



## Jefferson County Strategic Technology Plan

### A. Executive Summary

#### Purpose

This document provides a “road map” for technology-based growth and economic development in Jefferson County through ConnectKentucky’s findings and recommendations related to an assessment of Jefferson County’s technology needs, particularly related to community centers and their computer needs for children and families and information technology. ConnectKentucky helps Kentuckians use technology as a means to achieve personal transformation. ConnectKentucky’s mission focuses on all age groups of citizens across the Bluegrass. Its work through the No Child Left Offline (NCLO) Program improves the lives of children across the state who are left behind in the digital divide age. NCLO, with assistance from private partners, corporate foundations and state government, places Internet-ready computers in the hands of economically disadvantaged children to leverage technology for the benefit of Kentucky’s children and their futures. By leveraging the latest in technology and networking, ConnectKentucky is ensuring Kentucky remains the place of choice to work, live, and raise a family.

#### Summary

To address the technology challenge in metropolitan areas, ConnectKentucky is helping to facilitate comprehensive technology expansion efforts that both enhance the supply of available technology and create demand by catalyzing a grassroots awareness campaign. ConnectKentucky sees effective technological deployment as a means of delivering dramatic results that translate into economic development, more efficient public service and improved quality of life.

Technological advancement is dramatically changing the face of metropolitan communities, particularly in education, government, healthcare and business. However, the digital divide is cutting across socioeconomic lines and separating higher-income communities with technology access from low-income communities. This widening chasm is recognizable by the discrepancies in computer usage and technology adoption rates. With an effective digital inclusion program, disadvantaged areas of urban communities can participate in the global economy via high-speed Internet access and other related technologies. These low-income communities can be identified as neighborhoods in which the median family income (MFI) for the census tract does not exceed 80 percent of the greater of statewide MFI or the metropolitan area’s MFI, or subsidized housing communities, Hope IV revitalized projects and other low income neighborhoods.

Kentucky's NCLC Program supports local projects for the use of technology for education and enabling students to access Internet resources. The purpose of the projects is to help bridge the digital divide in an urban setting by providing computers to community-centered organizations. Since research suggests that after-school hours are the peak times for risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, it is imperative that children are awarded opportunities to use this time constructively by doing homework, research and exploring their online talents in various organizations while in a safe environment provided by community centers, Boys and Girls Clubs and other similar organizations. Not only will these computers be beneficial to students, but to their families and some community-based organizations as well.

### Methodology

Jefferson County's NCLC Community Team and Sponsors are leading the way into a new economy for Jefferson County, working in partnership with ConnectKentucky.

## **B. Why Does This Matter?**

Technological advancement is dramatically changing the face of metropolitan communities, particularly in education, government, healthcare and business. With an effective Digital Inclusion Program (DIP), disadvantaged areas of urban communities can participate in the global economy via high-speed Internet access and other related technologies.

## **C. Where Are We and Where Are We Going?**

ConnectKentucky recognizes six key strategies for creating and executing a successful digital inclusion plan for low-income housing communities.

1. Promote technology as an effective method for fostering economic development in low-income communities.
2. Accelerate availability and technology use to create a more effective community with improved healthcare, enhanced education and a tech-savvy workforce.
3. Create local public-private partnerships centered around low-income communities with community-based organizations, public agencies, businesses and educational entities that help residents in low-income neighborhoods create effective strategies for using technologies that give them access to the global economy.
4. Promote technologies within community-based organizations that allow children and their families to access educational resources after school hours.
5. Work with public-private partnerships to facilitate a meaningful online presence for all low-income housing communities that improves citizen services, provides access to global Internet resources and promotes economic development through e-government, virtual education and online healthcare.
6. Facilitate dialogue between residents, businesses, government and other stakeholders using technology applications such as e-government.

## **D. How Do We Get There?**

To facilitate digital inclusion, ConnectKentucky recommends nine tactical steps that lead to the formation of a comprehensive strategy for the dramatic improvement of quality of life in low-income metropolitan communities:

### **1. Development of eCommunity Leadership Teams or Collaborate with Existing Technology Initiatives**

Today, effective economic development requires unprecedented levels of collaboration among business leaders, local and state government, education, and healthcare and community leaders. In order to promote economic development in low-income communities, it is important to entice business investments to those communities by transforming them into technology hubs with technology-driven education, social and healthcare entities. It also means providing prospective employers with a well-educated workforce that can manage technologically-intensive equipment in today's competitive global economy.

- Form eCommunity Leadership Teams or collaborate with existing technology initiatives composed of community leaders who assemble to develop and implement technology growth strategies for local government, businesses, education, healthcare, libraries and community-based organizations within and around low-income districts.
- Identify corporate stakeholders that may participate in local community efforts.
- Form grassroots eCommunity Leadership Teams spearheaded by local/neighborhood leaders within the local communities that are identified.

### **2. Identify Corporate Stakeholders and Foundations to Sponsor Initiative**

Collaborate with eCommunity leadership team to identify potential sponsors of initiatives within the community.

### **3. Identify and Collaborate with Community-Based Organizations**

Community-Based organizations are pivotal for providing essential services to disadvantaged populations. ConnectKentucky recognizes them as tools for providing technological resources for community use. Of particular interest are organizations that provide support for after-school education, personal development, tutoring/mentoring and youth sports leagues. Research suggests that after-school hours are peak times for risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use. Therefore, it is imperative that children are offered engaging and enjoyable after-school programs that provide opportunities for educational and personal development. As digital natives, children respond to digital stimuli that help keep them engaged while also deterring them from risky behaviors. Child-centered organizations should work to provide the following:

- Access to modern computers and high-speed Internet for children and their families.
- A setting where parents and grandparents can learn to use computers effectively.
- Access to students' grades using applications such as STI, which should in turn promote parental involvement.

- Use of technology resources after school hours, on weekends and in the summertime to enrich the learning process.

#### **4. Assess Local Broadband Infrastructure**

Assess broadband infrastructure and collaborate with strategic partners to create business cases in areas where affordable broadband is not available. These strategic partners may be local broadband providers, local government, low-income housing cooperatives or any other organization that aggregate tax credits for low-income housing rehabilitation. Many states have amended their housing finance policies to include high-speed Internet access into publicly-financed homes and ensure the ongoing monthly costs of high-speed access are allowable operating expenses, like utilities. In Kentucky, the Kentucky Housing Corporation's Universal Design Handbook, sets broadband infrastructure as a requirement for single-family or multi-family housing developments in low-income areas. While the success of these policies is apparent in state-financed housing projects, it is not translated to U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development housing which does not have a set policy on broadband infrastructure.

#### **5. Identify Local Technology Resources for the Community**

Collect functional technology data from local communities including:

- Website or online presence of local community
- Public access sites such as libraries, schools, community-based organizations, churches and Internet cafés
- Sites that facilitate videoconferencing and other technology needs
- Local Internet-based initiatives
- After-school tutoring and mentoring programs
- Existing technology initiatives

#### **6. Dramatically Increase Use of Computers and the Internet Locally**

Through ConnectKentucky's No Child Left Offline Program, collaborate with local stakeholders and public or private foundations to place hardware and software into the hands of families and/or organizations that serve the community.

#### **7. Promote Training and Awareness**

Provide or facilitate sustained training and development for residents who want to learn how to use technology to improve their lives and seek employment, educational, healthcare, governmental and financial information.

- Offer free classes and seminars to promote Internet and computer use in the community.
  - Basic Typing and Internet Use
  - Word Processing Applications
  - PowerPoint Presentation
  - Desktop Publishing
- Hold educational seminars for small businesses at the adult education center.
- Offer training programs on weekends to increase attendance.
- Use STLP students to help teach and assist attendees.

- Encourage local businesses to donate old computers and allow students to refurbish them and distribute to low-income families.
- Provide computers and training for senior citizens.
- Provide information on protecting personal information in an online world (for example, awareness of internet scams, definition of phishing).
- Teach children and their parents about privacy and security matters with regards to personal safety in an internet world (for example, safe surfing, online predators).

## **8. Deploy Local Content through Community Portal**

ConnectKentucky recognizes that a community portal provides a meaningful online presence that helps integrate content, which is relevant and useful to the community.

### Goals for the Portal:

- Enhance the use of technology and the Internet within the community.
- Provide compelling and relevant content and tools that make the portal a favorite destination for local users. Focus areas to include:
  - Healthcare
  - Job Search & Career Guidance
  - Education, GED, College
  - Public Transportation Schedules
  - Finance, including Insurance & Homeownership
  - Life Skills
  - Community Discussions and Forums
  - Access to Government Resources
- Encourage participation in the portal by allowing a percentage of the content to be self-perpetuating.
- Integrate information and provide an easy user interface for the entire community.
- List available technology resources within each county and surrounding area.
- User-generated content, surveys and discussion areas will provide opportunities for fostering a sense of community. In particular, the portal can make use of “crowd-sourcing” approaches to involve participants in the portal, especially around localized content.
- Consider the need for Spanish or other language versions of the community web portal, as dictated by the make up of the community population.

## **9. Measure Results**

Measure success using appropriate before and after determinants such as new businesses, computer usage, home computing, Internet usage, changes in broadband availability and adoption. Benchmark relevant digital inclusion measures developed internally or against measures taken by external agencies such as PEW foundation and internal resources such as the portal. Measure and benchmark the economic and demographic status of the community.