2024 National Summit to Increase Social Connections
Welcome and Purpose Setting

• Sandy Markwood, Chief Executive Officer, USAging

• Lori Gerhard, Director at the Office of Interagency Innovation, Administration for Community Living (ACL)
Summit Housekeeping

Recording and Slides

• The recording and slides from both days of the Summit will be shared following the event on our website: www.committoconnect.org

Audio Options

• Use your computer speakers, OR dial in using the phone number in your registration email.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

• You can submit questions for the speakers at any time during this presentation. On the Zoom module on the bottom of your screen, click the Q&A icon, type your question in the box and submit.

Chat Feature

• The Chat feature allows webinar attendees, the host, co-hosts and panelists to communicate for the duration of the webinar.
Accessibility and Support

ASL/CART Services

• ASL/CART services will be provided for this event. A video stream of an ASL interpreter will be pinned on the screen so all attendees can view the interpreter.

• To access CART live transcription of the event, click on the CC Live Transcript button in the control bar at the bottom of the Zoom window.

Technical Assistance

• To get our attention if you need tech assistance: Raise or Lower Hand: Alt + Y

Screen Reader Users: Reduce unwanted chatter

• Request speech on demand: Insert, Spacebar, “S”
Keynote: Future of Technology and Social Engagement

- Kelly Cronin, Deputy Administrator, Center for Innovation and Partnership, ACL (moderator)
- Rani Snyder, Vice President, Program, The John A. Hartford Foundation
- Steve Ewell, Executive Director, Consumer Technology Association Foundation
- Eddie Garcia, Founder and Board Chair, Foundation for Social Connection
ACL National Summit to Increase Social Connections: Future of Technology and Social Engagement

May 14, 2024

Rani Snyder, MPA
Vice President, Program
The John A. Hartford Foundation
A private philanthropy based in New York City, established by family owners of the A&P grocery chain in 1929.
DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE CARE OF OLDER ADULTS

Mission

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE CARE OF OLDER ADULTS

PRIORITY AREAS

- Age-Friendly Health Systems
- Family Caregiving
- Serious Illness & End of Life
Shaping a Social Isolation Strategy for Older Adults

JAHF convening hosted by New York Academy of Medicine in January 2024
Goal of Convening:

• Discuss **collaborative action** that can improve the care of older adults by addressing social isolation and loneliness

• Review **existing evidence** to determine what actions a Foundation can take
Building on Key Reports

2020 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: *Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Healthcare System*

2023 U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory: *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community*
Opportunities for Implementation
Pt 1

1. Inclusion as a social determinant of health
2. Training of professionals
3. Partnerships between community-based organizations and health care
4. Building a national resource center

Opportunities for Implementation Pt 2

5. Policy efforts on historically underserved older adults
6. Measurement and documentation
7. Inclusion as active partners in research and evaluation
8. Technology

Thank You!

Rani.Snyder@johnahartford.org

WWW.JOHNAHARTFORD.ORG
Nationwide Network of Champions and Additional Resources from Commit to Connect and engAGED

• Katie Clark, Policy Analyst, Office of Interagency Innovation, ACL
• Meredith Hanley, Director of Community Capacity Building, USAging
Resources from Commit to Connect
Commit to Connect

• Aim is to connect people living with isolation and loneliness with programs and resources to build the social connections they need to thrive
• funded primarily by the U.S. Administration for Community Living
• USAging serves as the Coordinating Center
• www.committoconnect.org

Funding for this initiative was made possible by contract no. HHSP233201500088I from ACL. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.
Strategy

• Increase awareness and availability of programs and strategies that address social isolation and loneliness and grow social connections

• Build and strengthen collaboration with current and potential partners to leverage our collective efforts, resources, innovations and activities to increase social connection in the U.S.
Key efforts:

• **Technical assistance and training activities**
  • National Summit to Increase Social Connections
  • Professional and consumer resources
  • Webinars and Office Hours

• **Communities of Practice**
  • Link agencies, networks, and CBOs with subject-matter experts

• **“Innovations Hub”** to encourage replication
  • Clearinghouse of 8+ data-driven programs, interventions, and solutions

• **Engage an online Nationwide Network of Champions**
  • 485+ leaders at local, state, and national levels
Welcome to a Nationwide Network of Champions
Dedicated to Ending Social Isolation and Loneliness

SIGN UP HERE: https://committoconnect.org/become-champion/
Map of NNOC
The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults
Overview of engAGED

- National effort to increase social engagement of older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers
- Activities of engAGED are supported by USAging and, in part, through a contract with the Administration for Community Living
- Partnered with Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP

www.engagingolderadults.org
engAGED Resources

- Social Engagement Innovations Hub
- Consumer-facing materials
- Toolkits and template materials
- Publications for organizations
- Annual Virtual Summit
- Videos, blog posts, recorded webinars and more!
Innovations Hub

- Now in partnership with Commit to Connect, the Innovations Hub is searchable by a variety of filters, including intervention type (such as technology)
- Also has a search function, where you can search for keywords such as hybrid, technology and more

www.committoconnect.org/innovations-hub/

www.engagingolderadults.org/hub
Technology Booklet for Consumers

- Developed in partnership with the Eldercare Locator and OATS
- **Consumer-facing booklet** to help older adults tap into technology to stay engaged and connected
- Available in English and Spanish
Online Safety Fact Sheets for Consumers

• OATS from AARP and engAGED created a series of fact sheets to provide older adults with tips and best practices to safely and securely engage online
  – Protecting Personal Information Online
  – Socializing Safely Online
  – Browsing the Internet Confidently
Technology Manuals

- Virtual programming manual
- Hybrid programming manual
- Include considerations, tips and best practices for organizations
Stay Connected

1. Become a Champion: https://committoconnect.org/become-champion/

2. Visit the websites and sign up for the newsletters to learn about upcoming events and resources: https://committoconnect.org/ and https://www.engagingolderadults.org/

3. Browse the Social Engagement Innovations Hub to learn about innovative, replicable programs, services, and interventions

THANK YOU!
Please enjoy a 15-minute break
Program Spotlight: National Telecommunications and Information Administration

• Angela Bennett, Digital Equity Director, National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Digital Equity Act of 2021 Grant Programs

May 14, 2024
Topics for discussion

Overview of Digital Equity Programs
Social Determinants of Health
State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program
Key Dates and Deadlines
Overview of Digital Equity Programs
The Digital Equity Act seeks to promote digital equity and inclusion

**Today’s focus**

**BEAD**

**DIGITAL EQUITY**

$2.75B

Digital Equity Act

Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.

**TRIBAL**

$2.00B

Tribal Connectivity Technical Amendments

A program to help tribal communities expand high-speed internet access and adoption on tribal lands.

**MIDDLE MILE**

$1.00B

Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure

A program to expand middle mile infrastructure, to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas.

Note: Funding amounts inclusive of all administrative set-asides
There are two state formula grant programs, which are separate but connected, and a third competitive grant program.

### State Planning Grant
- **Who**: Open to U.S. States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (States)
- **What**: Grants will be used to develop a State Digital Equity Plan

### State Capacity Grant
- **Who**: Open to U.S. States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, that completed the State Planning Program
- **What**: Grants will be used to implement State Digital Equity Plans

### Competitive Grant
- **Who**: Open to certain entities, such as political subdivisions, Tribal entities, nonprofits, community anchor institutions, local educational agencies, and workforce development orgs
- **What**: Grants will be used to develop and implement digital inclusion activities

Other U.S. territories, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian orgs have a separate statutory set-aside and separate program requirements under the State Planning and Capacity Programs, as detailed on the next page.
Social Determinants of Health
How does the meaningful use of technology improve the following outcomes?

- Health Care Access and Quality
- Education Access and Quality
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Economic Stability
- Social and Community Context
# Social Determinants of Health: Sample outcomes

## Economic Stability
- Poverty reduction
- Increased employment
- Housing and home affordability
- Food insecurity
- Workplace safety

## Education Access and Quality
- Graduation Rates
- Literacy rates
- Proficiency
- Developmentally ready
- In-school mental healthcare accessibility
- Early childhood education

## Health Care Access & Quality
- Increase community organizations providing prevention services
- Increase family planning services
- Increase proportion of people with a PCP
- Increase adolescent and adult preventative health care, including cancer screening
- Facilitate positive outcomes in prenatal care, dental care, health IT, health communication, etc.

## Social & Community Context
- Poverty reduction
- Increased employment
- Housing and home affordability
- Food insecurity
- Workplace safety

## Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Environmental health
- Health policy
- Housing and homes
- Injury prevention
- Physical activity
- Accessibility
State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program
The purpose of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program is to create the conditions where individuals and communities have the information technology capacity that is needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States.

This Program will make funds available for States and Territories to begin implementing their accepted State and U.S. Territory Digital Equity Plans (and related purposes as detailed in the NOFO).

**Covered Populations**

- **Individuals who live in covered households** (defined as households with income of not more than 150% of the poverty level)
- **Aging** individuals aged 60 and older
- **Incarcerated individuals** (as defined by the State or Territory), other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility
- **Veterans**
- **Individuals with disabilities**
- **Individuals with a language barrier**, including individuals who are English learners and have low levels of literacy
- **Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group**; and
- **Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area**
The intersectionality of Covered Populations: Recognizing individuals may have multiple identities

- Low-income households
- Veterans
- People with disabilities
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Incarcerated individuals
- Aging populations
- Rural inhabitants
- People with language barriers
Digital inequity disproportionately impacts our stakeholders

**DE & BEAD**

**Covered Populations and Underrepresented Communities**

*Identity groups and communities disproportionately impacted by digital inequity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-income households</th>
<th>Indigenous and Native American persons</th>
<th>People with language barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aging individuals</td>
<td>Members of ethnic and religious minorities</td>
<td>Racial and ethnic minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated individuals</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Rural inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>LGBTQI+ persons</td>
<td>Persons adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons of Color</td>
<td>Persons with disabilities</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Serving Covered Populations

Achieving digital equity is vital to promoting personal welfare and civic engagement of the Covered Populations, focusing on issues like lack of telehealth services, online jobs, etc.

**IMPACTS OF DIGITAL EQUITY:**

- **Economic and Workforce Growth**
  *Through increased job opportunities and business growth*

- **Educational Expansion**
  *By tailoring accessible learning and upskilling opportunities to individual needs and preferences*

- **More Individual Control of Health**
  *From improved access to telehealth and increased health literacy*

- **Improved Civic/Social Engagement & Delivery of Essential Services**
  *Through increased participation in community events and access to services to improve their quality of life.*

**COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, HIGH-SPEED INTERNET**

Recognizing the devastating impact of digital exclusion, President Biden made a commitment that everyone in America will have access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet service.
Who Should Apply

Each State and Territory of the United States that has **developed an accepted Digital Equity Plan** is eligible to apply for grants under the Capacity Grant Program.

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### Eligible States & Territories

**Grantees that have completed a Digital Equity Plan that meets the requirements of 47 U.S.C. §1723(c) can apply for grants under this Program.¹**

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#### Eligible States

- All 50 states and Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico¹

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#### One Percent (1%) Territory Set-Aside

- United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands²

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¹ SDECGP NOFO Section II.B.1
² Id.
Key Dates and Deadlines
Key Dates to Remember

Application submission and grant award dates for the Capacity Grant Program are described in the NOFO.

**Period of Performance**
States and US Territories will be able to spend down grant funds during the 5-year period of performance beginning on the date when the State is awarded grant funds.

**Application Due Date**

*Applications are due by the following dates for...:*
- States, D.C. and Puerto Rico: 60 days after the NOFO is released, **May 28, 2024**
- U.S. Territories: The due date for US Territories’ Capacity Grant Applications is **July 31, 2024**
- Native Entities: 315 days after the NOFO is released; the Native Entity application window opens **September 25, 2024** and closes **February 7, 2025**

**Issuing Awards**
NTIA expects to begin issuing awards to Eligible States on a rolling basis **no later than August 28, 2024**.
Additional resources about the Digital Equity Programs

1. Visit the InternetForAll.gov for additional information on federal funding programs and contact information to your State Broadband Office.


3. Submit questions to digitalequity@ntia.gov

4. Attend future NTIA webinars, including program-specific application guidance webinars for applicants.
Thank you
Social Engagement and Assistive Technology Panel
Social Engagement and Assistive Technology Panel

- Lori Gerhard, Director of the Office of Interagency Innovation, ACL (Moderator)
- Glenna Wright-Gallo, Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, U.S. Department of Education
- Dawn Merth-Johnson, Education Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Laura Plummer, Statewide Assistive Technology Program Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Laura Talmus, Executive Director and Co-founder, Beyond Differences
Wisconsin is Moving Assistive Technology Forward Statewide

Dawn Merth-Johnson
Education Consultant SLP & AT

Financial Disclosure - Employed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Non-Financial Disclosures—Member of ASHA, WSHA

Laura E. Plummer
Statewide Assistive Technology Program Coordinator

Financial Disclosure - Employed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Non-Financial Disclosures - None
IDEA Discretionary Grant - Multi-Agency Partnership

- State agency that advances public education and libraries in WI
- Created in 1848

- One of 12 WI Cooperative Educational Service Agencies
- AT Forward Project

- Wisconsin's AT Act Program
- Statewide AT Lending Library
- Part of the WI Department of Health Services

- Communication Aids and System Clinic (CASC)
- Part of the UW Hospital and Clinics & UW Rehabilitation Dept

4 Agencies
One Common Goal
Assistive Technology Forward Components

AT Forward Connections

Video Resource Library

Micro-Credentials

WI Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Center

AT Devices, Services, and Resources

AAC Partnership Program
AT Forward Connections

➔ Free monthly Community of Practice (CoP) meetings for families, educators, professionals at any AT level
➔ Monthly email update and resources
➔ Video resource library
➔ AT online community
Micro Credential Program

- Modules can be leveraged anytime, anywhere, for self-paced learning
- Providing professional development to ALL
- 19 content categories available
- Over 374 badges issued to date
Wisconsin Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Center

Resource Development:

- AEM Decision Tree
- Next Steps for Providing AEM
- Wisconsin AEM Center
- Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired AEM Center
AAC Partnership Program

Goals
- Focus on capacity building for school teams
- Reaching rural communities

Collaborative team approach
- Approximately a 6-month partnership to include:
  - Feature matching – Focus on students who have been introduced to symbolic communication
  - Virtual coaching
  - ECHO meetings
  - Learning modules
AT Devices, Services, and Resources

Integration of statewide AT lending libraries

Wisconsin's Assistive Technology Act Program (WisTech DHS)
AT Lending Center (ATLC WI DPI)

- WisconsinAT4ALL
- AT Lending Center Resource Map
Understanding the System

FEDERAL
STATE
DISTRICT
BUILDING
EDUCATOR
STUDENT
AT: Process versus Destination

- Access takes collaboration
- Access begins with creating awareness and providing information
- Capacity builds through education, training, and technical assistance
- Acquisition begins with device access through lending libraries and trainings
- AT is an ongoing process
Advocacy

Determine

▪ Where AT funding is coming into your state
▪ How state agencies are investing in AT across your state
▪ What grant opportunities are available

Identify state, regional, and local AT decision makers and advocates

Bring together a workgroup to discuss how to expand AT connections in your state

Brainstorm goals and dreams of how to improve AT supports in your state
Cultivate Connections

Connect: State education agency
- State Education Agencies
- Communication Disabilities Council
- Council for Exceptional Children

Connect: State AT Act Program
- Assistive Technology Act Programs

Attend: Local, State, National AT Conferences

Post Secondary Connections
- Teacher Prep Programs
- Assistive Technology Labs

Community Connections
- Public Libraries
- Independent Living Centers (ILC)
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)
BEYOND DIFFERENCES™

Inspiring Youth to End Social Isolation
Our Mission

Our mission is to end social isolation and create cultures of belonging in middle schools across the country.
Our Inspiration

In Memory of
Lili Rachel Smith
(1994-2009)

Beyond Differences was founded by Laura Talmus and Ace Smith to honor the life and memory of their daughter Lili Rachel Smith. Since 2010, Lili has been the inspiration and guiding light for the accomplishments and growth of Beyond Differences. Her life sparked a national movement that has now touched the lives of millions of children.
What is Social Isolation?

At Beyond Differences® we define social isolation as a lack of quality connections with others.

We see this in 3 ways:

- **Physical Social Isolation**
- **Loneliness** – The gap between a desire for connection and what we are actually experiencing.
- **Social Isolation** (not seen) – Being in the same physical space as others, but being alienated, invisible, not seen.
Programs and Services

SEL Curriculum
Student Leader Guide
Day of Action Boxes
Day of Action Celebration
Student Leadership

National Teen Board:

Comprised of high school teens across the country that meet monthly and every summer to develop their leadership and activism skills, our NTB co-designs our curriculum and is regularly featured in our teacher trainings.
Priority Curriculum Topics

- LGBTQIA+ Rights
- Stopping AAPI Hate
- Positive Body Image
- Poverty and Economic Development
- Centering Immigrant and Refugee Voice
- Disability Visibility
By the Numbers and Demographics

- Partnering with 10,200 in all 50 states.
- 64% of our schools are Title 1.
- Teen Board leaders are majority BIPOC with lived experiences reflected in our curriculum.
- Our Disability Visibility curriculum goal is to serve the 15% of children attending schools with a defined disability to empower classroom norms and school policy.
California Governor Gavin Newsom Partners with BD - Know Your Classmates Day 2022
Everyone, at one point in their lives, will be a part of the disabled community.

Yet so many young people experience social isolation due to growing up disabled or in families with a disabled member.
MEET THE CREATORS

Amritha

Emily

Gurnoor

Kuba

Kailee

THESE ACTIVISTS WROTE THIS UNIT BASED ON THEIR OWN LIVES. THEY HOPE IT WILL CREATE BELONGING FOR YOUTH LIKE THEM ACROSS THE NATION
Disability Visibility Curriculum Overview

Don’t know where to start? Start here!
We start this unit with the voice of a vibrant young woman named Emily from San Francisco, California. She speaks of her experience with social isolation due to her disability and the ways she found ways to connect and uplift others.

Read Emily - Disability Visibility origin story.

Emily and the Beyond Differences National Teen Board Poverty Disability Team have created this update. By sharing their stories and creating this update, young people have started discussing how they can create a more inclusive culture for disabled students.

Why is seeing disability important to belonging?
The disabled community is the one community that everyone will, at one point, be a part of. Some people are disabled their whole lives, others learn of their disability later in life, and some become disabled in a moment or over time. If we do not allow ourselves to see disability, we deny not just the disabled but the culture of belonging we will all need.

What the Members of the Beyond Differences National Teen Board Disability Visibility Team want you to know.
- Disability includes both physical and mental disability
- Our team is made of both disabled teens and the siblings of the disabled

When disability is not celebrated - shame - blame - withdrawal - stepping away from one’s authentic self can result. As a result, many young people felt unable to connect and find belonging in their communities.

What is new in this curriculum?
- A lesson based on National Teen Board Emily’s story of growing up isolated by her disability and how she moved forward and found belonging
- A lesson empowering students to create practices to ensure belonging for disabled students and families.
- 4 Belonging Boosters, quick activities focused on Disability Visibility
- If you are new to this curriculum made by the Disability Visibility, make sure you use not only this update but also all of their offerings here.
Erin began her career as a special education teacher and quickly realized that, as a person with a disability, she could not continue to participate in a system that did not honor disabled identity but instead labeled students as broken. Erin earned a Master’s in Learning and Design from Vanderbilt University and is a Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC) through the International Association for Accessibility Professionals (IAAP). She recently began a new role as the Accessible Design Specialist in the Social Justice Collaborative at a college in Boston. Before that, she designed accessible and identity-affirming curriculum for an ed-tech company.
Accessibility Guidelines

Layout of the guidelines:
These guidelines are divided into three categories: Requirements, Requests, and Recommendations.

Each guideline is then further subdivided into Design Guidelines and Facilitation Guidelines.

Beyond Differences is committed to supporting guest speakers, presenters, and facilitators in our accessibility efforts. For the practical applications of this, please read Beyond Differences Accessibility Responsibilities.
Thank You

beyonddifferences.org
RAISE THE BAR FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
RAISE THE BAR: LEAD THE WORLD

ACHIEVE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
- Accelerate learning for every student
- Deliver a comprehensive and rigorous education for every student

BOLDLY IMPROVE LEARNING CONDITIONS
- Eliminate the educator shortage for every school
- Invest in every student’s mental health and well being

CREATE PATHWAYS FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT
- Ensure every student has a pathway to college and a career
- Provide every student with a pathway to multilingualism
OUR OSERS MISSION & PRIORITIES

TO IMPROVE EARLY CHILDHOOD, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND RAISE EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND THE NATION

LEADING FOR EQUITABLE OUTCOMES

PREPARED WORKFORCE
Remedy immediate staffing shortages and effectively deploy diverse and equipped educators, providers, and support personnel

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES
Amplify, promote, and actively drive effective learning experiences, instruction, intervention, services, and support

ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY
Accelerate usage of inclusive materials and technology for in-person and remote learning and employment

STAKEHOLDERS
Engage families, individuals with disabilities, educators, providers, policy makers, advocates, and communities to identify successes, barriers, and needs

STRATEGIC RESOURCES
Invest in data-aligned coordinated activities that advance Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)
Wrap Up and Next Day Preview

• Meredith Hanley, Director of Community Capacity Building, USAging
• Katie Clark, Policy Analyst, Office of Interagency Innovation, ACL
Join Us Tomorrow

• Program Spotlight: Machine Learning and the Social Health Connector Tool
• Virtual Programming Panel
• Call to Action and Wrap Up
Thank you for participating in the Virtual Summit!