

CENTER FOR DIGITAL EQUITY CHARTER

The Center for Digital Equity (CDE) is the backbone organization for a collective impact strategy bringing together residents, public, and private sector partners to co-create solutions allowing every resident the opportunity to thrive in our modern culture. Its mission is to make Mecklenburg County the most digitally equitable community in America.

The CDE focuses on five workstreams which include:

- Policy, Advocacy, and Ecosystem Development
- Data, Analysis, and Research
- Device and Connectivity
- Digital Navigation and Technical Support
- Digital Literacy and Skilling

The CDE is housed at Queens University of Charlotte and includes an Advisory Board and a Community Council structure. This document outlines the roles and responsibilities of participating in the Community Council and was co-created with residents, public, and private sector partners.

The Center for Digital Equity – Community Council Primary Responsibilities include:

- The CDE Community Council provides the space to **convene** residents, public, and private sector partners who are committed to making Mecklenburg County the most digitally equitable community in America.
- The CDE is a **networking** group for sharing digital inclusion ideas and practices to help all partners increase their ability to support community needs.
- The CDE is a **voice** for digital equity and inclusion for Mecklenburg County.
- The CDE is a **leader** in Mecklenburg County's digital equity efforts.
- The CDE will **develop** and **execute** a digital inclusion **strategy(s)** for the region in collaboration with residents, public, and private sector partners.

I. Meetings

Frequency. The CDE Community Council meets the first Thursday of every month from 3:30 to 5pm EST.

Program / Project Status. At each meeting, project status will be reported by the Community Council Co-Chairs and Deputy Director using an agenda outline such as the following:

- A. Introductory Items such as:
 - Introduction of new participants
 - Roll call
- B. Goals for the meeting
 - Notes from last meeting
- C. Workstream sessions
- D. Updates
- E. Actions and date of next meeting

II. Decision Making

Program/project decisions must be documented and at CDE Staff's discretion certain items may require an official vote by the Council. In those instances, the CDE will follow the procedure below for decision making.

QUORUM. 51% of the partners being present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the CDE Community Council. Any voting representative from a partner, primary or alternate, qualifies as a partner being present.

MANNER OF ACTING. The act of a majority of the partners present, in person or on the conference line, at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the partners of the CDE. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each meeting to determine whether a quorum has been achieved. Votes shall be by voice unless there is a motion for a written ballot. No proxy voting shall be allowed. Proxy is defined as someone not designated as a voting representative voting in the place of a partners' voting representative(s).

VOTING. Voting may take place at the workstream level and at the Community Council level.

For the Community Council – voting rights will be aligned with partnership type. If you are attending as a representative of your organization, then your organization will be given one vote while still having the ability for multiple people from the organization to participate. If you are attending as a resident, each resident will be given one vote.

For the workstream level – each person listed on the partnership agreement will be given one vote. This could mean that multiple people from the same organization have voting rights at the workstream level. The workstream chair will not vote unless there is a tie, then they will vote to break the tie.

PRESUMPTION OF ASSENT. A partner's voting representative who is present at a meeting at which action on any matter is taken shall be conclusively presumed to have assented to the action taken unless his/her dissent is entered in the notes of the meeting. Such a right to dissent shall not apply to a partner who voted in favor of such action.

NOTICE. Any item requiring a vote may only occur at a meeting where quorum has been established.

III. Other Rules of Operation

- a. Agendas will be distributed at least three (3) business days before the meetings. Any decision items requiring a vote will be prominent in the agenda and reference the 'discussion notes'.
- b. Meeting notes (of significant decisions and action items) will be distributed to partners within three (3) business days of each meeting. All corrections to the notes must be submitted by the end of the subsequent meeting.
- c. Meeting notes and partner attendance may be published by the CDE on a shared workspace and/or website, excluding Confidential Information, within seven (7) days of subsequent meeting.

NOTICE: CDE staff will perform a regular review of partners. Should a partner not meet the partnership responsibilities outlined in this Charter, communication will be sent out to the partner and their voting rights placed on hold for a 3-month timeframe. After the 3-month suspension, partnership voting rights will be reinstated until the next regular review.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities of a CDE Community Council

It is intended that the CDE Community Council partners leverage the experiences, expertise, and insight of key individuals committed to digital inclusion efforts in the Charlotte region.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- a. Resident Partners – All residents of Mecklenburg County who are committed to making this the most digitally equitable community in America
- b. Public Sector Partners – Staff of public agencies that operate within Mecklenburg County boundaries who represent their organization while participating in the CDE Community Council
- c. Private Sector Partners – Staff of private sector companies, philanthropic organizations, nonprofits who represent their organization while participating in the CDE Community Council.
- d. Workstream Co-Chair – Resident – A resident of Mecklenburg County who co-leads one of five workstreams and is elected by partners within the same workstream. Workstream co-chairs are expected to attend approximately 90% of all monthly meetings and at least one planning meeting per month. Must be voted in and serve a minimum term of 1-year.
- e. Workstream Co-Chair – Organization – A public or private sector partner who co-leads one of five workstreams and is elected by partners within the same workstream. Workstream co-chairs are expected to attend approximately 90% of all monthly meetings and at least one planning meeting per month. Must be voted in and serve a minimum term of 1-year
- f. Community Council Chair – A resident, public, or private sector partner who leads the Council as a whole and is elected by majority vote of the Council. Expected to serve a minimum term of 1-year and attend approximately 90% of all monthly meetings and at one planning meeting per month. Between Chair and Vice Chair at least one of these roles must be filled by a resident partner.
- g. Community Council Vice Chair – A resident, public, or private sector partner who co-leads the Council as a whole and is elected by majority vote of the Council. Expected to serve a minimum

term of 1-year and attend approximately 90% of all monthly meetings and one planning meeting per month.

CDE partners should:

- a. Have an understanding and be willing to continue working toward closing the digital divide, or otherwise ensuring that the organization represented (when applicable) has resources committed to this, apart from attending CDE meetings
- b. Understand the strategic implications and outcomes of digital inclusion initiatives and approaches being adopted
- c. Appreciate the significance of the initiatives for some or all major stakeholders and represent their interests
- d. Assume appropriate level of responsibility for initiatives and be an advocate for broad support for the outcomes
- e. Promote partner activities and initiatives to respective communities
- f. Have at least one named voting representative in attendance at 75% of CDE meetings
- g. Commit 5 hours/month per partner to CDE efforts (meetings, document review, outreach, etc.)
- h. Complete the online Partnership Agreement ([click here](#) if you are representing an organization and [click here](#) if you are participating as a resident)

In practice, this means:

- a. Openly consider ideas and issues raised
- b. Vote on proposals and decisions related to partner activities and initiatives
- c. Ensure project outputs meet the requirements of key stakeholders
- d. Leverage email and social media networks to promote initiatives and activities
- e. Prepare for meetings by reviewing emails, notes, and documents sent in advance
- f. Validate adherence of CDE staff activities to standards of best practice both within the partner and in a wider context

V. Confidentiality

- a. For purposes of this Charter, each partner shall be the “receiving party” with respect to Confidential Information disclosed by the other party and shall be the “disclosing party” with respect to Confidential Information disclosed by it, as appropriate in the context in which such terms are used.
- b. “Confidential Information” means any and all data and information related to the business of the disclosing party (including its affiliates) which is delivered or disclosed to the receiving party and which is not generally known to the general public. Disclosing party will deem such information as confidential. Confidential Information includes, but is not limited to, information (whether oral, written, recorded or otherwise communicated) relating to the disclosing party’s (or its affiliate’s) operations; plans; processes; materials, compositions, products; product development; designs;

ideas; concepts; technical know-how; intellectual property; services; pricing; community partners; contact lists; employee information; suppliers; supplier lists; accounting policies, procedures or information; marketing or advertising strategies; program management methods and project management artifacts; and any other information, communications, correspondence, and discussions by and between the parties related to the CDE discussions.

- c. The partners shall not disclose any Confidential Information of the other partners to third parties, nor use the other partner's Confidential Information for purposes other than those for which it was disclosed, nor publish, nor allow to be published, any material derived from the disclosures of Confidential Information contemplated, without the prior written consent of the disclosing party. Each partner agrees to inform all of its representatives who receive the Confidential Information of the confidential nature of such information and to direct all such representatives to treat such Confidential Information confidentially.
- d. Confidential Information that has been deemed confidential will not be included in CDE meeting notes that are shared publicly.

VI. Partnership

- a. Voting partnership is open to any partner that:
 - i. is committed to furthering digital inclusion in Mecklenburg County
 - ii. agrees to support the CDE's Charter
 - iii. whose work/service/mission has a digital inclusion focus
 - iv. has representative(s) with capacity to meet partnership requirements
- b. Process
 - i. Interested organization/resident will complete a **Partnership Agreement**
 - ii. CDE will review and discuss request at CDE meeting
 - iii. If there are no unresolvable conflicts with charter (Section VI. a.) new partner organization/resident will be accepted at subsequent CDE meeting.

VII. Convening

- a. Convenor

The CDE will be convened by the CDE staff (mainly the Deputy Director) and shall be responsible for

 - i. Set meeting location and time in accordance with the charter
 - ii. Draft and circulate meeting invitations in accordance with the charter
 - iii. Create an environment for active participation from all participant partners
 - iv. Arrange for meeting notes to be taken and reviewed at subsequent meetings

VIII. Standards for Resource Allocation (Both Monetary and In-Kind)

The CDE has a critical role in advising and optimizing the allocation of financial and in-kind labor resources from numerous commitments to investing in digital equity.

The approval of funding and a detailed process shall be the responsibility of the CDE Advisory Board to ensure an appropriate level of oversight between partners receiving funding and incoming investments.

As an example of a funding request process; partners of the CDE who meet eligibility requirements can make a justified request for these monetary and in-kind resources in service to achieving their workstream's approved Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and/or CDE long-term goals.

- a. Requests for resources may consider the following:
 - i. Impact: Who will this impact?
 - ii. Relevance: Does this problem and/or its potential solution fit into one or more of the CDE's areas of focus?
 - iii. Feasibility:
 1. Is there a solution to this problem that already exists that we can direct people to?
 2. Does the proposed solution to the problem have any evidence that supports that it can be run successfully? Has it been run successfully somewhere else?
 3. Are the costs or resources required for this potential solution reasonable for the proposed impact?

IX. Data

- a. Partners of the CDE agree to collaborate on collecting and sharing data aligned with the goals of the CDE.
- b. Appropriate data sharing agreements will be put into place as needed between the CDE and partner organizations.

X. Amendment

Amendment of this charter will be by majority vote of the partners, after advance notice of proposed change, in accordance with rules for action described elsewhere in the charter.

###END OF CHARTER###