

Marylanders Online FY24 Executive Summary

Launched in February 2022, Marylanders Online is the University of Maryland Extension's (UME) Digital Literacy program. In partnership with the College of Information (INFO), this state-funded initiative aims to bridge Maryland's digital divide by providing resources and education to build digital literacy and inclusion throughout the state. The three primary components of UME's Digital Literacy Program are (1) Digital Navigation, (2) Digital Literacy Curriculum Repository, and (3) Digital Literacy Training through Tech Education. These objectives are driven by a variety of activities that include national, statewide, and community-level partnerships, mini-grant programs, a call center helpline, tech support, digital literacy resource development and curation, and outreach. Through a well-organized infrastructure, the Marylanders Online program has been implemented with sustainability and scalability in mind by incorporating a multi-faceted approach that best leverages UME's and INFO's resources and multidisciplinary partnerships throughout the state.

Key Program Highlights

During the FY24 reporting year, July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024, Marylanders Online served nearly 1,400 program participants and facilitated 103 digital skills classes. Tech Extension Educators helped approximately 5,400 Maryland residents sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) at 89 ACP community events and assisted at 155 device distributions around the state. The program also coordinated the training of 320 community digital navigators while the Call Center tech helpline handled 17,120 calls, 9% of which were in Spanish.

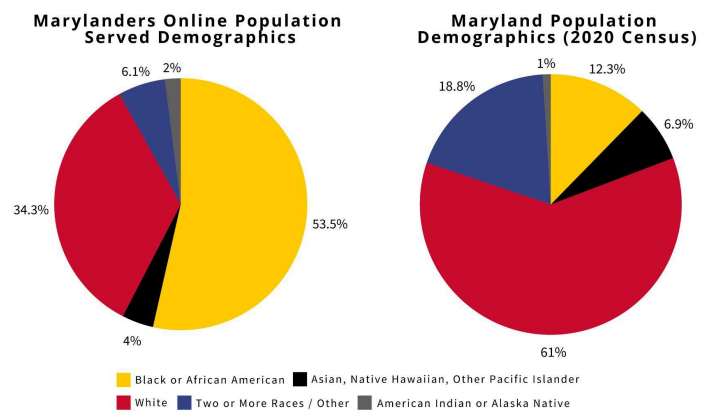
To build a more robust digital footprint, Marylanders Online launched [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) business accounts, amounting to 50,633 social media impressions. The [Marylanders Online website](#) underwent a series of improvements to enhance usability and functionality, earning over 63,500 page views during FY24. The program's [monthly newsletter](#) distributed 16 editions and grew a 33% increase in subscribership.

Marylanders Online has built partnerships with 84 organizations across the state, including 23 county government entities, 14 in Baltimore City, 12 county library systems, 8 nonprofits, and 7 youth-serving organizations to ensure the provision of services equitably around the state. These strategic partnerships have allowed the program to reach the immigrant, Spanish-speaking, and limited-English language communities, as well as older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income populations.

Statewide Impact

The UME Marylanders Online program was designed to address and complement the objectives outlined in the [State of Maryland Digital Equity Plan](#) and [Maryland State Plan](#), which emphasize the importance of digital equity in today's world. Digital skills and internet connectivity serve as a gateway to information, services, and opportunities that impact education, employment, health care, civic participation, and economic opportunity. These state-directed plans reinforce the findings of a [2024 National Council on Family Relations policy brief](#) which suggests that being able to access and utilize the Internet has an impact on nearly every aspect of family life, including education, employment, and health.

According to a [National Skills Coalition 2023 report](#), the modern-day labor market has an overwhelming need for digital skills across all sectors. Although 92% of all job postings require digital skills, studies show that one-third of US workers lack foundational digital skills. Individuals with digital skills can earn up to 23% more than those working in jobs that require no digital skills. These higher-paying, digital skill-demanding jobs disproportionately employ fewer people of color, often due to economic, social, and educational inequities among races and ethnicities. Marylanders Online is helping to bridge this digital divide through strategic programming and outreach. 53% of the self-reported Marylanders Online program participants identified as Black or African American, with a total 66% identifying as non-white.



Marylanders Online thanks the University of Maryland Extension, the community, partners, funders, and all other entities who have contributed to the many tangible achievements of the UME Digital Literacy initiative. This project has a profound significance in Maryland's history, ensuring that both present and future Maryland generations have the opportunity to thrive in the rapidly evolving digital world. The Marylanders Online project team is pleased to share the Marylanders Online FY24 impact in the following condensed report.

Marylanders Online Fiscal Year Report

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



COLLEGE OF
INFORMATION

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

COLLABORATIVE

TRAINING

1399 Total Participants

103 Digital Literacy Classes

324 Digital Navigators Trained



30 Low-Vision or Blind DNs Trained

DIGITAL LITERACY

EVENTS

5,404



ACP Enrollments Facilitated

155 Device Distributions

89 ACP Events

49 Senior Planet Events

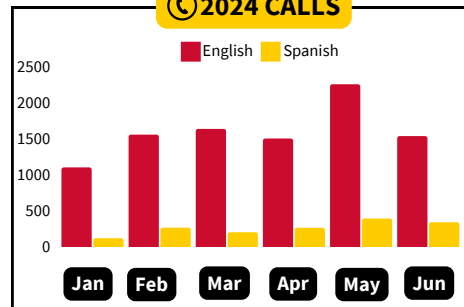
DIGITAL NAVIGATION

SUPPORT

17,120

Helpline Calls Handled

2024 CALLS



GET CONNECTED

REACH



63,526

Website Pageviews

3,676

Newsletter Subscribers

FEARLESSLY
FORWARD



www.marylandersonline.umd.edu

This is an equal opportunity institution.



Marylanders Online

Partnering to Bridge the Digital Divide

Building Connection Through Digital Literacy

Resource Sharing



Train the Trainer



Technical Assistance



Marylanders Online Partnerships in Action

Curricula & Resources

- 10-part collaborative Pratt Adventure & Beyond curriculum with Enoch Pratt Free Library
- 10 eGovernment services learning modules
- 550+ digital resources curated
- 330+ digital assets mapped
- AARP Senior Planet curriculum offerings

Inclusive Community Support

- Afghan community digital skills training with Baltimore City Community College Refugee Youth Project
- Microsoft Office training with Gilchrist Center for Immigrant Communities
- Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and Immigrant community digital device training with CASA

Digital Skills Training

- 73 digital skills classes taught in 2023
- 100+ individuals trained as digital navigators in partnership with NDIA in 2024
- Teens As Teachers program with 4-H & Baltimore County Department of Parks & Recreation
- 19 accessible technology trainings offered with MAT

Statewide Capacity Building

- 15,000+ tech support helpline calls since February 2023
- Maryland Statewide Digital Equity Summit
- Agriculture & Technology Conference
- Maryland Digital Equity Coalition (MDEC) support
- 67 device distributions supported in 2023
- 8 mini-grant recipients



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2I.1 - Broadband - Digital Navigators

ID	Subproject Name	Budget	Expenditures	Status
2I.1	Broadband - Digital Navigators	\$2,000,000	\$561,584.44	Less Than 50% Complete

Digital Navigators engage Marylanders to assess technology skills gaps and guide them toward self-sustaining technology use. Engagement is made through multiple touch points, including the [Marylanders Online](#) website and the Call Center.

The Digital Navigation Program provides the following services:

- Tech support in English, Spanish, and around 180 other languages upon request.
- Resources on affordable broadband internet options.
- Sources of affordable technology devices such as computers, tablets, and other devices to access the Internet.
- Information on connecting to Wi-Fi/wireless networks using a device to access the Internet.
- Basic computer skills.
- Raising awareness and providing support on the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) application and enrollment, through the end of ACP funding availability (June 1).
- Technical support and training of staff for community organizations, local government, and libraries in setting up ACP sign-up events.
- Digital navigator training and professional development for practitioners on topics including basics of digital inclusion, identifying internet options for underserved and unserved community members, matching community members with appropriate devices (e.g., persons with disabilities), as well as setting up digital navigation programs; and
- Referral to digital resources to meet additional needs in education, employment, services, healthcare, and digital literacy.

Project Activities

Asset Mapping

In FY 24, the Digital Navigation program continued mapping the assets available in Maryland to establish a baseline understanding of available resources and to build a knowledge base of

resources. This evidence-based work used models developed by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance. The knowledge base is used by digital navigators to direct Marylanders when they contact the Marylanders Online Call Center. It now contains approximately 300 locally available resources, including libraries, senior centers, non-profit organizations, workforce development offices, and more.

Marylanders Online Helpline

The Marylanders Online Call Center launched in February 2023 and provides help desk support to all Maryland residents. Staffed by a team of Digital Navigators, this service provides support for issues related to software, hardware, connectivity, affordability, and digital skills training. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance provided training to the Digital Navigators and the team developed tutorials for various help desk issues. The call center has provided assistance to 17,120 calls, with 11,792 reporting to be first-time callers. This represents a significant increase from the previous year when the call center responded to 104 calls from 88 unique callers.

Digital Navigators Model Training

We conducted three digital navigator training classes during the fiscal year for digital inclusion partners, practitioners as well as community members. The first series was in July 2023 and had 85 participants; on February 6 and 7, 2024, with a total of 33 participants; and the third was held in May 2024 with 103 participants on Day 1 and 85 on Day 2. Digital navigators are also being trained through a partnership with the Enoch Pratt Library, with about 18 participants, with 5 of 6 classes in the series conducted this year.

Device Distribution Support

In collaboration with the Office of Statewide Broadband, local government partners, and regional digital equity coalitions, the Digital Navigation Program supports device distribution across the state by deploying digital navigators as well as Tech Extension educators. The support ranged from initial device setup, creating account credentials, and troubleshooting at the sites of device distribution.

Community Engagement

To raise awareness and promote affordable connectivity, the Digital Navigation program employs a broad range of outreach, communications, and marketing approaches. These include: organizing and supporting community events; distributing print flyers and direct mailers; online and social media; a monthly newsletter; and participating at county and state fairs. The community events served as platforms to educate Marylanders about the importance of internet access and the resources available. The program also extended support to organizations by offering consultation services, empowering them to host ACP sign-up events

within their communities. By engaging in these awareness programs, Marylanders Online aims to advance digital inclusion and ensure that all residents have the knowledge and access they need to connect to the Internet and its benefits.

Marylanders Online has participated in approximately 46 community events, 89 ACP events, and 155 device distribution events. The Digital Navigation program also facilitated the enrollment of 5,404 individuals in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Furthermore, we have attended nine conferences where services provided by the Digital Navigation program were presented, highlighting opportunities for collaboration that enhance digital inclusion, particularly for historically marginalized communities.

To further disseminate information and raise awareness, we have distributed flyers at events and shared digital copies with our extensive partnership network of around 549 individuals. The monthly newsletter was launched in January 2023 and reaches around 3,676 subscribers, serving as a platform for sharing project updates, digital equity news, and event details.

Equity Related Activities

To ensure that the programs are delivered equitably, targeted outreach was conducted among unserved and underserved communities, resulting in key initiatives including:

Maryland Digital Equity Coalition

The establishment of the Maryland Digital Equity Coalition (MDEC) has brought together organizations across Maryland to facilitate information sharing and the development of best practices for bridging the digital divide through digital navigation and digital skills education. This coalition officially kicked off with a virtual event on October 5, 2023, with over 150 (one hundred fifty) participants from local government, non-profit organizations, state agencies, community members, and digital inclusion practitioners. By creating a support system, MDEC empowers digital navigators, educators, and practitioners throughout the state to collectively address the challenges of digital equity and inclusion. To facilitate MDEC's activities, a working group composed of key stakeholders was also established.

Connecting Marylanders to Jobs: Accessible Technology and Persons with Disabilities

To address digital equity for the low-vision and blind community, Marylanders Online launched the virtual "[Talk Text and Train](#)" program in collaboration with Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT). The multi-month accessible digital skills training course taught LVB digital navigators about accessible technology devices and programs. Thirty (30) individuals with low vision or blindness obtained certification to instruct others in the community. This initiative

provided marketable skills that enabled several participants to find employment at \$60 per hour through the Maryland Department of Rehabilitation (DORS) where they travel throughout the state to teach other LVB individuals how to use digital tools to increase independence. Survey respondents scored the training series an average of 4.5 out of 5 stars. Marylanders Online's dedication to inclusive digital equity practices is demonstrated by the Talk, Text, and Train program.

FarmerTech & CyberSeniors: Intergenerational Program to Support Farmers and Senior Citizens

Using the research-based “Teens as Teachers” model, this program was launched in Baltimore County to teach community members and offer technology support to farmers to increase engagement and farm revenue while providing valuable workforce development. The program also serves a dual purpose by teaching teens about service learning and public engagement. The programs are delivered by teen leaders or college-aged coordinators and are aimed at farmers and senior citizens across Baltimore County at multiple sites including Baltimore libraries, the Baltimore Department of Aging, senior centers, and other community gathering locations. FarmerTech and CyberSeniors supported device distributions, created instructional videos, and provided in-person technical support.

Project Website and Call Center

The Marylanders Online website is - <https://marylandersonline.umd.edu>. Individuals can also receive assistance through email at marylandersonline@umd.edu or by calling the Helpline at 1-866-206-8467. The Call Center hours are 10 am to 8 pm on weekdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 5 pm.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The digital navigation program prioritizes accessibility by offering a variety of delivery methods to meet individual needs and preferences, providing convenient and accessible avenues for individuals to seek guidance around their digital needs, whether it is connecting to affordable internet services, acquiring suitable devices, or obtaining support for digital skills. The program's commitment to offering diverse delivery modalities reinforces the goal of serving the community and empowering individuals to effectively navigate the digital world.

Evaluation activities are tracking call center services and disaggregated the data to determine the extent to which project activities focus on Maryland residents who are senior adults, have low income, have a language barrier (low literacy or English learner), are members of a racial or ethnic minoritized group, have disabilities, are from immigrant communities, rural communities,

or Baltimore City. In the past year, among callers who provided demographic information, 15% were senior adults; 18% preferred a language other than English; 21% identified as Hispanic; 46% identified as Black or African American; 1% were veterans; and 9% reported having disabilities. The largest percent of callers came from Baltimore City (38%), with 5% of calls coming from rural counties.

Intended Outcomes

A logic model and evaluation plan were developed, resulting in the following short- and intermediate-term outcomes:

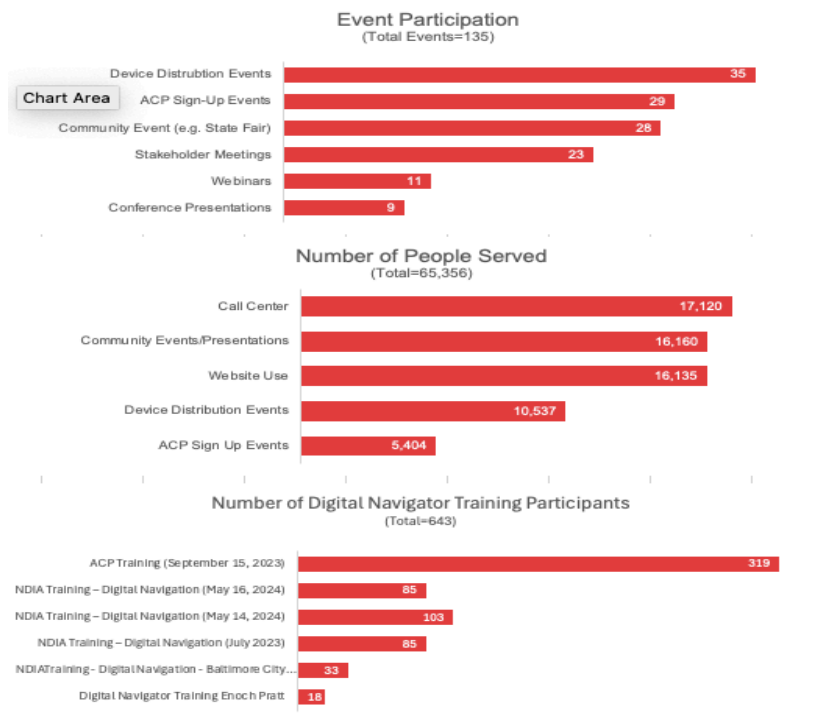
- Increased digital inclusion: assist communities and individuals who face barriers to accessing broadband, suitable devices
- Increased awareness of community members, organizations, and entities of available digital literacy resources in Maryland
- Increased capacity of community organizations and entities to address digital literacy and access issues
- Increased knowledge and skills of Maryland residents to enable them to get connected to the internet, access and use suitable devices, and complete everyday tasks.

Use of Evidence

Curricula have been developed and tailored to key audiences. An example is the Senior Planet program from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which is designed for older audiences. Tailoring digital skills training for this audience is essential, as a recent study showed improvements in feelings of loneliness and skills among low-income older adults who received a device, internet, and training as compared to those who received only the device and internet.¹ The NorthStar program, a standards-based program, was developed for adults to help job seekers gain digital literacy skills.

¹ 'Fly Like an Eagle: Measuring Transformational Social Outcomes Among Seniors Using Technology'; Older Adults Technology Services; American Association of Retired Persons; retrieved 7/1/23 from oats.org.

Performance



Type	Number of People Served
Call Center	17,120 calls
Website Use ²	16,135 users
Device Distribution Events	10,537
ACP Enrollments	5,404
Digital Navigator Training Enoch Pratt	18
NDIA Training - Digital Navigation with Baltimore City Recreation & Parks	33
NDIA Training – Digital Navigation (July 2023)	85
NDIA Training – Digital Navigation (May 14, 2024)	103
NDIA Training – Digital Navigation (May 16, 2024)	85

² Additional website metrics include 23,501 sessions; 62,868 pageviews; 3.9 minutes average session duration

ACP Training Webinar (September 15, 2023)	319
Community Events/Presentations	16,160
Total	65,356 Served and 643 Train-the-Trainer Participants

During the fiscal year, the Call Center assisted callers with support around device distribution events (n=11,114 calls), hardware (n=957), software (n=344), ACP (n=339), digital skills (n=84), project-related inquiries (n=17), partnership opportunities (n=2), and home connectivity (n=93). Data from the digital navigators staffing the Call Center indicated that 90% of calls were resolved. For the remaining calls, plans were devised for callbacks, however, in many cases, callers could not be reached again due to disconnected phone service and full voicemails. Follow-up surveys were received from 58 Call Center callers. A total of 82% of calls were rated as “Excellent” or “Good.” A majority of respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their issue was resolved (71%), that they learned something new about their computer, phone, tablet, or internet service (69%), learned something new about resources or services (73%), were more confident they could get help with technology problems (70%), and that they could do more with their computer, phone, or tablet than before (62%).

Matched pre-post surveys from 27 participants who attended the Digital Navigator Training in May 2024 showed a significant increase in confidence from before the training to after the training. Attendees cited that the training helped them define digital equity and digital inclusion and will aid them in helping people determine the best service or device for their needs; find data about internet use and device ownership; find resources for digital skills building; find free or low-cost local internet service providers; and engage in the work of a digital navigator, including data collection and client management.

2I.3 – Broadband - Tech Extension

ID	Subproject Name	Budget	Expenditures	Status
2I.3	Broadband - Tech Extension	\$4,000,000	\$2,211,842.49	More Than 50% Complete

The tech extension project, administered by the University of Maryland Extension, provides \$4 million in SLFRF to support digital literacy by:

1. Developing and adapting curricula to teach digital literacy using various learning modes.

2. Delivering training and support for instructors and users: A train-the-trainer model is being used to teach the tech extension curricula to librarians, educators, and volunteers.
3. Curating an online digital literacy website to support all Marylanders with classes and resources. For example, self-service access to locate broadband services in their areas.
4. Developing a Digital Literacy Partnership Network by establishing collaboration between public libraries, workforce agencies, providers, schools, and other community organizations for networking and access to resources.

Primary Delivery Mechanism and Partners

The University of Maryland Extension (UME), Family and Consumer Sciences Program leads the tech extension project.

UME is part of the Cooperative Extension System that provides information and training for community members, businesses, and nonprofits about safely and effectively using online tools to improve their economic opportunities, access to resources, and quality of life. The Family and Consumer Sciences Program provides educational programs to improve the health and well-being of Marylanders and trains health professionals, agency staff, human service providers, teachers, as well as other professionals.

The Tech Extension project team currently consists of the project director, statewide team (curriculum and program specialists, technology experts, and program coordinator), and local Tech Extension Educators (located in Baltimore City and county offices/research centers). The project team is supported by the Tech Extension Steering Committee, which has a representative from each of the four Extension programs to help define project goals and structures, provide input for program planning and implementation, strengthen the integration of digital literacy into existing UME programs and partnerships, and serve as advocates for the project.

In addition, UME has developed collaborative partnerships with faculty and graduate students with expertise in information, technology, and digital literacy from the University of Maryland (UMD), notably with the College of Information (INFO). Finally, the program has helped establish the Maryland Digital Equity Coalition, which represents diverse expertise and backgrounds from key stakeholders and serves as a coalition of coalitions.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

To promote equitable outcomes, the Tech Extension project employed a strategic and multi-faceted marketing campaign utilizing both traditional and digital channels to reach a broad audience around the state. These include:

Website

The website is designed to serve the many diverse communities of Maryland, particularly those who are disproportionately impacted by the digital divide, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), low-income households, older adults, immigrants, individuals with limited English proficiency or low education, and individuals with disabilities. The website also provides resources to address access barriers due to geographic location, such as rural areas and Baltimore City, as well as the cost of devices and/or internet service.

The website experienced impressive growth during the fiscal year, with significant increases in content, information, and visitors. Recent website enhancements include a more prominent and user-friendly search box on the home page, 53 new pages, and easier resource navigation. The website brought in 16,135 users and 63,526 page views during the fiscal year. While analytics show that 43.8% of site users were based out of Maryland, the heat map illustrates that the Marylanders Online website is being actively accessed both domestically and internationally.

Social Media

Marylanders Online Facebook and Instagram business accounts were launched in October 2023 and have grown to 153 and 113 followers, respectively, for a total reach of 51,622. A LinkedIn account was launched in January 2024 and has yielded 25,937 impressions since the beginning of the year, both organically and through the use of event ad campaigns.

Newsletter

The [Marylanders Online newsletter](#) has also experienced substantial growth, with a 37% increase in subscribership since June 2023. The newsletter currently has 3,676 unique subscribers, a 33% increase, and a 54% open rate, which is up 23% from the previous reporting period.

Medium	Website	LinkedIn	Facebook	Instagram	Newsletter
Page Views / Impressions	63,526	25,937	44,063	7,559	6,296
Users / Followers	16,135	181	153	113	3,676
% FY Change - Impressions	+189%	N/A	N/A	N/A	+33
FY Social Media Reach	77,559				

Integrating Maryland State Plan and Digital Equity Plan into Digital Skills Programming

Through the development of partnerships with organizations and individuals, Marylanders Online has designed, developed, and implemented many initiatives aimed at enhancing digital skills training and digital navigation throughout the state. Programs and resources have been created or curated to improve learners’ ability to apply digital skills in various practical circumstances such as applying for government benefits online, job seeking, telehealth, civic engagement, communicating through social network services, completing everyday online transactions, and more.

Responding to the need for equitable and accessible government resources, the Marylanders Online INFO curriculum team conducted a statewide needs assessment in 2022 which revealed gaps in Marylanders’ access to - and knowledge of - applications for government benefits. Using the study’s findings to prioritize user needs, the team developed a series of [10 eGovernment modules](#) to promote equitable access for Marylanders. This innovative, learner-centric initiative has garnered the attention of practitioners and stakeholders nationwide and received news coverage through the [College of Information](#) and [Maryland Today](#).

Based on the extensive stakeholder and user needs study, as well as consultations with key partners, the Tech Extension project initiated several digital skills training pilot programs to support Marylanders with connecting to jobs and to improve health outcomes, promote online safety, increase meaningful participation in the economy, and enhance overall wellbeing. The table below presents samples of these pilot programs:

Title & Description	Covered Population	Jurisdiction
<p>Enhancing Digital Literacy Skills for an Immigrant Afghan Population: provides digital literacy skills to access government resources and personal health information independently through in-person group classes</p>	<p>English learners, Racial/Ethnic minority</p>	<p>Baltimore City</p>
<p>Digital Tools for Youth Leadership Development: mentors younger youth through teaching to develop leadership skills and civic engagement in multiple counties</p>	<p>Youth</p>	<p>Multiple</p>
<p>4-H Projects in the Digital Age: empowers Queen Anne’s County 4-H youth with laptops for integrating digital literacy into the animal science program, enabling skills development, financial tracking, project marketing, and online safety awareness. Youth to support aging adults</p>	<p>Youth, Aging</p>	<p>Queen Anne’s</p>
<p>Digital Tools for Financial Capability: provides digital tools for financial capability and digital access to increase confidence to use devices and resources about applications designed to encourage self-sufficiency and collaboration</p>	<p>BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color); Seniors/Older Adults; Immigrants; People with limited English Language Proficiency /English Language Learners; People with Disabilities; and Residents of Rural Counties</p>	<p>Worcester, Wicomico, and Somerset</p>
<p>FCS Digital, Physical and Financial Literacy & Wellness Program: foster digital literacy and equity utilizing training to underserved populations, addressing pandemic-induced disparities in partnership with Harford County Department of Social Services- Susquehanna Workforce, Havre De Grace Maryland</p>	<p>Youth, adults (18 to 55)</p>	<p>Harford</p>
<p>Baltimore County Tech Extension Teen & CyberSeniors Program: uses 4-H’s established “Teens as Teachers” model to deliver classes where youth instruct adults to improve their introductory digital literacy skills.</p>	<p>Farmers, Senior citizens</p>	<p>Baltimore County</p>

<p>Helping Seniors Recognize and Avoid Scams: teaches seniors online safety to identify and protect themselves from electronic scams</p>	<p>Senior citizens</p>	<p>Carroll</p>
<p>Financial MindSet: Crossing the Economic Chasm with Technology: Fin-Tech program for our low-education, at-risk youths and low-income families</p>	<p>Low-education, at-risk youths, and low-income families</p>	<p>Calvert</p>
<p>Digital Skills & Financial Education and Small Business Ownership (FE-SBO) for Incarcerated Individuals Nearing Release: provides training for inmates with GED certificates to learn about finances, starting a small business, and the use of computers to develop a model for their business of interest</p>	<p>BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and Residents of Baltimore City, especially black and people of color, are predominantly residents of Baltimore City</p>	<p>Baltimore City</p>
<p>Basic Computer Classes and Programs: partnership with Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center which provides beginner and intermediate Microsoft Word, Internet, and email classes for immigrants in Montgomery County, created to support immigrants and non-native English speakers</p>	<p>Immigrants, English learners, low-literacy</p>	<p>Montgomery County</p>
<p>Teens as Teachers: a partnership between 4-H & Baltimore County Department of Parks & Recreation offers a five-week Teen as Teachers course that combines youth development and leadership with digital literacy skills.</p>	<p>Youth, older adults</p>	<p>Baltimore County</p>

Community Engagement

Creating a Digital Literacy Partnerships Network is a crucial element of the Tech Extension project. We have established 60 partnerships with organizations and individuals that are working towards digital inclusion and digital equity in their communities, including but not limited to state and local government agencies; University of Maryland Extension offices covering all Maryland jurisdictions; public and private libraries; nationwide Extension network; educational institutions; community colleges; workforce agencies; senior centers; faith-based organizations; and community organizations that help connect or incorporate digital literacy

into existing services and programs. In addition, 103 digital skills classes were conducted around the state.

The table below depicts a summary of community engagement and outreach activities the UME Tech Extension project team has organized or participated in.

Event Date Location	Target Audience	Description
9th Annual MD Tech Connect Dec. 5, 2023 Universities at Shady Grove, MD	Librarians, digital equity practitioners, and technology experts in public and private libraries in MD	Presentation “ <i>Marylanders Online: Bringing Digital Literacy Resources to Every Marylander</i> ” showcasing findings of the user needs study and how the partnership with Pratt Library is both shaped by and compliments the findings of the study. ³
Digital Equity Summit Nov. 9, 2023 Annapolis, MD	Federal, state, and local agencies and policymakers; community members, practitioners, activists, anchor institutions,	Statewide Digital Equity Summit to advance community engagement and support the establishment of partnerships and collaborations among stakeholders to foster ongoing digital equity initiatives.
MACo (Maryland Association of Counties) Summer Conference: Eye of the Storm Dec. 6-8, 2023 Cambridge, MD	Government officials, municipal/state/federal employees, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, vendors, and sponsors who partner with government	Participation in the annual winter MACo Conference to cultivate relationships with community and government partners and raise awareness about the Call Center, digital literacy curriculum development, and in-person digital skills training classes.
National Digital Education Extension Team (NDEET) Train-the-trainer Workshop Apr. 2-4, 2024 Atlanta, GA	Cooperative Extension members and partners across the nation who work towards digital inclusion and digital skills training; full participant roster can be found here	Attended an NDEET train-the-trainer workshop to discuss best practices in digital inclusion in each community, share meaningful data points and insights; practice digital literacy curriculum resources; and exchange ideas between the Cooperative Extension network.

³ [Marylanders Online: Bringing Digital Literacy Resources to every Marylander.](#)

<p>2024 Net Inclusion Feb. 13-15, 2024 Philadelphia, PA</p>	<p>Practitioners, advocates, academics, internet service providers, and policymakers</p>	<p>Served as panelists at NDIA’s annual Net Inclusion conference for two panel discussions and engaged with approximately 900 other practitioners and representatives to discuss digital inclusion efforts. The two panel discussions were “<i>Connecting Digital Literacy to the Adult Learning Ecosystem</i>” and “<i>Proven Coalition Strategies in Expanding Digital Services Navigation</i>”.⁴</p>
<p>19th International iConference Apr 16-18, 2024 Changchun, China</p>	<p>Scholars and researchers whose work focuses on information science, information literacy, and critical information issues</p>	<p>Published a paper about the findings of the user needs study carried out across Maryland as part of the digital literacy project, including the creation of a typology of learners, with potential national application.</p>
<p>2024 Annual MLA(Maryland Library Association)/DLA(Delaware Library Association) Conference May 8-10, 2024 Cambridge, MD</p>	<p>Library leaders and staff from Maryland and Delaware, as well as partners and practitioners</p>	<p>Presented a poster titled “<i>Bridging the Digital Divide through a Public University-Public Library Partnership: Pratt Adventure and Beyond</i>”⁵ along with Enoch Pratt Free Library, showcasing the train-the-trainer curriculum developed and implementation for digital navigators at Pratt Library, creating an opportunity for partnership with other public/private libraries.</p>
<p>41st Annual Human-Computer Interaction Lab (HCIL) Symposium May 23, 2024 College Park, MD</p>	<p>Faculty and students from anchor institutions, digital literacy experts</p>	<p>Presented a poster about the Enoch Pratt collaboration for an audience of scholars whose work focuses on human-computer interaction.</p>

⁴ <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/net-inclusion-2024/>

⁵ <https://www.mladlacon.com/>

Intended Outcomes

An evaluation plan and logic model were developed to capture project activities and their intended outcomes. The project’s long-term vision is to increase Maryland residents’ digital literacy skills and competency, increase ownership of digital devices, and increase home broadband digital access.

Equity Related Outcomes

The intended outcomes are focused on closing the gaps in digital literacy and access. Project activities are being directed toward groups that face gaps in target areas. Evaluation activities are tracking services provided and data has been collected to determine the extent to which project activities focus on Maryland residents who are senior adults, have low income, have a language barrier (low literacy or English learner), are members of a racial or ethnic minoritized group, have disabilities, are from immigrant communities, or rural communities.

The demographics of participants served by extension educators who reported demographic information (n=1724) are presented in the table below:

American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Some other race	White
2%	3%	53%	<1%	4%	2%	34%

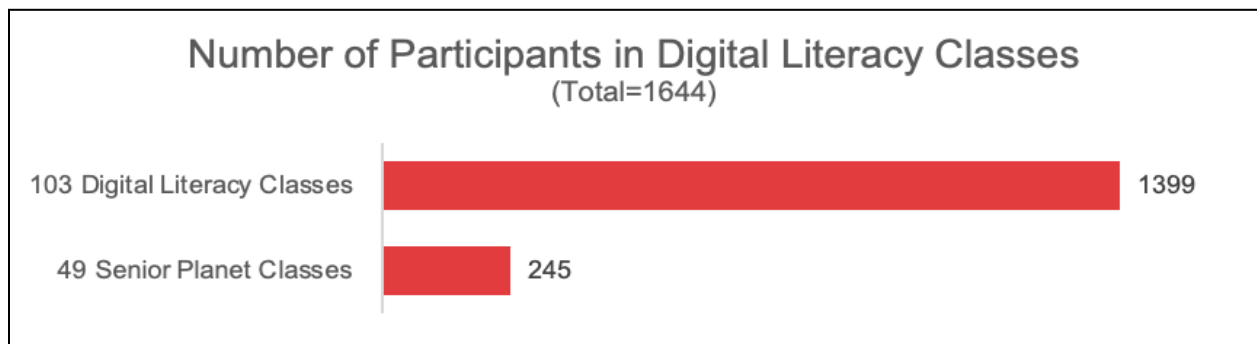
Use of Evidence

The team conducted a comprehensive user needs study with 161 Maryland residents to gain a deeper understanding of their digital literacy needs and identify gaps in current digital equity efforts. The user needs study was a follow-up to the Stakeholders Needs Study carried out in FY23. Utilizing the partnership network of the Marylanders Online project, the interviews were conducted at several community-anchor institutions across the state (e.g., libraries, housing centers, community colleges) that allowed the team to reach Marylanders with varying levels of digital literacy skills. The main focus of the interviews was understanding why Marylanders want - or do not want- to learn digital skills, how they seek and leverage digital education resources, and what types of instructional strategies would be best suited to different types of learners.

The study was conducted in English and Spanish. These follow-up investigations highlighted the need for better targeted institutional support and infrastructure that are essential to achieve more inclusive digital accessibility to everyday public services. The related works are being prepared for forthcoming conference presentations.

Performance

Type	Number of People Served
Digital Literacy Classes - 103 classes	1399
Training – Senior Planet 49 events ⁶	245



Appendices

Appendix I: [UME Marylanders Online Reach Breakdown](#)

Appendix II: [Meeting People Where They Are: Customizing Digital Literacy Education](#)

Appendix III: [Fiscal Year Report- July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024](#)

Appendix IV: [UME Marylanders Online Mini-Grant Recipients](#)

⁶ Senior Planet classes included 10 5-week classes, 24 lectures, 15 workshops, with an average of 5 registered participants per event