

ACRONYMS & JARGON

for cutting through the nonsense

- **ACP** - Affordable Connectivity Program (provides set discount on any internet plan to qualifying households; established post-covid; formerly EBB, emergency broadband benefit, became ACP when made permanent in 2021; renewal in ?)
- **Anchor Institutions** - Schools, libraries, and health centers (clinics, hospitals, etc.). This term refers to institutions which receive federal funding support for their telecommunications, which enables us to build high quality networks between data centers in metro areas and these institutions in rural areas.
- **BEAD** - Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (the part of IJJA for state broadband \$)
- **Broadband** - High-speed internet, defined by the FCC as a minimum of 25 megabits per second download and 3 megabits per second upload (written 25/3mbps). Modern households need 100/10 or even 100 symmetrical (100/100mbps) to telework or learn remotely.
- **DE Act or DEA** – Digital Equity Act (the part of IJJA specifically for digital inclusion work)
- **Digital Inclusion Coalition** - Locally created and locally run collaborative working group to connect digital inclusion practitioners and ensure services and programs dovetail rather than duplicate; typically include libraries, K-12, higher ed, state and local government agencies or representatives, nonprofits, advocacy groups, and sometimes private sector partners like internet service providers, device refurbishers and resellers, and for-profit skill building or job training programs.
- **Digital Navigators** - Service or program offered (usually in a library or community center setting) where people with sufficient digital skills provide entry-level support for people navigating the digital world for the first time. Digital Navigator programs often include device adoption, discounted home internet service, online learning, job upskilling, and support to meet educational, career, or financial goals. Sometimes ongoing relationships between Digital Navigators and their clients are emphasized or encouraged as a tool to increase impact.
- **ECF** - Emergency Connectivity Fund (covid funding for schools and libraries to provide devices and connectivity to learners in need)
- **E-Rate** - Colloquial name for the federal mechanism to support telecommunications services in schools and libraries. Sites receive a percentage discount based on the percent of their service area which qualifies for Free & Reduced School Lunch. Paid out of the Universal Service Fund (USF) and administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC).
- **FCC** – Federal Communications Commission (oversees ACP, E-Rate, Lifeline, FirstNet, broadband mapping, and regulates and licenses wireless spectrum)
- **IJJA** - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (massive bill from last year putting \$\$ towards broadband (BEAD) and digital equity (Digital Equity Act))
- **ISP** – Internet Service Provider (the company which owns the network, bills the individual, and manages the actual connection)
- **L4DE** – Libraries for Digital Equity (or Libraries4DE.org; collaborative digital inclusion newsletter focused only on library interests; consider joining!)
- **Last mile** - A broadband infrastructure term for wired networks reaching individual households. Also sometimes called “fiber to the home” (FTTH) or “fiber to the premises” (FTTP). Because many homes are far from major roads or densely populated areas, last mile can be prohibitively expensive. Very few communities have true complete last mile infrastructure.
- **Middle-mile** - A broadband infrastructure term relating to cabling infrastructure between major data processing centers and “anchor institutions.” Middle mile can be expensive to build because it covers long distances and difficult terrain.
- **PLS** - Public Libraries Survey (annual statistics on how library services are offered and how they change; great source of data locally and nationally)
- **NDIA** - National Digital Inclusion Alliance (advocacy and resource group for digital inclusion practitioners; consider joining!)
- **NTIA** - National Telecommunications and Information Administration (within federal Department of Commerce, administering IJJA)
- **REN** – Research & Education Network (or Regional Education Network; general term for organization which provides internet/phone service and often additional support to schools, libraries, and other anchor institutions; not all regions have one)
- **SBO** – State Broadband Office (all states have one; charged with implementing the BEAD program and bringing high-speed internet to all residents; often also charged with implementing the DE Act, but not always)
- **SHLB** – Schools, Health, & Libraries Broadband Coalition (advocacy and resource group focused on the needs of anchor institutions; consider joining!)
- **SLA** - State Library Agency (all states have one; charged with managing federal pass through funds and representing libraries in the state via data collection)
- **Three-legged stool** - A traditional way to describe the three components of digital inclusion work (internet access, useful devices, and digital literacy). Often referenced in passing, sometimes critiqued or updated but a good entry point for considering issues.