The GAP: Training The ACP Engagement Team

Background Information

Digital Access for All: The Patterson Foundation strengthens the efforts of people, organizations, and communities by focusing on issues that address common aspirations and foster wide participation. As The Patterson Foundation’s initiatives innovate to connect with people, organizations, and communities in new ways through digital technology, creating greater access to that technology has emerged as an aspiration with broad potential for its work in philanthropy. To pursue this aspiration, The Patterson Foundation created its Digital Access for All initiative, which explores the efforts of multiple sectors working to enhance access to technology that connects people in ways that foster inclusion and well-being.

Since we live in an age where major interactions in education, employment, health, finance, and more are increasingly going digital, there is an obligation to have connectivity, devices, and skills and support to participate in modern society. All three of these essential elements need to be present and work together for digital access for all to be achieved.

However, the main barriers to digital access for asset-limited families and communities revolve around four key factors:

- **Access**: Refers to one’s ability to connect to high-speed internet.
- **Adoption**: Refers to whether or not members of a community actually subscribe to a high-speed internet plan.
- **Affordability**: Cost is perhaps the most limiting factor when it comes to many asset-limited families and individuals across the country, including those living in our four-county area.
- **Awareness**: The Patterson Foundation’s research shows that even when low-cost, basic plans (+/- 25 mbps) are available for ALICE families in our region, residents are often unaware of them or how to qualify for them.

The Impact of Digital Navigation: People who do not have access to digital connections or devices fall behind in their ability to connect with the services they need. One promising innovation to address this challenge is the digital navigator concept. Digital navigators are people who connect community members with groups and programs to provide low-cost home internet service, an affordable computing device, and foundational digital literacy.
training based on their specific needs. Through the Digital Navigator Program, part of the Digital Access for All initiative, The Patterson Foundation is training local organizations to connect asset-limited families and individuals with opportunities to obtain digital connectivity, devices, skills, and support. Through a series of training, implementation meetings, and knowledge-sharing sessions with other nonprofits, consultants help participants embed the responsibilities of the digital navigator into the organization’s daily work and culture.

**The Project’s Information**

**The GAP:** Addressing the connectivity and devices, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) launched the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to ensure households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare, and more. The benefit provides a discount of up to $30 per month toward internet service for eligible households. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than $10 and less than $50 toward the purchase.

As TPF continues to look for ways to evolve its Digital Access for All Initiative, it was noted, on a national, state, and local level, that there is an ever-widening GAP between individuals and families who are eligible for ACP and those who have enrolled in the program. TPF felt that now is the time to make moves in order to ensure that all who are eligible for ACP are taking advantage of the program.

Using a well-established group of ACP Engagers and leveraging digital navigation, TPF will make strides in closing The Gap by addressing common digital access barriers such as:

1. **Increasing** awareness of the ACP program through strategic outreach via printed materials, social media, and the presence of our ACP Engagers at various events.
2. **Encouraging** internet adoption by enrolling eligible households in the ACP program via TPF’s Digital Navigators and our ACP Engagers to ensure they benefit from affordable internet options

**The GAP Training:** As DA4A builds a squad of ACP Engagers, Kiarra Louis will train each individual on the team to effectively promote and discuss the ACP program and help eligible individuals begin the early stages of the TPF’s enrollment process by completing an Intake Form.

At this time, it is determined that they will need to be trained on the following:
## 1 Hr Training Overview

| Introductions & Overview (7 mins) | Learn why each of them is here and how they will be contributing to TPF’s efforts to close The Gap. Key elements include:  
- Overview of the training session  
- Overview of what they will be doing |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Digital Access or All (5 mins)  | Learn what Digital Access for All Initiative is and why The Patterson Foundation is supporting it. Key elements include:  
- CV-19 Origins  
- Importance of Digital Access  
- 3 Essential Elements |
| Digital Navigator (8 mins)      | Learn what digital navigation is, TPF’s Digital Navigation Program, why it’s needed, and what it looks like. Key elements include:  
- Roles and Responsibilities of a Digital Navigator  
- The Digital Navigator Program Video |
| The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) (10 mins) | Learn what the ACP Program is, what it offers, and how it helps. Key elements include:  
- Origins of ACP  
- Offerings of ACP  
- Eligibility for ACP  
- Applying for ACP  
- ACP and Digital Navigation |
| The Patterson Foundation’s Closing The Gap Progress (30 mins) | Learn how TPF’s process for closing The Gap, how they fit in, and their roles and responsibilities. Key elements include:  
- Roles and Responsibilities  
- Awareness at Events  
- Intake Forms  
- Next Steps  
- Ongoing support and resources and support  
- Q&A |

### Training Support:
To further support ACP Engagers after the training, Kiarra Louis will create and implement the following, in tandem with Rachel Ploss, to bolster their confidence and ensure we are evolving to address their needs and work.

- **ACP FAQs:** To serve as an electronic and printed reference on what the ACP is and isn’t to help communicate accurate information to eligible households.
- **Digital Navigation FAQs:** To serve as an electronic and printed reference on what Digital Navigation is and isn’t to help eligible households understand why they will meet with a digital navigator, how they will help them, outline the process, and overall how they are there to help them.
- **Monthly or Bi-Monthly Check-In Team Meetings:** To ensure there is a regular, open line of communication where ACP Engagers can share what was helpful or not helpful related to the training or what needs to be included to prepare them for their roles and responsibilities. It’s also an opportunity for them to share feedback with Rachel on the scheduling and event side to share what’s been successful there and what needs to be added to improve the process. This can be adjusted as needed. The information gathered will be used to ensure the process continues to evolve, and so Kiarra can draft monthly reports.
- **General Feedback Surveys:** To ensure there is a regular, open line of communication where ACP Engagers can share feedback privately and/or anonymously if they so choose.

**Considerations**

1) How can we create an internal system and sequences of actions among The Gap Leadership team that facilitates the work ACP Engagers do?
2) How can we evolve the Intake Form to make it clear and concise?
3) How can we create an ongoing process to receive feedback and implement it for you to increase the effectiveness of our efforts to close the GAP?
4) What characteristics and skills are we looking for when identifying individuals to train for this endeavor?
5) Where will the data be located for the Pilot period May - August 2023 and beyond?
6) How often will the data be reviewed and considered for realignment of training and efforts?
7) How will we define the various types of engagement that will be implemented, such as; on-site event engagement, flyer distribution and follow-up, telephone calls, radio ads, social media push-out - type and frequency?