| Title | **0017** | 11/02/2023 |
| | by **Aaron Deacon** in **Digital Equity Public Comment (English)** | id. 44599958 |

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Please provide your first and last name	Aaron Deacon
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If you are affiliated with an organization, please provide the organization name	KC Digital Drive
If you are affiliated with an organization, please share a brief paragraph about your organization and its work in promoting digital equity	KC Digital Drive's mission is to make Kansas City a digital leader to improve the quality of life and increase economic opportunity for all people in the region. Our work reaches across the states of both Kansas and Missouri, supporting the state governments and partnerships that are interdependent with our local work. We focus on technology innovation as well as technology inclusion and equity, providing project support, thought leadership, and community building backbone capacity with a particular emphasis on digital equity.
If affiliated with an organization, please provide a link to website	www.kcdigitaldrive.org

Who is your main point of contact if we have further questions? Please provide their name and the best method to communicate with them if they are not the commentor on this form	Aaron Deacon
Is there any additional background information you would like our office to know?	
	Please rank the Kansas digital equity plan on how it accomplishes the following:
Question 1: Outlines the current state of digital equity in Kansas	
Question 2: Outlines a vision for digital equity in Kansas that recognizes the state's unique social and economic circumstances	
Question 3: Identifies the barriers to digital equity faced by each of the state's covered populations	
Question 4: Establishes an implementation strategy to achieve digital equity	

Question 5: Describes how Kansas will coordinate and conduct outreach amongst digital equity partners and stakeholders	
Question 6: Describes how Kansas will coordinate its use of DEA funding with any funds it will receive in connection with BEAD or other digital equity funding	
Question 7: Identifies the assets available to help connect Kansas' covered populations	
Question 8: If there are any digital equity assets that you feel have not been listed in the digital equity plan, please list them here	One item you might add among our initiatives (p 33) is the Kansas City Digital Inclusion Fund. It supports organizations and programs that focus on digital inclusion (internet access, digital skills, affordability and adoption) to increase participation in digital society for the Kansas City region's most underserved and/or disconnected residents. Under "Digital Equity Planning", we also are working with Miami County.
Question 9: Please indicate which sections of the Kansas digital equity plan you are providing comment on	Other section not listed or general comments
Please provide comment on any other section not listed, or provide general comments on the digital equity plan	The primary suggestion we ask you to consider is to add a framework that provides a bit better unity between the BEAD and the DEA work, which are each so important to the success of the other, but don't always use the same language.

For example, on p 24 of the plan (Section 2, on Availability) the plan clearly acknowledges the difficulty in reconciling the language and the shared objectives by extending the "success measure [of availability] to the actual adoption of broadband." Adoption is indeed a critical metric, but the language perpetuates confusion we see reflected everyday in our communities, where people say, for example, "the internet is not available" when they really mean it is not affordable or their service quality is |

untenable.

We recognize that terms like availability, affordability, and digital literacy are entrenched within the community of practice, and we do not propose eliminating or replacing them. In our work with dozens of on-the-ground community partner organizations, as well as local governments working on their own digital equity strategies (including Johnson, Miami, and Wyandotte Counties), we have developed the framework below. This common language helps various stakeholders to situate their work in a more precise way to one another and also to think about planning and goal setting within whatever community they are serving. It helps us to align solutions, initiatives, program interventions and objectives to a particular aspect of the problem. The approach layers necessary-but-not-sufficient conditions for thriving communities.

Logically, the section below was written to follow the sections headed "Implementation" and "Measuring Success" on p. 8. Given the structure of the report, and relation of the Executive Summary to some material repeated later, there may be some additional changes that would accompany.

Framework for Implementation and Measuring Success

The barriers to achieving digital equity are multifaceted. There are many reasons an individual might lack internet access or digital skills, for example. Different barriers demand different types of solutions. KOBD takes a holistic view of broadband, connectivity, and digital equity and has reflected this in the development of the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan and the Digital Equity Strategic Plan. These plans depend on the work of a broad range of partner organizations.

Due to the complexity of the issue and the diversity of the partners, a common framework is useful to help understand which particular barriers are being addressed by any given program. The dimensions of this framework build upon each other toward the outcomes people care most about. The five dimensions in this framework are:

1. Network Capacity
2. Access to the Network
3. Quality of Network Access
4. Participation in Digital Life
5. Excellence, Innovation, and Growth

While building network capacity with fundamental broadband infrastructure does not solve any needs on its own, none of the subsequent dimensions can be achieved without it. A programmatic intervention may address one or more of these dimensions. This progression serves as a shared framework within which many different stakeholders can clearly identify which barriers their programs and interventions are aimed at solving. The framework also lends itself to combining various ways of measuring progress towards the objectives outlined below (2.3.2).

Aaron Deacon, Nov 2, 2023