

## Project Compass Task Force

### ABOUT

Merit Network, a nonprofit organization classified under 501(c)(3), was recently awarded a grant by the USDA to aid communities in crafting strategies for digital equity and broadband infrastructure over the long term. This initiative aims to 1) examine the connectivity of local individuals, businesses, and groups to the internet, 2) the types of devices and technology they use for internet access, 3) the educational and training requirements they have, and 4) the obstacles that prevent internet access.

Outcomes of this initiative include:

- Forming a strategy for digital equity and infrastructure that can that can also be leveraged for additional grant applications
- Conducting surveys and community engagement events to gather feedback on internet usage and attitudes
- Developing educational materials for community training,
- Identifying future funding opportunities
- Offering involvement in a state broadband coalition
- Performing a feasibility study

### THE TASK FORCE

This work starts with a task force—a group of stakeholders across the community that will work with Merit to identify the needs of various population segments. Hearing from people that represent residents from areas such as small business, local government, schools and libraries, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations are critical in making sure all voices and interests are represented. Participants do not need to have any expertise with technology.

This task force is scheduled to convene virtually for one hour every three to four weeks over six months, and will meet in person twice for approximately three hours.

### INTERESTED IN JOINING?

For those interested in more details or wishing to participate, please email [compass@merit.edu](mailto:compass@merit.edu).

