Resources for Libraries to Advance Digital Equity:
Amplify & Connect Your Assets

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make significant inroads toward digital equity for decades to come. In Fall 2022, states are beginning to develop their digital equity plans. These plans must include community partnerships with organizations, like libraries, to achieve their digital equity goals. Act now to ensure your library is recognized as a community leader and partner in digital equity plans. Here are some strategies libraries can utilize:

1. **What Are We Already Doing?**
   Your library is already supporting digital equity in your community.
   a. Inventory your library's existing digital inclusion resources. Your inventory will likely include public internet workstations, Wi-Fi access, and some digital literacy or technology support. It may also include devices to lend (e.g., tablets, laptops, hotspots), one-on-one or group technology training, online training like DigitalLearn.org or other free resources, promoting low-cost broadband offerings, and more.
   b. Consider community usage of these resources. How many computer sessions did you have last year, how many wi-fi sessions, how many circulations of technology devices? In particular, how is your library helping the covered populations listed in the IIJA, including seniors (60 and above), incarcerated individuals, low-income households, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, those living in rural areas, and veterans? Can you share one or two patron stories about how the library's technology resources and staff helped improve their lives?
   c. Once this information is compiled, reach out to partners and community stakeholders to highlight your assets and discuss ways you might collaborate to identify and address community challenges.

2. **Promote Your Story**
   What digital inclusion story do you want to tell to show the value and impact of your library's work in this space? (For example, here's an Arkansas case study from the Libraries Lead with Digital Skills initiative.)

ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation   www.ala.org/advocacy/broadband

a. Draft an [elevator pitch](#) that promotes the library's expertise and experience with digital equity, literacy, and inclusion and advocates the role your library can play in building your community's digital future. Share that elevator pitch with your staff, partners, and advocates.

b. Don't assume people know how your library supports digital equity. Make it easy for the community to see your contributions! Promote your work on the library's website, via your social media platforms, at community partner events, etc.

c. Reach out and share your programs, services, and collaborations with local media.

d. [Share your stories and aspirations with ALA](#).

3. **Think Big: What Do We Want To Do?**
   This is a historic investment. What services, programs, and partnerships would the library explore if you only had more resources? Identify your community's digital equity, literacy, and inclusion needs and explore how your library and partners may address these gaps. Reach for the sky — this investment may permit more robust programs than what's usually available to libraries. Consider examples in the [Leverage Libraries report](#) that might be added to your inventory (e.g., targeted services or applications) or be considered in future planning.

4. **Raise Your Hand**
   Once you identify what you want to do, make sure people know it! Don't wait for someone to ask for your help. Create a plan, reach out to potential collaborators, identify the resources needed, and illustrate how your strategies advance your state's digital equity goals.

5. **Manage Up**
   Each state has identified an entity to manage the state's digital equity plan. Not sure who's leading? Reach out to your [state library agency](#) or governor's office to find out. Identify key stakeholders in your organization and your community who can advocate on behalf of the library with decision-makers. Take advantage of your board members, friends of the library, state library agencies, state chapters, and government officials to advocate on behalf of your library.

6. **Stay Informed**
   Identify organizations like ALA, your state library, the broadband office, etc., so you can stay up to date on digital equity policy, be informed about your state's priorities, and learn how libraries across the U.S. support this work.

Libraries have successfully created and implemented programs and services advancing digital equity, literacy, and inclusion in their communities for decades. Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Promote your expertise and experience and advocate on your community's behalf so your library can leverage this opportunity to strengthen and advance digital equity.