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**For Immediate Release:**

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## **The STEM Alliance Coordinates a Statewide Conference to Advance Digital Equity Across New York**

**MAMARONECK, NY** – On August 5th, [The STEM Alliance](#) was a proud leader of the New York State Digital Equity Network's (NYSDEN) 2025 Annual Conference, which reached full capacity with over 100 participants from across the state. This annual digital equity summit was held in partnership with the [Center of Excellence in Wireless and Information Technology \(CEWIT\)](#) at Stony Brook University. The event was made possible by financial support from [ConnectALL, New York's State Broadband Office](#), a division of Empire State Development. Senior Vice President Joshua Breitbart gave opening remarks celebrating the launch of a \$ 5 million ConnectALL Digital Equity Program Capacity Grant to support initiatives that provide New Yorkers with the devices, skills, and awareness needed to make use of affordable, reliable broadband service.

NYSDEN member volunteers coordinated the event to support their mission to unite regional and state leaders to advance digital equity priorities across New York State. The STEM Alliance served as the lead organizer for the event, reinforcing its commitment to building a strong digital inclusion ecosystem across New York State and supporting Governor Hochul's vision of connecting all New Yorkers. Under the theme *Advancing Access Through Collective Advocacy*, the convening brought together a diverse array of over 120 stakeholders, including elected officials, nonprofit leaders, healthcare professionals, workforce developers, and municipal agencies—all working to ensure digital access is treated as essential infrastructure.

*"The STEM Alliance served as the coordinator for NYSDEN's 2025 Conference because we are a leading regional provider of digital inclusion services - device ownership, basic skills and assistance with free/affordable internet options serving 1,500 annually across Westchester County and the New York City metropolitan area,"* said Margaret Kaufer, President of The STEM Alliance and a NYSDEN member. *"By connecting with peers statewide, we're better equipped to share our expertise and bring new strategies back to the communities we serve because digital access is critical for workforce development, health access, community engagement and education in our region."*

Throughout the day, participants engaged in panels on sustainable funding, AI implementation, accessibility for people with disabilities, and building alignment across workforce and healthcare systems. Keynote speaker Dr. Revati Prasad, Executive Director of the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, brought forth powerful lessons on coalition building from Francesca Polletta's book, *Freedom in an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. She urged attendees to organize with purpose: *"Coalitions are essential infrastructure for accountability, inclusion and funding. They ensure that digital inclusion remains a priority."*

Assemblyman Steve Otis said, "Continuing the success of the 2024 NYSDEN conference in Syracuse, this year's event convened New York's leaders in providing digital access and literacy to individuals and families excluded from technology tools essential for life today. The conference focused on the

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challenges of funding these programs, the importance of educating officials and the public about the disparities that exist, and strategies for providing programs for those in need. The vitality of NYSDEN, the collaboration of the NYS ConnectALL office, and the partnership with organizations providing programs for job training, health care access, education, and library services was underscored throughout the 2025 Conference.”

As the conference rotates across the state annually, the NYSDEN team announced that next year’s convening will take place in Albany. The 2025 gathering not only supports the implementation of New York State’s Digital Equity Plan, but also strengthens ConnectALL’s goal to increase the state’s digital inclusion capacity through coordinated, community-driven strategies. The work continues. With growing regional coalitions, stronger cross-sector partnerships, and a network of over 100 statewide practitioners, NYSDEN is building the foundation for sustainable, equitable access for all. As one participant shared, *“While federal funding for this work has been paused, our momentum has not. That’s very evident in the room today.”* NYSDEN is looking forward to increased membership and work in the coming year, as New York continues to lead the nation in digital inclusion.

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## About NYSDEN

The New York State Digital Equity Network (NYSDEN) is a statewide coalition of practitioners, advocates, and organizations working to promote collaboration, share best practices, and advance digital access for all New Yorkers.

Learn more at: <https://nysden.org>

## About The STEM Alliance

The STEM Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all people have access to the technology, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive in a digital world. As a leader in digital equity, STEM education, and summer enrichment, The STEM Alliance works to close opportunity gaps and build community resilience through hands-on learning, workforce readiness, and access to digital tools.

Learn more at: <https://www.theSTEMalliance.org>

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**Photo caption:** New York Digital Equity Network presents ConnectALL with a thank you card to their office and Governor Hochul for their \$5 million commitment to reopen the Digital Equity Capacity Grant program absent federal funding.