WORLD EDUCATION

Digital Literacy Needs Analysis Adult Education Program Assessment Report

Submitted to The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, City of Boston by World Education, Inc.

AUGUST 2022

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I.   INTRODUCTION

World Education, Inc. (WEI) is delighted to submit this Digital Literacy Needs Analysis Adult Education Program Assessment report. It describes the activities, approach, outcomes and recommendations resulting from our work leading twenty-five Adult Literacy Initiative member programs through the needs assessment and action planning process. Each program made substantial progress in recognizing and addressing gaps in their approach to integrating technology and digital literacy.

To accomplish the results, we drew on WEI's decades of work to improve the availability, quality, and capacity of adult education and workforce programs and our expertise assessing and addressing issues related to technology infrastructure, internet access, and digital skills for adult educators and learners. We are proud of the role we have played in supporting the programs through this process because we recognize that digital equity is critical to all aspects of community and family health and wellbeing, access to education and employment opportunities, and civic engagement for Boston residents.

II.   SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Due to delays in contract execution, the project launched a month later than planned. We're pleased to report that our activities were implemented as initially proposed, within a condensed time frame.

1. Recruitment

We drafted a detailed recruitment announcement outlining the activities, estimated time for completion, and benefits of participation for the adult education programs of the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative (ALI). Trinh Nguyen, Director of the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, sent the announcement via email on March 18.

Each program was asked to designate a staff person to lead the program's Digital Literacy Needs Assessment and Action Plan development with support from World Education coaches. We encouraged the designated lead to engage instructors, advisors/coaches, tech coordinators, and facilities managers in the needs assessment and action planning process to gain a broad perspective on their program's technology capacity and needs.

We are pleased to report that all 25 adult education programs came forward to participate and all have completed the process.

2. Coaching

Each program was assigned a coach to support their progress toward successful completion of the Digital Literacy Needs Assessment and Action Plan process. Our team of coaches are World Education staff and long-term consultants who are locally and nationally respected adult education innovators, technology and digital literacy integration specialists, and professional development trainers. Our team embodies decades of combined expertise in adult education and workforce development and integrating technology in program design and delivery. Members of our team have worked in Boston ALI member programs and staffed World Education's SABES Professional Development Center, funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE), serving adult education programs throughout the state. Coaches reached out to their assigned program leads and scheduled introductory meetings throughout the month of April.

Typically, coaches met one-on-one with the designated project lead, but in some cases, they met with the entire team working on the project. Between mid-late April through July, coaches met 4-6 times

with each of their assigned programs to check-in on their progress, ask clarifying questions, and help them keep their momentum and accountability to the project activities and timelines. Coaches provided verbal and written feedback to programs on their Digital Needs Assessment and Action Plan and responded to questions and emerging ideas, in real time, by sharing links to resources and information.

From the first introductory meeting, coaches recognized the importance of learning about each program's unique circumstances, goals, program design and student base. Our approach was inclusive and collaborative, and highly respectful of the resource constraints and competing demands on staff time. At the same time, we were transparent about our goals to engage programs in reflection and learning, and to consider new or expanded approaches to digital literacy and technology integration and the opportunities this process offers to learn, grow, and access needed resources.

These are the principles that our coaching team established:

- Strive to develop an understanding of the context, key players, strengths, and needs of each program to provide informed guidance and build a trusting relationship with the lead.

- Know and communicate the expectations of this initiative.

- Keep the conversation friendly, focused and on track. The focus is on helping them make progress on the activities, not directing their work or doing it for them.

- Support the lead and their team in completing Digital Needs Assessment (DNA) and Action Plan. Use check-in calls to help them stay on track. Suggest adjustments as they go along; identify strengths they can build on and blind spots they should be aware of.

- Help the lead think through their approach to gathering the information for the DNA - prioritizing tasks and breaking the assessment into manageable steps, while also pushing them to use this opportunity to take their program further.

- Identify questions, technical assistance (TA), information, and data to help them build out their action plan. Explore topics for webinars, cohort sharing, etc.

- Ask questions that open up dialogue and information sharing, rather than defensiveness. Avoid a tone of interrogation.

- Challenge assumptions or approaches when appropriate. Ask open-minded/ended questions to fully understand someone's reasoning and context, and present other perspectives, solutions, and examples in a respectful manner. Help staff to self-identify the assumptions that underlie their thinking.

- End each meeting by summarizing what was discussed and reviewing action steps for both parties. Aim for concrete, specific steps that can create a sense of accomplishment and maintain a forward momentum.

Throughout our engagement, program leads often expressed appreciation for their coaches' feedback: "I hadn't thought about that, it's a good idea" or ending the call with "you always give me something new to think about…". These comments and the 25 completed Digital Needs Assessments and Action Plans are a testament to the effectiveness of our approach.

3. Digital Needs Assessment

We developed a Digital Needs Assessment (DNA) tool that outlines effective program practices for integrating technology and building staff and student digital skills and distributed it to participating programs with a set of instructions on May 2.

The Needs Assessment outlines best practices and is organized, for ease of use, into five categories that are interrelated, overlapping, and, in many cases, interdependent:

I. Technology integration practices (program's current capacity to use technology for face-to-face and remote service delivery)

II. Staff digital literacy and technology integration skills (digital literacy skills needed for curriculum development, communication, collaboration and digital literacy instruction).

III. Program practices that support staff digital literacy and technology integration

IV. Program practices that support students' digital literacy skill development (digital literacy skills needed for learning, work, personal life, regardless of whether they attend face-to-face or remote classes)

V. Technology infrastructure needs

"Thank you very much for conducting this project and helping us to develop strategies to move forward. It was a great exercise – helped us to understand our stands and needs. We certainly need competent staff to really do it properly because nobody has time. I think we are at the point where we either have more staff, or we do not keep up, and that is what I focused on. We also need to systematize the processes and then keep developing. Thank you very much for your help and guidance in the process!"

Programs used the DNA tool to identify, reflect on and assess their program's strengths, gaps and needs for increasing their capacity to implement these practices. The tool is detailed and rigorous so that learning begins with the process of completing the assessment, because it introduced practices and ideas that programs weren't familiar with or had not previously considered. Programs also recognized current practices as strengths upon which they might build in their action plans.

For each assessment item, program rated themselves according to this scale:

(1) Practiced by very few or none.

(2) Practiced but no program-wide approach.

(3) Established program-wide practice.

In addition to the rating, they were prompted to explain why they chose that rating, describe existing practices, and list the types of resources they would need to expand or strengthen this practice. Programs could also explain that a given practice was not implemented by design, so resources were not needed.

For the needs assessment process to be authentic and effective, it was important for coaches to reassure programs that it was designed as a tool for internal inquiry, learning and development, to inform program improvement and identify resource needs, and not intended as a tool for external evaluation and judgment.

- The Digital Literacy Needs Assessment Template is Appendix D

- Completed Digital Literacy Needs Assessments for each program were emailed to Sarah Soroui, Clare Shepherd, and Anna Sherr on August 15, 2022.

- A summary and analysis of trends identified in the Needs Assessment begins on page 6.

4. Digital Literacy Action Plan

We designed a simple Digital Literacy Action Plan Template for programs to develop short- and longer-term goals and action steps to increase their capacity to integrate technology and digital skill building. The Action Plan Template includes instructions, guidance on how to think about action steps, timeline,

> *"I would like to add that working on the needs assessment and then on the action plan, we clearly saw an urgent need for additional human resources/staff time to guide, implement, and update our strategies for digital literacy development in a systematic and competent way."*

people responsible for implementing each step, resources available and resources needed to achieve the goals. In addition, we provided an example of a template filled out with a goal and set of action steps.

These detailed action plans will serve as a guiding document for programs as they build their digital infrastructure, implement digital navigation services, and strengthen instruction to support the digital skill development of their learners. They include an account of resources that are available to achieve the goal and the resources gaps and needs.

Coaches helped programs translate their needs assessment into a set of ambitious and also realistic goals and action steps reflecting their priorities and program design through multiple rounds of review, feedback, and clarifying questions. As with the Digital Needs Assessment, the coaches recognized that for the plans to be implemented, the programs needed to take ownership of their development and to the extent possible, we encouraged program leads to include any staff who will be accountable for implementing the plan into the plan development process.

- The Digital Literacy Action Plan Template is Appendix E

- Completed Digital Literacy Action Plans for each program were emailed to Sarah Soroui, Clare Shepherd, and Anna Sherr on August 15, 2022.

- A summary and analysis of Action Plan trends begins on page 6.

> *"We have made some immediate changes to our application based on the work we did on the needs assessment. We added some 'can do' statements about digital literacy skills in the section that asks about student devices/internet access. We're going to put together a longer skills assessment as well, but it's already been helpful in meeting with prospective students!"*

5. Professional Development

To respond more immediately to questions and requests we received from programs in the early stage of the process, we compiled and shared Boston Digital Literacy Needs Assessment & Action Planning Resources (Appendix F). The collection draws on expert sources such as the Massachusetts SABES System, the IDEAL Consortium, and the EdTech Center at World Education, among others. Resources are organized into key digital literacy categories for adult educators, with brief annotations to guide the user.

We offered two professional development workshops to support Action Plan development. The timeline for this project didn't enable us to wait until the Needs Assessments were entirely completed before choosing session topics. But based on our initial few meetings with programs, and review of draft DNAs, the coaching team selected topics that addressed common needs and gaps we observed across most programs. The high level of participation at both sessions, during the summer months, affirms our topic choices.

Everyone who registered for the workshops, plus all program leads, received a follow up email with links to the workshop recording, slides and resources introduced.

Workshop 1: Let's Explore Digital Literacy Frameworks: Applications for your Program (June 29)

In this interactive workshop, we introduced five distinct digital literacy frameworks recommended by MA DESE, Adult and Community Learning Services. These are: Teaching Skills That Matter: Digital

Literacy; International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards; SkillRise (an ISTE initiative); Maryland Digital Literacy Framework; and Northstar Digital Literacy Standards. Participants worked together in small groups to study and discuss one of the frameworks and presented a summary of the framework to the entire group.

The final presentations demonstrated each group's understanding of the main features and goals of each framework, their ideas for using it in a program, and the potential challenges in using it. Each group contributed to a collective slide deck, which in aggregate, summarized each of the five frameworks. Thirty-one people attended out of 41 who registered.

Workshop 2: Building Digital Resilience from the Start (July 13)

Evidence suggests that a strong start leads to increased student engagement and retention. Presenters shared successful approaches and examples of activities for initial screening, orientation and onboarding practices to support students' digital resilience. Building on the previous exploration of digital literacy frameworks, participants discussed ideas for improving their program's screening, orientation and onboarding activities to better support digital resilience that they can incorporate into their Action Plans. Digital resilience is defined as *the awareness, skills, agility, and confidence to be empowered users of new technologies and adapt to changing digital skill demands*. Participants recorded their ideas in a Padlet that all can use as reference to inform Action Planning. Twenty-five people attended out of 40 who registered.

> *"I think the two workshops combined did a good job in presenting an overall picture of digital frameworks available and having participants begin to talk about how they would use them as an Assessment as part of an Orientation/Onboarding process. Some parts of the workshops seemed rushed but, I'm glad we covered the ground we did."*

III. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF MAJOR TRENDS OBSERVED

Following, we describe the gaps most commonly identified in the Needs Assessment. These are the practices or clusters of related practices where the majority of programs entered a rating of "1," indicating that few or none of the staff implement it. We summarize the Action Plan goals that programs have set to address these gaps and the resource needs most frequently identified to achieve the goals.

As with the Needs Assessment, many of the practices are interrelated and in many cases, interdependent. Therefore, many of the goals, action steps and resources needed to address the gaps are as well.

Gap Identified in the Needs Assessment	**Gap #1**
	Few or none have a process or tool in place for assessing student digital literacy skills to determine what scaffolding and instruction they'll need in order to use instructional technology.
	No programs have a tool in place for assessing the digital literacy skills and needs of students based on a standards-based skills framework.
Goals that Address the Gap	Eighteen goal statements explicitly address creating an assessment process and/or tool, such as:
	● *Provide each student with a detailed digital skills assessment to help learners*

	determine and prioritize which digital literacy skills are needed to meet their career and life goals. ● *Develop program-wide digital literacy activities including a framework of standards to evaluate digital literacy instruction and assess student digital literacy skill needs* Other goal statements address student digital skill development, and developing an assessment is an action step.
Resources Most Commonly identified as Needed to Achieve Goal	Programs identify the need for funding to increase paid staff time or hire additional staff to identify and customize resources and build knowledge and skills to implement the assessment tools. Additional time is needed for formal staff training, informal professional development and peer learning to build knowledge and skills needed to implement. Some programs prefer to customize and develop an assessment and others rely on identifying an appropriate ready-to-use assessment and curriculum that meets their program needs.

Gap Identified in the Needs Assessment	**Gap #2** Few or none offer a comprehensive student orientation that details the tech tools that will be used in instruction and advising and takes time to onboard and train students on the tools. Of the programs that offer remote or hybrid learning, none provide students with a checklist or self-assessment to prepare them for and decide to enroll in online learning.
Goals that Address the Gaps	Thirteen goal statements explicitly address orientation and/or onboarding, such as: ● *Develop a systematic program-wide approach to digital assessment, onboarding, and troubleshooting with clear guides and assignments for teachers and advisors.* ● *Better equipping students for learning and learning activities by providing better tools for screening, orientation and onboarding.* ● *Offer an in-person student orientation and onboarding to assess student digital literacy and train students on the use of technology needed for class.* Other goal statements address a broader goal, such as assessing tech access and skills, and onboarding is referenced as an action step: ● *Assess students' access to hardware, software and internet needed to complete program activities remotely and on site.*
Resources	Programs identify the need for funding to increase paid staff time or hire

Most Commonly identified as Needed to Achieve Goal	additional staff to identify and customize resources and build knowledge and skills to implement the assessment tools.
	Additional time is needed for formal staff training, informal professional development and peer learning to build knowledge and skills needed to implement.
	Some programs prefer to customize and develop an assessment and others rely on identifying an appropriate ready-to-use assessment and curriculum that meets their program needs.
	To ensure that onboarding is comprehensive and to respond to the tech needs identified through the process, some programs will also need additional student devices, improved internet on site and hotspots to lend.

Gap Identified in the Needs Assessment	**Gap #3**
	Few or none use a digital literacy framework or curriculum integrated into existing curriculum and instruction to enhance academic and language learning.
Goals that Address the Gaps	Seventeen goal statements explicitly address the need for integrating digital skills into curriculum and instruction, such as:
	● *Review our curriculum to integrate digital literacy at every level, focusing on best practices for integration of digital literacy.*
	● *Develop a standards-based curriculum to integrate digital literacy skills into all levels of ESOL/ABE classes and workforce development training programs.*
	● *Implement a digital literacy curriculum that is aligned with an established standards-based framework that addresses the essential hardware, software, and informational skills students need to be professionally and personally successful in the digital age.*
	Other goal statements address professional development intended to improve digital skills instruction or seek to provide opportunities for students to obtain and practice digital skills. In these cases, curriculum revision is implied and/or is a specific action step.
Resources Most Commonly identified as Needed to Achieve Goal	Programs identify the need for funding to increase paid staff time or hire additional staff to identify and select a framework and use it to revise existing curriculum to integrate digital skill building throughout the program.
	Additional time is needed for formal staff training, informal professional development and peer learning to build knowledge and skills needed to revise and implement an integrated digital skill curriculum.
	Some programs prefer to customize and develop an integrated digital literacy curriculum and others rely on identifying an appropriate ready-to-use curriculum that meets their program needs.

Gap Identified in the Needs Assessment	**Gap #4**
	Few programs have a designated staff person to assist both students and staff with technical issues encountered during online instruction. Many describe patching this support together in an ad hoc manner with "whomever is available" assisting students on top of their regular duties and regardless of whether they are trained and equipped.
Goals that Address the Gaps	Fourteen goal statements address the need for technology support, such as: ● *Provide an in-person digital skills onboarding program and ongoing tech support to all students, in order to strengthen students' abilities to fully participate in remote and in-person learning in FY23.* ● *Have a staff person designated to assist staff and students with technical issues that they encounter in online instruction so that we can provide in-person and remote, one-on-one digital skills onboarding and ongoing tech support services to all students, in order to strengthen students' ability to fully participate in remote learning in FY23.* ● *Secure tech support for the program.* ● *Strengthen students' ability to participate and persist in remote classes through increased staff support.* More than 50% of the goal statements address improving and sustaining technology integration and to achieve these goals, access to qualified tech support to troubleshoot, maintain and update technology is implied.
Resources Most Commonly identified as Needed to Achieve Goal	Significantly, the need for additional staffing and staff capacity to provide ongoing, as-needed tech support to students and staff is cited frequently across most action plans. Programs identify the need for a tech support provider whose primary role and skills are to provide tech support and troubleshooting during the onboarding process and ongoing. They need resources to hire a qualified staff person or access external tech support and digital navigation services.

Gap Identified in the Needs Assessment	**Gap #5**
	Few or none assess staff digital literacy skills and needs.
Goals that Address the Gaps	Very few programs have a stated goal of assessing staff digital literacy skills in a systematic way. In general, staff use of technology and digital skills were rated highly. However, as several program ratings indicate, staff digital skills haven't translated to integrating digital skills into instruction. Nine goal statements explicitly address staff training to improve their digital skills and ability to integrate technology and digital skill building into the curriculum, such as:

	● *Provide in-house professional development to build staff digital literacy and tech capacity.*
	● *Develop a continuous improvement plan to encourage the persistent use of digital skills in class.*
	● *Provide on-going professional development to instructional staff to strengthen curriculum design, lesson planning, and virtual classroom teaching in remote settings*
Resources Most Commonly identified as Needed to Achieve Goal	Additional time is needed for formal staff training and informal professional development and peer learning to build knowledge and skills needed to effectively use instructional technology and teach digital literacy skills.

Gap Identified in the Needs Assessment	**Gap #6** Few or none have a sustainable system in place for providing, lending or referring students to low cost or free technology resources in the community. Initially, programs assessed their access to technology and ability to refer students to low cost or free resources as an established staff or program-wide practice, because for a limited time, emergency technology resources were available during the first year of the COVID shutdown. Additionally, some programs participate in Tech Goes Home to provide students with devices, but they have to reapply to participate each cycle, so access to devices is not guaranteed. However, as programs moved into action planning, coaches encouraged them to consider whether they had sufficient and sustainable sources of technology in place (devices, wifi bandwidth, wifi access) to achieve their digital literacy goals.
Goals that Address the Gaps	Seventeen goal statements explicitly provide the need to expand access to various technology: facility internet, student wifi access, devices, such as: ● *Offer students the technology infrastructure needed, guaranteeing all students have access to hardware, software and internet to support them in achieving their education and career goals.* ● *Secure hardware and software needed for in-class, hybrid, and remote learning, HiSET testing, workforce training, and resident services.* ● *Develop the tech infrastructure required to provide quality and up-to-date digital literacy skills development and service delivery in hybrid, on-line, and in-person modes.* Other goal statements address improved technology integration, onboarding, and skill-building, and expanding access to technology is listed as an action step and/or technology is listed as a resource needed to achieve the goal.

Resources Most Commonly identified as Needed to Achieve Goal	Programs identify the need for additional staffing and staff capacity to help students navigate and identify technology resources, manage and monitor program-based lending systems, and help students get set-up with using new technology and troubleshoot ongoing issues.
	The lack of available qualified tech support is a significant challenge. As programs expand their use of technology, the need for qualified, just-in-time available tech support will be even more critical.
	The costs of purchasing and sustaining access to technology continues to be prohibitive. To expand the integration of technology, programs need funding to purchase student devices, hotspots and wifi subscriptions, devices, improve onsite internet capabilities and increase licenses to commercial online curriculum.

"If we get money, great. But we moved forward with the work because it's important and the process was helpful, and we needed to do it to improve our program."

Additional Considerations

- Many programs established assessment and curriculum goals that they aim to achieve during the fall 2022 cycle. They are launching that work equipped with new insights and information gleaned from this process, but without additional funding or technology resources.

  Programs recognize that the work is ongoing and as they expand their capacity to integrate technology and digital skill building, they will need to reevaluate and upgrade their resources in order to sustain new practices.

- There are very few digital literacy resources for assessment and instruction available in languages other than English.

- Some programs face challenges to accessing sufficient technology support or internet access given firewall and security policies, such as Suffolk County House of Correction, Boston Public Schools, Boston Centers for Youth and Families (located in BPS).

- Programs may be part of a larger community-based agency that has an IT Department, but the adult education program is not a priority. The parent agency doesn't provide the level of just-in-time tech support they need to accommodate staff and students.

- Although many programs have established the goal of building staff digital literacy and tech integration skills, few programs consider these skills in teacher hiring and performance review. Many feel that while digital skills are important, they have other competing priorities. Some prioritize instructional subject expertise; others prioritize staff who reflect their student populations and can serve as mentors and role models, such as former gang members, returning citizens, and GED program graduates.

- Not all of the programs provide or plan to provide remote or hybrid instruction now that they are back on site. Nonetheless, through this process, all programs came to recognize the importance of integrating technology and digital literacy skills, in all modes of instruction, to prepare students for an increasingly digital world.

IV.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Information Sharing and Coordination

- Acknowledge receipt of the programs' documents and provide them with a timeline for next steps in the process of allocating digital literacy resources.

- **Provide ongoing opportunities for programs to exchange knowledge and share progress on their Digital Literacy Action Plans** (consider carving out time at ALI meetings in breakout sessions, or adding a meeting to the calendar expressly for the purpose of sharing plans and progress).

- **Create stronger linkages between ALI and SABES** and encourage members to take advantage of the extensive digital literacy professional development (PD) that is available, whether or not they are funded by MA DESE.
   - Encourage ALI members to sign up for SABES accounts and notifications.
   - Invite SABES Program Support PD Center staff to announce upcoming PD at ALI meetings.
   - Centralize and share up-to-date information about SABES digital literacy PD, for example via ALI newsletters and email communications.

- **Create stronger linkages with the Mass Match Assistive Technology Regional Center based in Boston.** Invite a guest speaker or sponsor a tour of the ATRC. Lack of awareness about assistive technology was a consistent gap identified in the Needs Assessment for all programs.

- **Continue to share and update the resource list** that World Education developed for this project, especially with new directors and coordinators.

Invest in Systemic, Sustainable Approaches to Building ALI Technology Capacity

The common need across programs is staff time and capacity to respond to student technology needs - to provide technology, refer to technology sources, and provide ongoing just-in time technology support. While programs need funding to increase staffing to support technology integration, staff cannot build the expertise and knowledge of available resources throughout the City with a few hours tacked on to their regular duties.

Investing in system-wide approaches to capacity building supports equity efforts because it ensures that all adult learners have access to the same level and quality of information and tech support.

- **Use a portion of funding to create or contract for City-wide Digital Navigation services to be shared by ALI member programs.** Digital Navigators provide much-needed just-in-time support via phone service, email, text, video chat, and other communication methods that work for the learner. Digital navigation services can also be provided in-person or in blended formats. See Appendix B for more information.

- **Use a portion of funding to create or contract for Technology Support services or Help Desk to be shared by ALI member programs**. While programs also need funding to increase staffing to support technology integration, staff cannot build the expertise or be available just in time to respond to technology issues with a few hours tacked on to their regular duties. See Appendix B for more information. An example, at a state scale, is Texas, which contracts with a company to provide technology support to adult education staff and students across the state. https://www.txdistanceedhelp.com/

- **Collaborate with the** [Office of Broadband and Digital Equity](#), **other relevant offices, to leverage resources,** for example broker bulk purchasing and draw down grant opportunities. The Office of Broadband and Digital Equity is working to expand high-speed, affordable internet options in the City of Boston, and supports the digital inclusion work of local nonprofits through the Digital Equity Fund. As a result, the City of Boston is recognized by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance as a [Digital Inclusion Trailblazer](#).

- **Centralize and share information about broadband and digital equity resources** so that ALI member programs can easily find the reliable information they need to refer learners. A City-wide Digital Navigator could contribute to developing and updating resource information and disseminate the information to programs and help learners access the resources.

- **Partner with organizations that refurbish donated computer equipment** or consider a request for proposals to fund a workforce development pathway program. There are examples across the country that could be of interest.

Advocate for Resources to Support Digital Equity

- **Actively seek opportunities to connect with the Digital Equity Act (DEA) administering entity in Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI)**, to ensure funding from the Digital Equity Act is allocated to support Boston adult education programs' technology integration.

- **Engage, educate, and convene ALI members, immigrant service providers, advocacy organizations, and their partners and supporters to connect with the** [MBI](#), who may have a limited understanding of the needs of different "covered populations". Advocate for and facilitate the inclusion of these organizations in the state planning process to ensure adult learners are included in the upcoming State Digital Equity Plan. See Appendix C for more information.

- **Strengthen the adult education workforce** by advocating for sufficient funding to create and sustain full time positions that enable the workforce to build the skills, knowledge and curriculum resources needed to effectively integrate and update technology and digital skill instruction in an ever-changing digital landscape.

V.   APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Potential Models and Sources for Shared Technology Support

We engaged a consultant, David Rosen, to explore examples or models where cities or other convening bodies have funded centralized technology maintenance, upgrading, and technology problem solving services for member programs or grantees, but didn't find any. However, our resources were limited, so the search was not exhaustive.

Technology maintenance, upgrading and other services organizations, some of which specialize in services to not-for-profit organizations

We identified several national, regional, and local Massachusetts organizations that provide technology support services such as computer maintenance, technology problem solving, and hardware and software upgrading support to not-for-profit adult education and other not-for-profit organizations. In some cases, national organizations had local offices, but not in Massachusetts, so their technology services were primarily provided remotely, although in-person services could be obtained with planning and additional travel and per diem expenses.

The advantages of using national organizations could be that they may have a large and varied staff of technology experts to help anticipate and prevent technology problems, or to help in solving them. Some of these technology services organizations had extensive experience with many kinds of not-for-profit and for-profit organizations in various parts of the country and, as a result, may have expertise that small, local organizations may not have. Small local organizations, on the other hand, especially those that have worked directly with low-income individuals or with organizations or programs that serve them, have the advantages of more easily and affordably providing organizations with in-person technology services, and in some cases, a better understanding of unique features of organizations in Massachusetts that provide these services such as the large number of not-for-profit community-based organizations that provide adult foundational (basic) education, for example, in the greater Boston area.

The agencies listed below have all been recommended in response to specific posts to national groups' threaded discussion boards, interviews, or phone calls or the consultant's local knowledge.

Large national agencies providing technology planning, maintenance, problem-solving and hardware and software upgrading services primarily remotely

TechImpact
They have offices in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Delaware, and Las Vegas. They have years of experience serving large numbers of nonprofit organizations. From the front page of their Website one can schedule a call directly with them using their calendar software.

Fourth Dimension Technologies
Located in San Francisco, over the last 32 years they have worked globally and in the U.S. with a wide range of technologies, and have served over 200 clients from nonprofit organizations https://nonprofit.fourdtech.com/ Email: npo@fourdtech.com Phone (650) 741-1421

TechSoup offers I.T. assessments and **managed I.T. services:** https://www.techsoup.org/managed-it. From their website: Managed IT services from TechSoup provide a comprehensive solution for a wide range of an organization's IT needs. From urgent help desk support to long-term technology planning, they say their services provide the support an organization needs to keep systems running.

Organizations serving not-for-profits in the Northeastern U.S.

Data Jugglers Computing
https://www.datajugglers.com/ for IT hardware, security, and enterprise level systems support. They claim that models of support for smaller and/or complex organizations is what sets them apart from other organizations providing these technology services. Data Jugglers primarily operates in the Northeastern section of the United States.

RoundTable Consulting
Operates in the northeast from Maine to New York https://www.roundtabletechnology.com),
A "full-service MSP" (i.e. a managed service provider platform, a computing framework used to deliver network-based services, applications, and equipment to enterprises, residences, or other service providers.) specializing in nonprofit IT and Cybersecurity.

Small, local companies

Computer Care and Learning
This Roslindale-based company has a two-year partnership with an adult education refugee organization in Cambridge as well as experience with many other eastern Massachusetts not-for-profit organizations and low-income individuals. Their approach, as their name suggests, emphasizes organizational capacity building to address technology issues, and in some cases extends to occupational training in technology.
www.computerCareandLearning.com

Tech Networks of Boston
information and technology management services and an independent, woman-owned business employing 29 professionals from headquarters at Andrew Square in South Boston
https://techboston.com/about-tnb/ A certified B Corp in Massachusetts

APPENDIX B - Digital Navigation Services

A digital navigator program ensures residents receive on-demand tech support and relevant information to find and secure:

- **Affordable internet** (e.g., help residents navigate ACP applications, find low-cost offers, and support registration as necessary).

- **Low-cost devices** (e.g., help residents find suitable programs to own devices or help them locate a device lending library or an open computing center in their area)

- **Digital skills** (e.g., help residents find education programs or digital literacy learning opportunities in their neighborhood. In addition, they can answer basic tech questions to help residents navigate telehealth or access critical community resources online, etc.)

Digital Navigators provide much needed just-in-time support via phone service, email, text, video chat, and other communication methods that work for the learner. Digital navigation services can also be provided in-person or in blended formats.

The Digital Navigator model is appealing as it offers flexibility in terms of where, how, and when services are offered and who provides the service. For example, Digital Navigators can be trained staff or bilingual volunteers that help residents (whether through phone, virtual hotlines, or at drop-in locations) secure affordable internet access, devices, and foundational training to meet their goals.

It is important to note that programs might address only one or two elements of digital inclusion (connectivity, devices, or digital skills). As a result, collaboration within organizations is fundamental to help community members be fully connected.

For more information on starting a digital navigator program, visit the Digital Navigator playbook. Program examples can be found here. Examples of implementations in diverse contexts, including adult education and training agencies, can be found here. Additional digital navigator resources can be accessed here.

Following are some models for system-wide Digital Navigation services that might be of interest to adapt or replicate for ALI member programs.

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
This digital navigation services program is for Massachusetts mental health patients, not only BIDMC patients, delivered in community-based settings such as BCYF neighborhood centers, using trained mental health facilitators working with small groups of individuals each of whom is using a mental health app chosen for them**.** See, for example https://assets.pubpub.org/3ovilnas/31634759489356.pdf In this brief document the role of digital navigator in this very focused mental health context is briefly described. While the digital navigation services are focused on helping patients use their mental health app, the relevance is the model for community-based, rather than site specific staffing.

They have collected outcome data and are now also scaling up to other cities and states: e.g. **Houston** https://bridgingapps.org/digital-navigators/

Brigham and Women's Hospital
Dr. Rodriguez did a presentation to the Adult Literacy Initiative in the spring of 2021 about this Brigham and Women's hospital digital navigation services program for its patients and patients of affiliated community health center. During the presentation, he also explored possible partnerships with ALI programs.

Boston Housing Authority (BHA)
The BHA has recently advertised for a new "Resident Capacity Program Digital Navigator." For more information, contact Sahar Lawrence, Resident Capacity Program Coordinator
617-308-8747 sahar.lawrence@bostonhousing.org

Charlotte, North Carolina
This description is from https://edtech.worlded.org/digital-navigators-adaptability-key-in-design/

Digital Charlotte, a non-profit digital inclusion organization in Charlotte, North Carolina, received funding through a coronavirus economic stimulus bill. Charlotte spent three months planning, investigating the digital problems affecting their community, and determining which systems needed to be in place to run the program effectively. Andrew Au, Director of Operations for Digital Charlotte, explained that it was difficult, but important to try to imagine all the different scenarios that a Navigator could come across. He also emphasized the importance of adaptability.

Initially, Digital Charlotte's navigator program was managed as a resource center, connecting their clients to the right organizations that could solve the client's issues best. However, once they were up and running, they realized that many problems have multiple layers such as clients needing both a device and internet access.

As a result, Digital Charlotte's digital navigators have adapted into the role of guide—supporting clients through each step—rather than merely sending them off with referrals without ensuring all their digital inclusion needs are met.

ScaleLIT in Chicago
A citywide digital navigators program that benefits from two VISTA volunteers trained as digital navigators. ScaleLIT, formerly the Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition, is focused on adult foundational (basic) education programs in Chicago and, to an increasing extent, in Illinois. They also manage the Chicago one-stop centers.

Harris County, TX
Harris County, in which Houston is located, has a digital navigator program. The state Library has several public library affiliates participating in a digital navigation services program funded through December 2022. See https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ldn/arpa/digital-navigators

The Mayor's Office of Innovation and Technology in Philadelphia
Three local organizations Beyond Literacy, SEAMAAC, and DREXEL's ExCITe Center, received government grants to provide digital navigator services and the model is now expanding citywide. A flyer (in English) describes the services this way, "Get support with finding low-cost computers, internet access, digital literacy, PHLConnectED, and more." It also lists three agencies that can be contacted for these services. The flyer is also available in at least ten other languages.
https://www.phila.gov/media/20211124115804/digitalnavigator1121-1.pdf Here's a link to a 2021 report on the first year of this program https://www.benton.org/headlines/philadelphia-releases-2021-digital-navigator-report-and-factsheet

Beyond Literacy
A large, well-respected adult literacy program with three Philadelphia campuses, *Beyond Literacy* also has a Digital Navigators program. https://beyondliteracy.org/digitalnavigators/

The ExCITe Center @ Drexel University
From https://digitalus.org/digital-navigator-playbook/program-profiles/

"The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed the ExCITe (Expressive & Creative Interaction Technologies) Center at Drexel University to address Philadelphia's digital divides that cut deeply across racial and economic lines. With guidance from Philadelphia's Office of Innovation and Technology and funding from Digital Literacy Alliance, the ExCITe Center, along with five other programs, aims to mitigate the technological gap in Philadelphia. The ExCITe Center has its primary focus in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone— high poverty neighborhoods in West Philadelphia designated by the U.S Department House and Urban Development (HUD) as needing assistance to improve the quality of life. Nevertheless, the Center strives to help as many people as they can regardless of where they are calling in from to receive Digital Navigator services."

Literacy Minnesota
"From https://digitalus.org/digital-navigator-playbook/program-profiles/

Literacy Minnesota runs its Digital Navigator program at its six Open Learning Centers that offer basic skills classes for adults. The Digital Navigators help learners with basic digital literacy skills, such as using an electronic device, accessing the internet, using Zoom for their classes, and finding resources suited for their needs. Because of its success, Literacy Minnesota partnered in the creation of TechPak with PCs For People, Ramsey County, Tech Dump and the Saint Paul Public Library to provide laptops, internet, and digital literacy training to Ramsey County residents. Through Techpak, the Navigators managed computer pick-ups, referrals of participants to ABE classes, and other supports."

APPENDIX C - Digital Equity Policy Information and Resources

The needs and challenges identified by each program are far from unique and reflect a growing understanding nationwide of the digital divide and digital inequity. Over the next five to six years, the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will invest $45.2 billion in digital equity and broadband infrastructure at the state level. These funds are managed by the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

The Digital Equity Act (DEA)

Under DEA, states can apply for formula funding to develop and implement a statewide Digital Equity Plan over the next six years. Between May and July 2022, all states – including Massachusetts – submitted their application for funding to develop their Digital Equity Plan, with a final funding decision expected by the end of September 2022. Upon receiving funding, the state lead (called the "administering entity") will have one year to convene their key stakeholders and draft their Plan, which in turn will be submitted to receive funding for five years of implementation. The formula used to determine funding allocations is listed on p. 11 of the Digital Equity State Planning Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity.

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) will serve as the administering entity for Massachusetts, and the state is tentatively projected to receive $1,003,763.61 for one year of planning.

State adult education agencies and local adult education programs have an imperative to get involved with their state's planning process:

- The overwhelming majority of adult learners fall into more than one of the DEA's "covered populations," which include individuals with a language barrier and individuals who are part of a racial or ethnic minority.

- State adult education agencies, nonprofits, and community anchor institutions – including organizations that represent individuals with language barriers – are all listed as key stakeholders in the legislation.

- Adult educators have the connections and expertise to ensure their learners are represented and heard, and the experience to continue leading digital inclusion work for their local communities.

Beyond the formula funding for State Digital Equity Plan implementation, both State and other eligible entities will be able to apply for separate competitive funding to implement other digital equity projects.

The Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program

Where DEA covers multiple aspects of digital equity, BEAD focuses specifically on strengthening the state's broadband infrastructure, with the goal of expanding high-speed, reliable broadband access and adoption in unserved and underserved locations. All states submitted their letter of intent between May and July 2022 to apply for funds to draft a Five-Year Action Plan and initial grant proposal over the course of a little over a year, with a four-year implementation period to follow. NTIA expects states to align their Five-Year Action Plan with their Digital Equity Plan and engage key stakeholders in the drafting of both.

The MBI is expected to be the administering entity for BEAD in Massachusetts as well. Like other states, Massachusetts can ask for up to $5,000,000 for their initial BEAD planning funds.

Resources

Throughout the state planning process, local offices can play a critical role in engaging, educating, and convening their region's adult education programs, adult education advocates (e.g., the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education), immigrant service providers and advocacy organizations, and their partners and supporters. These organizations must connect with the MBI to ensure adult learners are included in the upcoming State Digital Equity Plan and Five-Year Action Plan, as the MBI may have a limited understanding of the needs of different "covered populations."

City offices have also proved themselves to be critical players in spearheading digital equity work on the local level. For example, the Office of Broadband and Digital Equity is working to expand high-speed, affordable internet options in the City of Boston, and supports the digital inclusion work of local nonprofits through the Digital Equity Fund. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance's Digital Inclusion Trailblazers page lists other examples of city-level successes, including sample action plans. While non-State offices are not allowed to apply for DEA planning and implementation funding themselves, they can be subgranted to the administering entity for their work.

APPENDIX D - ALI Digital Needs Assessment

This Needs Assessment outlines effective program practices for integrating technology and building staff and student digital skills. Your World Ed coach will collect the program Needs Assessments and Action Plans and submit them to OWD to inform resource allocations in Phase 2 of the project. World Ed will also develop a summary of aggregate trends in needs and action items to report to OWD.

The Needs Assessment is designed for programs to use to identify, reflect on and assess your program's strengths, gaps and needs for increasing your capacity to implement these practices. Your World Ed coach can help you think through your responses or clarify any questions you have about specific topics in this Needs Assessment.

It is unlikely that any program is implementing all or most of the practices outlined below and some programs may be implementing very few of them. We encourage you to be frank in identifying and describing your capacity gaps and digital resource needs in this assessment, which will inform your action plan and subsequent resource allocations in Phase 2 of this project. Resources to consider in your needs assessment include technical assistance, professional development, digital devices, hardware and software, etc.

Digital literacy is the ability to actively utilize technology to find, evaluate, organize, create and communicate information. For definitions of program models and other terminology used in this Needs Assessment see Chapter 1 Getting Started of the IDEAL Handbook. If you want to get a jump start on professional development, check out Transforming Distance Education and other digital literacy professional development resources from SABES Program Support PD Center. Your coach can also answer your questions and point you to information and resources.

The Needs Assessment is divided into five sections:

 I. Technology integration practices (for face-to-face and remote service delivery)

 II. Staff digital literacy and technology integration skills

 III. Program practices that support staff digital literacy and technology integration

 IV. Program practices that support students' digital literacy skill development

 V. Technology infrastructure needs

If you rely heavily on volunteers to provide instruction and coaching, consider including their perspectives in this process, especially in Section II (Staff digital literacy skills). Needless to say, staffing and programming may be in flux as you wrap up this current program year. Answer the questions based on the current staff capacity as well as your collective observations of overall trends.

I. Technology Integration Practices (for face-to-face and remote service delivery)

Consider your program's current use and capacity to use technology for service delivery

Ratings: (1) Practiced by very few or none.		(2) Practiced by some staff in some classes, but no program-wide approach.	(3) Established program-wide practice is in place.
Technology Integration Practices	**Rating 1–3**	**Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?**	**What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?**
1. We currently offer some type of remote and/or hybrid (combination of in-person and online) instruction and advising.			
2. We offer a blended model of instruction (some synchronous and some asynchronous instructional activities)			
3. We have a checklist or self-assessment to help learners determine whether online learning is right for them			
4. We use a commercial, paid-subscription curriculum (e.g. EnGen, Aztec, Essential Ed, Burlington English) for remote and hybrid instruction.			
5. We use an online learning management system (e.g. Google Classroom, Canvas for Teachers)			
6. We use video conferencing, text messaging apps, and/or social media to communicate with students (e.g. Facebook group, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, Google meet, Remind.)			

Ratings: (1) Practiced by very few or none.		(2) Practiced by some staff in some classes, but no program-wide approach.	(3) Established program-wide practice is in place.
Technology Integration Practices	**Rating 1–3**	**Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?**	**What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?**
7. We offer a student orientation that details the technology tools that will be used in instruction and advising.			
8. We assess students' access to hardware, software and internet needed to complete program activities remotely and on site.			
9. We take time to onboard and train students to use technology platforms and tools used in their classes.			
10. We assess students' digital literacy skills to determine what scaffolding and instruction they'll need in order to use instructional technology.			
11. We have a staff person designated to assist staff and students with technical issues that they encounter in online instruction.			

II. Staff Digital Literacy and Technology Integration Skills

Ratings: (1) A minority of staff have these skills	(2) Some but not all staff have these skills		(3) A majority of staff have these skills
Staff Digital Literacy Skills	**Rating 1–3**	**Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?**	**What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?**
12. Staff have basic computer skills and knowledge needed to operate computers, teach and learn using technology, such as start-up steps, using the keyboard, printing, and trouble-shooting simple problems.			
13. Staff use productivity software to perform various tasks, including creating written documents, graphs and spreadsheets, and presentations, such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher) and Google Applications (Docs, Sheets, Slides).			
14. Staff use instructional software ranging from complete online curricula to those used for specific skill development, e.g., reading, writing, math, work skills, and ESOL (e.g. Burlington English, Essential Ed).			
15. Staff use online resources on a regular basis (e.g. websites, online forms).			
16. Staff are aware of and use assistive or adaptive technology to support learners with disabilities.			

Ratings: (1) A minority of staff have these skills		(2) Some but not all staff have these skills	(3) A majority of staff have these skills
Staff Digital Literacy Skills	**Rating 1–3**	**Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?**	**What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?**
17. Staff use a variety of online technology tools to communicate and collaborate. Some examples include e-mail, wikis, shared online documents, blogs, and social networking sites.			
18. Staff regularly evaluate and use new technology to choose what is best to use in the classroom and program.			
19. Staff use technology to solve problems and find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information.			

III.   Program Practices that Support Staff Digital Literacy and Technology Integration Skills

Ratings: (1) Not a Program Practice		(2) Emerging Program Practice	(3) Established Program Practice
Consider staff and volunteers (if applicable)	**Rating 1–3**	**Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?**	**What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?**
20. We include requirements related to the ability to integrate technology and teach digital literacy skills in our hiring procedures – job postings, descriptions, interviews.			
21. We have a process in place for assessing the digital literacy skills and needs of staff. (If a standards framework is used, describe).			
22. Our staff performance review process progress towards technology integration and digital literacy skill-building.			
23. We provide in-house professional development to build staff digital literacy and tech capacity.			
24. We require staff to attend PD to address gaps identified in performance review, self-assessments, etc. and pay for their time to attend.			
25. We include progress toward building staff and student digital skills in our program's annual continuous improvement plan or other goal-setting processes.			

IV. Program Practices that Support Students' Digital Literacy Skill Development

Consider this definition of digital literacy as you evaluate your program practices: *Digital literacy is the ability to actively utilize technology to find, evaluate, organize, create and communicate information.*

Ratings: (1) Practiced by very few or none.		(2) Practiced by some staff in some classes, but no program-wide approach.	(3) Established program-wide practice is in place.
Program practices that support student's digital literacy skill development.	**Rating 1–3**	**Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?**	**What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?**
26. We have a process and tool in place for assessing the digital literacy skills and needs of students using a standards-based skills framework.			
27. We use digital skill assessment results to inform curriculum and instruction and to identify individual student needs.			
28. We integrate digital literacy skill instruction into all instruction to enhance academic and language learning.			
29. We use a digital literacy curriculum that is aligned with a standards framework.			
30. We are aware of and connect students to program and community resources for sources of low cost or free technology devices.			
31. We are aware of and connect students to program and			

Ratings: (1) Practiced by very few or none.		(2) Practiced by some staff in some classes, but no program-wide approach.	(3) Established program-wide practice is in place.
Program practices that support student's digital literacy skill development.	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
community resources for sources of low-cost broadband access.			
32. We assess students' technology and digital literacy skills to determine what scaffolding and instruction they'll need to use instructional technology.			
33. Following initial onboarding, we continue to assess and build students' digital literacy and technology skills.			

V.   Technology Infrastructure Needs

Ratings: (1) We are minimally equipped		(2) We are somewhat equipped	(3) We are well-equipped
	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
34. Our program owns or has easy access to projectors, smart boards and/or big screens			
35. Our program has a system for lending devices and hotspots to students who need them.			
36. Our program owns or has easy access to devices such as desktop and/or laptop computers or tablets for staff use.			
37. Our program owns or has easy access to devices such as desktop and/or laptop computers or tablets for student use.			
38. Our program owns or has easy access to sufficient webcams, printers, scanners, mouse, keyboard.			
39. Our program has a staff person whose duties and skill set include periodic tech inventory, software and security updates, and maintenance according to a set schedule.			

Ratings: (1) We are minimally equipped		(2) We are somewhat equipped	(3) We are well-equipped
	Rating 1–3	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?
40. Our program has a staff person whose duties and skills set includes updating, refreshing/replacing, purchasing hardware, according to a set schedule.			
41. Our program or facility has a dedicated staff person whose duties and skills set includes ensuring that device and internet capacity is sufficient to run the learning platforms and software.			
42. Our program has sufficient high-speed and reliable internet access that can support multiple classes, online learning platforms, advising sessions, administrative work simultaneously.			
43. Our program has a secure space to store technology equipment.			

APPENDIX E - Digital Action Plan Template

Prioritization Activity

1. Review each section of your Digital Needs Assessment.
2. Copy and paste any items that you rated "1" for each section. Copy and paste the entire row directly, including your notes about why you chose the rating and the resources you'll need to strengthen.
3. Repeat, copying and pasting the items that you rated "2" for each section.
4. If you rated something "3" but identified resources needed to strengthen in that area, feel free to include them if it's a priority for you going forward.
5. If you have many items rated 1 and 2, don't be discouraged -, you don't have to address them all at once. In the next step, you will choose priorities and then break your action plan into short- and longer-term goals.
6. If you need to add rows to your table, to this section or to the Action Plan Template, here are instructions for Word (PC users), Word (Mac users), and Google Docs.

I. Technology integration practices (for face-to-face and remote service delivery)

Technology Integration Practices	Rated 1 & 2	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?

II. Staff digital literacy and technology integration skills

Staff Digital Literacy Skills	Rated 1 & 2	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?

III. Program practices that support staff digital literacy and technology integration

Consider staff and volunteers (if applicable)	Rated 1 & 2	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?

IV. Program practices that support students' digital literacy skill development

Program practices that support student's digital literacy skill development.	Rated 1 & 2	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?

V. Technology infrastructure needs

Tech Infrastructure	Rated 1 & 2	Describe the current practice. Why did you choose this rating?	What types of resources do you need in order to expand or strengthen this?

Digital Action Planning

This is **your** Action Plan, designed for your program to develop short and longer-term goals and action steps to increase your digital capacity, based on your priorities. Your World Ed coach can help you think through how to translate your needs assessment priorities into action.

Your World Ed coach will collect the program Action Plans and Needs Assessments and submit them to OWD to inform resource allocations in Phase 2 of the project. World Ed will also develop a summary of aggregate trends in needs and action items to report to OWD.

Steps to complete the Action Plan using the Action Plan Template:

1. **Review** your work above. Which items are priorities for your program to address in the coming year?

2. Identify your priorities and develop a set of goals and action steps (the number of goals should be based on what is realistic for your program to accomplish). Note that from here on, you don't need to think in terms of assessment sections since your goals and action steps will probably be more integrated.

3. For each goal, consider a combination of short-term (1-3 months), medium (4- 8 months) and longer-term (8-12 months and beyond) action steps.

   - *Action Steps:* What you'll do - the process for completing the goal, including the steps you'll take to achieve the goal. Consider action steps that you can complete in the short-term that can have a big impact to help you build confidence in the process and momentum for change.

   - *Timeline:* Identify the target start and end dates for the actions working on the strategy.

   - *Who:* Identify the person (including role) responsible for leading and coordinating each action step and the other staff that will be involved.

   - *Available Resources:* Think broadly about resources, including funding, staff, space, meeting and planning time, partnerships, hardware, software, reliable internet and maintenance capacity, expertise and skills, etc., that you will have and can use to complete the action steps.

   - *Resources Needed:* What resources do you need to complete these steps? Think broadly about resources and be sure to refer to the right-hand column of your DNA.

4. **See the Action Plan Example below**. Yours will look different, but it's important that your plan is both ambitious and realistic and that it provides a clear and detailed map to guide your program's digital capacity development.

5. As with the Digital Needs Assessment, to the extent possible, we encourage you to develop the plan with staff who will be accountable for implementing it. Take time to get input from staff and from your World Ed coach, as you develop and finalize the plan.

Digital Action Plan Example

Goal #1 (Example): Provide in-person, one-on-one digital skills onboarding and ongoing tech support services to all students, in order to strengthen students' ability to fully participate in hybrid learning in FY23.				
Action Steps	**Timeline**	**Who Will Lead? Who Else Involved?**	**What Resources are available to do this? (See above)**	**What Resources are needed to do this?**
Secure private, wifi-equipped physical spaces needed for onboarding and tech help	July 2022	Program Director (Lead), Operations staff	Physical space, leadership support, hotspots in lending library	Reliable, accessible wifi throughout the building
Coordinate staff on-site schedules and draft responsibilities/processes for handling onboarding and tech help appointments	July-August 2022	Program Director (Lead), Advisors and Teachers (help with onboarding and tech help)	Current staff; staff's expertise in teaching digital literacy and technical troubleshooting	1-2 additional part-time staff to ensure all students can receive services in a timely fashion; funding to hire additional staff
Train staff who need further support to be able to provide tech help to students.	August 2022	Program Director (Lead), Advisors and Teachers (tech help providers)	Current staff's expertise in technical troubleshooting; on-demand PD from SABES; instructional videos from Google, Canvas, and other platforms/products	Time to train staff and ensure all staff are ready to independently provide tech support; funding to cover staff time for PD; staff willingness to upskill
Do a refresher training on current COVID-19 organizational policies for all staff (e.g., masks and social distancing policies for appointments)	August 2022	Program Director (Lead), all staff	Current organizational policies and expertise, CDC/local guidelines	Time to train all staff; enforcement of policies
How will you know that you are making progress? What information will you use to measure your progress? We will know that we are on track if we are equipped with the space, processes, and skills to provide on-site advising and tech services to all students in need by mid-September.				
What can you do to obtain the resources needed to achieve the goal?				

Goal #1 (Example): Provide in-person, one-on-one digital skills onboarding and ongoing tech support services to all students, in order to strengthen students' ability to fully participate in hybrid learning in FY23.				
Action Steps	**Timeline**	**Who Will Lead? Who Else Involved?**	**What Resources are available to do this? (See above)**	**What Resources are needed to do this?**
Wi-fi: If we are unable to get access to the wi-fi in the building (or if it continues to be unreliable), then we will have to use hotspots when providing tech support. We have some hotspots in our lending library, but that would reduce the number of hotspots that we could lend out to students. We would also have to sustain funding for the hotspots.				
Funding: Move around DESE and match budgets to include funding for one additional PT staff member. Apply for additional funding from OWD, if available.				
Staff time: Delegate some training responsibilities to more tech-proficient staff so that all staff can be trained appropriately according to their own schedule, or provide an interactive recording for the COVID-19 policies training.				

Digital Action Plan Template

Goal #1:				
Action Steps	**Timeline**	**Who Will Lead? Who Else Involved?**	**What Resources are available to do this? (See above)**	**What Resources are needed to do this?**
How will you know that you are making progress? What information will you use to measure your progress?				
What can you do to obtain the resources needed to achieve the goal?				

Goal #2:

Action Steps	Timeline	Who Will Lead? Who Else Involved?	What Resources are available to do this? (See above)	What Resources are needed to do this?

How will you know you are making progress? What information will you use to measure progress and success?

What can you do to obtain the resources needed to achieve the goal?

Goal #3:

Action Steps	Timeline	Who Will Lead? Who Else Involved?	What Resources are available to do this? (See above)	What Resources are needed to do this?

How will you know you are making progress? What information will you use to measure progress and success?

What can you do to obtain the resources needed to achieve the goal?

APPENDIX F: Boston Digital Literacy Needs Assessment & Action Planning Resources

The following resources have been compiled for Adult Education (AE) programs participating in the Digital Literacy Needs Assessment and Action Planning project of the Boston Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. We drew from expert sources such as the Massachusetts SABES PD system, the IDEAL Consortium, and the EdTech Center at World Education, among others. Resources are organized into key digital literacy categories for adult educators with brief annotations to guide the user.

Definitions and Examples of Program Models

- Go to ACLS Adult Education Policies and download FY19-FY23 Massachusetts Policies for Effective Adult Education in Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions. See pp. 10-11 for ACLS definitions.

- The What, Why, Who and How of Blended Learning for Adult Basic Skills Learners by Jen Vanek and David Rosen.

- Remote ESOL Study - Useful for non-ESOL programs as well. See especially 'What We Learned' and 'Case Studies of Innovative Remote ESOL'. From EdTech @ World Education.

- Blended Learning Definitions of models from the Christensen Institute. Be aware that terms for the models differ from ACLS'.

- Examples of models from the Blended Learning Universe. Same disclaimer as above.

Digital Literacy Skills Frameworks

- Digital Literacy in Adult Education - DESE/ACLS webpage with policy, guidance, and links to recommended standards and frameworks.

- Digital Skills Frameworks and Assessments: Brief comparing frameworks (some of which are listed below. *J. Vanek for the CREATE Adult Skills Network*

- Building Common Language: Review of Digital Skills Frameworks Discusses various frameworks for defining the skills and competencies for digital literacy and digital resilience. *Edtech Center at World Education*

- **Massachusetts DESE/ACLS recommended digital literacy framework and standards:**

- **ISTE Standards:**

  - For Students

  - For Educators

  - Digital Skills Students Need Now and for Lifelong Learning - Recorded webinar and slides

  - ISTE Skillrise: Profile of a Lifelong Learner: details the digital and lifelong learning skills that working learners need to be able to thrive in the future of work.

- **Maryland Digital Literacy Framework:**

  - Framework (The Digital Literacy Framework for Adult Learners includes seven interconnected elements: Technical, Civic, Communicative, Collaborative, Computational Thinking, Investigative, and Productive)

  - Instructor Implementation Guide

  - Digital Literacy for Instruction: A Framework to Guide You - Recorded webinar and slides

- **Northstar Digital Literacy Standards:**
    - [Standards](#) (Detailed standards for Essential Computer and Software Skills)
    - See PD listed below
- **Seattle Digital Equity initiative: Diverse Skill Sets for Diverse Users**
    - [Framework](#)
      Framework pulls in multiple frameworks and curricula for diverse types of learners, workers, and community members.
    - [Seattle Digital Equity Initiative Skills Framework](#) Tool-Framework tool adapted by the EdTech Center@World Education based on the original work. Used as a framework for the [Digital Skills Library](#) managed by the EdTech Center @ World Education

Digital Literacy and Program Planning for Distance/Hybrid Education

- [Distance and Hybrid Education Planning Template](#) - Includes planning questions and considerations, professional development resources, and relevant terminology. *SABES Program Support PD Center.*

- [Quick Reference Guide of Key Questions for Planning Technology Infrastructure](#) - From the *US Department of Education.*

- [Considering Use of the Hybrid Flexible Model in Adult Education](#) blog about the hyflex model. *EdTech Center at World Education*

- [Strengthening Adult Education](#) Remote Learning: Guidance for Massachusetts Adult Education Programs. *Massachusetts DESE/ACLS*

- [SABES Guide to Recruiting, Onboarding, and Enrollment Strategies](#): 56 strategies in four areas: program design, staff, students, and technology. Two pdfs.

- [Identifying and Recruiting Students](#) - From the [IDEAL Distance Education and Blended Learning Handbook, 7th Edition](#)

- [Teacher Technology Use Survey](#)-Google Form set to copy so you can edit it for your purposes

Resources for Digital Literacy Instruction, Learner Skill Development & Program Development

- [SABES Resource Library](#) with [Digital Literacy](#) and [Distance and Blended Learning](#) resources.

- [SABES Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources](#) - Includes digital, Math & Numeracy, ELA, ESOL, and Program Support resources.

- [Teaching Skills That Matter: Digital Literacy](#) - An issue brief and numerous lesson examples.

- [Digital Skills Library](#) - Open repository of free learning resources designed to help all adult learners develop digital skills across ten domains from the Seattle Digital Equity Initiative Digital Skills Framework including communication, device ownership, and workplace. *EdTech Center @ World Education*.

- [EdTech Integration Strategy Toolkit](#) - Phone app. "This app is designed to help you find strategies, resources, and activities to support meaningful edtech integration and digital skill development." *EdTech Center @ World Education*

- [Transforming Distance Ed Course](). Free online course developed by the EdTech Center @ World Education with support from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education.
- [DigitalLearn]() - Multimedia micro-lessons on computer skills, online safety, job skills, Microsoft Word, online shopping, etc. Available in Spanish. See also Tools and Resources for Teachers. By the *Public Library Association.*
- [Learn My Way]() - Multimedia micro-lessons for building digital skills for work, life, and learning. By the Good Things Foundation.
- [Google Applied Digital Skills]() Video and project-based learning tools.
- [Northstar Online Learning]() Digital literacy online skill-building resources for learners include basic computer skills, email, Microsoft Word, and Career Search Skills.
- [Promoting Digital Literacy for Adult Learners: A Resource Guide]()
- [Workforce EdTech Tools]() Repository of edtech tools to leverage technology to accelerate adult learning, employment, organizational management, and career advancement. *EdTech Center at World Education*

Digital Navigation (for Instructors)
- Using [Google Docs, Forms, Zoom, and WhatsApp]() - Recorded webinars. *SABES ESOL PD* Session Recording Library
- [The Learners' View on Zoom]() A Collection of Tiny Videos and Viewer's Guide for Smartphone Use on Zoom Recordings. *SABES ESOL PD*
- [Distance and Hybrid Education Padlet Discussion]() - Note the *Orientation/Onboarding to Studying Online* for materials such as a multilingual tech picture dictionary and tips for successful practices. *SABES Program Support PD Center*.
- [Digital Navigator Resource]() hub with resources for teaching online communication skills, job exploration & resumes, locating community resources, accessibility features and safety. *Digital US. EdTech Center at World Education.*

Professional Development Opportunities and Resources
- [Remote Instruction Observation Tool]() - Useful for teacher & peer observations and self-assessments. In Fillable PDF and MS Word format. Customizable. Aligned with CCRS for AE. With Amy Poland, PD Coordinator, *Maine Department of Education & the IDEAL Consortium*
- [SABES]() - Massachusetts Adult Education Professional Development system. Staff from programs that do not receive adult education funding from MA DESE are welcome to participate as space allows.
- [Digital Literacy On-Demand, Asynchronous Offerings]() - Relevant topics include Distance Education planning, digital literacy tools and products. From the *SABES Program Support PD Center.*
- [Distance Ed. Strategy Sessions]() - 1-hour live and recorded webinars by nationwide practitioners and experts. Topics include Digital Skills for Educators, Strategies for Building Program Capacity and Learner Skills, The 7 Elements of Effective Remote & Hybrid Instruction. From the *EdTech Center @ World Education.*

- [Distance and Hybrid Education Discussion](#) on a live Padlet. Resources from research and the field on essential topics such as connectivity and device access, recruitment, orientation and onboarding, and more. From the *SABES Program Support PD Center.*

- [Northstar Digital Literacy Standards for Essential Computer Skills](#) Professional development course. Recorded webinar and slides. Fill out Google Form for instructions and access. From the *SABES Program Support PD Center.*

- [IDEAL Distance Education and Blended Learning Handbook, 7th Ed.](#) - Provides step-by-step guidance for adult education programs and practitioners creating distance or blended learning programs. Updated in September 2020.

- [Innovative Remote ESOL Program Models and Promising Practices](#) - Recorded webinar. Information for teachers, administrators, policymakers, and researchers interested in leveraging educational technology to support enrollment, attendance, achievement, and completion in remote ESOL programming for adults. EdTech Center at World Education.

- [Innovative Digital Learning Models for ELL Immigrant Adults](#) Webinar about MobileUp using Cell-Ed and other apps for learning English

- [Transforming Distance Education](#) - Self-paced, modular course by EdTech @ World Education guides users through all aspects of offering distance education to adult learners.

- [SkillRise Course](#) designed for educators to develop a distance learning strategy

- [Let's Explore Digital Literacy Frameworks: Applications for your Program](#) - Summer 2022 workshop about five digital literacy frameworks for Boston OWD digital literacy assessment project. [Group Presentation](#) about five frameworks. [Recording](#) use with Passcode: 2L?y*cRZ

- [Building Digital Resilience from the Start](#) -Summer 2022 workshop about digital screening. orientation and onboarding best practices for Boston OWD digital literacy assessment project. Recording and other resources [here.](#)

Digital Equity, Access & Infrastructure

- [National Digital Inclusion Alliance](#) Website with Practitioner Support resource page, terms and information for digital inclusion work.

- [Building Digital Resilience: Creating On-Ramps to Opportunity](#). Download report and see p. 6. from the DigitalUS Coalition.

- [Digital Equity Fund|Boston.gov](#) Grant funding for digital resources for Boston based organizations.

- [Affordable Connectivity Program](#), or ACP, is a connectivity program from Biden/Harris administration. Offers $30/month off internet cost and eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from certain participating providers, with a small copay. See [ACP providers by state](#).

- [New fact sheet: What the Digital Equity Act means for skills advocates](#). *National Skills Coalition*

- [Digital Navigator Playbook](#) Comprehensive guide to setting up a digital navigator program. *Digital US. EdTech Center at World Education.*

- [US Department of Education Office of Educational Technology/Infrastructure](#). Guidance for schools. See Section 5: Enabling Access and Effective Use.

- [State Broadband Leaders Network (SBLN)](#) Information on state broadband initiatives.
- [How Wicked Free Wi-Fi Works | Boston.gov](#) Information about Boston's free, outdoor wireless network.
- [Tech Goes Home](#) Digital inclusion organization partners with community groups to offer digital skills training and a free device upon training completion. and help with internet connectivity