

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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County celebrates Digital Inclusion Week, promotes digital equity for residents

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro is observing Digital Inclusion Week from October 2-6, 2023, joining the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) to raise awareness on the importance of bridging the digital divide. Digital inclusion encompasses three critical areas: affordable internet, access to suitable devices and digital skills training. This year’s theme, “Building Connected Communities,” is a core priority for the County.

In Summit County, 12% of households have no access to broadband, with data showing low-income households, older residents, and Black residents having the least access to broadband. Several projects have been launched to close this gap and to take further steps to increase affordability, quality, and digital skills. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Job and Family Services and Direction Home Akron-Canton distributed over 100 devices to seniors, 150 to schools and students, and provided internet access to families in need. Summit Connects, a county-led broadband initiative, creates infrastructure from which local governments, non-profits, and businesses can bridge the digital divide through affordable, high-speed internet and other technology projects that benefit the public.

The County is also leading a Digital Equity Steering Committee dedicated to pursuing digital equity and inclusion. The group is moving forward with plans to create a digital asset map for residents to look up digital resources nearby, such as public Wi-Fi, devices, and digital literacy training.

“When our residents and businesses have the access and skills to fully utilize technology, we can help level the playing field to ensure everyone has opportunities to work, learn, and connect in our digital age,” said Executive Shapiro, “Connection is an integral part of a thriving community, and we are working to ensure that digital connection is accessible to all!”

For more information about the National Digital Inclusion Alliance and Digital Inclusion Week nationwide, visit: digitalinclusion.org. For more information on Summit Connects, visit: co.summitoh.net/pages/Summit-Connects

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