

Dakota County Intelligent Community
Digital Inclusion Working Group
10.9.2009

Group members present: Steve Ditschler (team lead), David Anderson, Carrie Amann, Bruce Nordquist, Todd Bornhauser, Jeff Weisensel, Michael Kelley, Peggy Johnson

1. Committee members reviewed the benchmarking submittal and analysis, paying particular attention to the data pertaining to digital inclusion.

Report indicated that Dakota County did not have a strategy for digital inclusion. We are implementing things, but they are not necessarily connected to a strategy.

Steve Ditschler stated his belief that Dakota County could possibly have access to financial resources and funding to support digital inclusion once we develop a strategy.

It was noted that Dakota County has computers available in a number of public locations, such as libraries. However, having computers without training is not effective for marginalized populations in our county.

2. Committee members received a draft copy of a goal statement which was reviewed and adopted as written, with the opportunity to revisit it at a later date should any committee member wish to suggest revisions or changes.

Goal: Create and maintain an environment that enables all citizens to access the network and equips them with the skills to make use of technology tools and information.

3. How do we get to be a "5"?

Committee members discussed the possibility of looking at strategies from effective communities. Dakota County may be able to adapt ideas that we feel would work in our community.

There are some examples in the packets. A question was posed: Do we need to access examples via website or can we be provided with a hard copy? This question was posed to Robert Bell, who said he would be able to provide the group with some general information on best practices from other communities.

Committee members provided email addressed to the recorder, so information could be shared electronically. Members committed to reading information when received via-email so they could come to future meeting(s) prepared for discussion.

Dakota County could still come up with unique strategies and initiatives, but the committee would like to begin by looking at these best practices ideas from communities that are functioning at a level "5".

Dakota County could take a look at our current initiatives as reported and use them as a starting point for creating an over arching strategy for the county.

There are different dynamics when working County-wide vs. City-wide.

We're all doing something, just not planful and aligned with each other.

A question was posed: Using the information in the report as a baseline, can we put numbers on our data. For example data shows there are computers at the library, can we show how many are being used, why, how often, by whom? Quantity and quality measures.

Could we incorporate some type of survey on publicly used computers to better understand their use/users in an effort to quantify and qualify?

- Many computers are currently being used by dislocated workers for job search due to the high speed (not dial-up) available at public sites such as library.

Just because we write a strategy, does not mean we have to follow it. Who is responsible for the follow through?

Once designated as a "top 7", where does it go from there? How long does this designation last?

Apple Valley has purposely stayed away from strategies for certain initiatives. We need to see the strategic framework for this initiative.

Apple Valley busses kids to school to have access to computers and resources . . . what do we do for the rest of the community to ensure access?

Should we focus on getting people to locations or fiber to the homes?

- These are different strategies, though one could be an interim strategy to attain the other.
- How can Dakota County create overall inclusiveness for people without access?

4. Who else might be engaged in this topic and interested in participating?

- University of Minnesota (umore park)
- Dakota County Extension (outreach to communities, capable of delivering)
- Townships
- Non profits (CAP, CAC)
- ECCE
- Worship Communities