

Adult Literacy, Digital Literacy
and the National Broadband Plan

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National Coalition for Literacy
Quarterly Membership Meeting, May 12, 2011



National Broadband Plan
Key Issues

- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Healthcare
- Energy and the Environment
- Government Performance
- Civic Engagement
- Public Safety

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National Broadband Plan
Adoption and Utilization

- 65% of Americans have broadband at home
- 40% of low-income (< \$20,000/year)
- 24% of those without high school diplomas
- 50% of rural Americans
- 35% of older Americans (65+)
- 42% of people with disabilities
- 59% of African Americans
- 49% of Hispanics

FCC Consumer Survey, 2009


National Broadband Plan
Adoption and Utilization



Barriers

- Cost
- Digital Literacy
- Relevance

National Broadband Plan
Digital Literacy Recommendations



“Recommendation 9.3: The federal government should launch a *National Digital Literacy Program* that creates a *Digital Literacy Corps*, increases the capacity of *digital literacy partners* and creates an Online *Digital Literacy Portal*.”

Digital Literacy Working Group



 U.S. Department of Commerce	 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 U.S. Department of Education	 U.S. Department of Labor
 U.S. Department of Energy	 Institute of Museum and Library Services
 Federal Communications Commission	 Corporation for National Service
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	 U.S. Department of Agriculture






Opportunity for Adult Education

- Digital literacy as a cross-agency initiative offers opportunities for strategic partnerships
- Focus on digital inclusion of vulnerable populations creates opportunities for coordinated services
- Interests in tutoring and community partnerships draw on adult education expertise

Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)

Following a rigorous application and review process, NTIA invested approximately \$4.4 billion in 233 BTOP projects benefiting every state, territory, and the District of Columbia, including:


- 123 infrastructure projects totaling \$3.5 billion in Federal grant funds to construct broadband networks
- 66 public computer center (PCC) projects totaling \$201 million in Federal grant funds to provide access to broadband, computer equipment, computer training, job training, and educational resources to the public and specific vulnerable populations
- 44 sustainable broadband adoption (SBA) projects totaling \$251 million in Federal grant funds to support innovative projects that promote broadband adoption, especially among vulnerable population groups where broadband technology traditionally has been underutilized


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Learner Web Partnership:
A Multi-state Support System for
Broadband Adoption for Vulnerable Adults






Project Purpose

Address primary barriers to broadband use:

- Affordability
- Lack of digital literacy skills
- Perceived lack of relevance to daily lives, needs, and aspirations


Primary target population:

- Low-income adults, often without a high school education, including immigrant communities




Partners

- Portland State University: project lead & Learner Web host
- Minnesota Literacy Council: content developer for learners
- ProLiteracy Worldwide: content developer for tutor training
- Subrecipients with networks of community partners:
 - Richmond Public Library (Richmond CA)
 - Goodwill of Southeast Louisiana (New Orleans)
 - Minnesota Literacy Council (4 cities in MN)
 - Cayuga Community College (18 Literacy Zones across NY state)
 - Literacy Coalition of Central Texas (3 counties in Austin TX area)
 - South Texas College (2 counties in McAllen TX area)

 **Learner Web - BTOP States**

State	% Internet users	Rank among 50 states & DC
California	67.1	35
Louisiana	60.5	48
Minnesota	76.1	5
New York	66.1	38
Texas	60.4	49

Current Population Survey, 2009

 **Program Outcomes**


- 23,000+ new adults will understand broadband, including ways to access it in their homes & communities.
- Many of the adults will develop the digital literacy skills needed to use computers and broadband and begin job search and career exploration.

 **Timeline**


- October 2010 - March 2011: Start-up
 - Develop and pilot Learning Plans for learners (*Digital Literacy; Broadband Consumer Education*) and tutors
 - Hire and orient staff
 - Recruit, train, and place community tutors
 - Develop student recruitment procedures
- April 2011 - March 2013: Service delivery
 - Adults access Learning Plans in public computer centers with support from community tutors
 - Develop *Intro to Career Pathways* Learning Plan
 - On-going recruitment of adult learners & tutors

 **Learner and Tutor**

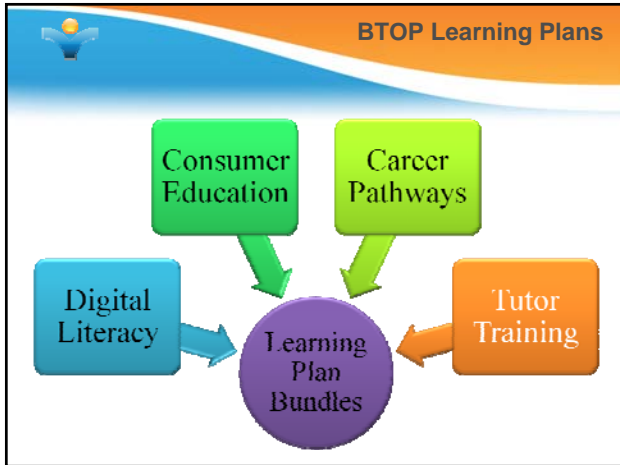


 **Project Approach**

- Self-paced learning in public computer labs
 - Fits some learners better than synchronized classes where everyone must progress at same pace
- Support from technology *and* tutors
 - Tutors trained by and familiar with technology
- Content customized to learners
 - Language
 - Location
 - Background knowledge, skills and interests

 **LearnerWeb** **Research Origins**

- A longitudinal study was conducted of about 1,000 high school dropouts over a 9-year period
- Individuals often have educational or occupational goals but lack realistic plans to reach them
- Learner Web provides web-based *Learning Plans* that adults follow, providing structured access to *customized* resources, both online and in their local communities
- Learning Plans have roles for teachers, tutors, counselors and others who interact with Learners as they move from one program or setting to another
- Learner Web is a tool for cross-sector collaboration to wrap support services around Learners, combining for example case management with learning support



Richmond Public Library, CA

--Jose goes to library lab for computer access
--Learning need: To gain Internet skills with bilingual supports

--Tutor and Jose work through BTOP intake process
--Jose gets a customized Learning Plan in the Digital Literacy cluster

Photo courtesy of dipnet.com

Jose's Learner Profile

Update Your Profile

3. Email
james@gmail.com

4. Preferred Language
Español

5. Age
24

6. Lab Location
Richmond Library (CARL)

7. Region
Richmond

Save and Close

LearnerWeb Language Customization

- José prefers to learn in Spanish
- He sometimes switches into English to practice and back into Spanish when needed
- The interface, content, resources and workspace forms & interactive activities switch languages
- The Digital Literacy and Broadband Consumer Education Learning Plans are available in English and Spanish
- Other languages can readily be added

Customized Learning Plans


--Rose is from South Texas

--Karen is from Louisiana

Photos courtesy of clipart.com


LearnerWeb Resource Customization

- Rose and Karen happen to be working on the same step of a Broadband Consumer Education Learning Plan
- Let's see how each is shown different Resources based on their location
- Customizations can be based on other Learner characteristics - for example, reading level, personal interests, etc.
- Learning to do internet searches, for example, is based on personal interests such as family health, job search, etc.



Clusters of Learning Plans

- GED
- ELL
- Citizenship
- Workforce Development
- College Success and Advising
- College Transition
- Professional Development
- Digital Literacy
- Broadband Consumer Education
- Coming soon:
 - Family Literacy
 - Introduction to Career Pathways



Strategic Paths


- **Community Collaboration**
 - Cross-sector, learner-centered
- **Postsecondary Success**
 - Transition pathways
 - Blended extra-curricular support
- **Professional Development**
 - Teacher, tutor, mentor support
 - Sustained & just-in-time PD



Community Collaboration


Examples

- New York: *Literacy Zones*
- Minnesota: *FastTrac*
- Richmond CA: *Richmond Builds*

 **Postsecondary Success**


Examples

- Minnesota: Accuplacer prep
- Portland State: “Headstart” for science
- Community College of DC: *Next Generation Learning Challenges*

 **Professional Development**

Examples

- LINCS: Numerous Learning Plans
- Portland State: ESL tutors & teachers
- ELL-U: Considering Learner Web for sustained PD in teacher clubs

 **Contacts**

National Broadband Plan
www.broadband.gov/plan

Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
www2.ntia.doc.gov

Learner Web
www.learnerweb.org

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