

Update from the Digital Divide Project - February 2022

Here is a quick look at the work we have been doing in the last few months at the Digital Divide Project:

Recommendations and report for Advanced Education

We are in the final stages of completing a report with recommendations for Advanced Education. The content of the report outlines:

1. The main barriers learners are facing in accessing online, remote, and blended learning.
2. Key concepts that have emerged around:
 - Digital inclusion, digital literacy, and accessibility
 - Social and economic conditions, and the impact of the pandemic on learners and practitioners
 - Professional development and the increased time demands of online learning
 - Emergency learning, post-pandemic learning, and reimagining CALP programs
3. Specific recommendations grouped into the following three areas:
 - Increasing funding to CALPs to enhance learner access to reliable broadband internet and digital devices suitable for learning.
 - Prioritizing and funding the training and technical support necessary for online programming.
 - Ensuring that the programs offered through online delivery are high-quality learning opportunities.

User-friendly resource for practitioners and the MakerSpace event

On Friday, March 11th from 1:30-4:00pm, we are hosting a fun, free, creative online MakerSpace event. This is a chance for practitioners to contribute to the development of a practitioner resource to share wise strategies for effective delivery of online, remote and blended learning. (Participants will receive a gift card after the event!)

At the MakerSpace event, participants will:

- Meet with other practitioners and the team from the Digital Divide Project at Calgary Learns
- Get a behind-the-scenes look at the resource already under development and the strategies we have collected from practitioners
- Help us prioritize the strategies to include in the resource
- Share any strategies that you think we've missed
- Choose design options and tell us how you'd like to access the resource when it's finished.

For more information and to register click here: <https://forms.gle/jcN9d9cxgJkdXb4w9>

Low-cost internet program

We have been working with ISPs (Internet service providers) in Alberta to discuss the possibility of developing a new, low-cost internet program specifically for financially-barriered CALP participants who

do not qualify for other internet subsidy programs (like the Telus For Good program, designated only for families, and with stringent criteria). We are cautiously optimistic and excited because we know how much of a positive influence this could have on learners.

Thank you to over 100 CALP-funded organizations across the province who answered our request for information on numbers of learners and their access to the internet, among other things. We will use this information to make a strong case to Shaw/Rogers and Telus, and to further our discussions of where and how this program could be offered. We will keep you posted on developments.

Digital audit tool

We have been developing a Digital Audit Tool to support organizations who are considering how to reduce the impact of the digital divide on their clients and services. The tool is in the final stages of editing and we will let you know when a completed version is ready to be used and distributed. We've received some very good feedback on the tool from practitioners and organizations who recognize that the tool will be valuable in advancing how organizations think about their service delivery and respond to issues of digital inclusion and equity.

Thank you for all of your support and engagement in our Digital Divide Project. And special thanks to our Advisory Committee members.

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