

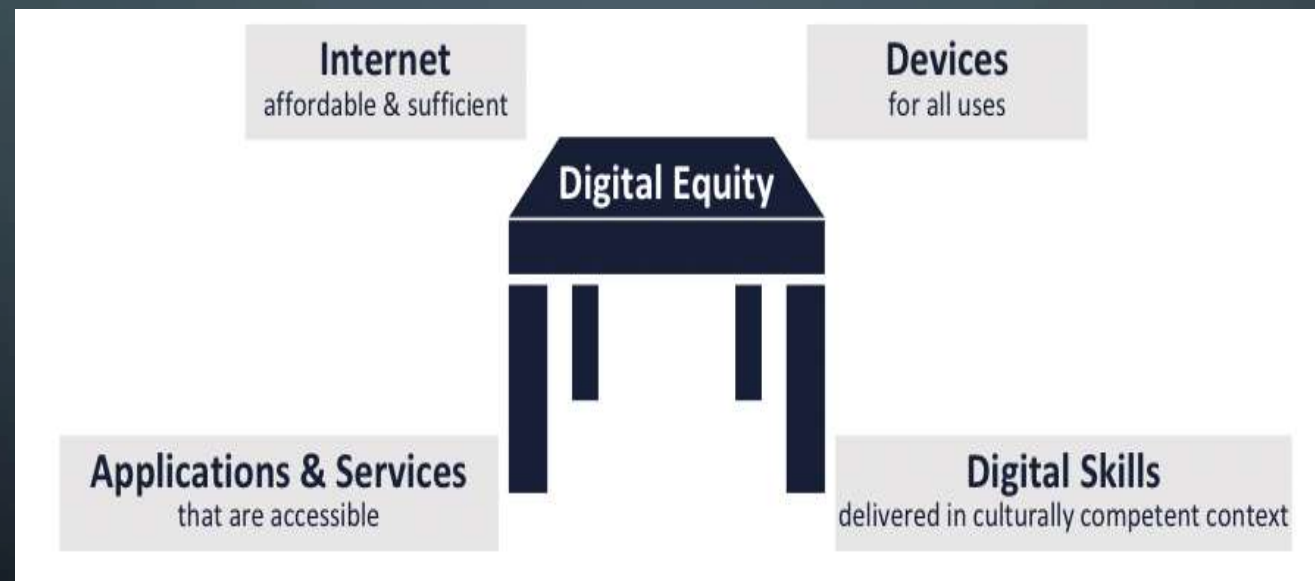


# BROADBAND: THE NEXT CONNECTION

SWREDA MAY 2023 CONFERENCE PANEL PRESENTATION

# WHAT IS DIGITAL EQUITY?

**Digital Equity:** everyone having daily access to the Internet, at speeds, quality and capacity necessary to accomplish common tasks, with digital skills necessary to fully participate online, and whenever possible on a personal device and home network



# DIGITAL EQUITY VISION

*Louisiana is committed to the vision that all residents have affordable access to fast internet connections, are taught to use the latest devices, and understand why access can further their quality of life.*

# BROADBAND FOR EVERYONE IN LOUISIANA (BEL) EXECUTIVE ORDER

*...with the goal of eliminating the digital divide by 2029.*

# WHERE IS THE NEED?

The digital divide hinders equal participation and opportunity in all aspects of life due to the gap between those who have affordable access, skills, and support to effectively engage online and those who do not. This disproportionately affects

- People of color (43% of Louisianans are not white)
- Indigenous people (representing over 360,000 Louisianans)
- Low-income households (over 17% of the state lives in poverty)
- People with disabilities (11% of Louisianans live with a disability)
- Rural areas (nearly 26% of our population, over 1.2 million people)
- The elderly (16.5% of Louisianans are 65 years old or older)

# WHY DIGITAL EQUITY?

Broadband connectivity allows Louisiana residents and businesses access to the most basic amenities needed in a 21st century world. Internet access has become a critical piece of infrastructure, relied upon to ignite economic growth and competitiveness.

- 21% of Louisiana households do not have a broadband subscription
- 12% of school age children in Louisiana are not connected
- 31% of the Census blocks in Louisiana have no form of internet coverage other than via satellite subscription
- 31% of working age adults do not have the digital skills needed