes the state plans to achieve through the implementation of these strategies and key activities.

There may be one or more strategies tied to each digital equity outcome. Outlining the goals and objectives under the strategies and key activities can help develop Section 2 of this template.

Examples:

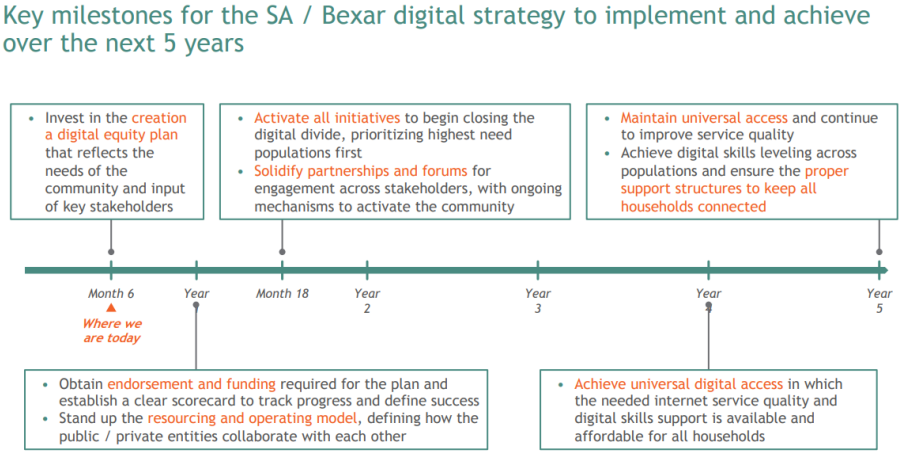
Baltimore County, MD	
Description	**Reference**
In Baltimore County, the plan maps strategies for affordability, serviceability, and digital literacy. The plan also shows how the strategic plan aligns to the County's goals and ongoing projects.	*Baltimore County, MD Strategic Plan*

Washington, DC	
Description	**Reference**
The community tech plan above provides strategies and multiple actionable items for each strategy. The plan provides a timeline and goals that are to be accomplished from each strategy.	District of Columbia Community Technology Plan for Ward 8

Timeline

Refer to Section 5.2 of the State Digital Equity Plan Guidance.

In developing a timeline to implement strategies, some best practices include:

1. Identifying the potential risk(s)
2. Determining the mitigation strategy to eliminate or manage the potential risk
3. Assigning a responsible entity to each strategy
4. Providing a projected timeline for completion and including any milestones for strategy

San Antonio and Bexar County	
Description	**Reference**
The City of San Antonio provides timeline by year with milestones to map its implementation of strategies.	San Antonio and Bexar County Digital Inclusion Roadmap