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NEWS RELEASE

Clayton County Digital Equity Named One of Nation’s Digital Inclusion Trailblazers

(Clayton County, GA)– The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) named Clayton County as a 2023 Digital Inclusion Trailblazer, recognizing the county’s efforts to close the digital divide.

As the pandemic demonstrated, digital inclusion – access to affordable high-speed internet, devices, and digital skills training – is essential to participating and thriving in today’s world. Recognizing the ongoing needs of the community, Clayton County didn’t stop digital inclusion efforts at the end of the quarantine.

“We are so honored to receive this recognition for our digital equity efforts. Since the inception of our office on July 1, 2022, we have hosted or participated in 50 ACP Sign-Up events, assisted 191 residents with applying for the ACP benefit, of which 67 qualified, facilitated 83 FREE digital skills trainings, of which 399 Clayton County residents have participated, and provided 207 free devices to our residents via partnerships with local and national non-profit organizations. We have only scratched the surface and look forward to continuing to work to close the digital divide in Clayton County ‘one household at a time’.” said Digital Equity Administrator, Takiyah Thomas.

This year, Clayton County joins a record number of Digital Inclusion Trailblazers, with 47 total awardees representing municipal, county, and regional governments paving the way for digitally inclusive communities across the US.

“Nonprofits, libraries, churches, and other community organizations can’t reach digital equity on their own. For everyone to thrive in today’s digital world, we need all hands on deck,” said Angela Siefer, NDIA executive director. “NDIA’s Digital Inclusion Trailblazers exemplify the key role local governments have in building connected communities for all of their residents.”

Trailblazers provide models for other local governments to aspire to as communities build digital inclusion ecosystems. Clayton County achieved Trailblazer status by prioritizing digital inclusion for residents of their communities through:

1. Heavily promoting the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), a \$30/month federal subsidy, used to lower the cost of home internet service.





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2. Collaborating with local and national non-profit organizations to provide free digital devices to Clayton County residents.
3. Facilitating FREE digital skills training for Clayton County residents.

NDIA revised the seven-year-old Trailblazer program this year, identifying seven categories of current best practices. Each applicant's materials are verified for accuracy, assessed for community impact, and posted in an interactive map and searchable database on NDIA's website. By sharing materials with open-sourcing, NDIA provides community advocates and local governments ways to continue learning, connect with trailblazing peers, and plan their own digital inclusion solutions.

For more information about Clayton County Digital Equity initiatives, access <https://digitalequity.claytoncountyga.gov/>. Media representatives should contact the Office of Communications, Communications Administrator, Valerie L. Fuller at 770.473. 3834 or submit a media inquiry form to the team by accessing <https://claytoncountyforms.claytoncountyga.gov/news-media-request>.

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About National Digital Inclusion Alliance: NDIA advances digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act. Working collaboratively with more than 1,500 digital inclusion practitioners, NDIA advocates for equitable broadband access, tech devices, digital skills training, and tech support. For more information, visit digitalinclusion.org.

