



Digital Inclusion Week Proclamation

WHEREAS, Broadband services play an important role in civic and cultural participation, lifelong learning and access to essential services for Albemarle County communities, and nationally, nearly half of all people who are digital disconnected are people of color and are less likely to have a broadband internet connection or a desktop or laptop at home; and

WHEREAS, Digital equity ensures all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how the digital divide impacts our residents, particularly our racially and ethnically diverse residents and communities, and access to a reliable, affordable internet connection is a social determinant of health, with higher COVID-19 mortality associated with a lack of an internet connection; and digital skills are a gateway for career advancement and crucial for economic growth, intergenerational wealth-building and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing and Community Development's Broadband Office has been a national leader in funding and supporting broadband expansion projects through the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative, placing Albemarle County in the position of achieving universal broadband access by 2025; and

WHEREAS, Albemarle County is committed to closing the digital divide for its residents through the work of the Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office, Albemarle Broadband Authority, Albemarle County Public Schools, and partner organizations like the Jefferson Area Board for Aging, the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library, the Blue Ridge Health District, Piedmont Housing Alliance, and other members of a coalition that includes representatives from the University of Virginia and the City of Charlottesville, all working to launch programs that address barriers to digital equity including: distributing Wi-Fi hotspots, providing digital skills training, distributing laptops and tablets, and coordinating the development of a digital equity plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that we, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, do hereby recognize the week of October 2 – 6, 2023, as Digital Inclusion Week in Albemarle County and encourage residents to join in raising the awareness of advancing digital equity and being committed to closing the digital divide.

Signed this 4th day of October 2023.

Donna Price, Chair
Albemarle Board of County Supervisors