The Patterson Foundation (TPF) created its Digital Access for All (DA4A) initiative to explore, educate, and engage sectors working to enhance access to technology that connects people in ways that foster inclusion and well-being.

Achieving Digital Access for All Matters

Digital evolution holds boundless possibilities for the future, but having digital access is a prerequisite.

When individuals and families in our community lack one or more of the three essential elements (connectivity, devices, and skills/support), it impacts our ability to thrive socially, intellectually, and economically.

In the spirit of exploration, collaboration, and action, we encourage you to join our efforts to strengthen people, organizations, and communities in the following ways:

Cohort 2 of the Digital Navigator Pilot Program Underway

The second cohort of the Digital Navigator Program has officially launched with the convening of three new nonprofit organizations that have volunteered to help close the digital divide in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties. This second round of collaboration and training, generously sponsored by The Patterson Foundation, comprises Easterseals Southwest Florida, FUNducation, and Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida.

Cohort two agencies will access the Digital Navigator Program curriculum and receive ongoing weekly support with implementation, communications, and data management to ensure success throughout the pilot timeline and beyond. After a three month training and coaching, the Digital Navigator will be well equipped to help clients, neighbors and friends.

Cheers to proven digital inclusion
According to the American Community Survey (ACS), about 10% of Florida households report having only a smartphone and no other type of computing device (2019).

In 2019, there were 7,905,832 households in Florida, which indicates that roughly 800,000 homes across the state lacked the essential large-screen devices to use the internet effectively.

The COVID-19 pandemic helped shine a light on the digital divide nationally, when everyone’s ability to live, work, learn, and play was disrupted in different but far-reaching ways regardless of age.

Everyone can have use for a computer if given the opportunity. Becoming a computing device adopter is related first to the affordability of the device and the internet connection, as discussed, but is also tightly connected to understanding the relevance of the computer in one’s life.

Digital Divides Are Now in the Spotlight: Here’s How We Have Helped and What You Can Do
By Susie Bowie, Manatee Community Foundation

Despite incredible losses from the past two years, we can thank this time for accelerating the development of better ways of working and supporting people to ensure their success. From our perspective, this means encouraging donors to imagine life as a striving employee, job seeker, single parent, or first-generation student without the tools they—as donors—have at their fingertips. Investing in laptops, infrastructure, and digital navigators helps level the playing field for all people. When we want others to thrive, we support them with the tools to access opportunity.

Thanks to The Knight Fund of Manatee Community Foundation, the digital navigator programs initiated at the Women’s Resource Center and UnidosNow by The Patterson Foundation have jointly received a $55,000 investment in people who will help community members access jobs, education, health, and other critical information needs. Their clients include single mothers, women in transition, Hispanic/Latino learners, and changemakers. Read more here.

Digital Access For All Embarks on a New Journey
By Michael Zimmerman

As Digital Access For All continues on its journey to connect, learn, share, evolve and strengthen people, organizations, and communities—we grew curious to discover who else is doing the good work. On the heels of our curiosity, we launched a National Philanthropy Scan to engage funders, from corporate giving to foundations, in strategies like digital navigation and to cohort two!

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conversations around their models and approaches to effective and impactful philanthropy in the Digital Access and Equity space.

We’re curious to know what’s working in which regions and how? Are the funders working in isolation or collaborating? People should look forward to a full synopsis of corporate funders and foundations and their approaches to Digital Access and Equity in their communities and beyond.

Thus far, we have some early findings from a few regional collaborations between funders, government, and nonprofits delivering devices and WiFi extenders while building infrastructure in underprivileged, underrepresented, and underserved communities.

The initiatives are still underway, and the funders are steadily reaching project milestones.

The Affordable Connectivity Program provides a discount of up to $30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to $75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than $10 and less than $50 toward the purchase price. Sign up here!

More than 325 digital equity professionals from across the country descended on Portland, Oregon, to attend the 2022 Net Inclusion Conference.

Held in person for the first time in two years, participants were thrilled to share the rapid evolution of digital equity efforts across the nation. Not only did guests attend in person, but many of the conference class offerings were available through Livestream options added in the last 30 days leading up to the conference.

More than 250 additional people tuned in via the stream. Over 90 subject matter experts representing each state presented topics ranging from assisted technology, efforts to widen the availability of affordable broadband, security, and teaching tech curriculum to all ages.

Updates on federal funding opportunities to deliver low-cost, high-quality broadband services to everyone in the United States continue to be a priority of this group, and efforts to collaborate among organizations were encouraged.

The DA4A team is proud to have participated via Livestream while learning and sharing with an emphasis on serving ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) families.

Learning is the life of this party, and we’re embracing it at every turn. Don’t worry...you’re all invited!
The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is bringing Remake Learning Days to our region, and we want YOU to be a part of it!

Suncoast Remake Learning Days is a 10-day festival of free events for children and families...think of it as the world’s largest multi-site open house from April 29 to May 8, 2022.

Suncoast Remake Learning Days will build on the assets and strengths of our region, reinforcing the knowledge that learning happens everywhere!

Eligible Florida Customers Can Use Federal Program Funds for Xfinity Services
By Jen Boyett, Senior Manager, External Affairs

Comcast is committed to bridging the digital divide. With Internet Essentials from Comcast, the nation’s largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program, qualified customers can get 50 Mbps internet service for $9.95 a month.

Comcast is also proud to participate in the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provides eligible households with a $30 a month credit for Internet and/or mobile phone services.

Internet Essentials customers who participate in the ACP will have their entire monthly Internet bill covered by the credit. Comcast also just launched the new Internet Essentials Plus tier, which is twice as fast as the original Internet Essentials service at 100 Mbps and costs $29.95 a month, meaning its cost would also be completely covered by the ACP credit for qualified customers.

In addition, Comcast has added the ability for customers to use their ACP credit toward mobile phone service with Xfinity Mobile. Visit www.xfinity.com/free for more information.

Florida’s Office of Broadband’s Speed Test: Help develop Florida’s Broadband Availability Map by taking a speed test. Your participation helps identify gaps in high-speed internet service in order to advance the state’s broadband infrastructure expansion goals. It takes less than one minute to complete. You can take the speed test here!

Do you have a resource or idea to share with the community? Is there a national, regional, or local effort you’d like us to know about or feature in future publications? Contact DA4A at digitalaccess@thepattersonfoundation.org to be considered.

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