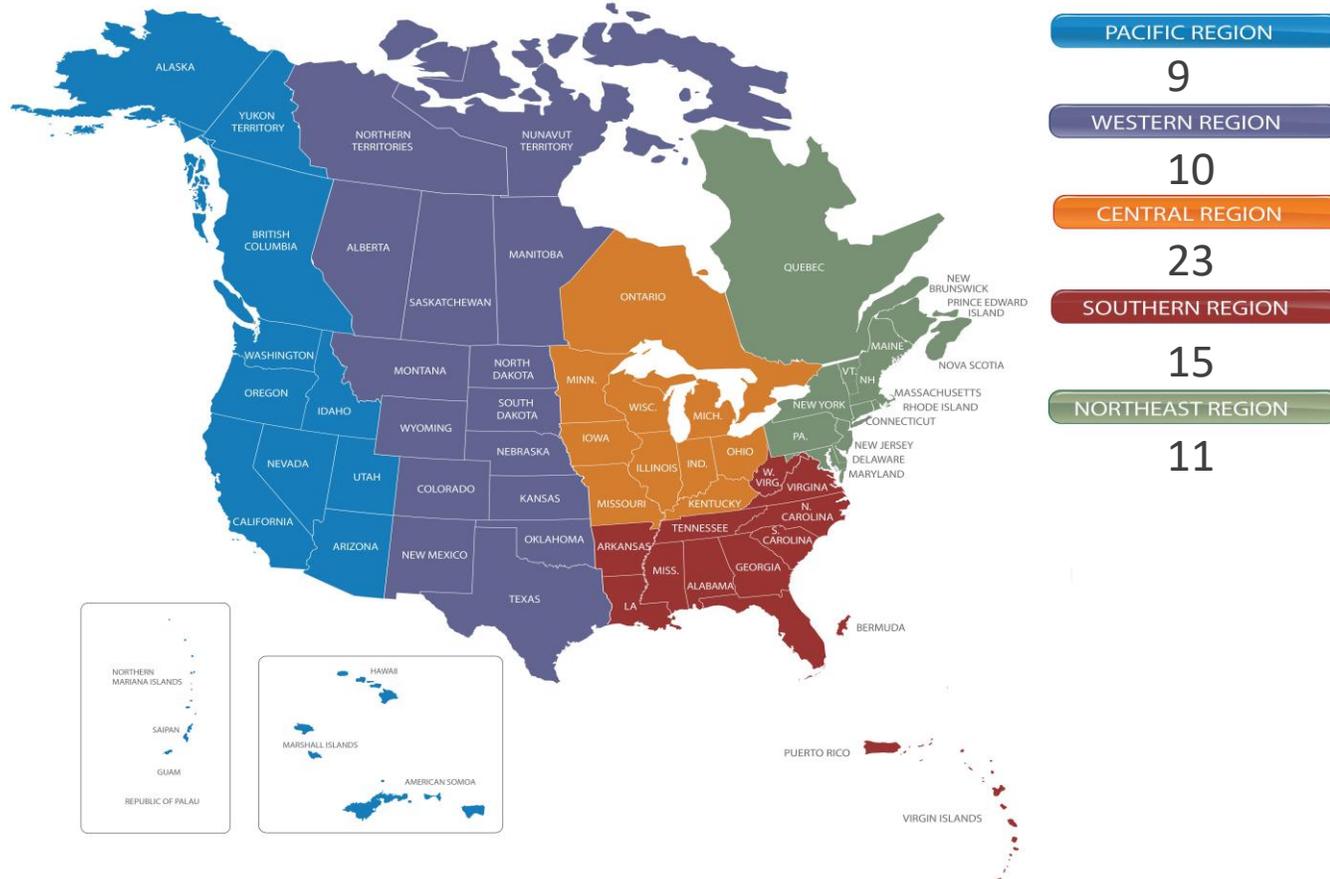# Strengthening Rural Community Colleges
Cultivating Digital Equity

This webinar series is brought to you in part by the Association of Community College Trustees in partnership with the Rural Community College Alliance and with funding made possible by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. For more information about the Strengthening Rural Community Colleges Initiative and to read our report, please visit our website. Thank you!

ACCT Region Representation

PACIFIC REGION
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WESTERN REGION
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CENTRAL REGION
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NORTHEAST REGION
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Digital Equity Education Roundtables (DEER) Initiative: Updates and Findings

Digital Equity Education Roundtables (DEER)
tech.ed.gov/DEER

The DEER Initiative aims to identify barriers that learner communities face in adopting reliable, high-speed internet and technology tools for learning, recommend strategies that leaders can leverage to navigate these barriers, amplify examples of solutions, and spur community action and commitment to close the digital divide.

What did we do?

Host a series of national conversations with organizations championing educational and digital access to identify adoption barriers faced by learner communities furthest from digital opportunities and promising, impactful solutions.

Publish a resource for leaders to inform states' digital equity plans regarding equitable broadband adoption strategies.

Spur community action and commitment aligned with the recommendations made in the published guidance resource.

What did we find?
Availability Barriers & Strategies

Availability Barriers

- Lack of reliable, high-speed broadband

- Lack of adequate device access from home

- Digital redlining

- Building-level barriers

Availability Strategies

- Hotspot and device distribution

- Leveraging public spaces

- ISP partnerships

What did we find?
Affordability Barriers & Strategies

Affordability Barriers

- High cost of broadband and technology tools for learning

- Lack of sustained funding for programs and resources

Affordability Strategies

- Subsidized access

- ISP partnerships

- Sustained funding efforts

What did we find?
Adoption Barriers

- Exclusion of impacted communities

- Distrust of systems and programs

- Lack of intentional collaboration

- Lack of disaggregated data

- Lack of inclusive communication

- Lack of access to critical support resources

What did we find?
Adoption Strategies

- Co-creating solutions

- Technical support efforts

- Building digital literacy skills & digital resilience

- Leveraging trusted community assets

Padlet Activity

1. Go to **bit.ly/OETbraindump**

2. Take 2 mins to share (plus symbol on bottom right corner):

   - What you're recalling

   - What you're wondering

   - Anything else!

Closing Thoughts

Questions to consider

- How do we ensure sustainable, community-driven solutions?

- What does strong community engagement look like?

- How do we best integrate the education sector's unique needs and assets into digital equity planning processes?

Coming Soon!

National Digital Equity Summit

Barnard Auditorium
Lyndon Baines Johnson Building (U.S. Department of Education)
Washington, DC

Wednesday, September 28, 2022 | 1-4 PM ET

DEER Initiative

Digital Promise

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We look forward to working with you!

Discussion 1: Co-Identify Needs

- What do you see as major barriers that learners, families, and communities face around adoption of broadband connections and technology tools for learning?

- Think about overarching barriers as wells as barriers unique to specific populations.

Discussion 2: Current Efforts

- How are you currently involved in conversations or initiatives around the advancement of digital equity?

- What are you learning around "what works" to advance digital equity at the state and local levels?

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Discussion 3: Future Works

- What might be your role in ensuring that needs of our learners, families, & communities furthest from digital opportunities are addressed?

- How can OET support you in your efforts to advance digital equity?

Think About…

- Shared vision setting with members of the community

- Forming multi-sector coalitions to accelerate digital inclusion strategies

- Better communicating information about the range of available resources to families/communities

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