DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT COMMUNITY OF AUSTIN

DECA Phase I: Roadmap Report

DRAFT

City of Austin
Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs
June 27, 2016

This roadmap report, built using strategic co-creation methodology, is draft until reviewed and approved by the City of Austin Digital Inclusion Steering Committee.

*The Digital Empowerment Community of Austin (DECA) is a cohesive network of organizations and stakeholders managed by the City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Program and led by Austin Free-Net to address access and adoption of digital technology within Austin. 2015 saw the kickoff of Phase **I** of the DECA Working Group Co-Creation process, primarily directed toward organizations and entities providing direct client services, to aid in implementation of the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan.*

- ✓ *Recognize the **independent nature and unique contributions** of digital literacy service providers.*
- *Improve the **quality of computer skills instruction** across digital literacy providers to better serve vulnerable populations.*
- *Develop **common objectives** across the digital empowerment community that address the target client segments.*
- ✓ ***Assess and inventory community assets** that can be leveraged in meeting stated objectives.*
- *Leverage blogging and other communication platforms including **DigitalATX.org** to tell **the story of digital inclusion in Austin.***

This process was intended to utilize the community's insights and experience to articulate the common objectives, identify assets, explore program value propositions and develop actionable strategies to achieve the goals set forth in the City's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan.

As the City begins to frame Phase II of DECA's Working Group this fall we take a look back at Phase I and examine what was accomplished and the processes that got us to where we are.

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DECA Phase I: Roadmap Report

DECA Meeting Overviews

Meeting I
Program Introduction / Capacity Building
October 29th, 2015

The first DECA Meeting convened more than 80 community stakeholders from nonprofits, government, private companies, the academic community and more convened at the Asian American Resource Center to collaborate and brainstorm challenges. The objective of the meeting was to introduce DECA through storytelling, program inventory and mapping as well as knowledge sharing.

The meeting included a Capacity-Building Workshop to give DECA members new tools and opportunities to collaborate on how to build successful digital inclusion programs. This activity was designed to foster collaboration and problem-solving among diverse members of DECA using case studies and business planning tools. The desired outcome of this activity was for DECA members to develop organizational digital inclusion capacity using a business model canvas be able to successfully apply for the City's Grants for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs). The stakeholders engaged in a workshop to gather insights from the morning sessions, combined with ideas from GTOPs anonymized case studies to diverge on three prompts:

- What considerations to be more sustainable and appealing to funders?
- What might we evaluate?
- What are the opportunities to strengthen the program and provide maximum client benefits?

The meeting stakeholders selected the most important or salient facts/insights to carry forward into their Program Planning Canvas (using a Business Model Canvas). At the end of the meeting the Digital Inclusion

office called on community members to establish a working group to be convened at the next DECA meeting that could identify common goals and opportunities to implement digital inclusion learning models.

Meeting II
DECA Goals / Value Proposition
December 11th, 2015

The second DECA meeting was the first convening of the Working Group and included the establishment of the group's goals and the creation of value proposition's for the different community organizations. These goals as mentioned above are as follows:

- Develop common objectives across the digital empowerment community that address the target client segments
- Assess and inventory community assets that can be leveraged in meeting stated objectives
- Utilize a web based tool, DigitalATX.org, to maintain and develop asset inventory
- Recognize the independent nature and unique contributions of digital literacy service providers
- Improve the quality of computer skills instruction across digital literacy providers to better serve vulnerable populations
- Leverage blogging and other communication platforms including DigitalATX.org to tell the story of digital inclusion in Austin

The meeting's main activity, a value proposition exercise, asked each member to answer five questions about their organizations programs, clients and service delivery. The goal of the activity was to determine the fit between the needs identified by client profiles and the programs or services each organization provides to meet those needs. An overview of this activity can be seen here.

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Meeting III
Program Dimensions Scope
January 22nd, 2016

The third DECA meeting and the first of 2016 was intended to focus on a Program Dimensions scoping exercise after an overview of group goals and summary of the Working Group's progress to this point. The goals for the Program Dimensions Scope was for the Digital Inclusion programs that are convened in the working group to be able to understand the distinct differences that exist between the many programs in Austin. Some of the *domains* and *dimensions* of the model used in this exercise have been borrowed from the Dimensions of Success (DoS) observation tool which was developed and studied with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) by the Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR).

The meeting was framed around the components of a Digital Inclusion program, as defined by the Benton Foundation's 2016 report "Digital Inclusion and Meaningful Broadband Adoption Initiatives":

1. Providing low cost broadband.
2. Making low cost computers or devices available.
3. Operating public access computer centers.
4. Connecting digital literacy training with relevant content and services.

The group was led through a facilitated workshop to explore dimensions that define a Digital Inclusion program, as listed below:

1. Audience
   - E.g.: Age, employment, language, transportation, client location, disabled clientele.
2. Learning Environment
   - E.g.: Trainers, languages offered, hours, closed door vs. open door, calendar.
3. Learning Engagement and Activities
   - E.g.: Attendance tracking, formal vs. informal instruction, directed vs. self-directed work.
4. Content and Relevancy
   - E.g.: Client feedback, internal assessments, program certifications, formal curriculum.

The group developed insights and feedback of the program dimensions taking into account the unique needs of Austin's diverse populations. The working group prioritized the dimensions and insights generated at the meeting to focus and define objectives served.

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Meeting IV
Engagement Opportunities and Outcomes
February 26th, 2016

One of the core challenges of organizations supporting programs in Digital Inclusion is community engagement. With that in mind, the fourth meeting was dedicated identifying community engagement opportunities and outcomes. Before the meeting we had gathered unanswered questions DECA affiliated programs had identified as inhibiting their community engagement outcomes. These questions were organized into four broad categories and would become the building blocks for the meeting's workshops:

1. Clients
    - Who are our participants?
    - Why are participants in our programs?
2. Curriculum
    - What should we be teaching?
    - How do we know if our clients are truly benefiting?
3. Learning Environment
    - Who are our instructors?
    - How should we be training the instructors?
    - How could our instructors effectively connect with clients?
4. Learning Community
    - How do people advance after completing a program?
    - How do these programs fir into the overall service environment?

Participants broke off into groups and tackled these challenges together and discussed the different tools that might facilitate positive engagement outcomes. These tools are listed below:

- Data Collection
- Facilitated Client Discussion
- Trainings
- Program Tools (E.g.: Assessments, Surveys, Checklists)

The meeting concluded with a feedback carousel where participants critically engaged with and prioritized the tools listed above.

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Meeting V
Focus and Improve Client Outcomes
April 1st, 2016

For any Digital Inclusion program, success largely depends upon achieving positive client outcomes. The fifth DECA meeting gave our members an opportunity to focus and frame what positive outcomes would look like for a client through a series of "How Might We" questions:

1. How might we assess what services clients can benefit from?
2. How might we understand client outcomes from all organizations/programs to enable cross-relevancy of certificates between organizations and programs?
3. How might we better reach clients who are offline?

This framing brought us to a pivotal juncture in the moving from scanning and clarifying into challenge formulation. These facilitated exercises unlocked barriers to frame target client segment objectives. At this facilitated workshop, the Working Group, in part, drilled down current priorities by Digital Inclusion partners to build client segment objectives, while identifying necessary variables in supporting working group goals.

These objectives were then broken into smaller sub-challenges through an altitude framing exercise. This deliberate, visual ordering of challenges from broad to narrow helps to unbundle complex challenges into smaller sub challenges creating visual road map. Once these systems and elements are understood and illustrated, new options emerge for framing challenges and teams can begin to make strategic decisions regarding which challenges are most important to begin tackling. Once participants were able to select these challenges they began to *conceive* the selected challenges into more fully fleshed out concepts. This activity allowed teams to generate possible solution ideas for the challenges and possible answers to the "How Might We" questions mentioned earlier.

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Meeting VI
Strategies for 2016 and Beyond
May 6th, 2016

The final DECA meeting for Phase I of the Working Group was designed with the hope that it would generate actionable initiatives from the insights we'd received in previous DECA meetings. These initiatives had been generated from priority goals developed in Meeting V. These priority goals are listed below:

1. Provide Creative Opportunities, Skills, and Services that Benefit Clients
2. Standardize Digital Curriculum & Client Needs Assessments
3. Provide Training Resources for Program Trainers
4. Conduct a Gaps Analysis on Available Community Services
5. Develop a Client Outreach Plan That Achieves Greater Diversity

The seventeen initiatives within these priority goals were separated through a sequencing exercise and each initiative was marked as either Short Term (By the End of 2017), Medium Term (By the End of 2019) or Long Term (2-4 year cycle beginning in 2019). Once the initiatives had been separated into these three categories we asked DECA members to prioritize them and determine which initiatives were of a greatest need. The initiatives receiving the highest number of votes are as follows:

- Create a Pool of Program Instructors
- Leverage Existing Alternative Transportation Outreach Programs
- Develop City-Wide Wi-Fi
- Create a Technical Assistance Hotline

With these insights now integrated into fully developed initiative goals, DECA has built a foundation in Phase I of the Working Group that will allow us to further enhance Digital Inclusion programs and enable the City's programs to continue to break down the digital barriers in Austin in Phase II.

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DECA Concept Catalog

May 2016

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DIGITAL INCLUSION
City of Austin

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1. **Provide creative opportunities, skills, and services that benefit clients**
   - 1.1 Develop Citywide Wi-Fi
   - 1.2 Create a Public Device Checkout Program
   - 1.3 Develop a Wireless Bus Program
   - 1.4 Advance Mobile Training
   - 1.5 Implement a Technical Assistance Hotline
   - 1.6 Develop Public Technology Kiosks
   - 1.7 Develop Cross Program Certification
   - 1.8 Offer Skills-Based Workshops
2. **Standardize digital curriculum**
   - 2.1 Convene a National Digital Consortium
   - 2.2 Develop an Online Content Clearinghouse
   - 2.3 Create a Digital Handbook
   - 2.4 Create a Standardized Client Survey
3. **Provide training resources for program trainers**
   - 3.1 Create a Pool of Program Instructors
   - 3.2 Provide Periodic Training Sessions
4. **Conduct a gaps analysis on available community services**
   - 4.1 Convene a Forum
   - 4.2 Convene Digital Service Providers
5. **Develop a client outreach plan that achieves greater diversity**
   - 5.1 Advertise using different media
   - 5.2 Leverage Existing Alternative Transportation Outreach Programs

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

Initiative Timeline

Short Term By the end of 2017

1.5 Implement a Technical Assistance Hotline
1.7 Develop Cross Program Certification
1.8 Offer Skills-Based Workshops
2.1 Convene a National Digital Consortium
2.2 Develop an Online Content Clearinghouse
2.4 Create a Standardized Client Survey
3.2 Provide Periodic Training Sessions
4.1 Convene a Forum
4.2 Convene Digital Service Providers
5.1 Advertise using different media

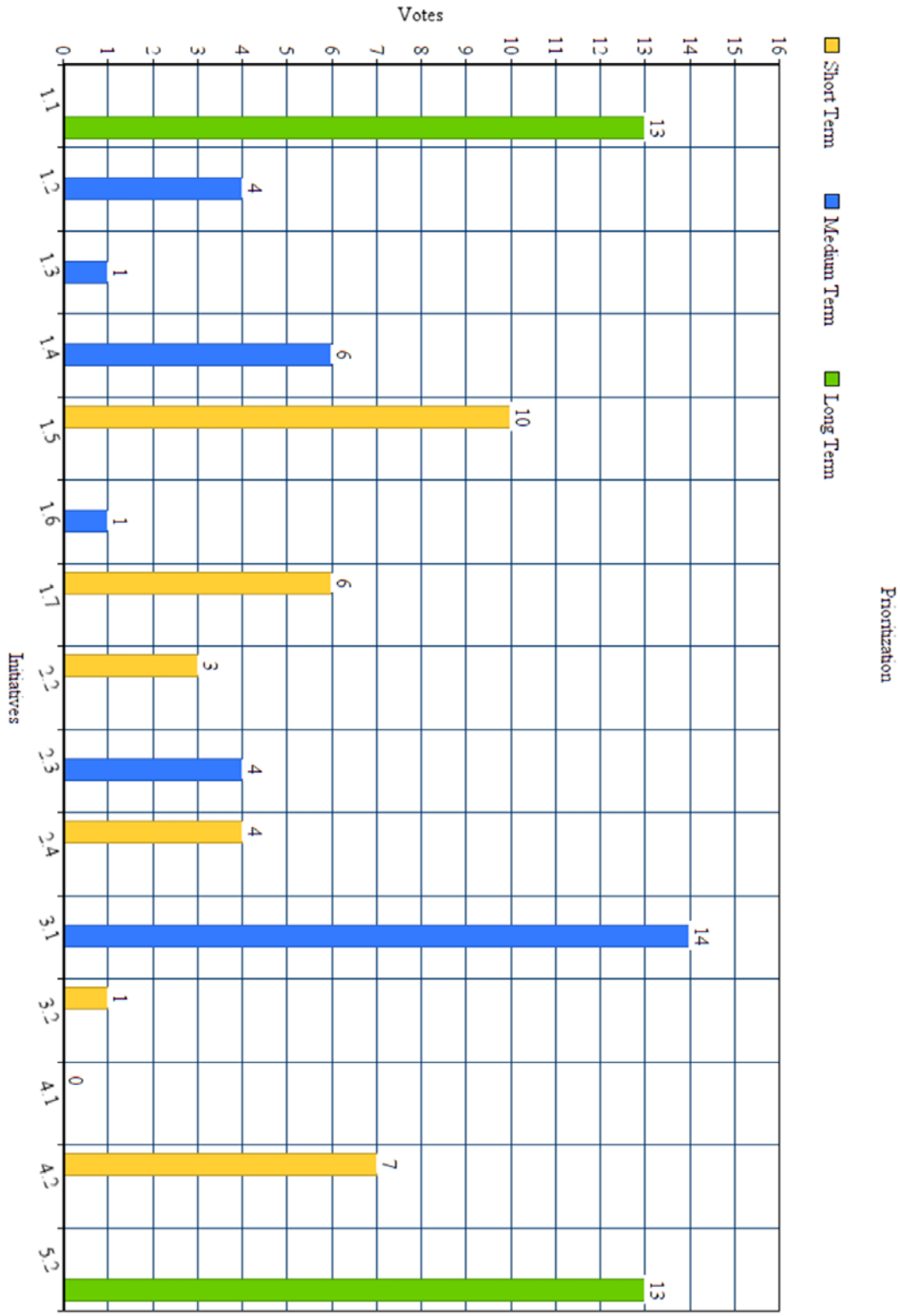
Medium Term – By the end of 2019

1.2 Create a Public Device Checkout Program
1.3 Develop a Wireless Bus Program
1.4 Advance Mobile Training
1.6 Develop Public Technology Kiosks
2.3 Create a Digital Handbook
3.1 Create a Pool of Program Instructors

Long Term – 2-4 year cycle starting in 2019

1.1 Develop Citywide Wi-Fi
5.2 Leverage Existing Alternative Transportation Outreach Programs

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects



Source: [DECA Prioritized Projects]

1. Provide creative opportunities, skills, and services that benefit clients

Digital organizations across Austin serve diverse clients with different needs. To adequately meet their needs, it is important to provide creative opportunities, skills, and services that appeal to clients' varying interests and goals.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

1.1 Develop Citywide Wi-Fi

Long Term – 2-4 year cycle starting in 2019

What it is (goal)
A citywide complimentary Wi-Fi mesh network service providing internet access to all.

What it does (Objectives served/achieved)
Grants people access to the internet anywhere in Austin. (See email with maps sent to you 8/8/16) With the exception of Wi-Fi provided at libraries or public computer labs, people are usually asked to pay for a good or service in order to access a business's Wi-Fi. This tends to exclude low-income residents who may not have access to the internet at home. Limited complimentary Wi-Fi is currently available in limited areas in central Austin as shown here.

Services Offered
internet & potential for Voice over IP

Extension
This service will connect digitally disconnected individuals to the internet, thereby making a basic need in this digitally connected age readily accessible. This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals in which every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in our digital society.

Challenges
Funding and coordinating this service may prove challenging.

Opportunities
Wi-Fi Task Force

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

1.2 Create a Public Device Checkout Program

Medium Term – By the end of 2019

What it is
A program in which Austin residents can check out digital devices, including laptops, tablets, cameras, etc.

What it does
Grants residents access to digital devices they may not be able to afford. This allows residents to practice and apply digital skills.

Service
Public library of digital devices

Extension
This service will connect digitally disconnected individuals to the internet, thereby making a basic need in this digitally connected age readily accessible. This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals in which every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in our digital society.

Challenges
Maintaining the devices and ensuring their security may be difficult with a large public device checkout program. Some users may also require education on how to use and care for the devices--the program may not have the capacity to provide such education. Acquiring funding may also be difficult.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

1.3 Develop a Wireless Bus Program

Medium Term – By the end of 2019

What it is
A citywide service providing internet Wi-Fi on all public buses. While Wi-Fi currently exists on MetroRail and MetroRapid, it does not yet exist on MetroBus.

What it does
Grants public transit rider's access to the internet during their commute. Most public transit riders are low-income individuals who may or may not have internet at home. Offering free internet on a service they use allows those individuals who do not have internet at home to access it during their travels. This also benefits other public transit riders who may need Wi-Fi to navigate to their next destination or complete business or homework assignments.

Service
Internet

Extension
This service will connect digitally disconnected individuals to the internet, thereby making a basic need in this digitally connected age readily accessible. This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals in which every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in our digital society.

Challenges
Funding and coordinating this service may prove challenging.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

1.4 Advance Mobile Training

Medium Term – By the end of 2019

What it is
A mobile venue in which residents can receive digital training.

What it does
Provides technology training around the city.

Service
Digital education for mobile devices

Extension
This service will connect digitally disconnected individuals to the internet, thereby making a basic need in this digitally connected age readily accessible. This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals in which every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in our digital society.

Challenges
Funding and coordinating this service may prove challenging. This might also require multilingual trainers.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

1.5 Implement a Technical Assistance Hotline

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
A hotline number people can call if they are experiencing technical difficulties.

What it does
Provides technical assistance to those who may not have the resources to resolve a technical issue. It may also be a more affordable option for those who may seek services from an IT specialist.

Service
Digital customer service

Extension
This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals in which every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in our digital society.

Challenges
This would require multilingual individuals with IT skills.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

1.6 Develop Public Technology Kiosks

Medium Term – By the end of 2019

What it is
A technology station in a public location that people frequent, such as a shopping center.

What it does
Provides technology devices, assistance, or information for the public.

Service
Technology access

Extension
This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals in which every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in our digital society.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

1.7 Develop Cross Program Certification

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
A collaborative system to streamline professional certification programs.

What it does
Creates a standardized certification program across digital organizations. Organizations that train individuals on how to use certain software can offer a certificate indicating that individual's level of skill in programs like Excel, Adobe Suite, or GCF. Those certificates will be recognized at other organizations looking for those skills. Furthermore, organizations that offer currently professional certification programs collaborate and develop professional development tracks for clients. If an individual begins the professional certification process at one program, he or she can continue their education at another organization.

Service
Professional development, digital education

Extension
This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals in which every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in our digital society.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

1.8 Offer Skills-Based Workshops

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
A collection of workshops that teach clients various skills

What it does
Teaches clients skills that are desirable in the workplace or helpful for personal knowledge. Such workshops can inform clients on online identities or consumer education resources such as financial aid and how to conduct online research. They can also teach clients the value of soft skills in the workplace using best practices.

Service
Professional development, digital education

Extension
This can address the needs of Austin residents who are unemployed or underemployed, teaching residents the skills required to fill the high-skill, high-demand jobs that are being created in Austin.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

2. Standardize digital curriculum and client needs assessments

Though numerous organizations working in the Digital Inclusion sphere in Austin have developed curricula, it would be useful to develop standardized assessments and certifications bringing additional value of the programs to clients.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

2.1 Convene a National Digital Consortium

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
A national digital consortium for service providers and non-clients to share insights, discuss challenges and learn best practices.

What it does
Helps standardize curricula, performance measurement and client support.

Service
Capacity building, training and coordination of service delivery

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

2.2 Develop an Online Content Clearinghouse

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
Forum and message board for people to request and share curriculum ideas and resources.

What it does
Creates an online portal of information based on client needs

Service
Capacity building, training and coordination of service delivery

Evaluate curriculum within DECA orgs

- Create **multilingual** content for people who speak Spanish, Vietnamese, sign language (people with hearing disabilities)
- Create review exercises

Tags could be attached to curricula to ease the finding of a curriculum specific to their needs

Artificial Intelligence customization to help determine needed curriculum -- a responsive curriculum like what Educational Technology organizations use for standardized exams

Encourage standardization by helping people adopt this curriculum.

Extension

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

2.3 Create a Digital Handbook

Medium Term – By the end of 2019

What it is
A unified data collection/Handbook use of information (with privacy issues)

A centralized collection of data housed online

What it does
Finds service provider or vehicle for online curriculum delivery

Provides materials that can be accessed from anywhere with internet connectivity

Offers mentoring opportunities

Service
Capacity building, training and coordination of service delivery

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

2.4 Create a Standardized Client Survey

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
A survey to be distributed by service providers to determine client needs.

What it does
Helps providers make determinations about client needs, demographics, and logistics. Having a standardized format for all service providers would enable providers to collect and analyze and understand common challenges for their clients served.

Service
Organizational resource

Extension
Insights drawn from data related to the survey could help directly improve the provided services as well as help the Digital Empowerment Community better understand our clients and their needs.

Challenges
Cooperation could prove difficult if other organizations do not adopt survey.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

3. Provide training resources for program trainers

Train-the-trainer processes can be enhanced by providing the instructors with additional resources such as periodic training sessions to update training with new techniques, insights and technologies.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

3.1 Create a Pool of Program Instructors

Medium Term – By the end of 2019

What it is
A pool of instructors for service providers that are organized by skills, age and availability.

What it does
Allows organizations to find the right fit for their programs, clients, and instructors themselves. This tool could be used by all groups and be curated in a way that ensures a diverse pool of volunteers. Austin Free-Net already offers a tool similar to this.

Service
Organizational Resource

Challenges
Cooperation among service providers that have already developed their own pools of instructors.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

3.2 Provide Periodic Training Sessions

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
Periodic training sessions that aim to train trainers

What it does
Connects trainers with new techniques, insights and technologies that can help them in training their clients on digital literacy.

Service
Capacity Building; Professional Development

Challenges
Time and other resources dedicated to constructing and implementing training programs

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

4. Conduct a gaps analysis on available community services

We can gain valuable knowledge to enhance our services through the creation of a gap analysis of available community services which would be provided by the Digital Empowerment Community. The analysis would be based on insights from clients as well as the service providers themselves.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

4.1 Convene a Forum

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
A community forum for clients and non-clients to assist in gaps analysis for available community services.

What it does
Allows service providers to get client and non-client feedback on issues like ensuring diversity, logistics and ownership as well as transportation. Keeping the line of communication open between service providers and the client-base is crucial to understanding barriers and collecting knowledge to implement gaps analyses.

Service
Community Outreach

Extension
By engaging with clients as well as non-clients, the City and other service providers will gain crucial insights into barriers related to transportation, language and age. This aligns with the Strategic Plan's goal of addressing potential barriers to Digital Inclusion as well as the goal of understanding the need for digital literacy training.

Challenges
If attendance is limited it will be difficult to gain credible insights to implement from gaps analysis.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

4.2 Convene Digital Service Providers

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
A forum for service providers to meet and define organizational goals to avoid overlaps and coordinate efforts.

What it does
Allows for organizations avoid gaps and overlaps in community services while also developing and facilitating strategic partnerships. It will also ask organizations to provide 2-3 specific goals they aim to achieve.

Service
Inter-Organizational Coordination and Networking

Extension
Through a coordinated effort between like-minded organizations this forum would aid in the Strategic Plan's vision for ensuring all Austin residents' inclusion in digital society.

Challenges
Affecting organizational change through this format following gaps analysis may prove difficult due to existing initiatives and goals.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

5. Develop a client outreach plan that achieves greater diversity

To expand the client-base who receive our services, it is crucial to develop an outreach plan that can be implemented across different media. To further broaden our base, it is important to leverage alternative transportation outreach programs and overcome barriers of mobility and geography.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

5.1 Advertise using different media

Short Term – By the end of 2017

What it is
Targeted marketing campaign using diverse media.

What it does
Allows Digital Inclusion service providers to more effectively reach interested individuals with different goals and interests. By utilizing old and new media as well as existing public resources (I.E. Libraries and City facilities) and various community events (I.E. Job fairs) we can develop a marketing strategy that can connect clients who need training to appropriate programming and available facilities.

Service
Digital Education Outreach

Extension
By better targeting clients we can create an inclusive outreach program that matches client needs and interests with relevant programming thus expanding the base for all Digital Inclusion initiatives. This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals in which every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in our digital society.

Challenges
Development, distribution, and coordination of marketing will require significant allocation of time and resources from Digital Inclusion office.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects

5.2 Leverage Existing Alternative Transportation Outreach Programs

Long Term – 2-4 year cycle starting in 2019

What it is
Partnership-based program to utilize alternative transportation outreach programs to address transportation barriers for clients.

What it does
Coordinates efforts between alternative transportation outreach service providers and digital inclusion providers to provide free or low cost transportation options for clients.

Service
Transportation

Extension
This aligns with the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's identification of Transportation as a Community Asset and its recommendation that addressing transportation convenience is essential in solving issues of digital access.

Challenges
Alternative transportation services and infrastructure are limited in many areas and efforts to leverage existing programs could be limited until barriers are reduced.

Source: DECA Prioritized Projects