

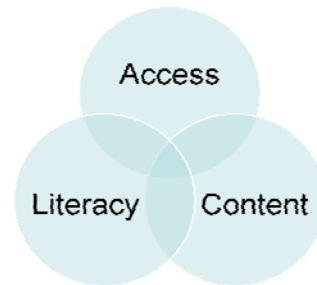
*Communities Connect Network (CCN) is a statewide coalition of public and private organizations working to make Washington state a leader in technology opportunities for all.*

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## Defining Digital Inclusion for Broadband Deployment & Adoption

Fully realizing the potential of broadband requires an understanding of the digital divide and a strategy to ensure full deployment and adoption. “Digital inclusion” is the positive response to closing the divide. Meaningful inclusion efforts require more than simply computer ownership or deploying Internet service nearby. Digital Inclusion encompasses three areas: **Access**, **technology literacy**, and relevant **content** and services. Inclusion seeks equity for all residents, as well as small businesses and community-based (non-profit) organizations. The three areas include these components:

1. Access
  - a. Connectivity to the Internet
  - b. End user equipment: hardware and software, including tools for people with disabilities.
  - c. Access to technical support
2. Technology literacy/competency
  - a. Skills required to utilize the equipment and Internet effectively for essential services, education, employment, civic engagement and cultural participation.
3. Relevant online content and services
  - a. Services available for those in need
  - b. Culturally and educationally appropriate design
  - c. Marketing and placement appropriate to reach underserved communities
  - d. Enabling of content production and distribution by lower capacity residents, businesses and organizations.



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Washington State adopted an abbreviated definition of community technology and digital inclusion in 2008 (Public Law 6438-S2). Digital Inclusion/community technology programs level the playing field of opportunity by serving low-income or low-literacy residents, residents of rural communities, seniors, people with disabilities, at-risk youth, immigrants/refugees and people of color as well as small disadvantaged businesses and non-profit organizations.

Programs are usually provided by non-profit or public agencies in community settings. These may be youth and community centers, small business and workforce training centers, immigrant and refugee organizations, low-income housing, libraries or schools opened for community programs.

“Technology underserved” are those populations identified as behind other populations in access to and use of information and communications technology. The reasons for this may vary, based on available infrastructure and costs, discrimination or lack of investment in delivering technology and technology-related services to a specific area or to a specific population, or, for a given population, based on discriminating factors, which may include socioeconomic status, education, literacy, special needs or disabilities, language barriers, and culturally or age appropriate design and delivery of services.

*Prepared for the Communities Connect Network by the City of Seattle Community Technology Program  
([seattle.gov/tech](http://seattle.gov/tech))*