

RVBAT Meeting – June 4, 2025

Meeting Purpose

To discuss broadband access, digital equity, and AI impacts in Southern Oregon communities.

Key Takeaways

- AI is rapidly advancing, bringing opportunities and risks around fraud, digital literacy, and workforce impacts
- Funding challenges are affecting digital equity programs; need to explore alternative funding sources
- Statewide collaboration on broadband/digital equity efforts could be improved
- Environmental and ethical implications of AI need more consideration

Topics

AI Developments and Impacts

- AI conference highlighted both benefits and risks of rapid AI advancement
- Concerns about AI-enabled fraud targeting seniors and vulnerable populations
- AI could potentially help with digital literacy training and fraud prevention
- Need to balance AI opportunities with ethical considerations and environmental impacts

Digital Equity Program Updates

- Josephine County Library partnering on smartphone program, doing outreach
- Ashland Senior Center seeing increased reports of potential scams from seniors
- Southern Oregon ESD exploring digital learning best practices, librarian roles
- Funding challenges affecting ability to plan and sustain programs

Statewide Collaboration

- Interest in improving statewide coordination among Broadband Action Teams (BATs)
- Oregon Broadband Equity Coalition meets monthly on digital equity issues
- Suggestion to use Oregon Connections Conference to bring BATs together
- Link Oregon hosting annual member meeting for public/nonprofit entities

Funding Landscape

- State digital equity grant not a good fit for some local needs/timelines
- Shift toward exploring private/philanthropic funding sources
- Challenge of planning programs with uncertain future funding

AI Ethics and Literacy

- Need to teach information literacy skills alongside AI/digital literacy
- Questions about environmental impacts of AI energy consumption
- Challenges in developing AI training that won't quickly become obsolete

Next Steps

- Connect RVBAT with statewide BAT leaders' group
- Explore bringing BATs together at Oregon Connections Conference
- Share relevant conference/event opportunities with the group
- Continue discussions on AI impacts, digital equity funding, and statewide collaboration

Action Items

- **Invite Stephanie (new head staff at Age Plus) to join RVBAT meetings**
- **Share info on philanthropic funding avenues for digital inclusion projects with RVBAT group**
- **Connect with Joe Franell re: statewide BAT leaders group participation**