Executive Summary

With the surge of public and private funds being infused into local communities for digital equity, we have an unprecedented opportunity to expand the breadth and reach of resources and services as nonprofits, philanthropy and government take an all-hands-on-deck approach to close the digital divide. As a national leader in digital inclusion with 10 years of experience in closing the digital divide, EveryoneOn is uniquely qualified to take the lead on such an effort.

The *Digital Communities* training delivered by EveryoneOn with the support of the Michelson 20MM Foundation served 18 organizations across California, most of which have not traditionally engaged in digital inclusion work. Through this effort, we found that:

- Organizations recognize the importance of digital inclusion/equity work as intersectional to improved educational, economic, and health outcomes
- Many direct service organizations and professionals are only somewhat aware of existing digital inclusion resources, such as the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) subsidy for eligible households
- Staff and organizational capacity are key barriers for organizations not focused on digital inclusion/equity to engage in this work
- Technical assistance and support is critical to ensure success for diverse organizations beginning to engage in digital inclusion/equity work

With a place-based framework to leverage, EveryoneOn can foster long-term change by establishing ecosystems comprised of nonprofits, anchor institutions, community-based organizations, elected officials, community leaders and others that can braid their resources to fully support the needs of the community and move the needle on closing the digital divide.

What is the most pressing digital inclusion challenge facing the community/communities you serve?

- Access to affordable internet: 35%
- Limited digital inclusion resources in a language other than English: 15%
- Access to devices: 10%
- Limited digital skills: 10%
- Limited or lack of digital inclusion technical assistance or support for staff: 10%
- Multiple selections: 20%
Project Description

Supported by The Michelson 20MM Digital Equity Spark Grant, EveryoneOn embarked on an effort to develop a new curriculum and a toolkit to build the capacity of diverse organizations in California to drive digital equity in their communities through a train-the-trainer model.

To understand the needs of cross-sector stakeholders that would benefit from the training, we held listening tour sessions in 2021 with organizations that had previously worked with us and those that had expressed interest in capacity building training, including graduate students studying social work, community health workers in public housing and nonprofit staff members. We learned that previous iterations of our capacity building trainings were successful by incorporating the following elements:

- Engagement of attendees at the start of the training about their personal or professional interest and connection to EveryoneOn’s mission and digital inclusion/digital equity work
- Space for in-depth conversations about the impact of the digital divide on healthcare, education, workforce development and other life functions, etc. from both national and local perspectives
- Role playing outreach scenarios where participants practiced communicating the importance of being connected with their neighbors/clients, which in turn could lead to a successful new adoption of internet service

Additionally, listening tour respondents shared that EveryoneOn’s “national in scope, but locally focused” expertise as practitioners helped organizations that have not previously engaged in digital equity work feel confident that they would be providing reputable and accessible resources to their clients.

"The digital inclusion resources shared during the Digital Communities training have been instrumental for our members, who many times do not know about these programs available to them. They are making a positive impact in the lives of the members we serve everyday in our programs.”

- CARLOS VASQUEZ, LIFT LOS ANGELES

Which best describes your organization’s current digital inclusion efforts?

- Delivering digital skills or digital literacy training
- Enrolling clients/participants in low-cost internet and device options
- Generating awareness of low-cost internet and device options
- No current efforts or unsure if any
- Participating in local, regional, state, and/or federal digital inclusion advocacy efforts
In early 2022, EveryoneOn developed a new curriculum and resource toolkit designed with the above insights in mind, and added additional content tailored to the needs of the community based on feedback from partners from other facets of our work. This includes our Digital Connections basic digital skills trainings for individual community members and EveryoneOn’s national research project, completed in 2022. Additionally, we retained the support of a consultant to redesign our measurement and evaluation tools for capacity building training, ensuring a consistent feedback loop once staff began delivery of the trainings.

Beginning in Summer 2022, staff members began delivery of the new Digital Communities capacity building training to organizations that were interested in participating. We were able to share the opportunity via social media as well as with announcements to local digital equity coalitions and supporters such as the Los Angeles Digital Equity Action League, Digital Marin, Greenlight Fund and The Greenlining Institute/Oakland Undivided Initiative.

Due to continued limitations as a result of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic uncertainties, EveryoneOn delivered six hours of training content via virtual sessions over Zoom to cross-sector partner organizations based in Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

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**Project Partners**

EveryoneOn facilitated Digital Communities training sessions for 18 cross-sector stakeholders in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, of which 11 participated in the entire training program. At least five of the organizations have a regional and/or statewide reach which increases the number of residents/clients that will benefit from the resources and tools shared during the trainings. Participating organizations included:

- Alliance for a Better Community (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- Asian Prisoner Support Committee (Northern California/Bay Area)
- Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (Northern California/Bay Area)
- Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- Communities in Schools (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- El Tímapano (Northern California/Bay Area)
- Front Porch - Los Angeles (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- Hub Cities Consortium (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- HumanGood (Northern California/Bay Area)
- Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (Statewide)
- LIFT Los Angeles (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- Mayor’s Office, City of Los Angeles - Los Angeles Promise Zone (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- Northern California College Promise Coalition (Northern California/Bay Area)
- Para Los Niños (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- Proyecto Pastoral (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- Southeast Community Development Corporation (Southern California/Los Angeles)
- The Unity Council (Northern California/Bay Area)
Collectively, the organizations supported clients from the following populations:

- K-12 parents/guardians
- Seniors/elders
- Immigrants
- Reentry/returning citizens
- Unemployed/underemployed individuals
- Residents of public housing
- High school students and recent high school graduates

“"The training was very extensive, and it gave me knowledge of the various services and programs available to community members who are still struggling with the digital divide. It also provided various resources that are now made available to members which include free hardware, software and trainings.””
- ANONYMOUS

Curriculum Design and Implementation

The Digital Communities training is designed to highlight EveryoneOn’s expertise as digital inclusion practitioners to benefit cross-sector organizations who may not normally engage in digital equity work. The training is tailored to each partner organization’s needs and covers the following topics:

- The Digital Divide and its Impacts
- Digital Inclusion: Current Landscape
- Low-cost Internet Service and Device Options
- Digital Literacy Curricula and Best Practices
- Outreach Strategies for Diverse Populations
- Preparing for Implementation
- Digital Inclusion and Community Resources

As part of this project, six hours of content was delivered in three, two-hour Zoom meetings to allow for online engagement and discussion between EveryoneOn staff and participants. Additionally, training attendees were provided access to an online Digital Inclusion Toolkit developed alongside our training with information and links to other digital inclusion resources.

Six organizations also took advantage of the opportunity to develop a sample implementation plan as part of our Digital Communities training, and shared those plans with the EveryoneOn team. These plans outline strategies that each organization envisions putting in place to ensure that the clients/constituents that they serve will be provided the information and resources shared during the training. Many of them will be looking to implement various digital inclusion activities reaching 10-4,000 people, including:

- Increasing awareness of low-cost internet and device offers
- Designing a general presentation on digital equity
- Developing and delivering digital skills trainings within their own organizations
HERE’S WHAT’S ON THE RESPONDENTS’ MINDS

100% of respondents rated being “Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied” with the training.

75% of respondents indicated that organizational capacity is one of the biggest challenges to continuing digital inclusion/equity work. Funding was also lifted up as a need to continue these efforts.

ONLY 55% responded that their organizations currently engaged in any digital equity work.

Respondents suggested that EveryoneOn should encourage organizations to invite multiple team members to ensure that everyone is on the same page about the importance of the work and to facilitate implementation efforts.

Lessons Learned

The experience of delivering capacity building training to organizations through this project continues to impact and inform our digital equity work as digital inclusion practitioners. Our Digital Communities training will continue to evolve and be updated to meet the needs of our partners and reflect the realities of digital inclusion/equity work. As diverse stakeholders continue to engage in efforts that are not in their traditional scope but intersectional to their own missions, EveryoneOn, other organizations and funders offering and promoting capacity building must:

1. Gain a deep understanding of the organizations and the staff being served to ensure that training materials are responsive to the needs of the communities they support by integrating feedback loops and allowing flexibility on the delivery of the content

2. Connect digital inclusion and digital equity to other social determinants and outcomes, such as financial literacy, healthcare, education, workforce development and other areas of life
Consider providing financial support in the forms of stipends or subgrants to allow organizations the flexibility for additional capacity and engagement in new and unfamiliar efforts outside their traditional scope of work.

Design marketing strategies to ensure that organizations and potential attendees understand the value of the training and perspectives offered, particularly within digital inclusion, especially as many new entities enter the space.

Encourage organizations to invite cross-functional team members directly involved with program or service delivery to participate in capacity building trainings.

Facilitate trainings in a format that allows for attendees to truly understand information presented. For example, due to continued uncertainties around the COVID-19 pandemic, EveryoneOn delivered trainings virtually. However, we anticipate better engagement with in-person trainings where attendees can interact with each other and the content with minimal distractions.

**Conclusion**

Thanks to the support from The Michelson 20MM Foundation, EveryoneOn was able to build a more robust, outcome and impact driven capacity-building curriculum that can be tailored and taken to scale across the U.S. There is an opportunity for continued evolution of our curriculum for specific objectives, for example, with a focus on engaging and investing in community members as advocates for digital equity. With new organizations entering the digital inclusion space everyday, EveryoneOn sees this moment as an opportunity to influence new digital inclusion leaders and set organizations and communities up for success.

We look forward to continued engagement with nonprofits, anchor institutions, community leaders and policy makers to ensure that technical assistance and support is part of the conversation on closing the digital divide and achieving digital equity.

Visit our website at [everyoneon.org/digital-communities](http://everyoneon.org/digital-communities) for our live Digital Inclusion Toolkit developed alongside this report.