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.

Access to Digital Healthcare is Essential

There is a misconception that telehealth and teletherapy services were born out of the pandemic with a need for doctor's appointments to be remote as our country, our world, shut down. However, many healthcare institutions, including Cigna, Spectrum Health, and the American Telemedicine Association, have been identifying and addressing the need for these services way before COVID entered our lives.

Telehealth is the provision of healthcare remotely through telecommunications technology. Teletherapy is when people receive therapy for mental health issues digitally, usually by videoconferencing.

The Digital Access for All (DA4A) initiative has identified the need for

Check out Charlotte County Libraries & History’s Traveling Library Program

By Lynda Citro, Librarian Supervisor at Englewood Charlotte Library

Charlotte County Libraries have a traveling library to reach patrons in their natural environments. The traveling library pops up at various places, including the beach, county facilities, neighborhoods, community organization meetings, schools, and festivals. It is a spontaneous and unexpected way for customers to discover and access services and materials and has the potential to increase literacy and strengthen community partnerships.
equitable access to these services, especially considering many people do not have the means to afford healthcare or a device and internet to access healthcare digitally.

We have begun a large-scale project to research and address the issue of access disparities in the telehealth and teletherapy realms. This project aims to identify and connect trusted technology-based medical resources and education services to individuals and families at free or low-cost rates.

TAKE THE SURVEY

You’re Invited to DA4A’s July Webversation

Please join DA4A on July 21, 2022, from 10:00a-11:30a for our quarterly webversation attended by nonprofits, schools, libraries, and human services providers to continue exploring ways to increase digital access to families and communities in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties. By fostering wide participation, we continue to connect and explore opportunities and possibilities together.

REGISTER HERE

Take Sarasota County’s Broadband Survey to Help Improve Our Communities

The program cost less than $200 to put together and provides staff the opportunity to enhance customer service skills and build familiarity with their community. The equipment utilized includes a few collapsible crates, a hot spot, a portable table, and an iPad. Librarians can sign visitors up for a library card and check out materials for them right away using the iPad connected to the mobile library software system. We distribute flyers for library programs and services and help customers connect to online eBooks, audiobooks, movies, and magazines.

Be sure to check out the traveling library program soon. We look forward to meeting you!

Take Desoto County’s Broadband Survey to Help Improve Our Communities

DeSoto County is seeking input from DeSoto residents and businesses about their broadband access. Your input will be included in DeSoto County’s Local Technology Plan for opportunities to bring broadband services to our community. Data will be submitted to the State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Office of Broadband by mid-August.

Please take a few minutes to complete one or more of the surveys
Accessing broadband and technology is a core need of any community and business. Broadband is a conduit delivering education, communication, telehealth, business opportunities, and social interaction to our communities within Sarasota County. It keeps our community engaged and vital! The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)’s Office of Broadband has several funding opportunities to address broadband equity barriers within our community.

To help qualify for funding, Sarasota County was required to form a Local Technology Planning Team (LTPT) to identify underserved or unserved areas in our community that have broadband equity barriers such as affordability, device needs, and language barriers. Sarasota County’s LTPT must conduct two surveys: one focusing on citizens and one on businesses. The data collected along with targeted focus groups will be used to create a plan for submission to Florida DEO’s Office of Broadband. Once acquired, these funds will be used to help improve equity barriers to service throughout Sarasota County.

Please take a few minutes to complete one or more of the surveys below by July 30, 2022!

- If you are a business in Sarasota County
- If you are a Sarasota County

Thriving in an Age-Friendly Community: Using Technology to Enhance the Lives of Older Adults

By Antoinette Johnson

By Antoinette Johnson, resident at Casa Santa Marta

As I entered the community room at Casa Santa Marta senior housing, Cheri Corveya of The Patterson Foundation (TPF) stepped forward to greet me with warmth and confident enthusiasm. Over the last several weeks, residents, including myself, had signed up to participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and engage with the Digital access for All (DA4A) initiative in an enrollment event that afternoon. We were all quite excited.

The DA4A team, Digital Navigators, and Lead Technical Support were already assembled and eager to begin. [...]There was this amazing sense of community, ready to be fully engaged and unified in purpose. Clearly, something quite wonderful was about to take place!
Our world is increasingly going digital. Citizens, workers, and students are expected to be connected to the internet and have devices + digital literacy skills to participate fully in our modern society. To achieve digital access for all, we have learned that the following three essential elements must be present and work together: **connectivity, devices, and skills**. Although many rely on their smartphones to be connected, it is not conducive to remote learning, remote working, or applying for social services. It can be done, but it’s not ideal.

As the U.S Census data shows above, thousands of households in our community have internet subscriptions and computing devices. However, thousands do not! These numbers represent households with individuals who may be our family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, peers, grocers, bus drivers, or someone else we cross paths with in our everyday lives.

Among those who do not have digital access are **asset-limited, income-**
constrained, employed (ALICE) families and communities. Significant barriers prevent households, including ALICE, from achieving digital access for all, such as a lack of awareness of available low-cost plans, a lack of internet access in the area, or a lack of affordability. Their lack of access impacts us all. When individuals and families in our community lack one or more of the three essential elements, it affects our community’s ability to thrive socially, intellectually, and economically.

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Submits Strategic Plan for Broadband

On June 30th, 2022, The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) submitted the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband to Governor Ron DeSantis, Senate President Wilton Simpson, and House Speaker Chris Sprowls, detailing the goals and strategies to improve and expand broadband Internet connectivity in the State of Florida. DEO’s Office of Broadband will lead Florida's efforts to ensure that broadband Internet availability, adoption, and use are sustainable in every community and rural area for a resilient Florida future. The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband outlines a three-step approach to forge a connected economy that yields a more robust workforce, enhanced educational opportunities, and healthier Floridians. The plan also promotes economic growth, workforce education and job training, and workforce housing, particularly in rural, unserved, and underserved areas of the state. Read the full press release here. Read the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband here.

The Affordable Connectivity Program

**How to Enroll**

1. **Apply**
   - Go to AffordableConnectivity.gov to submit an application or print out a mail-in application.

2. **Contact Provider**
   - Contact your preferred participating provider to select an eligible plan and have the discount applied to your bill.
   - Some providers may have an alternative application that they will ask you to complete.
   - Eligible households must both apply for the program and contact a participating provider to select a service plan.
**The Affordable Connectivity Program** is an FCC benefit providing a discount of $30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and $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. See the table below for ACP enrollment state and local data. County information is updated quarterly. To find additional ACP enrollment data, click [here](#).

### ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker

| Total Enrolled Households Nationally  
(As of July 4th, 2022) | 12,708,795  
(†9.84% ; Previously 11,569,930 on 5.2.22) |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Total Households in Florida  
(As of July 4th, 2022) | 898,754  
(†6.95% ; Previously 840,315 on 5.2.22) |
| Total Subscribers in Charlotte County  
(As of June 1, 2022) | 3,495  
(†32.49% ; Previously 2,638 in Feb. 2022) |
| Total Subscribers in DeSoto County  
(As of June 1, 2022) | 845  
(†8.33% ; Previously 780 in Feb. 2022) |
| Total Subscribers in Manatee County  
(As of June 1, 2022) | 14,356  
(†35.68% ; Previously 10,581 in Feb. 2022) |
| Total Subscribers in Sarasota County  
(As of June 1, 2022) | 6,401  
(†29.21% ; Previously 4,954 in Feb. 2022) |
| Total Subscribers in Suncoast  
(As of June 1, 2022) | 25,097  
(†32.42% ; Previously 18,953 in Feb. 2022) |

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. @ThePattersonFdn #DigitalAccessforAll
Try email marketing for free today!