

# READY25: DIGITAL COMMUNITIES IN ACTION Conference

## Conference Program

Day 1:  
Thursday, July 10, 2025  
Navigator Focus



CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY

## Sponsors:



CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY



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Illinois  
Department of Commerce  
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ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

# Day 1: Program

9:00 am - 9:50 am

## Registration and Check In

10:00 am - 10:30 am

## Opening | Welcome

**Mark Smith**, *Dean, Chicago State University*

**Ms. Jeanette Tamayo**, *Illinois Broadband Lab*

**Dr. Daniel Block**, *Department Chair, GSHAA, Chicago State University*

**Ms. Nathalia Cardenas**, *Project Manager, ABE-LINC Program, Chicago State University*

10:45 am - 11:30 am

## Panel Session | CRSU Rotunda

**Devon Braunstein**, *Assistant Director, Illinois Office of Broadband*

**Kyla Williams Tate** *M.B.A., Digital Equity Director, Office of the Cook County President*

**Christian Taylor**, *Director of Digital Equity, City of Chicago*

**Jill Gottfred Sohoni**, *Lead Consultant & CEO, Circle Root Collaborative*

11:40 am - 12:25 pm

## Concurrent Sessions

Session 1 | Conference Room A 132

### Conversations Around AI

*Presented by **Bevon Joseph**, Campus Coin Invest*

Session 2 | Conference Room B 131

### Professional Development for Digital Navigators

*Presented by **Jeffrey Goumas**, World Education*

Session 3 | Conference Room C 130

### Equity Access and Digital Inclusion Work

*Presented by **Lingling Liu**, Community Engagement Manager, Illinois Office of Broadband*

12:30 pm - 1:15 pm

## Lunch | CRSU Rotunda

# Day 1: Program

1:25 pm - 2:15 pm

## Concurrent Sessions

Session 4 | Conference Room A 132

### **Driving Connectivity and Digital Opportunity**

*Presented by **Paul Garnett**, CEO, and **Deborah Lathen**,  
Vernonburg Group*

Session 5 | Conference Room B 131

### **ScaleLIT's Illinois Digital Learning Lab**

*Presented by **Michael Matos**, Director, Education Technology,  
**Germania Solorzano**, Career Pathways Navigator, **Fantazia Berry**,  
Digital Navigator and **Robert Guzman**, Director, External Affairs,  
ScaleLIT*

Session 6 | Conference Room C 130

### **Before the Signal Understanding the Barriers that Keep People Disconnected**

*Presented by **Dwayne Douglas**, CEO, **Nathan Williams**,  
QUILT Corporation*

2:25 pm - 3:00 pm

## **Closing Session I CRSU Rotunda**

Regroup and Close Out

**Thank you for attending the Digital Communities in Action  
Conference please scan the QR code to complete the Conference  
Survey for Day 1.**

# Special Thanks & Acknowledgements

## Our Partners

University of Illinois Systems  
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity  
Illinois Broadband Lab  
Northeastern Illinois University  
Chicago State University

## Our Speakers

### Devon Braunstein

*Assistant Director, Illinois Office of Broadband*

### Fantazia Berry

*Digital Navigator, ScaleLIT*

### Dr. Daniel Block

*Department Chair, GSHAA, Chicago State University*

### Sophia Rodriguez Cahue

*NEIU STEAM Pathways*

### Nathalia Cardenas

*Project Manager, ABE-LINC Program*

### Dr. Hei-Chi Chan

*UIS AI Campus Learning Community*

### Pedro Covarrubias

*Project Manager, ABE-LINC Program*

### Brandon Cuatlatl

*Project Manager, ABE-LINC Program*

### Dwayne Douglas

*CEO, QUILT Corporation*

### Yesenia Garcia

*NEIU STEAM Pathways*

### Paul Garnett

*CEO, Vernonburg Group*

### Jeffrey Goumas

*World Education*

### Christina Gutierrez

*Associate Director, Admissions*

### Robert Guzman

*Director, External Affairs, ScaleLIT*

### Bevon Joseph

*Campus Coin Invest*

### Deborah Lathen

*Vernonburg Group*

### Lingling Liu

*Community Engagement Manager,  
Illinois Office of Broadband*

### Renita Malone

*ABE-LINC Program*

### Camila Duarte Marez

*NEIU STEAM Pathways*

### Michael Matos

*Director, Education Technology, ScaleLIT*

### Mark Smith

*Dean, Chicago State University*

### Jill Gottfred Sohoni

*Lead Consultant & CEO, Circle Root Collaborative*

### Germania Solorzano

*Career Pathways Navigator, ScaleLIT*

### Ms. Jeanette Tamayo

*Illinois Broadband Lab*

### Kyla Williams Tate M.B.A.

*Digital Equity Director, Office of the  
Cook County President*

### Christian Taylor

*Director of Digital Equity, City of Chicago*

### Karen Tolentino

*Citizens Utility Board*

### Lesley Vasquez

*NEIU STEAM Pathways*

### Nathan Willams

*QUILT Corporation*

### Nathan Wolters

*NEIU STEAM Pathways*