

NH Forum on Digital Equity Funding for Financial Inclusion & Empowerment

Tapping Digital Equity Funding for Financial Inclusion and Literacy

Monday, February 5th, 2024 noon-1:00PM Eastern



Our Panel

Moderator: [Venus Lockett](#), chief empowerment officer, Bank On Georgia, and member [State Financial Empowerment Leaders Network](#)

Panelists:

- [Matt Conserva](#), broadband program manager, NH Dept. of Business and Economic Affairs
- [Bob McLaughlin](#), executive director, National Collaborative for Digital Equity, and member, [State Financial Empowerment Leaders Network](#)
- [Ken Sheldon](#), state president, New Hampshire, Bank of America
- [Kristy Merrill](#), president, New Hampshire Bankers Association

Welcome and thanks for joining us!

Webinar aims

- Orient banking and other financial inclusion and empowerment leaders to over \$200 million in federal funding over the next four years to New Hampshire for broadband access and digital equity
- Explore how this funding can enhance
 - Financial inclusion – e.g., more access to [Bank On-certified](#) accounts for previously unconnected households
 - Improved access to online and “hybrid” financial literacy resources and coaching
 - Coordinating outreach to lower-income and underbanked households – e.g., cybersafety training and Bank On enrollment for safer online banking
- Explore pilot efforts in New Hampshire to meld financial and digital inclusion
 - Manchester Financial Partners – bank-funded laptops for LMI children with drive images pointing to Bank On, 211 and other inclusion resources
 - Training bank volunteers to combine Bank On enrollment with financial literacy coaching and assistance signing up for Affordable Connectivity Program’s broadband subsidy, focused on supporting New Americans
 - Bank On New Hampshire coordinating financial with digital inclusion efforts
- Q & A (including brainstorming next steps)

Agenda

- Matt Conserva: orient participants to affordable broadband coming to many previously unserved and underserved street addresses across New Hampshire
- Bob McLaughlin: orients participants to federal funding to NH (and other states) for digital equity
- Ken Sheldon: provide overview of pilot efforts in Manchester that combine digital and financial inclusion
- Kristy Merrill: explore how New Hampshire's leaders in financial inclusion, literacy and empowerment members might best alert NH's broadband and digital equity planners to their interest in leveraging broadband access and digital equity resources in support of their financial institution's strategic priorities
- Q & A (including ideas for promising next steps) moderated by Venus Lockett

Matt Conserva, NH Dept. of Business and Economic Affairs

- BEAD funding to states – purposes
- [NH's BEAD plan](#)
- How might banking leaders find out more about where and when newly affordable broadband is coming to NH communities?

Bob McLaughlin, executive director, NCDE

Federal funding for digital equity to NH:

- Digital access: broadband subsidy and device access and multilingual tech support
- Digital literacy skills: developing digital, media and information literacy, cybersafety and AI skills for lower-income learners of all ages – from expectant parents to PK12, afterschool, adult education, community college, USNH, seniors, vets, vocational rehab clients...

DBEA received USDOC funding to oversee inclusive development of a state digital equity plan

DBEA awarded planning contract in 2023 to UNH Extension & NCDE

Draft plan now available for public comment at www.NHdigitalequity.org

Plan based on intensive listening sessions with [8 covered populations](#)

Over next 4 years, USDOC will provide ca. \$4 million/year to NH to implement its plan

NCDE now mobilizing donor campaign to address “donut hole” in digital equity funding – home access to computers

Ken Sheldon, state president, NH, Bank of America

Examples of melding digital and financial inclusion:

- Manchester Financial Partners
 - “[Operation Lemonade](#)”: Mobilized a dozen banks and several credit unions to fund 490 laptops for K12 students at start of pandemic; laptops bundled with pointers to Bank On checking accounts
- Bank financial literacy volunteers being oriented to most affordable broadband providers and free digital navigators in their community
- Forthcoming “First Time Home Buyer’s Guide” to orient first-generation homeowners to ask realtors and sellers re: home’s access to affordable broadband
- Bank volunteers being oriented to [Inclusion Junction](#) as free tool to point current and prospective customers to broadband enrollment assistants and digital navigators
- State’s use of federal broadband funding for NH Electric Coop to bring affordable access to 119 rural communities *very* exciting for cost-effectively improving rural access to banking services

Kristy Merrill, president, New Hampshire Bankers Association

- To what extent might your members regard these as important barriers to fostering financial inclusion:
 - Affordable broadband access
 - Cybersafety and digital literacy skills for safe online banking
 - More awareness among the unbanked and underbanked about availability of Bank On certified checking and financial literacy coaching
- What are the contributions you most hope your state's digital equity planning leaders can make to your members' success and NH's economic vitality?

Q & A

Moderator: Venus Lockett, chief empowerment officer, Bank On Georgia



Thanks for joining us!

For more information, contact

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