

AT&T Community Investment Boosts Digital Literacy in Western North Carolina

Funding Will Expand Digital Skills Training Across the Region

ASHEVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES, February 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Land of Sky Regional Council, in partnership with The Center for Digital Equity (CDE), is honored to announce a \$67,500 community investment from AT&T to support digital literacy

training and digital navigation classes for residents in Western North Carolina. The investment is part of a national multi-year effort by AT&T to help [close the digital divide](#) and connect communities.



Over the next eight months, AT&T's support will help provide digital skills training to more than 100 community members. At the heart of this work is CDE's focus on building skills within communities so support can live where people already are. Through this approach, CDE trains and supports Digital Navigators—trusted community members who provide one-on-one technology help in workforce programs, health clinics, housing communities and neighborhood centers—ensuring people can access support for everyday needs, from learning to use email to joining a telehealth appointment.

"Digital access and literacy are foundational to expanding economic opportunity for our communities and small businesses," said Sara Nichols, energy & economic development manager for Land of Sky Regional Council. "AT&T's generous support will be instrumental in helping close the digital divide for more than 100 community members affected by Hurricane Helene."

Since the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, Land of Sky Regional Council has been actively working to address the growing digital divide in the region. Through WestNGN, a program of the Land of Sky Regional Council, more than \$8.5 million has been secured to support digital access initiatives—public Wi-Fi projects, digital education classes and more—across Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania counties since 2016.

"At AT&T, we believe that digital literacy is essential for creating opportunities for residents and communities to thrive. Our collaboration with Land of Sky Regional Council and The Center for Digital Equity underscores our commitment to helping bridge the digital divide in Western North

Carolina. By equipping residents with the necessary skills and resources, we are helping connect more North Carolinians to greater possibility," said Kathleen Evans, regional director of external affairs with AT&T.

This effort is part of AT&T's initiative to help address the digital divide through internet accessibility, affordability and safe adoption. AT&T is committing \$5 billion to help 25 million people get and stay connected to high-speed internet by 2030. Staying connected is the first step, as many community members are also working toward digital workforce readiness. According to the National Skills Coalition, over 90% of jobs in North Carolina require digital skills. Fields like healthcare, manufacturing, retail and insurance often go a step further, seeking candidates who can navigate specialized analytics or planning software unique to their industry.

"We've seen firsthand how connectivity can change lives. This investment celebrates the work of incredible nonprofit organizations who are working tirelessly to help people confidently use the digital tools they rely on every day," said Sherry Sample, program director at CDE. Expanded digital skills classes, made possible by AT&T's investment, will begin soon. To register for digital skills training, please visit the [Land of Sky Regional Council website](#).

About the Center for Digital Equity

The Center for Digital Equity at Queens University of Charlotte works to ensure every resident has the tools, support, and skills to navigate and benefit from digital life confidently. In partnership with more than 100 local organizations, CDE helps embed digital opportunity into the fabric of Charlotte's communities—one trusted relationship at a time. Learn more at thecenterfordigitalequity.org.

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