



The 2025 Maryland Digital Opportunity Summit

October 15, 2025 | 8 AM - 4:30 PM | Silver Spring Civic Building, MD

“Investing in Maryland’s Future: Invest Today. Empower Tomorrow. Fueling Economic Growth and Workforce Innovation Through Digital Opportunity”

Time	Activity
8 – 9 a.m.	Registration, Continental Breakfast, and Networking Summit Emcees: Lo Smith, MLS, Executive Director, Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition & Teri Mumm, Digital Navigation Program Manager, University of Maryland Extension Digital Literacy Project
9:10 – 10 a.m.	Welcome & Opening Remarks Welcome Address: Jinhee Kim, Ph.D., Professor, Associate Director, and Associate Dean, University of Maryland Extension (UME) State of Digital Opportunity in Maryland: Ronnie Hammond, Director of Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband Learning Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Examine Maryland’s progress in creating digital opportunities.2. Identify strategies for building cross-sector partnerships to drive economic growth.3. Establish key principles of statewide engagement and inclusion.
10 – 10:45 a.m.	Keynote Address: National Insights on Digital Opportunity, Inclusion, & Workforce Innovation Speaker: Nicol Turner Lee, Ph.D., Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Technology Innovation at the Brookings Institution Drawing on national insights and local needs, the keynote address will spotlight how digital opportunities are essential for shaping Maryland’s future. Learning Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Become knowledgeable about the current trajectory of digital inclusion within both a broader national and statewide context.2. Understand how digital access and skills drive economic growth and enhance workforce development opportunities.3. Develop plans for collective action to sustain progress during uncertain funding cycles.



10:45 - 10:55 a.m.	Maryland's Digital Roadmap: From Budget to Impact Speaker: Brooke Lierman, Comptroller of the State of Maryland As the 34th Comptroller of Maryland, Ms. Lierman will provide insights on the state's fiscal leadership and its commitment to sustainable digital opportunity investments. Learning Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn Maryland's fiscal priorities and budget allocations for technology initiatives across key sectors.2. Identify the strategic framework and key metrics for measuring Maryland's digital opportunity programs.3. Understand the connection between public technology investment decisions and community outcomes.
10:55 - 11:00 a.m.	Transition to Breakouts
11 a.m.– 12 p.m.	Morning Breakout Sessions: 1a, 1b, 1c
	1a. Workforce Development Breakout Panel Explore how digital skills drive vocational and economic growth, examining current and future workforce needs of businesses and implications for job seekers and policymakers. Panelists: Mike Knapp, Chief Executive Officer, SkillSmart; Devin Jackson, CEO, A Prosperous Tomorrow; Suja Joseph, M.S., Director of Reemployment Programs, Maryland Department of Labor Moderator: Marokey Sawo, Research Associate, Research to Action Lab Center for Equity and Community Impact - Urban Institute Learning Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the connection between digital skills and career advancement pathways.2. Identify successful models for integrating digital skills training into existing workforce development programs.3. Develop strategies to build partnerships between employers, training providers, community organizations, and educational institutions.



	<p>1b. Infrastructure & Access Breakout Panel</p> <p>Assess Maryland's broadband landscape by identifying remaining connectivity gaps in infrastructure, access, service, affordability, and policy.</p> <p>Panelists: Ronnie Hammond, Director, Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband; Kaori Hirakawa, M.A., Chief Executive Officer, One Language, LLC; Charlotte Davis, Executive Director, Rural Maryland Council</p> <p>Moderator: Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network of Maryland</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand Maryland's broadband progress and remaining gaps.2. Learn about policy frameworks and stakeholder relationships that govern broadband deployment.3. Identify strategies to align infrastructure expansion with affordability and digital adoption programs.
	<p>1c. Community Engagement Breakout Panel</p> <p>Explore various approaches to digital inclusion that foster community connections and develop sustainable programs designed with and by the communities they serve.</p> <p>Panelists: William Hegwood, M.S., Lead Career Coach, Rapid Rehousing Vocational Program at CareerCatchers, Inc.; Ken Oldham, Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Frederick County; Reverend Dr. Alfred Bailey II, Minister of Mission and Outreach, New Psalmist Baptist Church</p> <p>Moderator: Julie Slivka, Communications Manager, University of Maryland Extension Digital Literacy Project</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn best practices for effectively engaging with communities of varying needs and experiences.2. Understand how grassroots leadership and community champions drive digital opportunity.3. Identify successful community-based inclusion and outreach strategies.
12 p.m.	Lunch & Networking
12:30 - 1 p.m.	<p>Maryland Digital Equity Awards Ceremony (concurrent with lunch)</p> <p>Recognize the outstanding work of Maryland's digital equity champions in four categories: Navigator, Practitioner, Program, and Workforce.</p>



1:05 - 1:45 p.m.	Partnership Speed Dating A fast-paced, 40-minute networking session connecting participants with potential partners and collaboration opportunities. Learning Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create targeted partnership connections by identifying complementary expertise, geographic focus areas, and program goals.2. Identify shared priorities and opportunities for joint initiatives.3. Build partnerships that strengthen Maryland's statewide digital opportunity ecosystem.
1:55 - 2:35 p.m.	Coalition Building Session Transform networking connections from the Partnership Speed Dating session into actionable plans and regional coalitions that focus on fostering digital opportunities locally. Learning Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop shared goals and strategic priorities for Maryland's regional digital opportunity coalitions.2. Learn frameworks for establishing sustainable collaboration structures.3. Identify strategies to ensure statewide engagement.
2:35 - 2:45 p.m.	Snack Break & Networking
2:45 - 3:45 p.m.	Afternoon Breakout Sessions
	2a. Policy & Advocacy Learn how effective policy and advocacy engagement at the state and federal levels drive legislation, funding allocation, and program implementation. Panelists: Tsion Tesfaye, Senior Research & Policy Manager, National Digital Inclusion Alliance; Delegate Kris Fair, Maryland House of Delegates, District 3; Shae Gardner, Director of Policy & Research, LGBT Tech Moderator: Dhanaraj Thakur, Ph.D., Research Director, Center for Democracy & Technology Learning Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Examine key policy issues shaping digital opportunities.2. Learn advocacy strategies to engage decision-makers.3. Explore coalition opportunities to influence long-term policy change.



	<p>2b. Digital Skills Training Breakout Panel</p> <p>Examine effective models for delivering inclusive, learner-centered digital skills training that ensure success for learners of all backgrounds.</p> <p>Panelists: Ashley Lane, LMSW, C-PHM, Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Frostburg; Demetrius Goodwin, Chief Executive Officer, NPower; Aziz Hurtado Olson, Tech Extension Educator, University of Maryland Extension</p> <p>Moderator: Liz Gabbitas, MLIS, Founder & Managing Director, Libraries 4 Digital Equity</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand how programs can be developed and tailored to effectively meet the needs of communities.2. Discover inclusive training models that foster successful learning outcomes for individuals from diverse backgrounds and skill levels.3. Identify key metrics and evaluation frameworks to measure program effectiveness.
	<p>2c. Innovative Local Programs Breakout Panel</p> <p>Explore innovative local digital inclusion programs with statewide scaling potential, examining how community-based solutions can be transformed to address digital opportunity gaps across Maryland.</p> <p>Panelists: Gretchen LeGrand, M.S., Senior Program Manager for Digital Equity, Robert W. Deutsch Foundation; Mac McComas, M.A., Senior Program Manager, Johns Hopkins, 21st Century Cities Initiative; Vishnupriya Desai, Digital Equity Program Manager, Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband</p> <p>Moderator: John Horrigan, Ph.D., Senior Fellow, Benton Institute for Broadband & Society</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand how programs can successfully tailor solutions to address unique community needs.2. Explore examples of replicable local digital inclusion initiatives.3. Recognize innovative approaches as drivers for statewide digital equity progress, including nonprofit and for-profit opportunities.



3:50 - 4:20 p.m.	<p>Plenary Panel Fireside Chat: Where We Go From Here</p> <p>This closing session focuses on the future of digital opportunity in Maryland. Panelists will discuss the policy landscape, strategies for sustainable funding, and the legislative actions needed to advance digital opportunity statewide. The conversation will highlight how Maryland can protect and expand programs, ensure both urban and rural communities are supported, and position the state as a national leader in digital inclusion.</p> <p>Panelists: Cheryl DeBerry, Broadband and Energy Manager, Garrett County Government; Kenya Asli, Executive Director, Baltimore City Information Technology; Isaias Tesfalidet, Project Director, University of Maryland Extension Digital Literacy Project; Mitsuko Herrera, Program Director, Montgomery Connects; Molly Sherman, Executive Director, Carroll Technology and Innovation Council; Teri Mumm, Digital Navigation Program Manager, University of Maryland Extension Digital Literacy Project</p> <p>Moderator: Josh Bokee, Executive Director & Founder, Connect for Broadband</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify key policy issues shaping Maryland’s digital equity future.2. Explore strategies to secure sustainable funding beyond current federal allocations.3. Discuss legislative pathways to strengthen statewide digital inclusion efforts.4. Translate summit insights into actionable commitments.
4:20 - 4:30 p.m.	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Speaker: Isaias Tesfalidet, Project Director, University of Maryland Extension Digital Literacy Project</p>
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.	<p>Networking Reception</p> <p><i>Hosted by Carroll County Technology and Innovation Council & CareerCatchers, Inc.</i></p> <p>The networking reception provides an informal setting for attendees to strengthen connections, celebrate Maryland's progress in digital equity, and build partnerships for future initiatives.</p>