



Latah County
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MOSCOW, ID—October 2, 2023—The Latah County Broadband Coalition will get another step closer to bridging the digital divide with new support. Starting in September 2023, a dedicated Digital Literacy Coordinator will help launch a County-wide digital inclusion effort.

University of Idaho Extension’s Digital Economy Program (DEP) is placing AmeriCorps Members across the state to meet community members where they live and to deliver resources and training to empower Idahoans to participate in an increasingly digital society. Local resident, Kylie Holveck, will serve Latah County as a Digital Literacy Coordinator, working alongside the Latah Coalition, to improve digital access and opportunity in the County beginning with outreach and listening sessions to better understand barriers to digital access, especially among target populations.

“The county libraries’ existing efforts to advance digital skills among the public will get a considerable boost from partnering with the Digital Literacy Coordinator,” said Chris Sokol, director of the Latah County Library District. “Kylie is working with our Tech Help Team to identify new and exciting educational opportunities that we can provide for free to residents at all seven of our libraries throughout Latah County.”

The [Digital Equity Act](#) recognizes eight target populations as disproportionately facing barriers to broadband internet access and adoption, including low-income households, aging populations, incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, racial and ethnic minorities, and rural residents. Digital inclusion refers to the effort to ensure equitable access to and use of information technology by identifying and eliminating barriers to the tools and skills necessary to participate in an increasingly digital world.

“Broadband internet access and use is now an essential component to improving the quality of life for all Idahoans,” says Amber Smyer, Program Manager for DEP. “We’re thrilled to be able to place Kylie in Latah County to help leverage resources to expand digital access for individuals and rural communities.

The new coordinator will also add support to enhance Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) awareness and increase enrollment. The \$14 billion ACP provides discounts for eligible households of up to \$30 per month toward broadband internet service and up to \$100 toward a one-time purchase of a computer, laptop, or tablet. Currently, fewer than 12% of eligible households in Latah County are receiving this benefit. Please visit the [Latah County Broadband Coalition website](#) for more information on ACP enrollment.

“Local Digital Literacy Coordinators like Kylie are crucial in improving digital access throughout Idaho,” said Dylan Baker, Deputy State Librarian for the Idaho Commission for Libraries. “Latah County residents will benefit from this new support, helping them participate more fully in today’s online and connected world.”

Meet Kylie and learn how to participate by joining us at the next Latah County Broadband Coalition meeting on Wednesday, October 11 from 10:00am – 11:00am. Find an agenda, attendance information, and more here:

<https://grants.latahcountyid.gov/updates/>

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ABOUT

The [Latah County Broadband Coalition](#) engages stakeholders across the County to communicate broadband needs and offer support in developing projects to address those needs. The coalition's aim is to find local, state, and federal funding to facilitate the build-out of future-proof broadband infrastructure throughout Latah County.

University of Idaho Extension [Digital Economy Program](#)'s mission is to reduce the digital divide, allowing the benefits of digitalization to extend to all Idahoans, so no one is left behind, nor left offline, in the growing digital economy. The program provides learning opportunities for Idahoans focused on basic digital skills, retraining for remote work, and helping entrepreneurs and business owners access new markets and expand their sales using online venues.

The [Idaho Commission for Libraries](#) is the lead agency for developing a collaborative Digital Access for All Idahoans Plan as part of the Digital Equity Act. Their goal is ensuring Idahoans have access to information and communication technology that's vital for life in the 21st century.

The [Affordable Connectivity Program](#), formerly the Emergency Broadband Benefit, is an FCC benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare, and more. It is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), an independent not-for-profit, with oversight from the FCC.

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