



May 02, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Summer Hess, Digital Equity Project Manager, 509-828-0462

**COMMUNITY LEADERS ENCOURAGED TO GET INVOLVED IN DIGITAL EQUITY:
FEEDBACK NEEDED BY MAY 12**

WENATCHEE, WA – The NCW Digital Access and Equity Coalition, along with the Digital Equity Plan Work Group for Chelan, Douglas, and Grant counties, invites community-based organizations to get involved in upcoming efforts to achieve digital equity in North Central Washington. “The pandemic created broader awareness, urgency, along with State and Federal resources for bridging the digital divide. We have a key opportunity to work collectively to identify local needs and open up access for regional funding in the future”, Jenny Rojanasthien, Executive Director of NCW Tech Alliance. Adding, “We are asking community leaders to provide their input or time, especially with the survey by May 12.”

These teams are working together and have identified several ways for stakeholders to contribute to digital equity work in the region over the next weeks and months:

1. Complete the Digital Equity Asset Survey in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) by May 12, to help inform regional Digital Equity Plans and offer a framework for planning and implementing projects to expand broadband infrastructure and promote digital equity for everyone in our communities. Counties will become more competitive for several large-scale funding opportunities after submitting these inventories to the Broadband Action Office. Any and all organizations completing digital equity work in Chelan, Douglas, and Grant counties are invited and encouraged to complete this survey.
2. Participate in NCW Tech Help and learn about the Digital Navigator Program. Through the end of June, Community Health Plan of Washington is offering training for community-based organizations to become digital navigators. Qualified organizations can receive a \$500 grant per employee who enrolls in a four-hour Digital Navigator training. Learn more about NCW Tech Help and register your interest in a future Digital Navigator Training on this [interest form](#).
3. Join the Digital Equity Plan Work Group to help review the region's submission to the State Digital Equity Plan and provide valuable insights on local assets and areas of concern regarding digital equity. To learn more, email techhelp@ncwtech.org, and request Zoom details for a kick-off call on Friday, May 5 at 12:00. Participants are expected to give 1 hour per week to the review process, and all feedback is due on May 30 by 5pm.

The NCW Digital Access and Equity Coalition is led by NCW Tech Alliance, in partnership with Community Health Network of Washington, Thriving Together NCW (formerly North Central Accountable Community of Health), and Bigfoot Telecommunications of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. Broadly, the group's initiatives are labeled NCW Tech Help to ensure the general public can easily understand the initiative's goals. The coalition is still in its early stage of development with a plan to fully launch Fall 2023. The initiative serves Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan counties and is funded by the Washington State Department of Commerce, Office of Broadband.

NCW Tech Alliance is taking the lead in building the Digital Equity Plan Work Groups for Chelan, Douglas, and Grant counties. NCW Tech Alliance has subcontracted with Our Valley Our Future to provide additional leadership and expertise. Chelan County PUD is taking the lead in developing a Broadband Infrastructure Plan for Chelan County.

NCW Digital Access and Equity Coalition along with the Digital Equity Plan Work Group emphasized that achieving digital equity requires a coordinated, regional approach, and it will take all of us to address the digital divide in North Central Washington. They urge organizations to participate in the above initiatives to make a meaningful impact on the region's digital equity.

"We are grateful for the community's support and interest in digital equity. We encourage all stakeholders to get involved in the initiatives outlined above to help us achieve digital equity in our region," said Gerardo Perez, Steering Committee Member and Regional Manager of the Community Health Plan of Washington.

For more information about ongoing digital equity initiatives in North Central Washington, please contact Summer Hess at techhelp@ncwtech.org or visit www.ncwtech.org/techhelp.

About NCW Tech Alliance

Since 1999, NCW Tech Alliance has served as the region's tech alliance, championing growth and development in North Central Washington. As a 501(c)3, NCW Tech Alliance's mission is to bring together people and resources in technology, entrepreneurship, and STEM education. For more information visit www.ncwtech.org

####