





# TANF and Technology: Preparing Workers for Long Term Success

Wednesday, April 28, 2021 1:00-2:30 p.m. EDT



# Welcome



James Butler Family Assistance Program Specialist Office of Family Assistance Administration for Children and Families (Moderator)





# **Using GoToWebinar**

#### Participation

Please submit your questions and comments using the Questions panel on the right hand side of your screen while phones are muted.

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# Facilitator

Bridget Brown Director of Workforce Innovations ICF





# Overview

Today's webinar will include three elements:

- Individual presentations from our speakers.
- Polling questions with the audience.
- Audience Q&A.



## Presenters

- Pamela Loprest, Ph.D., Senior Fellow, Urban Institute
- Scott Steiner, Engineering Branch Chief, Loan Origination and Approval Division, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture
- Charlene Miles, Education and Training Manager, Employment and Training Services Department, Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)
- Samantha Hansen, Senior Manager, Employment & Training Services Department, Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)
- Melissa Stallings, Chief Program Officer, Byte Back



# Polling Question #1

What is the most common barrier you see amongst your clients related to technology?

- A. Accessing internet/broadband
- **B.** Accessing equipment
- C. Using the internet and other tools
- D. All of the above
- E. I'm not sure



# What is Tech Literacy and How Can it Promote Equity?

Pamela Loprest, Senior Fellow

TANF and Technology: Preparing Workers for Long Term Success April 21, 2021

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### What are tech skills?

· URBAN · INSTITUTE ·

### **Foundational Tech Skills**

Nonspecialized technological skills that may be important for carrying out a job but are not the job's main substance

Examples:

- Writing and attaching a document to an email
- Using a database to retrieve customer information
- Accessing and using an online employee handbook or schedule
- Using a tablet to log information
- Filling out an electronic timesheet

### Tech Skills are on a Continuum



Knowing how to use tech tools Task-oriented tech skills Using tools in specific context

Tech literacy

Applying knowledge to new contexts

### **Tech Literacy**

Being able to combine basic technological knowledge and problem solving to approach new contexts, platforms, and uses

- Tech literacy means people can more easily learn new technological tasks on the same job or new jobs.
- Even where employers provide specific tech training, tech literacy is often assumed and needed to take advantage of that training.

### Why are tech skills important?

• U R B A N • I N S T I T U T E •

### Demand for foundational tech skills is growing

By 2030, the number of work hours using basic technological (digital) skills is projected to increase 69 percent. Increases in hours using basic tech skills will be large in the manufacturing, health care, and energy and mining industries.

--McKinsey Global Institute, 2018

### **Digital Content Scores in Select Occupations**



Source: Muro, Liu, Whiton, Kulkarni 2017

Foundational tech skills also needed for ...

Job Search



**Education and Training** 



Equity in job preparation, job seeking, getting hired, retaining job and promotion

**Requires foundational tech skills** 

### Levels of and Disparities in Tech Skills

• U R B A N • I N S T I T U T E •

# Foundational Digital Skills ►

#### DIGITAL SKILLS — ARE INCREASINGLY — REQUIRED FOR MOST OCCUPATIONS

#### LEVELS OF DIGITAL SKILLS

**Basic digital skills** Turning on a computer, using a mouse, or accessing the internet

**Task oriented skills** Using a specific platform or application and following clearly defined steps to accomplish a task

#### **Digital literacy**

Applying knowledge of specific digital tasks to new circumstance, contexts, or platforms



Even those with traditionally **low digital skill** requirements.





Digital skills training is critical for workers and job-seekers. Find out more about strategies training providers are using at https://urbn.is/2HmmKXv.  $\mathbf{T}$ 



URBAN INSTITUTE

#### Digital Skill Levels among Youth Ages 16 to 24 W ho Are Employed by Race



Source: Hecker and Briggs (2021) - calculations from 2017 PIACC

### Households Reporting Home Broadband Internet Access



Pew Research Center 2021

### **Tech Skills Training Strategies**

• U R B A N • I N S T I T U T E •

### **Strategies for Teaching Tech Skills**

- Teach skills in context
- In-person teaching is important
- Match training to people's needs
- Access to tech tools connected to tech literacy

### **Challenges for Teaching Tech Skills**

- Assessing tech skills
- Funding
- Meeting the needs of non-English speakers
- Moving to tech literacy

Moving from knowledge of specific skills and tasks to broader tech literacy involves confidence, familiarity, and interest

### **Contact Information**

Pamela Loprest ploprest@urban.org Urban Institute



#### Introduction to the USDA & Overview of Rural Utilities Service Programs

TANF and Technology: Preparing Workers for Long Term Success

Presented by: Scott Steiner



#### Rural Development's (RD) Mission

#### **USDA Rural Development**

Committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America.

- Provide loans, grants, and loan guarantees that support essential services, such as:
  - Housing
  - Economic Development
  - Health Care
  - First Responder Services and Equipment
  - Water, Electric, and Telecommunications Infrastructure



#### Rural Development Background

Rural Development includes 3 agencies with unique programs and objectives:

- Rural Utilities Service (RUS)
- Rural Housing Service (RHS)
- Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)
- Across the three agencies, Rural Development administers over 40 programs.
  - RUS Electric & Telecommunications programs are administered by National Office
  - RHS and RBS programs are administered by State & National Offices

### RUS Telecommunications Program History

#### From electricity to broadband...

1935	Rural Electrification Administration (REA) created and began providing financing to promote rural electrification
1949	REA received authority to finance telephone service in rural communities
1995	Evolving from the REA, the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) required all financed telecommunications networks have the capacity to deliver broadband
2010 to present	RUS has approved over <b>\$8 billion</b> in loans and grants to build out broadband infrastructure and expand distance learning and telemedicine services in rural areas

### Funding for Rural Broadband

- Telecommunications
   Infrastructure Loan Program
- Rural Broadband Program
- Community Connect Grant Program
- ReConnect Program



### Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program

Funding Type	g Type Rural Focus Funding Thresholds How to Apply		How to Apply	When Applications are Accepted
Loans/Loan	Primarily benefits communities ≤5K	N/A	Submit through the <b>RD Apply</b>	Year-round
Guarantees			online application system	

Available Funding	Program Updates
FY2019	<u>FY2019</u>
\$690 million available	12 loans approved: \$181.5 million/10 states impacted
<u>FY2020</u>	<u>FY2020</u>
\$690 million available	8 loans approved: \$98.6 million/10 states impacted
<u>FY2021</u>	<u>FY2021</u>
\$690 million available	2 loans approved: \$57.5 million/1 state impacted
	5 loans in process: \$58.9 million

https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-infrastructure-loans-loan-guarantees

#### Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program

#### **Standard Loan Terms include:**

- 2 Year Principal Deferral
- Interest Rate at the Cost-Of-Money
- Loan Maturity Life of the Facilities Financed Plus 3 Years

#### Staff can assist and review loan applications before submission

### Rural Broadband Program

Funding Type	Rural Focus	Funding Thresholds	How to Apply	When Applications are Accepted
Loans/Loan Guarantees/Loan- Grant Combinations	Areas with populations ≤ 20K	TBA in the Federal Register	Submit through the <b>RD Apply</b> online application system	Applications are not accepted at this time
Available F	unding	Program Updates		
FY2019		FY2019		
\$121.7 million available		3 loans approved: \$47.8 million		
FY2020 \$91.9 million available FY2021	<ul> <li>FY2020</li> <li>O loans approved</li> <li>RUS was not accepting applications during FY 2020 due to a 2018 Farm B requirement to implement a new public notice system.</li> </ul>			g FY 2020 due to a 2018 Farm Bill notice system.
\$11.9 million available		<u>FY2021</u> The program is closed and will open when a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is published.		

https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-broadband-access-loan-and-loan-guarantee

#### Rural Broadband Program

#### **Recent regulatory changes include:**

- Lengthening build-out period of the broadband system from 3 to 5 years
- Tying the required broadband lending speeds to the term of the award
- Providing technical assistance and training through grant funding to help applicants intending to serve the most rural areas prepare an application

See <u>7 CFR 1738</u> published in the <u>Federal Register</u> on March 12, 2020 for a comprehensive review of the updated content.

### Community Connect Grant Program

Funding Type	Rural Focus	Funding Thresholds	Matching Requirement	Broadband Service Speeds	How to Apply	When Applications are Accepted
Grants	Areas with populations ≤ 20K	\$100,000 - \$3,000,000	15% of requested grant amount	Broadband Service: <10/1 Mbps Broadband Grant Speed: ≥25/3 Mbps	Submit through the Community Connect Portal	Applications are not accepted at this time
Available Funding				Program Updates		
FY2019 \$33 million available				FY2019 12 grants approved: \$24.3 million/9 states impacted		
<b>FY2020</b> <b>\$29 million</b> available in FY2020 after awarding 8 grants from FY2019 application cycle			varding 8 grants	<ul> <li>FY2020</li> <li>8 grants approved: \$15.7 million (from the FY2019 Application window)/7 states impacted</li> <li>No FY2020 application window due to regulation update</li> </ul>		
FY2021 \$35 million available				FY2021         Application window closed on December 23, 2020         73 Applications received: \$146.4 million		

http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants

#### **Community Connect Grant Program**

Applications were submitted electronically through the new online application system.

Resources are available on the website at: <u>http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-</u><u>services/community-connect-grants</u>

#### **Contact Information**

Loan Origination and Approval Division Email: <u>community.connect@usda.gov</u> Call: 202-720-0806

#### Home

Welcome, Toby

#### **Community Connect**

Thank you for your interest in the Community Connect Grant Program. The purpose of the Community Connect Grant Program is to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible applicants that will provide, on a "community-oriented connectivity" basis, broadband service that fosters economic growth and delivers enhanced educational, health care, and public safety benefits.

You can create your Proposed Funded Service Area and upload your Community Connect Grant application by clicking the button below.

Funding Window Open: July 01, 2020 - August 15, 2020

Get Started

Central Internet Company

Switch Entity View


#### ReConnect Program

Funding Type	Rural Focus	Funding Thresholds	Matching Requirement	Broadband Service Speeds	How to Apply	When Applications are Accepted
Loan/Grants /Loan-Grant Combination s	Areas with population s ≤ 20K	≤\$50 million for loans & loan-grant combinations ≤\$25 for grants	For grant- only: 25% of requested grant amount	Broadband Service: <10/1 Mbps Broadband Buildout Speed: ≥25/3 Mbps	Submit through the <b>RUS</b> online application system	Applications are not accepted at this time
Available Funding			Program Updates			
FY2019 \$550 million available FY2020 \$655 million available in FY2020 (includes CARES funding)				FY2019– "Round One"146Applications processed: \$1.4 billion78100% Grant applications5350/50 Loan/Grant applications15100% Loan applications		
FY2021 \$635 million available				<ul> <li>77 awards approved: \$663 million/33 States impacted</li> <li><u>FY2020</u> – "Round Two"</li> <li>172 Applications submitted: \$1.57 billion requested</li> <li>88 awards approved: \$675 million/35 States impacted</li> </ul>		

https://www.usda.gov/reconnect

#### **ReConnect Program**

"Rural eConnectivity Program" regulation has been published. Highlights of the new regulation include:

- Broadband speeds, funding limits, scoring criteria, and protected areas will be announced in Federal Register notices or Funding Opportunity Announcements when new application windows are opened
- If awarded, grant funds may be used for eligible preapplication expenses in the first advance request

See <u>7 CFR 1740</u> published in the <u>Federal Register</u> on February 26, 2021 for the regulation text.

**Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program** 

#### Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program

**Distance Learning** means the <u>real-time, interactive</u> delivery of <u>curriculum via</u> <u>telecommunications</u> and promotes the connection of students and teachers at remote sites.

- Provide educational programs, instruction, or information originating in one area, whether rural or not, to students and teachers who are located in rural areas; or
- Connect teachers and students, located in one rural area with teachers and students who are located in a different rural area.

**Telemedicine** is a <u>real-time, interactive, telecommunications</u> link to an end user from medical professionals at separate sites in order to exchange health care information for the purpose of providing improved health care services to residents of rural areas.

• Benefits rural residents both in reduced travel and improved access to service

#### Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program – The Basics

Available Funding	Program Updates		
<ul> <li>FY2020 Window 1 - \$71.7 million available</li> <li>\$12 million for projects to address opioid epidemic</li> <li>\$9.4 million for projects to address substance use disorder</li> <li>\$50.3 million for all eligible DLT projects</li> </ul>	FY2020•FOA #1: February 10 - April 10, 2020•276 applications received for \$155.9 million•180 applications eligible totaling \$101.4 million•117 applications approved for \$72.4 million		
<ul> <li>Window 2</li> <li>\$24.25 million for all eligible DLT projects (CARES Act funds)</li> <li>Carryover from Window 1 &amp; additional funds, if available</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>FOA #2: April 14 - July 13, 2020</li> <li>534 applications received for \$252.1 million</li> <li>149 applications eligible totaling \$71.3 million</li> <li>86 applications approved for \$42.3 million</li> </ul>		
<ul> <li>FY2021 Total of \$44.5 million available         <ul> <li>\$10.2 million for projects to address substance use disorder</li> <li>\$34.3 million for all eligible DLT projects</li> <li>Available funds may increase depending on carryover funds, rec</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>FV2021 <ul> <li>FOA published April 5, 2021</li> <li>Applications due June 4, 2021 via Grants.gov only</li> <li>Awards will range from \$50,000 to \$1,000,000</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants

### Program Historic Numbers



#### Telecommunications Programs – All State Investments

Since FY2010, RUS has approved over \$8 billion in funding for broadband and distance learning and telemedicine projects that serve rural residents.

Program	Projects Approved	Funds Approved
Telecommunications Infrastructure Program	195	\$3.2 Billion
ReConnect Program	165	\$1.3 Billion
Rural Broadband Access Program	10	\$273.4 Million
Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program	1,153	\$408.1 Million
Community Connect Grant Program	111	\$185.0 Million
Broadband Initiatives Program	258	\$2.9 Billion
Grand Total	1,892	\$8.3 Billion

\*Table shows award data **at time of obligation** for all programs except ReConnect and BIP, which show present award data.

### General Field Representative Coverage - <u>www.rd.usda.gov/contact-</u> <u>us/telecom-gfr</u>



#### Rural Utilities Service Telecommunications Key Contacts

Assistant Administrator

Deputy Assistant Administrators

Laurel Leverrier, Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications laurel.leverrier@usda.gov / 202.720.9556

Shawn Arner, Telecommunications Program shawn.arner@usda.gov/ 202.720.9556

Peter Aimable, Portfolio Management & Risk Assessment Division peter.aimable@usda.gov / 202.720.1025

Randall Millhiser, Loan Origination & Approval Division randall.millhiser@usda.gov / 202.720.0800

Kenneth Kuchno, Policy & Outreach Division kenneth.kuchno@usda.gov / 202.690.4673





# Polling Question #2

What do you think will be the biggest challenge when starting a tech literacy program in your community?

- A. Getting leadership buy-in
- **B.** Training staff
- C. Recruiting participants
- D. I'm not sure



# Poll Question #3

Do you currently partner with any community-based organizations or businesses to provide technology access or literacy services to clients?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know

## IMPACT OF DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT



Presented by: Samantha Hansen, Senior Manager Charlene Miles, Education and Training Manager

# MISSION | VISION | VALUES

#### **OUR MISSION**

To work in partnership with Our People to develop opportunities that fulfill Our endless potential.

#### **OUR VISION**

We envision a future in which all Our People—especially Our youth, the stewards of our future—have access to vast opportunities, and have the ability, confidence, and courage to advance and achieve their goals, infused with an unshakeable belief in Our endless potential.

#### **THROUGH OUR VALUES WE ARE:**

Interdependent	Resilient	Accountable	Respectful	Humor

Our People have always understood that no one lives in isolation—individuals depend on each other, as well as themselves. In a world that presents both challenges and opportunities, we must work together, and be resilient. Each person has a responsibility to themselves, to their families and to their community. We need to treat each other with respect. These cultural values guide us in everything we do.

# **TECHNOLOGY LITERACY AND CITC**

**Technology literacy** is a term used to describe our participant's ability to access, understand, manage and communicate information in a fully digital environment.

Participants who possess technology literacy are able to:

- Easily utilize a variety of digital devices (computers, smartphones, tablets)
- Communicate using electronic devices (e-mail, social media)
- Research
- Solve problems
- Apply technology and critical thinking to real-world experiences
- Develop the knowledge and skills to adapt to changing technologies
- Use technology to meet personal needs, interest and learning styles





## TIMELINE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ALASKA



## TIMELINE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ALASKA



# **DIGITAL INCLUSION**

Access - Availability, affordability, design for inclusion and public access

Adoption – Relevance & understanding

Application – Changing the culture and applying what we have learned. Workforce development, education, social connections, case management and eligibility services.



SIGN HERE:

#### Please email this application to elg@citci.org

#### 230-4 SIGNATURES

The participant and case manager must both sign (either virtually, telephonically or by a physical signature) the completed FSSP. If the FSSP is developed by telephone, the case manager notes the participant's agreement with the family's plan in the case record, signs the family's plan, keeps a copy for the case record, and sends the original to the participant to sign and return.

**Note:** During declared emergencies when it's challenging to receive signatures an acknowledgement from the participant virtually or telephonically can be accepted temporarily until normal business operations can resume.

## **BEFORE AND SHIFT FROM COVID**

## PRE-PANDEMIC

- Transition in Action
- Onsite Services
- Existing workforce





### THE PARADIGM SHIFT

- Switching Gears
- Fast Track to Digitalization
- Increased Skills Gap

# ADAPTATION

### **GAINING A NEW LENS**

- Digital Reality
- Interdependence
- Resilience in Action

#### **REVAMPED APPROACHES**

- Shift in Support Services
- Implement Tools
- Creating Virtual Space
- Skill Building



# WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

#### **Newest CITC Developments**

- Family Information System
- AlaskaNativeHire.com
- Virtual job Fair

ALASKA's

PEOPLE



Design.

Thrive.

Connect.

#### **Digital Badging**

- The Microsoft Office Suite
  - Word
  - Excel
  - PowerPoint
  - Outlook
  - Access
- IC3 Basic Computer Literacy
- Project Management
- Cyber Security
- Entrepreneurship



# **REFERENCES TO EXPLORE**

- https://iseralaska.org/static/legacy\_publication\_links/DigitalDiversityAlask aHudson.pdf
- https://www.gci.com/about/news-releases-archive/gci-launches-alaskas-1st-5g
- https://www.ncta.com/whats-new/gci-turns-alaska-into-the-first-frontierwith-5g-service
- https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7648497/#:~:text=Paradi gm%20Shift%20Caused%20by%20COVID%2D19,-With%20organizations%20attempting&text=For%20many%20companies% 20that%20already,organizational%20resources%20for%20remote%20emp loyees
- https://hbr.org/2016/02/technology-isnt-enough-to-empower-employeeseven-in-a-digital-world
- https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-1011-4
- https://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/rework/3-ways-technologyboth-widens-and-bridges-generational-divide-work





# Poll Question #4

What technical assistance or support would be most helpful to start programming related to tech literacy?

- A. Training for staff
- **B.** Curriculum
- C. Partnership development support
- D. Research/resources about the value of programming to increase buy-in
- E. Other please specify in the Questions box

### Meet Byte Back

### Mission



Byte Back provides a pathway of inclusive tech training that leads to living-wage careers.

Melissa Stallings, Chief Program Officer



### Byte Back's Pathway & Tech Literacy

#### Living-Wage CAREER Using Tech

#### **Tech Certifications**

**Computer Proficiency** & Career Readiness

#### **No Tech Skills**





**17%** Reported Disability

60% receive gov benefits



### Why Is the Work Needed IMPACT: When bridging the digital divide also means bridging an economic divide ...



#### **57 GRADS HIRED**

Employed Graduates Started Earning an Average of



**MORE PER YEAR** 



### How is COVID affecting this?





## **Adapting during Covid-19**

- Transitioned to a virtual learning modality by the end of March 2020. Previously, all classes were in-person. Laptops were offered as needed.
- Leveraged laptop donations from our board, funders, and corporate partners to create a robust loaner laptop program.
- Relied on participant survey feedback to add additional supportive services such as tutoring and case management
   + better assess student needs.
- Launched virtual exam proctoring through Pearson Vue and subsequently reopened Byte Back's Learning Lab (student feedback).
- Recently added in-person socially distanced hands-on labs.



## Meet Tolya



"Having Byte Back has made me less fearful of my future, especially during this pandemic."



### **Byte Back Overview of 2020**

- In 2020, Byte Back trained 328 participants, 200 of whom entered our career pathway earning Microsoft Word, Excel, CompTIA IT Fundamentals, and CompTIA A+ certifications.
- Despite the pandemic, we maintained a 77% participants' completion rate.



## Integrating Tech Training into Job Training

- SNAP Employment & Training
- DC Department of
   Employment Services
  - Digital Literacy + Device





## Integrating Tech Training into Job Training

- The SNAP & DOES models provide the Whole Package: Tech training + career training + device + internet
- Equity: those who need classes most are getting services
- What is Digital Literacy?
- The need for advanced certification training





### **Diversity and Inclusion in Tech**



Untapped potential: 28 million low-tech jobs are GONE. Meanwhile, the tech sector has a huge diversity problem.

Combining tech+job training has increased diversity in tech while closing opportunity gaps.



### Establishing the Loaner Laptop Program

- Sourced and procured 180 computers from The Wilderness Technology Alliance (Wild Tech).
- Leveraged IT Consultant to support hiring and onboarding of IT Specialist, securing inventory and acquiring IT Operations & Service Management software (ManageEngine).
- Hired IT Specialist dedicated to SNAP Loaner Laptop program.
- Created an email for all IT Support requests.
- Prepared all computers with imaging software.
- Partnered with SNAP E+T to create referral and loan processes.



### **Laptop Loaner Initiative Policies**

Byte Back agreement allows for at least 150 laptops to remain in circulation throughout FY21. They handle inventory, distribution, and support.

Participants must be engaged in at least 40 hours of SNAP E&T component activities per month to be eligible, but may be working with any provider or with DC DHS staff.

Laptops loaned for anticipated time for component completion with max term of 4 months, which can be extended based on availability and documented need for extension to complete activities.

Participants complete a pre and post loan survey and sign a form taking responsibility for equipment.


## Thanks for listening!

Melissa Stallings mstallings@byteback.org (202) 846-6908



@ByteBackDC







## **Additional Information**

- A recording of this webinar will be available shortly on the PeerTA Network website at: <u>https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/</u>.
- We would also like to hear from you about future webinar topics. Please send us your ideas by e-mail to <u>peerta@blhtech.com</u>.



## Webinar Feedback

 Please send us your feedback via the survey that will launch when the webinar ends.

