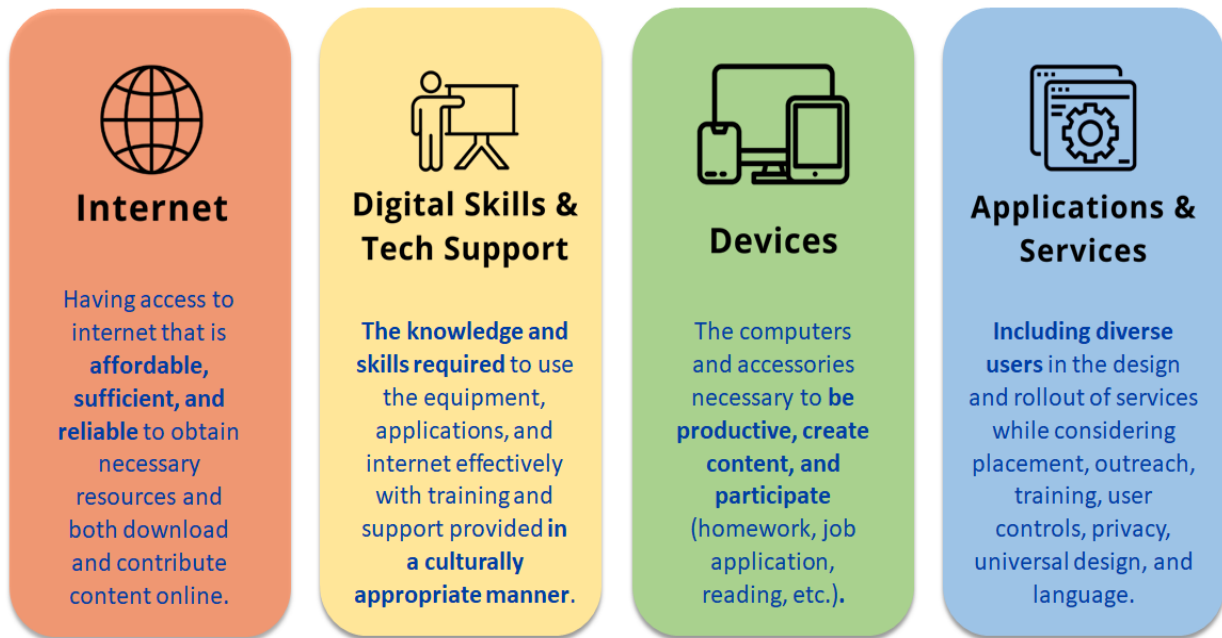## Working for Digital Equity

Seattle is working together for digital equity, to ensure all residents and neighborhoods have the information technology capacity needed for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

- *We envision Seattle as a city where technology's opportunities equitably empower all residents and communities – especially those who are historically underserved or underrepresented.* (Adopted by Seattle Digital Equity Action Team in 2016)
- *The City Council commits to the goal of enabling all Seattle residents to access and adopt broadband internet service that is reliable and affordable, which can be called Internet for All Seattle. (Internet for All resolution #31956 adopted by City Council 7/20/2020 and signed by Mayor on 8/5/2020*

Elements of Digital Equity

Internet

Having access to internet that is **affordable, sufficient, and reliable** to obtain necessary resources and both download and contribute content online.

Digital Skills & Tech Support

The knowledge and skills required to use the equipment, applications, and internet effectively with training and support provided **in a culturally appropriate manner**.

Devices

The computers and accessories necessary to **be productive, create content, and participate** (homework, job application, reading, etc.)**.**

Applications & Services

Including diverse users in the design and rollout of services while considering placement, outreach, training, user controls, privacy, universal design, and language.

We focus on these 4 digital equity requirements to give residents the information and communications technology (ICT) capacity they need to succeed:

1. **Internet** that is affordable and sufficient at home and on the go
2. **Devices** for all uses
3. **Digital Skills & Tech Support** delivered in culturally competent context

1. **Internet** that is affordable and sufficient

   This includes internet service that is reliable without ongoing interruption, is affordable, provides sufficient speed and bandwidth for family needs, has sufficient data allowance (caps), and that is easy to enroll in and understand the ongoing costs and terms of service being provided. It also includes the equipment necessary to make the Internet connection work (e.g. modem/wifi router), and access to support to set it up. In today's world, this also means internet available at home and on-the-go (mobile).

2. **Devices** for all uses

   The computers and accessories that are necessary to be productive, create content and participate. This includes a screen size and computing power to be able to do homework, write a resume, create a presentation, and/or apply for a job online. It also requires capacity for wireless (wi-fi) connecting on the go. For many, this likely means multiple devices. For disabled residents and others with limited mobility, it includes assistive technology devices.

3. **Digital Skills & Tech Support** delivered in culturally competent context

   The information and communication skills required to utilize the equipment, applications and Internet effectively for meeting one's needs, including finding and using essential services, education, employment, civic engagement and cultural participation. This includes being able to obtain basic and advanced digital skills training and the digital navigation and technical support needed in a cultural, language and literacy appropriate context to promote continued, successful skill development and be able to maintain and operate the hardware and software/applications required.

4. **Applications & Services** that are accessible

   The design and deployment of applications and services (web, mobile and other applications) can improve or hinder use and foster digital and other equity and opportunity. This includes:
   1) Offering relevant online content and services to help vulnerable communities generally and connect them to digital inclusion and essential resources,
   2) Cultural, education and population appropriate design including the application of universal design to include people with disabilities (e.g. visuals, language, screen readability, font choice, placement and level of translation),
   3) Design with understanding of diverse user impacts (e.g. screen size, video that requires

higher broadband or unlimited data plan, shifting costs to low-income users for printing).
4) Options for user to select preferred method of notification, participation, or payment,
5) Marketing and placement appropriate to reach underserved communities,
6) The application of an equity lens, addressing bias, and ensuring personal data privacy, control and security to applications, and
7) Enabling of content production and distribution by lower capacity residents, businesses and organizations. Historically, a lot of application development has not fully engaged diverse communities or work teams. Accessible applications also requires Race & Social Justice inclusive planning in project scopes, teams and throughout the project implementation phases, as well as ongoing feedback to improve applications and services and ensure personal data privacy and control (which also helps build trust in using these services).

National Digital Inclusion Alliance definitions

The City of Seattle, with our digital inclusion and our race and social justice work with community, contributed to these national definitions.

Digital Inclusion

Digital Inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This includes 5 elements: 1) affordable, robust broadband internet service; 2) internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; 3) access to digital literacy training; 4) quality technical support; and 5) applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration. Digital Inclusion must evolve as technology advances. Digital Inclusion requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional and structural barriers to access and use technology.

Digital Equity

Digital Equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy. Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/