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## NEWS RELEASE

### Clayton to Create Digital Equity Plan and Celebrate Digital Inclusion Week

(Clayton County, GA)-Clayton County is in the process of creating a digital equity strategic plan to help close the digital divide for its residents. According to the 2020 Census, approximately 20 percent of nearly 300,000 Clayton County residents do not have access to high-speed internet due to availability or affordability. As a result, the Clayton County Office of Digital Equity is creating a Digital Equity Strategic Plan and conducting a Broadband Feasibility Study to qualify for federal Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant funding. Funds are expected to be awarded by the end of the year to the State Digital Equity Office that may be used to:

- Build and Upgrade Broadband Infrastructure.
- Create Programs to Assist Eligible Households obtaining High-Speed Internet.
- Digital Devices and Technology Skills Training.

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance defines digital equity and inclusion as “a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.” Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services. Clayton County is taking the necessary steps to ensure that citizens are connected and able to navigate the online world and improve their lives because of it.

"We are committed to working together to bridge the gap to help increase the number of unserved and underserved residents who do not have digital access, whether it is internet or cellular services," said Chairman Jeffrey E. Turner. "We are also excited to be able to educate, inform, and improve the technical offerings that our citizens may not otherwise have access to, which they can use to learn a new skill, potentially qualify for additional career paths, and start or improve their own business."

Additionally, the Office of Digital Equity will (1) Identify ways to increase affordable access to high-speed internet for residents and businesses, (2) Establish a countywide technology committee that will coordinate digital literacy initiatives and innovation programs and (3) Implement a Digital Equity Scorecard that tracks neighborhood availability, service affordability, and digital literacy initiatives.

Residents are invited to participate in *Digital Inclusion Week October 3-7, 2022*, to raise awareness about opportunities to apply for eligible services, engage and learn more about technology and skills.

For more information, or to register for training classes during Digital Inclusion Week, access [digitalequity.claytoncountyga.gov](http://digitalequity.claytoncountyga.gov).

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