

A Collective Vision for Digital Inclusion

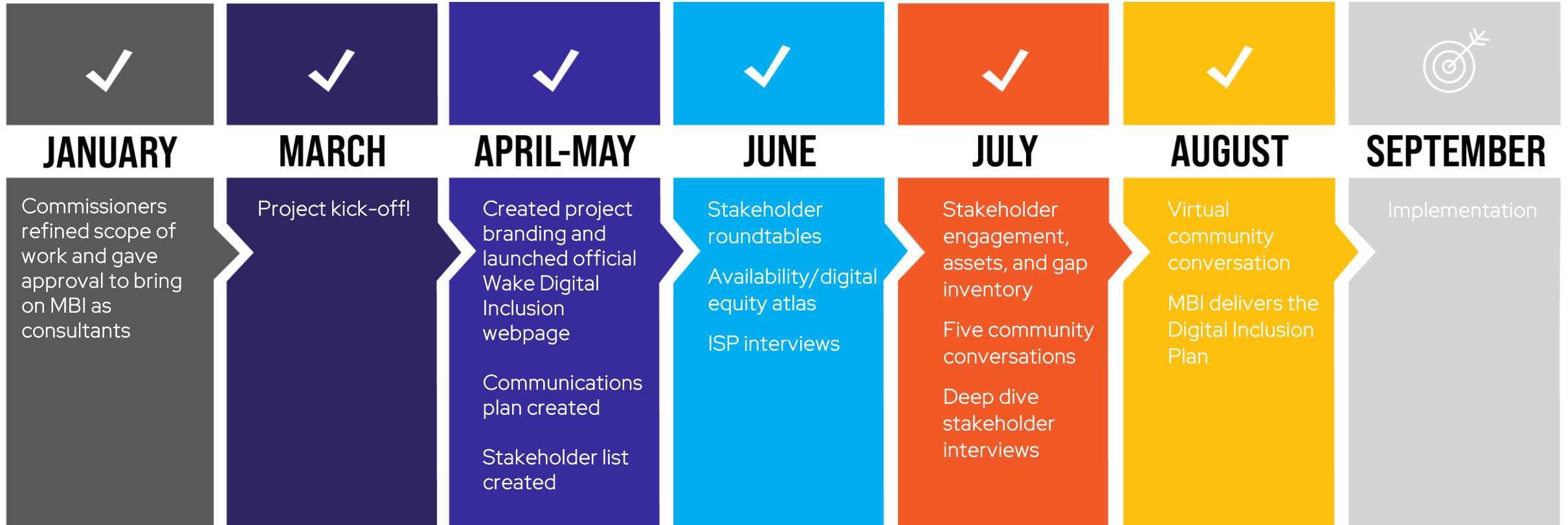
FINAL REPORT

Board of Commissioners Meeting

September 9, 2024



Project Timeline

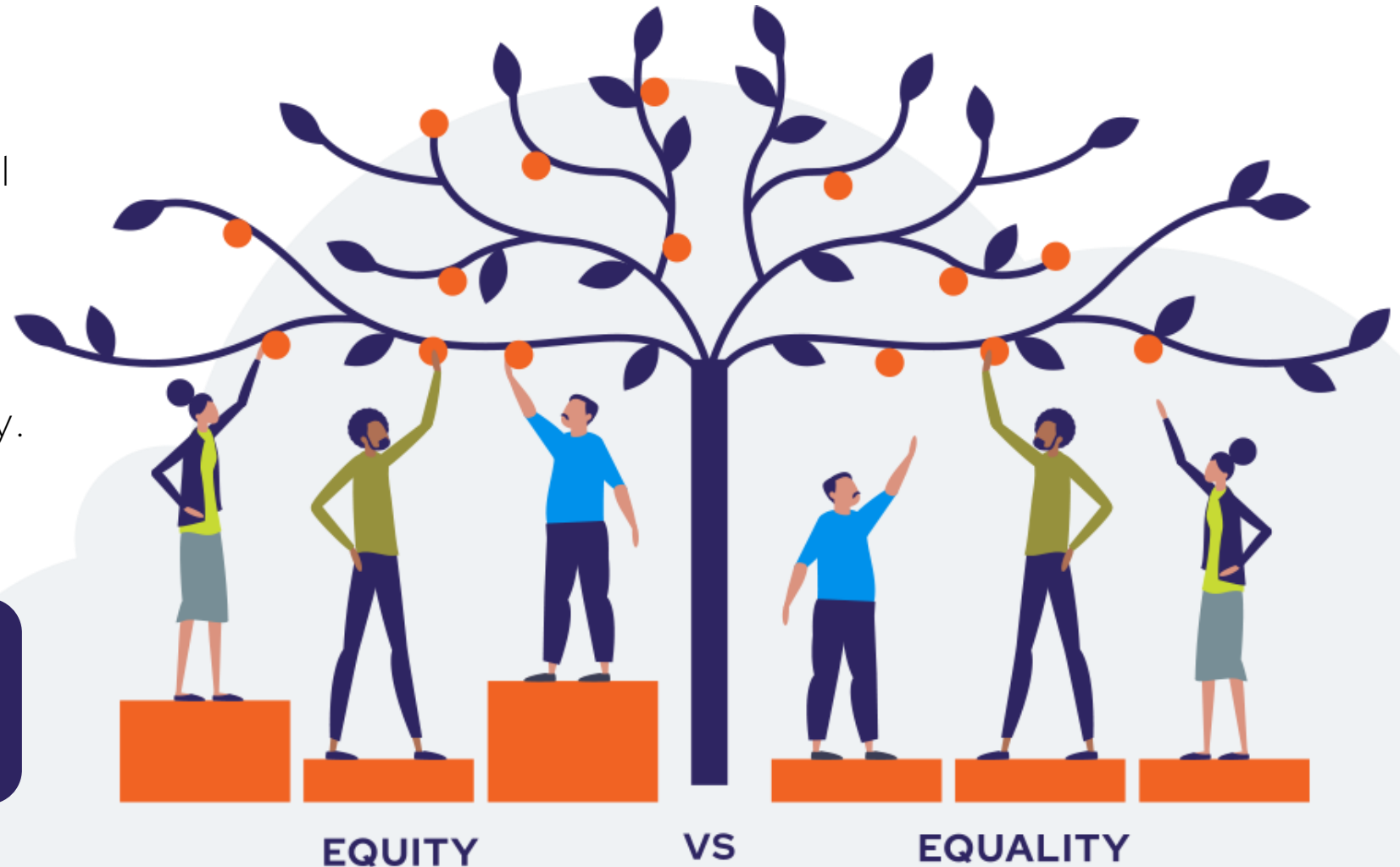


Digital Equity vs. Digital Inclusion

Digital equity is the desired outcome where all individuals have the necessary technology and skills to succeed in our digital society.

Digital Inclusion refers to the practical steps that are taken to provide access to devices, skills training and internet connectivity.

Essentially, **digital inclusion** is the means to achieving digital equity.



Who We Engaged

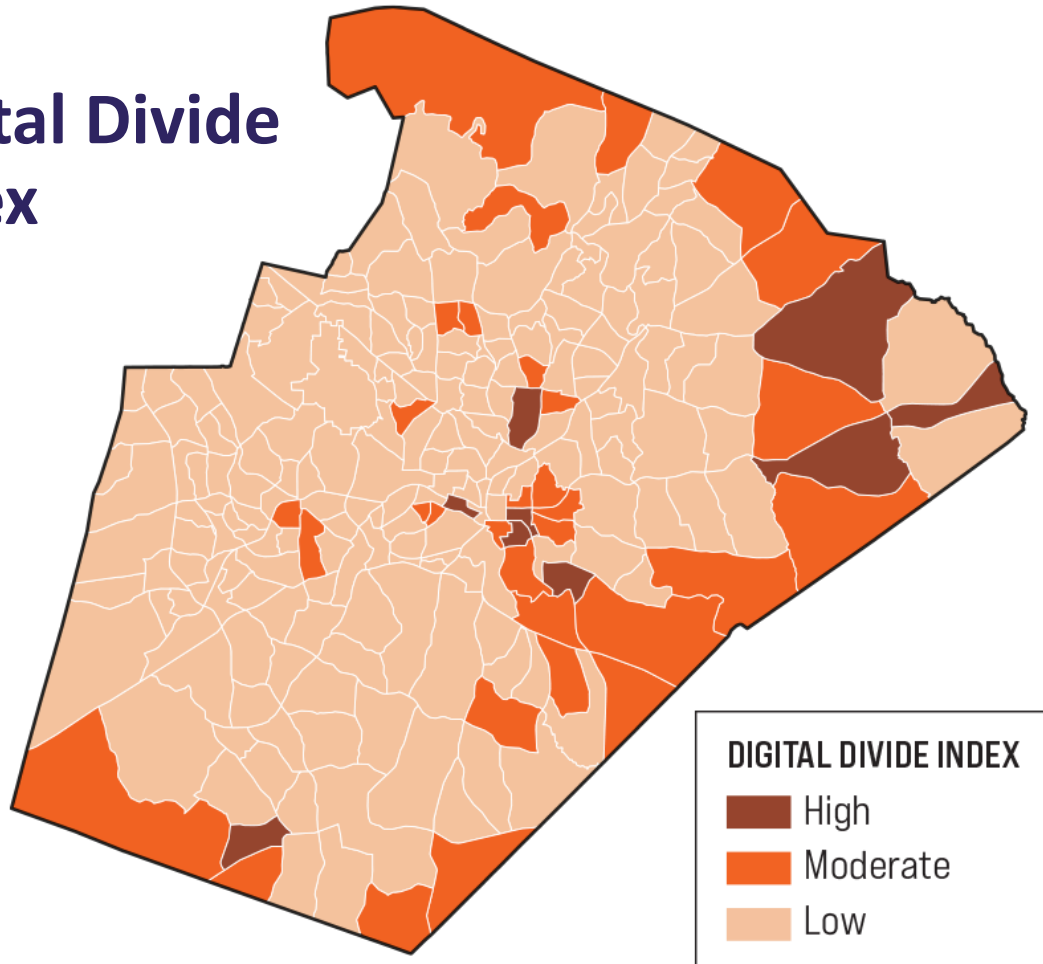
- AARP
- AARP NC
- ARMS PTSA
- Bear Brown & Company
- Central Pines Regional Council
- City of Raleigh
- Click! Photography Festival
- Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society
- High Tides Consulting
- HUBZone Technology Initiative
- Human-I-T
- Kramden Institute
- L.U.V Enterprises Presents LLC
- McCants LLC
- North Carolina Department of Information Technology
- North Raleigh Ministries
- One More Child
- Peace Place LLC
- Raleigh Little Theatre
- Renewed Strength Counseling
- RTI International
- Signature Events LLC
- SLID (nonprofit), Burt+Brewington
- The Resiliency Collaborative
- Thompson Executive Coaching
- Town of Apex
- Triangle Aphasia Project Unlimited
- Urban One
- Wake County
- Wake County Health and Human Services
- Wake County Public Libraries
- Wake County Register of Deeds
- Wake Forest High School
- Wee Care Children's Enrichment
- Women's Center of Wake County

PLUS, MORE THAN 140
WAKE COUNTY RESIDENTS



What We've Learned

Digital Divide Index



WAKE COUNTY CENSUS FINDINGS



24,968

HOUSEHOLDS
HAVE NO INTERNET
SUBSCRIPTION



6,902

HOUSEHOLDS
DO NOT OWN
A COMPUTER

What We Heard

“Without action, **the digital divide** could become permanent.”

“We see residents of all ages who are not being prepared to identify scams and **falling prey to financial and/or identity theft.**”

“**Special needs equipment** can be unaffordable for those who need it.”

“Many low-income families have to make decisions about what bills get paid, and especially without the **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**, the internet bill gets is often first to get cut.”

“Without **proper training and access to internet**, many senior citizens and immigrants similarly can't access Medicaid, attend medical appointments, apply for jobs, or file paperwork to apply for housing.”



Key Project Themes

Three consistent themes emerged across all the Community Conversations as critical factors:



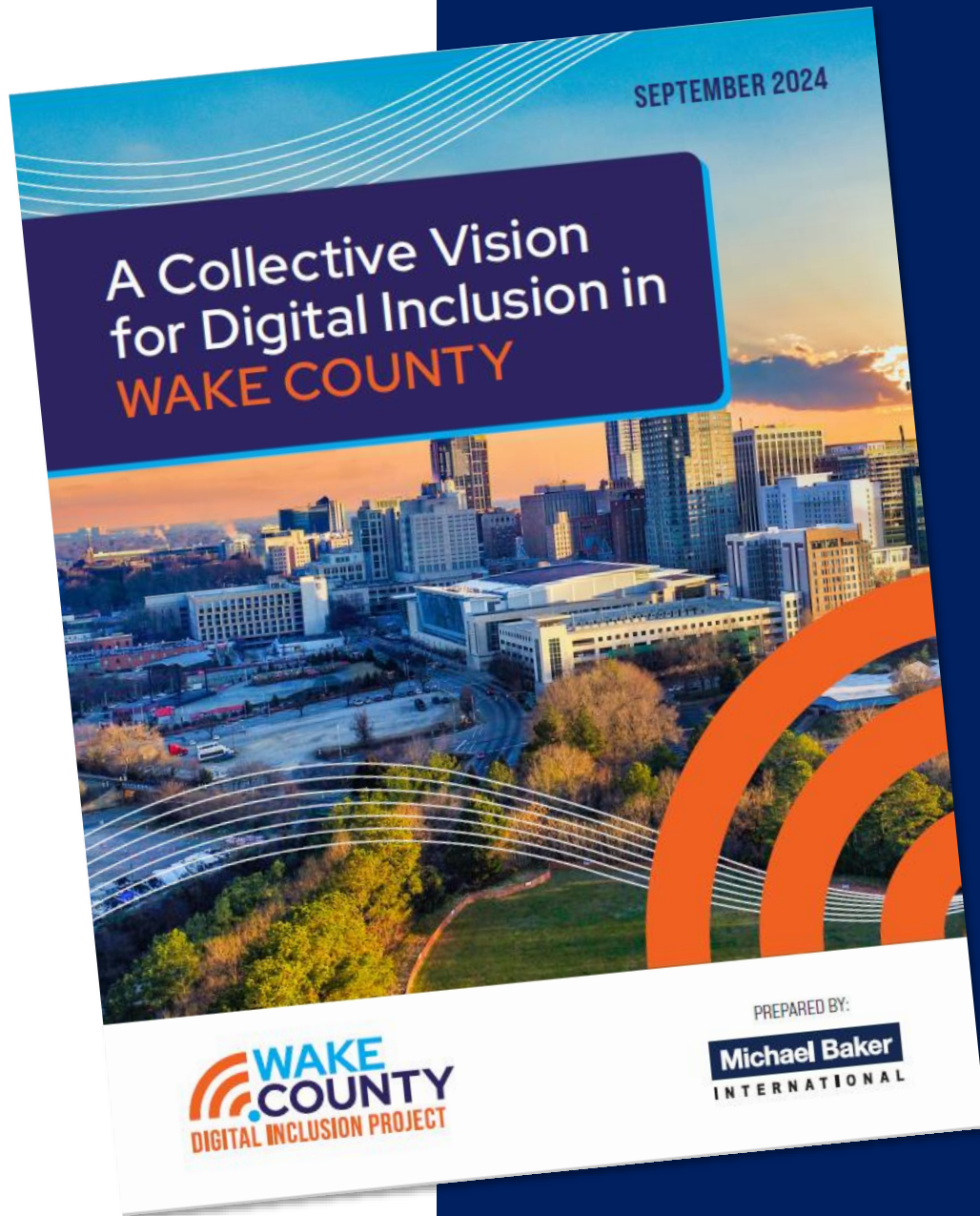
1. **ACCESS:** Participants frequently highlight that many individuals lack reliable internet access, which limits access to educational opportunities, employment, and essential services.



2. **AFFORDABILITY:** Discussions reveal that high costs for internet service and digital devices prevent many from obtaining the technology needed for participation in the digital world. Affordability issues are expressed by both those in underserved areas and those who can access high-speed internet but struggle to cover the associated expenses.



3. **DIGITAL SKILLS:** There is a necessity of digital fluency and skills. Participants emphasize that even with access and affordability addressed, individuals must possess the skills to use digital technologies effectively.



Final Report

Working to Achieve Your Vision

Building off the vision set forth in the North Carolina Digital Equity Plan (2024), the Plan outlines the current state of digital inclusion in Wake County. It captures residents' needs, provides information about many community-based and government organizations that offer digital skills courses and devices, and highlights the gaps where county and community partners need to focus on bridging the digital divide.

The final report is now complete and ready for your review.

Digital Inclusion Plan Goals

- In order to realize the collective vision for digital inclusion in Wake County, we have developed goals and strategies that are designed to address critical aspects of the digital divide.
- Each strategy is attached to near-term (3 months), short-term (1 year) and long-term (3-5 years) implementation timelines.



GOAL 1: Accessibility
and Affordability of
Broadband



GOAL 2: Accessibility
of Devices and
Inclusivity of Resources



GOAL 3: Adoption and
Digital Fluency



GOAL 4: Sustainable
Digital Equity in Wake
County

Project Recommendations



- Identify resources to move the Plan forward including networking, **promoting and growing successful digital inclusion programs** in training, device lending, and more.
- Look at **funding opportunities** at federal and state levels for digital inclusion projects.
- **Grow partnerships** with the City of Raleigh, Kramden Institute, regional and local community-based organizations, agencies, institutes of higher learning, nonprofits, training providers, individuals, and more that support goals.
- Adopt mechanisms to **ensure the Plan is regularly evaluated** and updated.

Thank You!



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