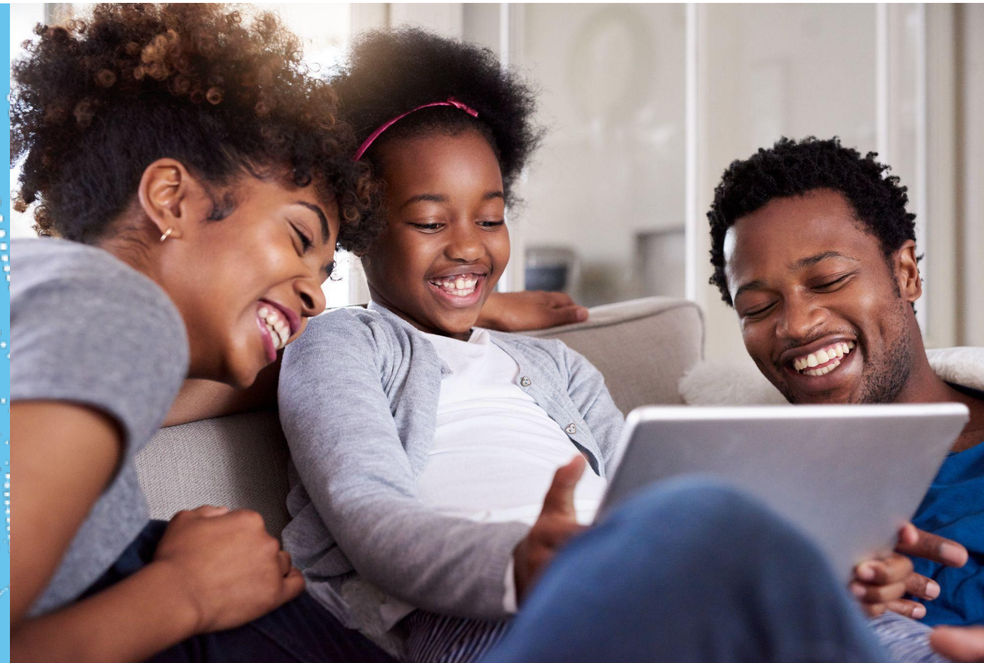
Digital Equity Action Agenda

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION



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Imagine going one day without the internet...

How would you work?

How would you connect with friends and family?

How would you pay your bills?

How would you research that place you need to go or thing you need to buy?

How would your children do their homework?

How would you live?

Access and Use of the Internet Enables Everything

WELL-BEING

"I don't leave the house much, especially being low income and being limited at what I can (buy/do), that's why I love Twitter. It was the internet that gave me a voice. I started rescuing dogs and I have a huge following and twitter means a lot to me... **Internet reminds me that I am not alone."**

– Jill, Southside, low-income AT&T Plan

LEARNING AT ALL AGES

"I have doctors appointments online and am **doing a workforce training through my job."**

- Kyra

"We pay $176 a month just for internet. I lost my job so **we can't afford it, but I still need it for [my GED] and for applying for jobs."**

– Tamara

ACCESS TO SERVICES

"I do telehealth a lot; **don't like to go to the doctor's office for 5 minutes,** because it takes me away from work."

- Cierra

"People are trying to **apply for benefits online** and God forbid the connection drops."

– Debera

INCOME GENERATION

"Have to have internet at a high enough speed to **keep my call center job."**

- Cora

"If I actually want **to make money, I need [my WiFi] to work."**

– Megan

Today, in Franklin County
80,000 households are without internet...

Could you imagine having **80,000 families without water or electricity** in their home?

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Unfortunately, this isn't even the biggest part of the problem...

Post pandemic, the digital divide became larger not smaller

- COVID-19 led to a permanent acceleration in the adoption of digital technology across society
- Increased demand for digital across sectors including education, workforce development, social services, healthcare, and the justice system
- Established a need for digital that is only expected to grow post-pandemic

Post pandemic, the digital divide became larger not smaller

GROWING SKILLS GAP

COVID-19 Accelerated the rate of jobs that require digital skills, and we're not prepared.

Today

One-third of working-age Americans possess limited digital skills.*

- One in six are **unable to use email, web search, or other basic online tools.**

By 2030

75% of jobs will require ADVANCED digital skills.*

- Talent demand for **physical and manual skills will decrease 11%**
- Talent demand for **basic cognitive skills will decrease by 14%**

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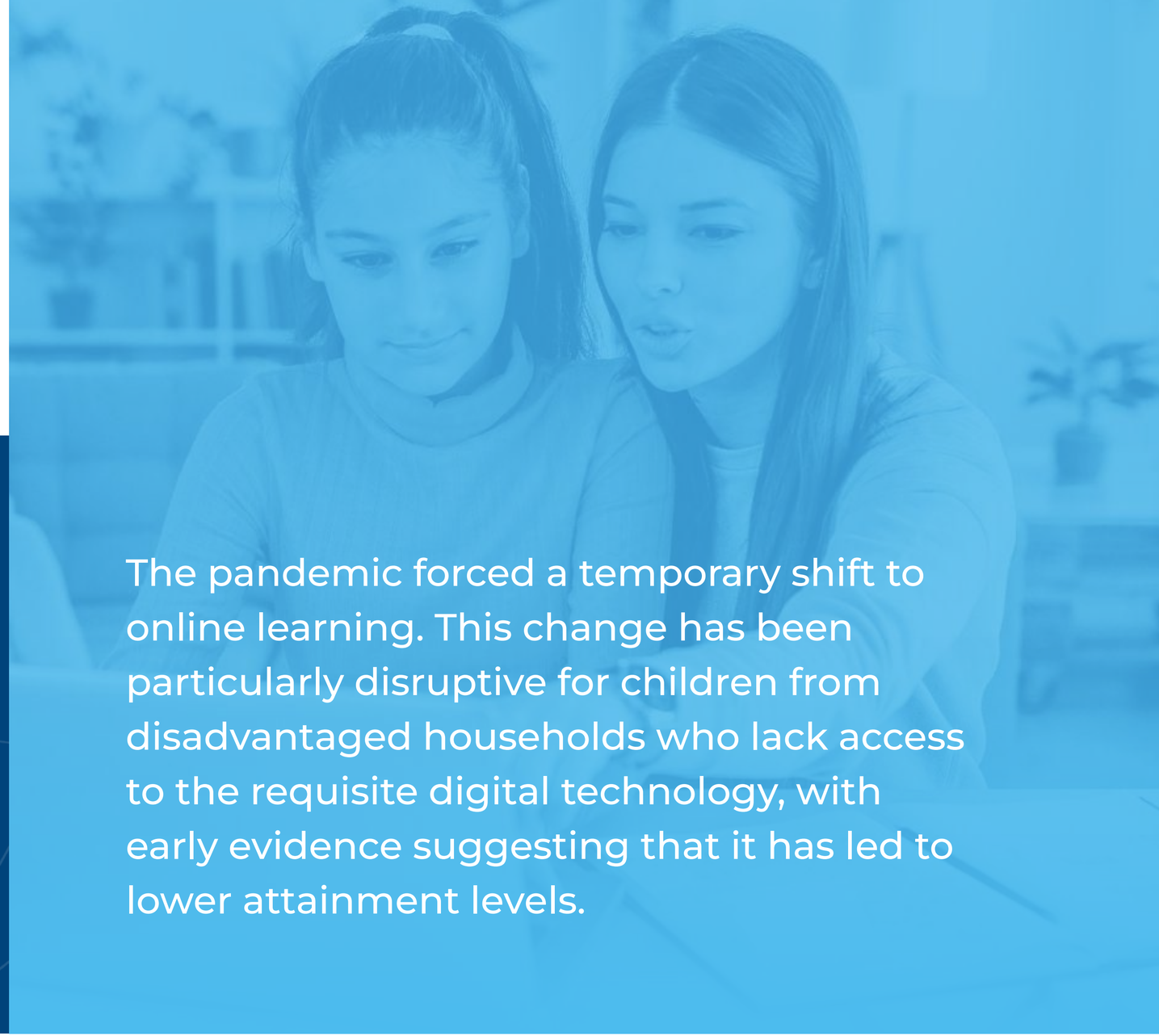
**Ezell, Stephen. "Assessing the State of Digital Skills in the U.S. Economy." Information Technology and Innovation Foundation | ITIF, 29 November 2021, https://itif.org/publications/2021/11/29/assessing-state-digital-skills-us-economy/. Accessed 11 August 2022.*

Post pandemic, the digital divide became larger not smaller

There is an emerging skills gap among the most digitally native generation in history due to learning loss during the pandemic.



The pandemic forced a temporary shift to online learning. This change has been particularly disruptive for children from disadvantaged households who lack access to the requisite digital technology, with early evidence suggesting that it has led to lower attainment levels.

Today’s realities are leaving **disadvantaged households behind at an increasing rate**, and are building upon a legacy of systemic inequities in internet access and adoption.

As the standards for what you should be able to do on the internet continue to exponentially increase, **so too do the expectations for equity.**

This is an expensive problem to have

If 80,000 households **didn't have residential internet** that would be a **$40 million a year problem** - $500/year ($50/month)

If 80,000 households **didn't have water** that would be a **$66 million a year problem** - $802/year est. ($206 a quarter)

- Having any internet is **not enough**.
- Having only one device in the home is **not enough**.
- Knowing the basics of getting online is **not enough**.

This Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda lays out the problems, opportunities and recommendations for moving us a historic step closer to closing the digital divide.

Today, our community has a loosely coordinated ecosystem of passionate partners who want to help residents connect.

This agenda will guide investments in establishing a robust ecosystem of committed partners, engaged residents, and interconnected solutions over the next five years.

JOIN US

The Vision for Digital Equity

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We aim to close the ‘Digital Divide’ with ‘Digital Inclusion’ activities to **achieve the desired state of ‘Digital Equity’**

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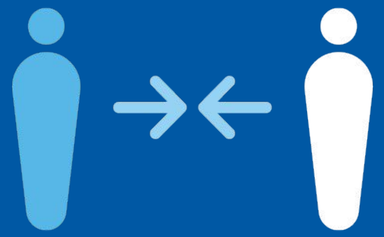
DIGITAL DIVIDE
(The Problem)

The **digital divide** is the gap between those who have affordable access, skills, and support to effectively engage online and those who do not.

DIGITAL INCLUSION
(The Work)



Digital inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Digital Inclusion must evolve as technology advances.

DIGITAL EQUITY
(The Goal)

Digital equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

Digital Inclusion Priorities

CONNECTIVITY

Access to affordable, reliable home internet.

DEVICE ACCESS

Digital devices that support what people want and need to do online.

DIGITAL SKILLS

Building basic to advanced digital skills.

OUTREACH & ADOPTION

Driving awareness of and desire to participate.

These problems **disproportionately impact** black and brown communities, and low-income families in general.

As a Community, We Must

- Ensure **under-resourced residents have access** to residential internet, devices, and skills training opportunities
- **At an equitable level of quality** that enables today's online experiences
- **At an affordable price point** for low-income households

Who Should Benefit Most

Under-resourced and underserved households & neighborhoods in Franklin County **at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line.**

STUDENTS

Those engaged in PreK-12, vocational or trade school, and Higher Ed.

HOUSING INSECURE

Those experiencing one of several different dimensions of accommodation problems, including affordability, safety, quality, insecurity, and homelessness.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

NEW AMERICANS, IMMIGRANTS & MIGRANT FAMILIES

An individual in the U.S. who is aspiring to take the Path to U.S. Citizenship, or who has, in the recent past, become a naturalized citizen of the United States of America.

JUSTICE INVOLVED

Those who have had interactions with the criminal justice system as a defendant.

OLDER ADULTS

Individuals that are 65 or older.

VETERANS

Person(s) who served in the active military, naval, or air service.

** Survey data from 2021 Digital Equity Coalition Survey of the Franklin County Jobs and Family Services client base.*

The Digital Divide Problem

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RESIDENTS & LEADERS AGREE

Access and Use of the Internet is a **Basic Need**

RESIDENTS

"You can't do much of anything without the internet. **It's a basic need**."

- Kristen, Basic Internet Needs Sprint

"It's becoming a primal need to have internet. [...] Internet **allows people to live**."

- Jennifer, Brand / Messaging Focus Group

DEC MEMBERS

"I think of **broadband as a utility.** It's that whole aspect of what's considered the norm."

- Adam Fru

"There is **really no choice anymore** in whether or not you engage in the online world."

- Matt Martin, The Columbus Foundation

RESIDENTS & LEADERS AGREE

Access and Use of the Internet is **Critical to Participating in Today's World**

RESIDENT

"**Our whole day involves the internet**. School, resources, purchasing products, communicating with family. I use it for browsing, the doctor, my pet care. My husband uses it for work."

- Sandy, Digital Equity Co-Design Sprint

DEC MEMBER

"We went from using Technology as an enrichment tool to relying on technology to continue our business mission! It went from an expense center to a **critical enabler of our mission**."

- V. Vandhana Veerni, CIO, Columbus City Schools

The Problem is this Basic Need is Not Being Met

Over 80,000* Franklin County **households** (10%) are **without internet subscriptions** today.

Over 110,000* Franklin County **households** (13.7%) are **without a connected device beyond a smartphone.** Of these, over 48,000 do not have any computing device, including a smartphone.

**Data extrapolated from GIS information from Columbus Office of Technology and 2020 U.S. Census Bureau American Communities Survey.*

AFFORDABILITY

89% of those without home internet **view cost as a very important factor.**

(JFS Community Internet Access and Affordability Survey)

ADOPTION

100,000+ households face adoption barriers including lack of comfort with digital tools, language, etc.

(100% of households w/o internet and/or adequate devices)

INEQUITY

Black and brown families are more than 2X as likely to be without computer or home internet subscription than white families.

Residents Are Seeking an Affordable, More Reliable Internet Option

NO RESIDENTIAL INTERNET

"When you couldn't go talk to someone in person and you didn't have internet, **it was like we lived in a small town and we were the only family there**."

- Stephany, South Side Beta Pilot

HOTSPOT DEPENDENT

"When my provider cut me out, **I streamed from the phone** hotspot and sent it to the tv. I wasn't going to be without internet."

- Tina, Basic Internet Needs Sprint

SUBSCRIPTION VULNERABLE

"**We don't know how we will be able to pay this month. I lost my job**... but I still need it for [my GED] and for applying for jobs."

- Tamara, South Side Co-design Sprint

FEELING STUCK

"Internet companies always suck you in with **a reasonable price then raise their fees**."

- JFS Survey Respondent

SEEKING RELIABLE INTERNET

"Doesn't matter who I have or how high of a speed I get, **it still cuts out**."

- Taylor, Brand / Messaging Sprint

Systemic Barriers to Affordability, Reliability, and Quality

Digital Redlining prevents the *ability* for some households to receive quality, reliable internet.

Lack of trust in the government and ISPs to deliver options that are fair.

"I'm getting a third of what I'm paying for. That sounds like something they would do, larger corporations are always trying to finesse you."

"I don't trust the government...Without guarantees, things just don't happen... There's no reason to believe them."

- Co-design Sprint Participant, household of 6

Lack of awareness and understanding about ROI and discount options.

60% of JFS survey respondents were not aware of the ACP program.

Residents want to hear from someone they trust, like a family member or neighbor.

The Problem: Affordability

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There's an Inequitable Financial Burden on Lowest Income Households

Households with an **income of less than $35,000** make up nearly one-quarter of all households, yet account for **64% of those without home internet subscriptions***

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** American Community Survey, "Table B28003: Presence of a computer and type of Internet subscription in household," U.S. Census Bureau, 17 March 2021.*

Subscription Vulnerable

Some **32% of households are subscription vulnerable**, that is, they struggle to maintain service and have a very difficult time affording service.*

"They (ISP) shut our household off for 2 weeks because we were late on our bill."

- Tina, Fairgate, multigenerational household with her mom and 3 kids - $65/month Spectrum subscriber, also shares her internet with her brother next door

"[I pay] $69.99, but if you pay late, it's a $20-$25 late fee...when I lost a job, I was just trying to take care of necessities. But since I got a job I am getting back on top of it."

- Syreeta, Linden/Westerville area - 6 people in the household with four boys ages 2-15, WOW customer

**Horrigan, J., "Three Data Points to Help Plan for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Broadband Funding," Benton Foundation, 5 April 2022.*

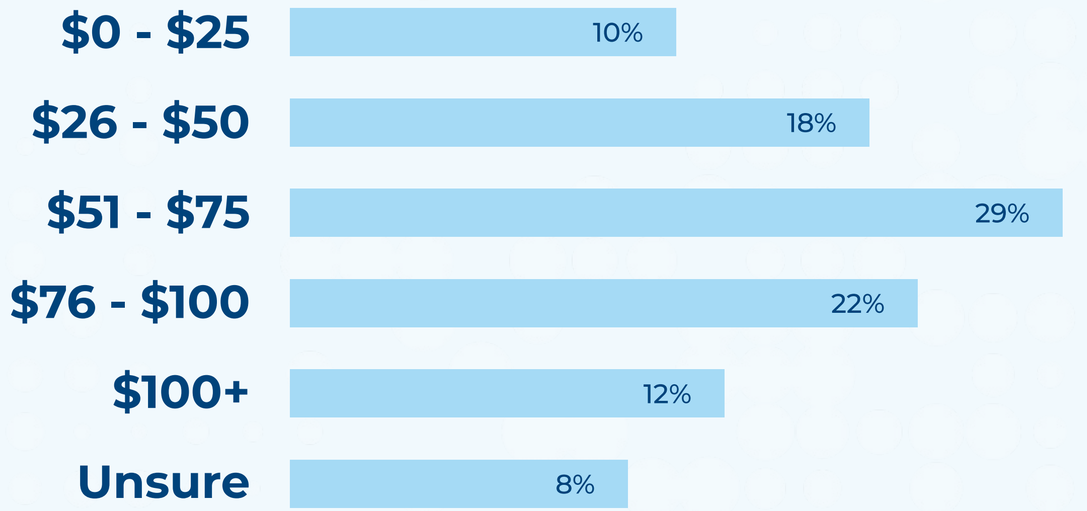
Internet Pricing

No household should pay more than **1% of their incomes** for residential internet.

TIER FLATTENING

- Large ISPs created pricing models that resulted in a greater difference between low-speed and middle to high speed plans.
- This has priced out many low-income families from quality plans that they need

There is no standard price for internet.



89% **of those without home internet indicated cost as a very important factor.**

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** Survey data from 2021 Digital Equity Coalition Survey of the Franklin County Jobs and Family Services client base.*

Default Access is Through Data Plans with Tight Management of Usage

We have only met one resident who had a period of being completely disconnected. However, we have frequently connected with residents who don't have fixed internet, and instead they have a smartphone with a data plan.

"I have Metro PCS – I'm satisfied; **I use it for everything**."

- Myra, pays $75/mo and it came with a phone

"[My home internet] works sometimes...When it doesn't work **I have to use my data, but that slows down after I use so much data."**

- Branden, about $60/mo on Spectrum

"They say it's unlimited [data plan] but it **slows down once you hit a certain limit**. If you use over 35 gigabytes it will slow down during certain times and in certain places."

- Delisa

"Have wifi on public transportation, and at work. **Only use data plan when at bus stop**."

- Cierra

"I have a Cricket plan. **Use my phone for main source of everything**. I was at $40 before, and I think I'll get to $60 — I get highest deal they got. It changes how I use my internet, I get irritated [when my data goes down]. They **change my plan according to what I pay** — you're deciding what to pay, looking at my bills, what can I afford to pay."

- Joseph

Digital Inclusion Budget

Household investments in **connectivity, devices, training and cellular** are combined to create a digital inclusion budget.

The mobile / cellular budget comprises 44% of the household digital inclusion budget. When given a choice over mobile versus home-based broadband, under-resourced households tend to choose their cellular plan.

What does the average household spend on digital inclusion every year?

FAMILY OF 4 – ANNUALLY		% OF BUDGET
Residential Connectivity	$ **500**	9%
ACP (Affordable Connectivity Prog.)	$ [**360**]	-7%
Computer (1)	$ **765**	14%
Cellular Connectivity	$ **1,560**	28%
Cellular Devices (4)	$ **883**	16%
Digital Training	$ **1,433**	26%
	$ 4,782	

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** This digital inclusion budget includes one computer per household, configured at the low end of current market prices, and a mobile budget for a family of 4 including financing the phones over 36 months, which many under-resourced households will not qualify. The costs above are current market-costs as of June 2022 for a family of 4 in Columbus, Ohio.*

Digital Burden Index

When compared to major spending categories, **the digital inclusion budget for families making less than $30,000 a year rival their expenditures for transportation and food**.

Households under the 200% federal poverty level **expend a disproportionately higher amount of household income for digital necessities** for the same services when compared to affluent households.

ACP Will Help But It's Not Long Term

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), formerly the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), is a broadband affordability program that provides a **discount of up to $30 per month toward (cellular or residential) internet service for eligible households** and up to $75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a **one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet** from participating providers.

- **Deals are as good as the service that is available**.
- This is **not an indication for equitable infrastructure** investment.
- There is **no guarantee of service quality** as advertised with ACP, especially if the infrastructure doesn't exist.
- **This is short term/temporary** — When the money's gone, the money is gone. It is estimated 3-5 years.
- There are a **lot of conditions** across providers.

ACP OFFERINGS AS OF JUNE 2022* *These become $0 with ACP*

AT&T	Spectrum	WOW!	Frontier	Starry	PCs for People
100 / 100 for $30	100 / 10 for $29.99	100 / 10 for $30	100 / 100 for $30	100 / 50 for $30	50 / 10 for $15
Where Fiber is Available	*Avail. for 2 Years Only*		*Where Fiber is Available*	*Fixed Wireless*	*Fixed Wireless / Mobile*

**National Digital Inclusion Alliance. "Free & Low-Cost Internet Plans." National Digital Inclusion Alliance, https://www.digitalinclusion.org/free-low-cost-internet-plans/. Accessed 5 August 2022.*

MEET TARA

- Mother with four children at home
- Lives **Near Children's Hospital**
- Pays $40 a Month with Spectrum

Why she choose this plan?

She has had service from two other providers, and she thinks this is the best she's been able to get. She's been with this service for 4 years.

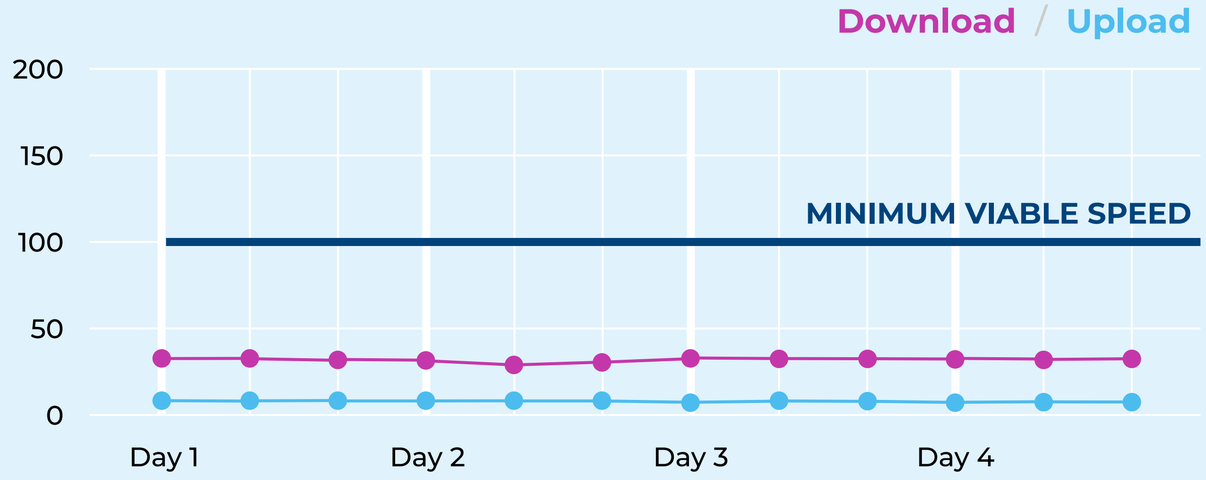
What's it like with multiple users?

Internet is used non-stop at her house, from social media to schooling. She homeschooled her children in the 2021 – 2022 School year. She also takes classes online at home to get her GED. She sometimes connects to the WiFi from the Elementary school behind her house.

Meet Tara, a Primary Beneficiary of ACP

HOME INTERNET CONNECTION TESTS

- 4 Days, 3 Check-ins a Day
- Average speed was **35/5 Mbps**
- 1 Chromebook, 1 Laptop, 1 Phone



Equitable Speeds Needed

The Problem:
Infrastructure

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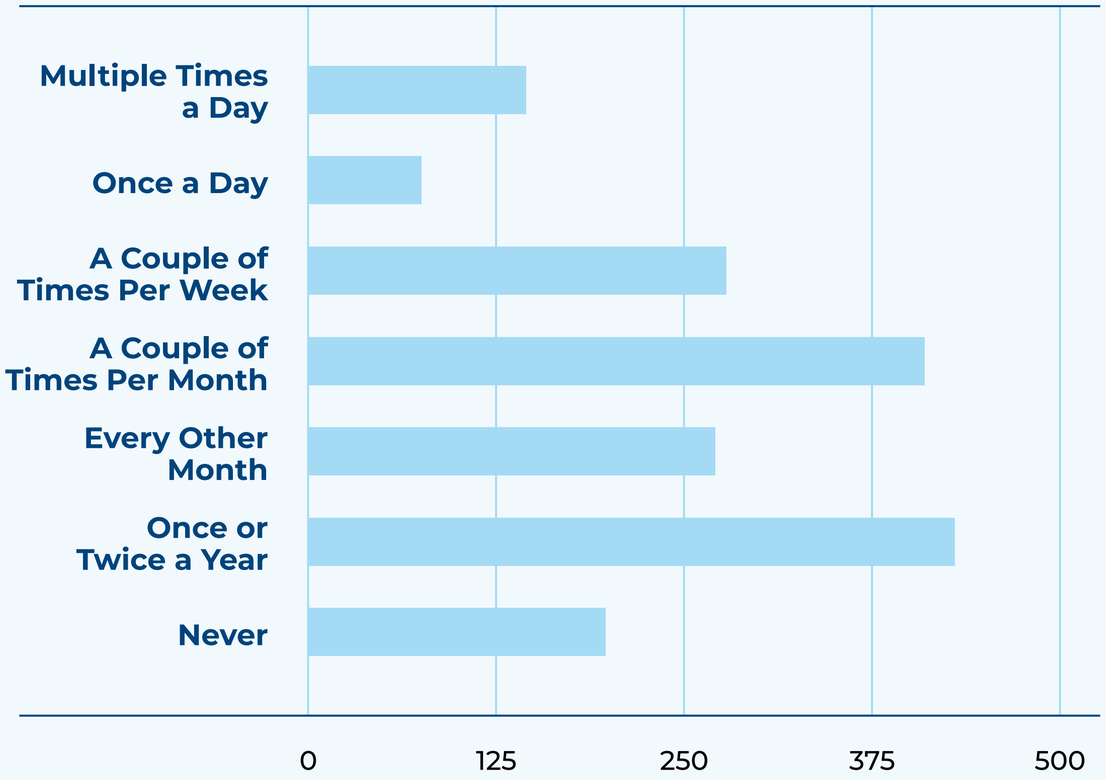
Residents Cited Unreliable Service as the Second Biggest Issue Behind Expense

“Doesn't matter who I have and how high of a speed I get, it still cuts out.”

– Taylor, pays $120 a month

How frequently do you experience unreliable internet in your household? *(Such as no connection or service so slow you can't use it.)*

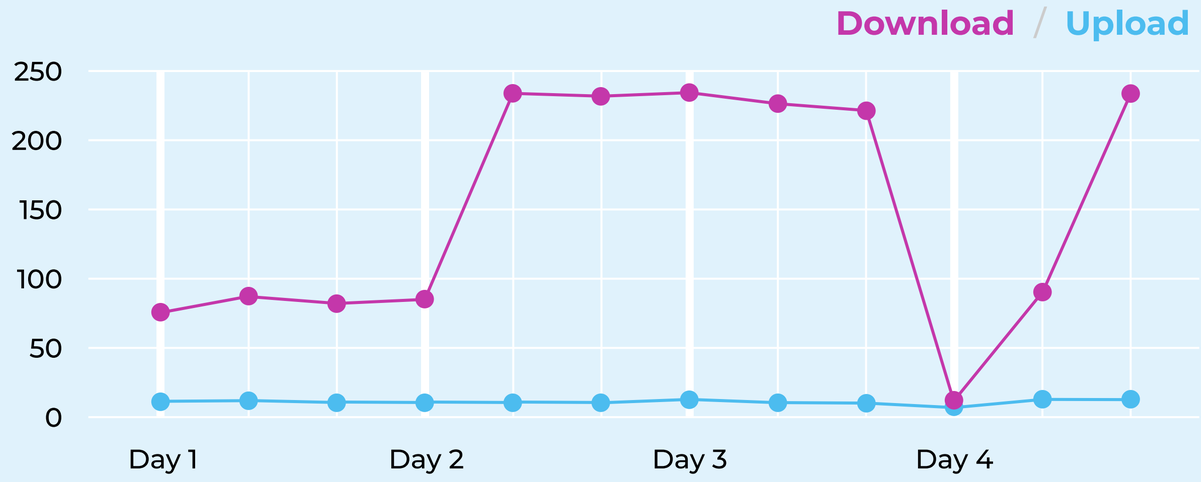


**Survey data from 2021 Digital Equity Coalition Survey of the Franklin County Jobs and Family Services client base.*

Unreliable Connection was Reported by 40% of Respondents*

HOME INTERNET CONNECTION TESTS

- 4 Days, 3 Check-ins a Day
- Average speed was **133/10 Mbps**
- Paying for 200 Mbps
- 1 FireStick for TV, 1 Tablet, 1 Phone, Nintendo



*Jobs and Family Services Survey

MEET TAYLOR

- Mother of three kids, 12, 4 and 8 months
- Lives in **North Linden**
- Works as a waitress
- Pays $89 a Month with Spectrum for 200 mbps plan

Why she choose this plan?
She was given three levels of subscription options when she called to get service, she selected the middle option at $89/month.

What's it like with multiple users?
"It was impossible when I was trying to homeschool during COVID. It was my daughter and her cousin, and I was trying to help. It was basically impossible. I'd end up saying: Somebody's gonna have to get off so the other could do school."

MEET RIVER

- 30 year old who lives with his partner on the **East Side**
- Has a few part time jobs; primary job requires access to a spreadsheet
- $55/Month with Spectrum paying for 200 mbps plan with EBB

Why he chose this plan?

Have been on and off plans, is more stable now because qualified for EBB.

"Initially I had issues because it can be very expensive, there are times where it feels like there's something wrong with me if i can not afford to pay it... but now that i am in a program to pay for it I feel like I am "a part of society" "feel like a weight has been lifted"

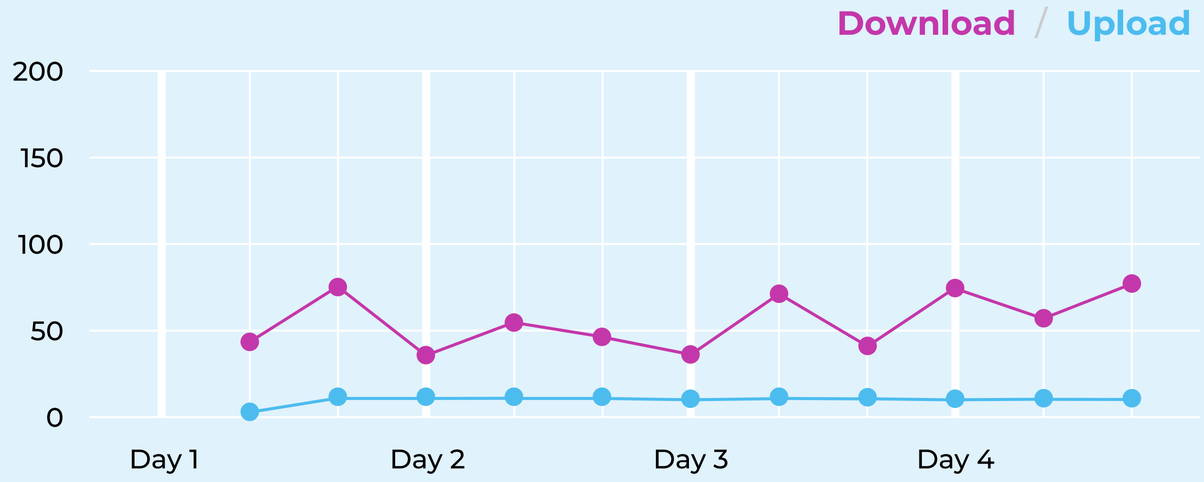
What's it like?

"I use a laptop for editing, I have a phone and add news streaming in the background."

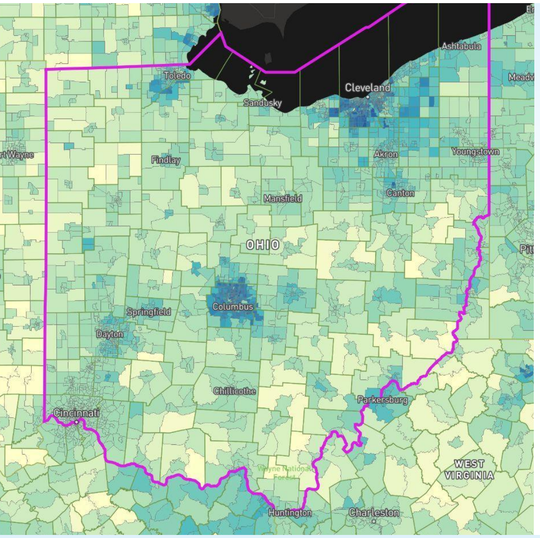
Many Residents Attested to Not Getting What They Pay For

HOME INTERNET CONNECTION TESTS

- 4 Days, 3 Check-ins a Day
- Average speed was **56/17 Mbps**
- 2 Laptops, 2 Smartphones

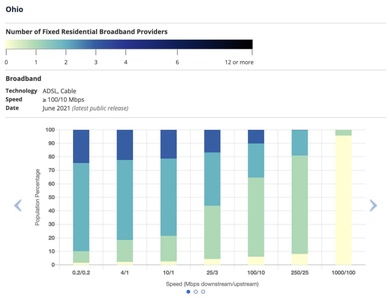


Wireline Investment in the U.S. and Ohio Have Historically Been Copper-based Networks

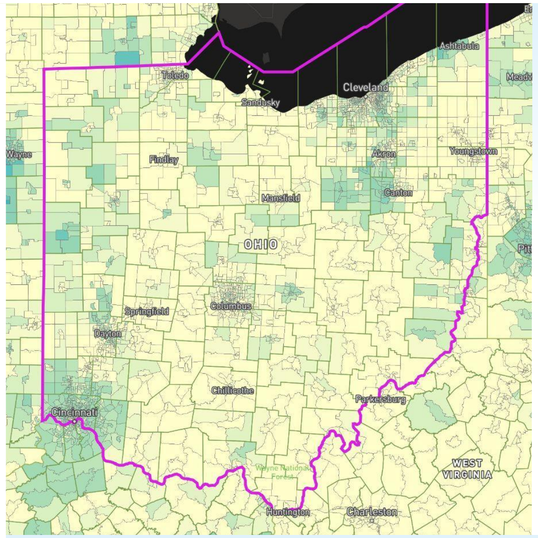


FCC AVAILABILITY

Residential Wireline Copper, 100/10 mbps

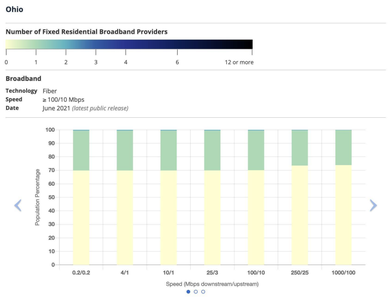


While wireless solutions provide flexible, low-cost solutions for residential connectivity, wired solutions historically have provided better over capacity measured in bits per second especially when measured over time. Copper-based solutions have been the primary material used to wire America, due mainly from the conversion of telephone and cable television networks to transmit digital information. Copper-based wireline networks can support 1 Gbps today and soon up to 10 Gbps.



FCC AVAILABILITY

Residential Wireline Fiber, 100/10 mbps



Fiber development came 120 years after the development of coaxial cable in 1858. While copper networks use electricity to propagate signals, fiber uses light. Light has much better capacity than copper, especially when considering future capacities needed for residential use. Fiber networks provided 1 Gbps in 1997 while copper networks to the home did not achieve this capacity until 2006. Fiber networks to the home currently support 10 Gbps in many areas of the country, including Franklin County. 100 Gbps to the home is expected by 2055.

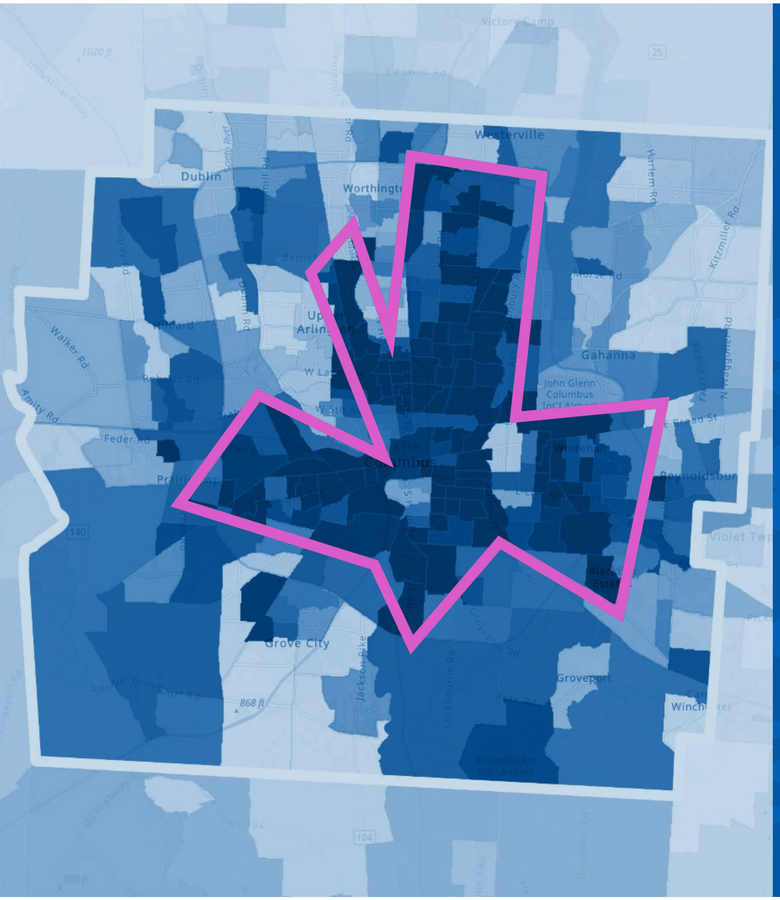
"Why would one not pick the fiber every time? Why do you have to be 'technology neutral' when there are clear differences between the performance and the incremental upgrade costs of the technologies?"

– Paul de Sa, former Chief of the FCC's Office of Strategic Planning

In thinking about what residents need for connectivity in the decades ahead, **fiber is the clear option.**

**FCC Availability accessed 31 August 2022. https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/#/*

Internet Quality Differs
Based on Where You Live



Following the patterns of redlining, **low-income areas disproportionately have lower quality internet** and less options.

"I live in a low-income neighborhood and it's not fair that there are limited options. I used to live in a more affluent neighborhood and there were so many options. It's not really a fair position to be in."

- Southside resident paying $60/month

"In a meeting the other day we had to show our speeds and they (other's) were in the 90s/50s... it just made me wonder how they got their speeds so high. I don't typically have problems so it got me wondering how they got them so high."

- Kristen, North Linden, Family of four with an 18 year old and preschooler at home, $10/month

MEET BROOKS

- Single, Business Owner
- Lives in a condo in the **Short North**
- $79/month for Fiber with AT&T

Why he choose this plan?

Believes it's the only provider that services his location

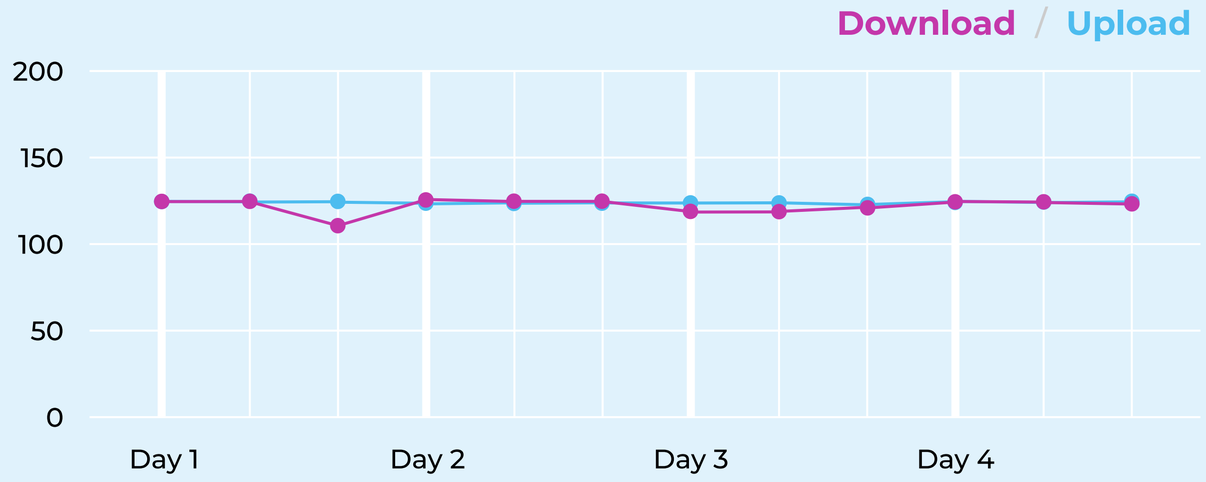
What's it like?

Daily browser. "Internet means a lot to me. I run a construction company for my day job. We still do zoom calls. I also have a e-commerce store online."

Reliable, 100/100 Mbps Speed Should be the Norm

HOME INTERNET CONNECTION TESTS

- 4 Days, 3 Check-ins a Day
- Average speed was **121/124 Mbps**
- 2 Apple TVs, 1 Laptop, 1 Apple Watch, 1 iPhone, 1 iPad, Smart Home



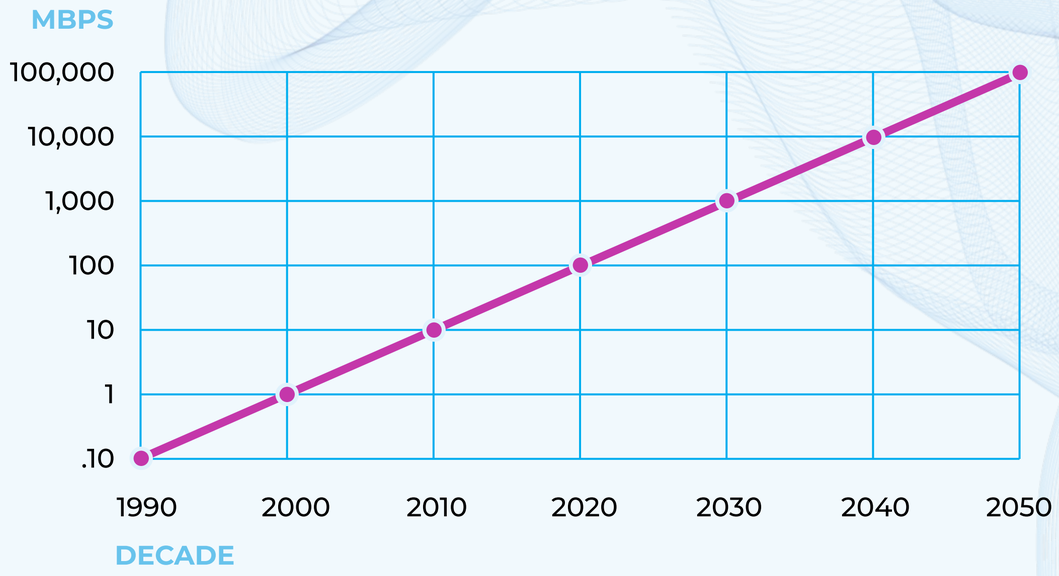
100/100 Mbps is today's minimally acceptable broadband speed

100 / 100 Mbps Will Not be Enough in the Future

Residential speeds are forecasted to be **above 100 Mbps by 2055**, that's 100 times what was consumed in 1990.

Average household internet consumption grew **38 times or 3722%** from 2010 to 2020.

AVERAGE URBAN / SUBURBAN SPEEDS IN MEGABITS PER SECOND



While the national goal of a *minimum* home speed has changed from 25 Mbps in 2015 to 100 Mbps in 2022, **many residential wireline provider's initial speed offered for customers is 200 Mbps, twice the current federal *minimum***. And, for those with the financial means, 1,000 Mbps is the preferred service level

The financial burden to have residential internet is **2x as high** for a low-income neighborhood versus a middle-income neighborhood and gets **1/6th the speed**.

TWO NEIGHBORHOODS, 3.7 MILES APART

Neighborhood	North Linden	Clintonville
Households (Avg. Hhd. Size)	12,911 (2.57)	16,051 (2.08)
Avg. Unemployment Rate	9.78	3.65
Avg. Median Income	$38,099 ($35,693)	$84,664 ($74,878)
Monthly 1% of Avg. Income	**$29.75**	**$62.42**
Spot Check / Speed Attainable	**Max Speed 50 Mbps from AT&T**	**Max Speed 300 Mbps from AT&T**
Internet as a Proportion of Disposable Income	**1.8%**	**0.9%**

Assumes standard internet cost of $50-55/month

** Forbes Advisor. "Ohio Income Tax Calculator 2021." Forbes, 2021, https://www.forbes.com/advisor/income-tax-calculator/ohio/84664/?filing=married&deductions=0&k401=0&ira=0&dependents=0. Accessed 5 August 2022.*

Opportunity

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

Aspirations for Equity

Meet today's standard now

100/100 Mbps is a modern day, minimally acceptable broadband speed, and should be available to under-resourced residents at a cost below 1% of their income by 2024.

Future-proof infrastructure by 2027

Ensure broadband infrastructure can deliver a minimum of 1 Gbps X 1 Gbps broadband service across the county by 2027 and at a price point for under-resourced residents that is no more than 1% of their income.

Promote a competitive environment

A competitive environment will ensure market forces produce multiple providers capable of delivering robust, competitively priced, and profitable broadband solutions meeting or exceeding 1 Gbps X 1 Gbps service.

Ensure under-resourced Franklin County residents have what they need to participate in the digital world today and in the future

Making quality devices and home connectivity available at an affordable cost and ensuring digital skills training is accessible at low to no cost for individuals at all ages and at all skill levels.

An Additional 700,000+ Households Stand to Benefit if We Meet Our Aspirations

700,000+

Households (**82.26%** of all) have less than the speed aspiration of 1GB x 1GB fiber to the home today.

512,000+

Households (**58.7%** of all) prioritize broadband although it accounts for more than 1% of household income.

Residents may also lack the digital skills needed to keep pace with the current & future applications.

Based on a percentage derived from 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year data multiplied by the dwelling count from Franklin County.

Digital Equity is Foundational to Reducing Systemic Inequities & Driving Prosperity

FOR THE RESIDENT

Expands opportunities and reduces inequities for individuals

- **Ensures access to basic needs** and the speed of life in the modern world
- **Increases access to education, job opportunities, and healthcare** unlocking greater societal inclusion
- **Increases economic potential** as students with access make $2M+ more over their lifetime
- **Lowers the time burden to accessing information** and services bringing efficiency to daily life

FOR THE COMMUNITY

Unlocks benefits across the community and society

- **Establishes upskilling, training, and new ways of learning** in education through digital curriculum and skills building
- **Enables a more inclusive remote and hybrid workforce**
- **Increases telehealth access**, enables online social service support and expands digital government

FOR THE ECONOMY

Generates a positive return on investment for the economy

- **Creates a $2.40 societal ROI** (e.g., from increased earnings, taxes) for every $1 invested in digital access
- The presence of ultra-fast broadband leads to **3% average increase in new businesses formation**

Ramsey Co. (Minnesota) impact overview conducted by ECOTONE ANALYTICS in January 2021

Access to modern digital **devices** and attainment of digital **skills** are needed to take full advantage of the internet and enable digital equity.

The ability for all people to **advance themselves** in today's digital economy will result in regional benefits brought on by shared prosperity.

Historic Investment Opportunity
Over the Next 5 Years

$100M – $200M

Through federal broadband programs (e.g., ACP, ECF, BEAD)

$100M

Through State and Local Gov Fiscal Recovery Funds and Capital Projects Funds

$100M

Sector-specific funds across Education, Health, Housing

And potential to tap into other local funds (including bonds) and philanthropic sources.

If we do not act now, we could face significant delays due to resource constraints for technical capabilities (e.g., fiber splicers, network engineers) and raw materials (e.g., fiber)

Franklin County
Digital Equity Priorities

CONNECTIVITY

Expand **reliable, high-speed residential internet** options in low-income neighborhoods in Franklin County at an **affordable cost** for under resourced households.

DEVICE ACCESS

Create a sustainable stream of different types of **high-quality digital devices** that are available **at low to no-cost** to benefit Franklin County residents who need them.

DIGITAL LIFE SKILLS

Expand and increase **access to digital skills training** with the addition of learning opportunities across provider organizations that **support residents' individualized needs** on a continuum from survival to career.

OUTREACH & ADOPTION

Establish and support a **coordinated, multi-channel outreach** approach that is activated by a **distributed network of partners**, effectively providing residents with information to do what they want and need to do online.

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda Recommendations

CONNECTIVITY	1. High Quality Residential Internet for the Long-Term	
DEVICES	2. Modern and Use-Case Driven Devices for the Household	
SKILLS	3. Four Priority Investments to Build Out the Digital Skills Ecosystem	4. Apply Digital Equity Lens Across Funding Priorities and Programs
OUTREACH & ADOPTION	5. Community-wide Campaign with Culturally Relevant Messaging	6. Community-wide 'Digital-force' *Navigators, Ambassadors, etc*

Delivered Across a Continuum of Support

DIGITAL LIFE SKILLS

An unemployed resident visits community-based organization to ask for help. They discuss both short term employment opportunities and longer term career pathways. In a one-on-one conversation with a case worker, she gets equipped.

She Receives:

- Tips on video conferencing
- Application for 2-year certificate
- Support to write resume
- Application for call center job

DEVICE ACCESS

While she's there, she expresses concern that she doesn't have a laptop to engage in the virtual courses. When discussing a job at a call center, she learns she'll need a headset for the job. She expresses annoyance that with multiple people in the house, it is distracting to have many video calls going at once.

She Receives:

- Laptop
- WiFi extender
- Headphones and headset

CONNECTIVITY

She also shares frustration that she experiences buffering and lagging while video streaming on multiple devices. The case worker recommended an affordable service that aligns with her needs. While completing the 2-year certificate program, she's also able to leverage the faster internet and laptop for a call center making $20/hour as she prepares for a career that will improve her income by 25%.

She Receives:

- Learns about speed testing
- No-cost or low-cost internet service

25,000 Households to Directly Benefit from Digital Equity Actions Within 5 Years

30% of households in under-resourced neighborhoods in Franklin County.

25 Neighborhoods identified by data model - 200% of FPL adjusted for a 2.5 avg hhld size

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

Closing the Digital Divide Will Take Resources and Move at the Speed of Trust

SKILLS ACROSS GENERATIONS

Over the past five years, Boston's Tech Goes Home training program, served **22,000** youth and adult learners with 15 hours of training a piece and distributed **14,500** new computers in communities across Greater Boston.*

4.9 million metro area pop.

NEW INTERNET OPTIONS

45+ neighborhood events and 1,600 door knocks led to 215 households subscribing to a new, no-cost internet service in King-Lincoln.

Did not require ACP enrollment

DEVICE ACCESS & SUPPORT

Average lifespan of a chromebook or like device is an est. 5 years. Devices distributed during the pandemic will need tech support and/or replaced within 5 years.

Nearly 50,000 computing devices were distributed in Franklin County since the onset of the pandemic

** "Our Impact." Tech Goes Home, 2022, https://www.techgoeshome.org/impact. Accessed 5 August 2022.*

Journey to Date

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition (DEC)

30 public, private and nonprofit entities throughout Franklin County working to create long-term solutions to digital equity. We believe digital equity is integral to achieving economic, educational, racial, and social equity.

2020

BUILD THE TABLE

Make Digital Inclusion a Community Priority

- Crisis Response
- Work Group Framework
- Became the DEC

2021

LEARN ABOUT THE PROBLEM

Build a Deeper Understanding of the Problem

- Learning Map
- Prototype Pilots

2022

ALIGN ON THE ACTION AGENDA

Refine DEC Operations

- Assess the Prototype and Actions to Date
- Build Scalable Framework
- Role Clarity and Coordinated Action
- **Funding**

2023

OPERATE & ENGAGE

Scalable Services in:

- Affordable Connectivity
- Device Access
- Digital Skills Support

2020: Community Crisis Response

From March 2020 to May 2022, DEC Member Organizations have mobilized the following:

Nearly 50,000 Computing Devices Distributed

- CCS – 43,000 devices
  - *City of Columbus – 20,000 Chromebooks purchased for distribution through CCS*
- CML – 2,500 Chromebooks and 150 tablets
- Leadership Columbus – 500 computers distributed

Over 10,000 HotSpots Distributed

- MORPC and ESC – 2,300 hotspots
- CCS – 6,000 hotspots
- CML – 2,300 hotspots on long-term loan; another 200 hotspots in a circulating collection across all branches

45,000+ Residents Benefited from new Affordable Residential Internet Connectivity Programs

- EBB Adoption – 43,718
- CMHA Partnership with Spectrum – 4,500 households across 18 communities
- 2 Neighborhood Affordability Pilots – 250 Residents

800+ Residents Engaged in New Digital Skills Programming

- Goodwill 101 Workshop Expansion – 300 participants
- City of Columbus 3 Summer STEM Camps – 450 CCS Students
- Central Community House Pilot – 186 Seniors

2021: Journey of Empathy & Understanding

Mar 1-5, 2021	**Understand how people experiencing poverty want and need to use technology.**	Co-design Sprint	12 Residents	TCF
Mar – May, 2021	**Southside Free Internet Pilot - Testing desirability and viability of free residential internet**	Test	70 Residents	Smart & City of Columbus
Jun 30 – Jul 2, 2021	**Exploring why people on the South Side are saying no to free internet. Trying to understand what is beneath the answer.**	Co-design Sprint	12 Residents	TCF & Smart
Jul 21 – 23, 2021	**Understand the user journey of those participating in the free internet pilot**	Existing Pilot Participant Interviews	5 Residents	Smart
Jul 27, 2021	**Understand profile and need of residents applying to enroll in free internet program**	Analysis of enrollment surveys	298 Residents	Smart
Aug 5-6, Aug 12, 2021	**Test resident response to messaging and imagery associated with low to no-cost internet programs and deepen understanding of motivations**	Focus Groups	13 Residents	Smart

Sep 8-30, 2021	**Understanding residents' relationship with household internet and what is adequate speed to meet their needs.**	4 days of speed tests, 3X a day and 2 interviews	10 Residents	TCF & Smart
Oct 28, 2021	**Understand if an internet comparison and/or education tool would be valued by residents**	Prototype Test - 2 rounds of 50-minute interviews	13 Residents	Smart & ZoCo
Oct 2021	**Quantify residents' experiences, preferences, priorities, and needs**	Online Survey	1,839 Residents	Franklin County Jobs & Family Services & Smart
Nov 2021	**Understanding what, if any, help seniors and New Americans may need with technology**	Co-design sprint; 6 community designers	18 hours of interviews	TCF, CML, Jewish Family Services
Dec 2021 – Mar 2022	**King-Lincoln Free Internet Pilot – Testing desirability and viability of free residential internet**	Test	278 Residents	Smart & City of Columbus
Apr 2022	**Understand resident barriers to using technology for telehealth, accessing health records, and scheduling.**	Design Sprint	Provider Workshop & 5 Resident Interviews	Smart & ZoCo
May 2022	**Deeper understanding of the systemic barriers perpetuating digital inequity for Black and Brown communities and innovative strategies to address them across sectors**	Workshop and Literature Review	Workshop with 20 residents, organizers and service providers; and analyzed 75 data points	Smart
May 2022	**Understand how rural residents want and need to access home internet.**	Design Sprint	20 Residents	Smart, Broadband Ohio, & Harvard Biz School

2022: Align on the Action Agenda

1

DIGITAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Articulation of the community's vision for closing the digital divide, identification of priorities, and framework for community organizing.

2

DIGITAL EQUITY ACTION AGENDA

Articulation of the guiding principles, approaches, and foundational work. Documentation of the resulting recommendations for funding and implementation.

3

DIGITAL EQUITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Development of tactical, detailed operational plans of the funded objectives and strategies of the action agenda and build off the initial framework.

4

EXECUTION & MEASUREMENT

Execution of the implementation plan, resulting in realization of the vision and delivery of goals.

Agenda Deliverables

- **Alignment across key stakeholders on the objectives** (e.g., focus areas, adoption levels, sustainable solutions)
- **Understanding of the barriers** to access including availability, affordability, and adoption
- **Recommendations to close the gap** impacting under-resourced households, students, older adults, veterans, workforce, disabled, new americans and the justice involved
- **Roadmap and activation agenda** with timelines, milestones, stakeholder roles, and required investment for key initiatives
- **Funding Considerations** with options for local investment to activate this work

Process to Form Equity Agenda

Weekly meetings with DEC Steering Committee and general body occurred throughout to collaborate on the plan.

ECOSYSTEM ALIGNMENT

(7 Weeks)

- **Stakeholder Interviews**
  Facilitate stakeholder interviews to align on shared goals and priority focus areas
- **Community Activity Matrix**
  Collect data to map existing digital inclusion activity across the community

UNDERSTAND NEEDS & BEST PRACTICES

(12 Weeks)

- **Sizing the Need** – Research to understand size of the need through data
  - Supply side: infra., speeds, costs
  - Demand side: household tech access, key barriers
- **National Best Practice Assessment**
  (Ex: NDIA Conference, San Antonio, Chattanooga/Tech Goes Home, Cleveland and Charlotte)
- **Codifying Resident Insights**
  - Insights from human-centered design efforts
  - Identified learnings and best practices from local efforts underway in Franklin County today

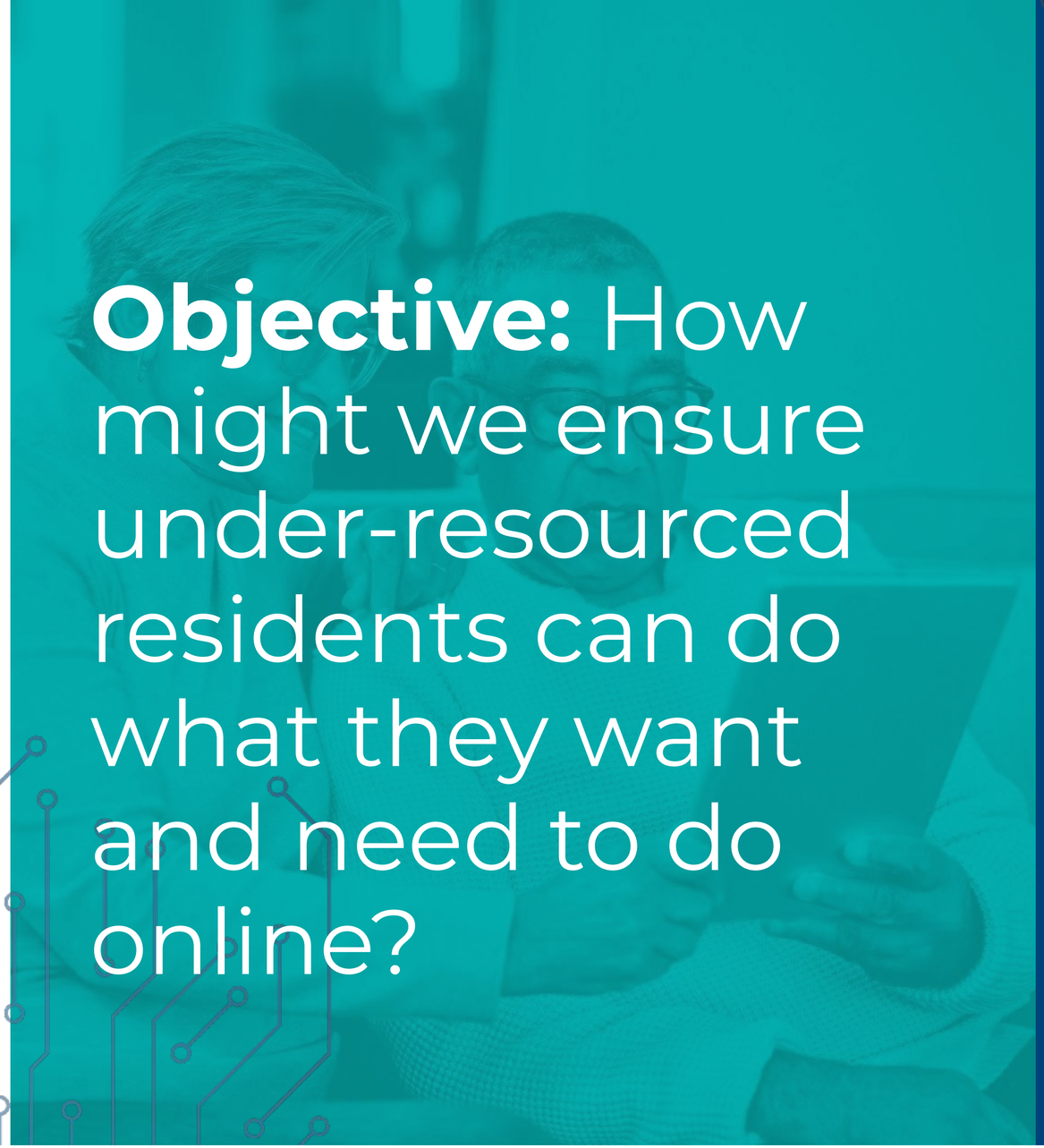
CREATE THE STRATEGY

(12 Weeks)

- **Stakeholder Workshops**
  Facilitate 9 Workshops to assess technical & financial requirements and pressure test solutions
- **Document** recommended solutions and path forward for program priorities

Action Agenda Recommendations

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION



Objective: How might we ensure under-resourced residents can do what they want and need to do online?

- Ensure **under-resourced residents have access** to residential internet, devices, and skills training opportunities
  - **At an equitable level of quality** that enables today's online experiences
    - **At an affordable price point** for low-income households

Franklin County Digital Equity Priorities

CONNECTIVITY

Expand **reliable, high-speed residential internet** options in low-income neighborhoods in Franklin County at an **affordable cost** for under resourced households.

DEVICE ACCESS

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OUTREACH & ADOPTION

Establish and support a **coordinated, multi-channel outreach** approach that is activated by a **distributed network of partners**, effectively providing residents with information to do what they want and need to do online.

FUNDING FRAMEWORK	IMMEDIATE (12 Months / 1 Year)	MIDDLE (48 Months / 4 Years)	LONG-TERM P3 (60 – 120 Months / 5 Years)	
Connectivity CITY; County, State/Fed	Planning & Biz Model **$500,000**	Design, Build **$8,858,310**	Partnership Model **$TBD**	Investor Option **$700M-$1B**
Devices SCHOOLS; County, City, Private Sector	Planning & Biz Model **In PMO & $481,540** [Schools 1-to-1 Devices Separate]	Distribution & Tech Support **$11,557,008** Over 4 Years [Schools 1-to-1 Devices Separate]	Ongoing **$16,300,000** Over 5 Years [Schools 1-to-1 Devices Separate]	
Skills COUNTY; City, Schools, Private Sector, TCF	Program Design **In PMO & $1,200,773** - $200,773 – Tech Goes Home - $500,000 – Program Pilots - $500,000 – Summer STEM	Program Implementation **$8,918,559** - $4,918,559 – Tech Goes Home - $2,000,000 – Summer STEM - $900,000 – Resident Stipends - $1,200,000 – Grant Fund	Ongoing **$5,600,000**	
Outreach & Adoption County, City, Private Sector, State/Fed	Development & Implementation **In PMO & $1,498,600** - $1.1M – Ed. Campaign Dev & Launch - $800,000 – 'Digital Force' - $100,000 – Co-Design	Implementation **$4,446,865**	Ongoing **$3,000,000** + Connectivity Costs Offset Additional Need	
Assessment/Research **This is not program evaluation	Survey design & Distribution **$125,000**	Survey Improvement & Distribution **$538,642**	Survey Improvement & Distribution **$500,000**	
PMO/Gov/Coordination	**$1,688,360**	**$6,619,220** ($1,000,000 a year)	**$5,000,000** ($1,000,000 a year)	
Administrative Fees	**$199,771**	**$1,286,210**	**$1,300,000** ($264,,000 a year)	
TOTAL	**$5,694,044 + 500K**	**$44,221,765 + 8M**		

Federal Funding Opportunities

BEAD – Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment

LOI July 18, 2022

- $42.45 billion
- Only states may apply
- To fund planning, deployment, adoption
- Priorities:
  - unserved (no access to 25/3 Mbps)
  - underserved (no access to 100/20 Mbps)
  - community anchors without 1/1 Gpbs connections
- 5 year plan made by each state must include collaboration with local and regional entities
- Minimum state allocation is $100M

DIGITAL INCLUSION

LOI July 12, 2022

- $2.75B for 3 programs
- State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program -$60M for states to develop digital equity plans
- State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program - $1.44B to implement digital equity plans
- Digital Equity Competitive Grants – including political subdivisions $1.25B

MIDDLE-MILE

Due September 30, 2022

- States and Political Subdivisions of States are eligible
- Extending middle-mile for unserved and underserved
- $1B competitive
- 70% maximum of total project costs
- Due September 30, 2022, Awards March 1, 2023

Funding Timeline / Advocacy Focus

	DEC ACTIONS	FINAL DRAFT	PLAN RELEASE		SUMMIT		STATE ADVOC.			FED ADVOC.	
Funding Source	**Digital Equity Use**	**May**	**June**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Q1 2023**	**Q2 2023**
State ARPA Dollars	Discretionary	State still has some left, unlikely they will be used for Digital Divide									
County ARPA Dollars	Discretionary / Critical Capacity	Round 1 Funds Allocated								Round 2 Funds Allocated	
City ARPA Dollars	Discretionary / Critical Capacity	Funds to be received from Feds before allocation decisions									
Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (State)	Affordable Connectivity, maybe some Navigators			Target Open Grant Period		Project Plan Due	Worst Case Scenario – Grant Period Open				
Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program (Via State)	MUD Connectivity and Programming	Fed NOFO	State Submits LOI	Planning Process – 6 Months (Ideal is that Broadband Ohio has consultant for developing 5 year plan hired in May – FCC map release is big dependency. Should occur sometime in summer. IMPORTANT ADVOCACY PERIOD					Likely Grant Period (Could be as early as Nov 2022 or as late as Aug 2023)		
Middle Mile Infrastructure Grants (Fed Competitive)	Connectivity		Potential NOFO	Potential Competitive Grant Period							
Digital Equity Capacity Grants (Via State)	Affordable Connect., Devices, Skills, Literacy					Fed NOFO	State Planning Period (Could move based on release of the NOFO)				>Fall 2023 Grant Period
Digital Equity Comp. Grant Funds (NTIA)	Affordable Connect., Skills, Literacy										>Fall 2023 NOFO

Socialization Period & Commitments

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda Recommendations

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CONNECTIVITY

High Quality Residential Internet for the Long Term

	GAP NETWORK OPTIONS			LONG-TERM
	Millimeter Wave (Starry)	**CBRS (Motorola & PCs for People)**	**WiFi 6**	**Fiber to the Home**
Cost	$150K investment for 200 Households for 1 Year	MOST AFFORDABLE Under $50K/sq mile	Needs more sites $50K/square mile	LARGEST INVESTMENT
Reliability	Trees and obstructions to line of site make homes unserviceable – Best service provided in a MDU	Low reliability, spectrum management a concern	Solid	Most Reliable/The Gold Standard
Speed	Up to 100/100 mbps	50/10 mbps	80-300 mbps	FASTEST 1GB/1GB + Future Capacity Growth
Business Model	ISP Owned	Government Owned/Shared Services Benefit	Government Owned/ Shared Services Benefit	Public-Private Partnership
User Install	5 Exterior attachments to single family home 2.65% All others were MDU	Self-Install w/in home device	EASIEST – Nothing	Fiber installation to the home
What we learned?	Challenged to get to single family homes, biz model not preferred	Not suitable for streaming and multiple users	Don't know how well it will penetrate homes	Most desired by residents

CONNECTIVITY

Feasibility and Business Model

	Own Rights of Way, Util. Infra.	Own Middle Mile	Own Last Mile	Operate Infrastructure	Service Customer	Example City
Full Municipal Broadband	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Public Entity (City or Utility)	**Chattanooga**
Publicly-Owned, Privately-Serviced	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Public Entity / Service Provider	Service Provider(s)	**Westminster**
Hybrid Ownership	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Service Provider(s)	Service Provider(s)	Service Provider(s)	**Lincoln**
Private Developer Open Access*	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Private Developer	Private Developer	Private Developer	Several Service Providers	**Fullerton**
Full Private Broadband	Public Entity (City or Utility)	Service Provider(s)	Service Provider(s)	Service Provider(s)	Service Provider(s)	**Boston**

*Note: Private Developer is defined as private company that builds, owns and operates the network infrastructure and offers open access to it to several retail SPs that provide service on the top.

Over 20 years, the city has invested in more than $100 million in laying 1,000 miles of fiber that can uniquely be leveraged to address this problem in Franklin County.

The City of Columbus nor any other community partner seeks to operate as the Internet Service Provider. The RFI seeks to understand who potential operators may be, how that relationship would look, and how it can be sustained long-term.

"Broadband models for unserved and underserved communities." US Ignite & Altman Solon, 9 July 2020, https://www.us-ignite.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/USIgnite_Altman-Solon_Whitepaper-on-Broadband-Models_FINAL_7-9-2020.pdf. Accessed 5 August 2022.

CONNECTIVITY

What Does a Fiber Investment Look Like?

As described by AECOM in their Broadband Access report from June of 2020, fiber-to-the-home (F-t-t-h), includes fiber to residences subscribing for service, networking electronics in the home to connect the household, labor for installation, and other central office or ”back-end” components to connect households to the Internet.

From a capital investment perspective, the capital costs to construct F-t-t-h is approximately $2,535 per household.

A sample investment per 5,000 households is illustrated to the right:

NUMBER OF HOMES	CAPITAL INVESTMENT
5,000	$12,776,000
10,000	$25,442,000
15,000	$38,108,000
20,000	$50,774,000
25,000	$63,440,000
30,000	$76,106,000
35,000	$88,772,000
40,000	$101,438,000
45,000	$114,104,000
50,000	$126,770,000

Smart Columbus & City of Columbus Fiber Request for Information, Summary of Key Outcomes

Potential partners responding to the RFI and after issuance have confirmed interest in potential Public-Private-Partnerships in additional investment in residential fiber to the home in Franklin county.

Potential Outcomes of a P-P-P may include:

- More fiber to the home options for residents
- Potential monetization of municipally-owned fiber that reduces monthly subscriber costs well past the expiration of ACP’s $30/month subsidy runs out
- $30 per month for 1 Gbps to households in under-resourced neighborhoods, less than ½ the current market rate and; 10 times the downstream rate of the current federal minimum of 100 Mbps; and 100 times the upstream rate of the current federal minimum of 10 Mbps.
- Competitive market rates for 1,000 x 1,000 Gbps service with upward capacity to 10, 100 Gbps and beyond.
- Connectivity options for MDUs, including Affordable Housing, Seniors and other under-resourced populations

CONNECTIVITY

Recommendations

ID	KEY STRATEGY	COST
2.3.1	Build out Fiber to the Home (FTTH), providing low-cost, high speed, and reliable internet connectivity to low-income neighborhoods	$$$$
2.3.2	Support Connectivity Improvements across Franklin County	$

"When we look at our options for closing the digital divide in Columbus and Franklin County, one choice stands above the rest, and that's fiber to the home. Fiber has the speed, capacity and cost-benefit to meet our residents' needs today, and over the next 50+ years ahead. All residents need high-quality, affordable, and reliable service that fiber provides."

– Sam Orth, Director, Department of Technology, City of Columbus

Laying a Strong Foundation Via Connectivity Enables Device Usage and Skills Training

Without connectivity, devices and skills are limited

INSIGHTS FROM RESIDENTS IN HOUSEHOLDS OF MANY FAMILY MEMBERS

Multiple devices require more bandwidth.

"When the kids were in virtual school the whole year. I called [our service provider] weekly. We had 5 devices minimum going on at a time, it was terrible. It was daily, my kids were so frustrated." *– Maggie*

Slow speed makes any online experience negative.

"[Our Internet service] Is very slow and we have dead spots. We live in an apartment. The kids have complained about this even more than me." *– Rebekkah*

DEVICES

Modern & Use Case Driven Devices for the Household

USE CASE	DEVICE TYPE	STANDARD
Daily Life & Basic Survival	Smartphones	iOS and Android operating systems capable of running apps required to take advantage of transportation and banking applications
Education (K – Higher Ed)	Chromebooks / iPads Pre-K – Touchscreen	New Devices
	Higher Capability Laptops	New or Used
Workforce Development & On-the-Job Needs	More powerful software-capable devices and supporting accessories	40% New & 60% Used
Telehealth & Disabled Needs	Touchscreen, Tablets & Wearables	80% New & 20% Used

Distribution of Devices through:

- Distributed upon completion of basic Skills Training program (i.e. Tech goes Home)
- Integrated distribution through programs with healthcare institutions, workforce development programs, etc.
- Distributed on a need basis through anchor institutions such as libraries, Job and Family Services, schools and higher education institutions

DEVICES

Recommendations

ID	KEY STRATEGY	COST
3.1.2	Coordinate collective purchasing power across anchor institutions to acquire new and used devices that meet residents' needs	$$$
3.2.1	Establish flagship device distribution points that intersect with places that residents already go	$$$
3.3.3	Organize tech support services available to those receiving devices	$$

Different devices enable different use cases

"Normally I would use my phone because it's the most convenient to use. If I have something that requires a lot of reading (or if I just feel like I need a bigger screen), then I'll go to my tablet. I have a laptop that I use if I have a video call, or for paying bills or more administrative stuff." – *Paul*

Devices will need the supporting accessories

"When they have a laptop, it's still really useful for the kids to have a mouse. My younger child has a harder time using the finger pad." – *Sarah*

Supporting devices may include:

- Router or Modem
- Mouse and/or Keyboard
- Headphones
- Protective Case
- Charger

SKILLS

Focused Skills Investments for Individualized Needs

Across the three levels of skills training, the Digital Equity Coalition recommends **four new priority investments,** including the creation of a competitive grant fund to spur innovation in tailoring digital skills training to seniors, disabled, justice involved, and new American populations.

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
	Intro to Using Tech in My Life *Devices & Usage* *Email & Messaging* *Social Media* *Banking* *Community Resources* *Safety & Privacy*	**Using Tech in My Life** *Telehealth* *Social Media* *Banking* *Community Resources* *Safety & Privacy*	**Using Tech in Work & Career** *Career Exploration* *Education & Training* *Credentials* *Employment Opportunities* *Productivity Software* *Safety & Privacy*
Under-Resourced Residents		Establish Tech Goes Home Training Program (1)	
K-12 Students			Expand Summer STEM Programming and tech training in summer employment for Franklin County youth (2)
Adult Workers			Provide payment for those who complete and/or participate in tech skills training (3)
Seniors	Establish competitive grant fund to support inclusive training programs that meet the unique needs of the group (4)		
Disabled, Justice Involved, New Americans			

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

SKILLS

Recommendations

ID	KEY STRATEGY	COST
4.1.3	Set up four priority investments to build out the digital skills ecosystem: 1. *Establish Tech Goes Home Training Program* 2. *Expand Summer STEM Programming and tech training in summer employment for Franklin County Youth* 3. *Provide payment for those who complete and/or participate in tech skills training* 4. *Establish a competitive grant fund to support inclusive training programs that meet the unique needs of seniors, new americans, disabled and justice involved across training levels*	$$$
4.2.1	Apply a digital equity lens across existing funding priorities and programs incorporating these considerations	$

"The digital divide is something that we need to tackle, but there is an even deeper divide. There is a massive adult learning project that goes alongside this work."

– Tom Goodney, Superintendent, Educational Services Center of Central Ohio

OUTREACH & ADOPTION

Community-Wide Campaign and Common Messaging

Actions Today

Coordinated multi-channel marketing and PR campaign

Robust Open Source Digital Resources

A 'digital-force' of people prepared to help

Outcomes by 2028

Residential Connectivity

60% of eligible residents are enrolled in ACP

Device Access

Over 20,000 new devices have been distributed

Skills Training

Over 5,000 residents annually receive digital skills training

OUTREACH & ADOPTION

Community-Wide 'Digital-Force'

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	
Community-Wide Training	**Anchor Institution Referral Network**	**Embedded Support Network**	**Resident Ambassador Network**
Digital Advocates – Deliver workshops, equipping front line workforce across hundreds of social service, education, government, and other entities with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to help those they serve bridge the digital divide. (Ex: Certified Tourism Ambassador Program)	**Digital Navigators** – Engage 10 anchor institutions to **cross-train their team** to assess and identify need, promote access programs, and refer/connect residents to the digital navigation support that will best help them. (Pilots occurring this year at Library, CMHA, and OhioHealth)	**Digital Coaches** – Engage 10 organizations with **embedded/ dedicated** digital navigators, customizing digital inclusion services to the populations they serve; share lessons learned with other navigators. (Pilots occurring this year at Library, Jewish Family Services, and Goodwill)	Supported by a grassroots network (Ex: Moms2Be)
Central Support Tools – Develop baseline content, optimize for shared resources across navigator programs including a common ticketing and resource system that records and monitors service fulfillment. (Ex: Charlotte)			

OUTREACH & ADOPTION

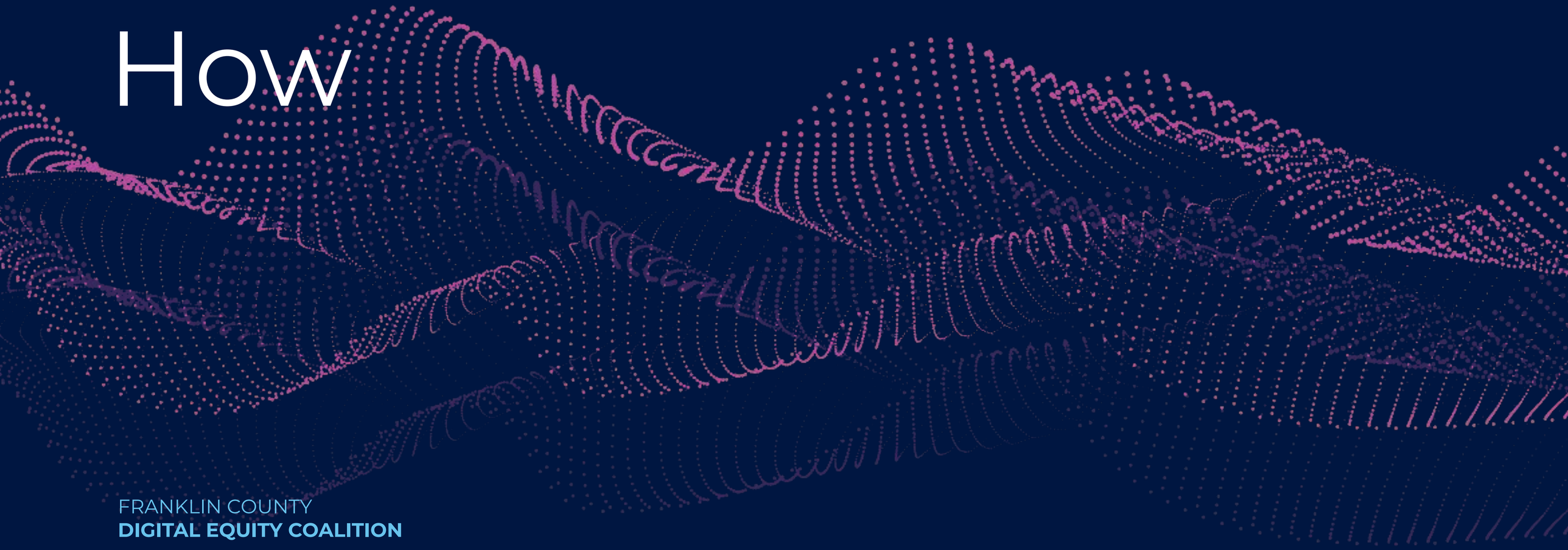
Recommendations

ID	KEY STRATEGY	COST
1.1.2	Construct and execute messaging and awareness campaign that connects with, and supports the needs of under-resourced residents	$$$$
1.2.1	Create a digital inclusion resource portal and tools, including an Internet Comparison Tool, to be used by residents and digital support teams	$$$
1.3.1	Create a community-wide 'Digital Force' empowering people across the ecosystem to assist residents in getting access to what they want and need to do online.	$$$
1.4.1	Launch a Community Co-design Program to foster resident alignment, ownership and buy-in.	$

"To those we serve, we are the internet." Barriers include not only the lack of reliable and robust internet and devices, "barriers are (also) financial, cultural, and language-based; and, they require understanding the processes one must use."

– Tariq Mohamed, Jewish Family Services

How



FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

The Columbus Way

NCUS National Center for Urban Solutions

goodwill Columbus The power of good

THE CITY OF COLUMBUS

COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS

OhioHealth

REEB AVENUE CENTER

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

Franklin County Board of Commissioners OFFICE ON AGING 1803

National Church Residences

MORPC

[JD]

eSc

eliminating racism empowering women ywca columbus ohio

Key Milestones Over the Next 5 Years

TODAY

- Complete the **Digital Equity Action Agenda** that reflects the need of the community and input of key stakeholders

YEAR 1

- Obtain **endorsement and funding** required for the agenda
- Invest in **Digital Equity Implementation Plan** with detailed tactics for achieving objectives and establish a clear scorecard to track progress and defne success
- Stand up the resourcing and **operating model**, defining how the PMO, public entities and coalition collaboration with each other
- **Lay the groundwork** for scaled outreach and adoption

YEAR 2

- **Activate all initiatives** to begin closing the digital divide, prioritizing highest need populations first.
- Emphasis on **scaling outreach and adoption** campaign
- Solidify partnerships and focums for engagement across stakeholders, with ongoing mechanisms to activate the community
- Develop and deploy bi-annual **digital equity assessment**

YEAR 3

- Device **tech support** is available county-wide
- **Digital skills** support is available and affordable for all under-resourced households

YEAR 4

- Maintain access and **continue to improve** service quality
- Achieve digital skills leveling across populations and ensure the proper support structures to keep all households connected
- Refine and deploy bi-annual digital equity assessment

YEAR 5

- First **under-resourced Households are connected with Fiber-to-the-Home**
- Assess performance and ecosystem sustainability; **ensure sustainability of appropriate coordination and operating model** for what's needed in the future

Role of the DEC

DEC member feedback in response to:

What do you imagine the role of the DEC being in 6 months? In 3 years?

SHORT TERM – Next 6 Months

- Advancing work in a similar fashion
- Working with BB Office on Budget and Priorities
- Advocating for Dollars
- Keep Community Groups Aligned and Informed on Progress and Action
- Continuing to be the implementation partner for projects in County

LONG TERM – 3 Years

EFFECTIVE

- We have **built an ecosystem** that provides cities around the country a **model that is replicable**
- **Seeing progress** on eliminating the digital divide.

COMMUNICATION

- Keep community groups **aligned and informed** on progress and action
- Continuing to **provide upkeep and outreach** for the projects

FUNDING & ADVOCACY

- Figuring out **response** to next federal administration.
- Looking for **more funding** opportunities and partners

MORE STRUCTURED COORDINATION

- **The basis for the governance model** — still helping to lead the work, convening partners, but with more structure and solid funding stream.
- **Transitioned to an advisory** committee that compliments a more formal governing body
- A city-county **funded office who coordinates** digital equity work
- A mechanism for **receiving grants** that benefit the whole

Centrally Coordinated, Aligned Actions

DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

Neutral Third Party

CENTRAL DIGITAL INCLUSION PROGRAM OFFICE

+ Letters of Commitment in Q3
++ Engagement Model Similar to AP Program
** PMO Governed by Primary Founders, DEC is Advisory*

Role of Common Coordination

- **Ensure direct link to initiative/community goals** – Monitor projects and programs and ensure they link to community goals. If they don't, PMO would ensure they don't start or end quickly
- **Help win support for important initiatives** – Build support for projects and activities
- **Standardized methodologies to support scale** – Help document what works to avoid duplication and wasted time and effort. Increase efficiencies and speed to value
- **Achieve outcomes not possible without a coordinated effort** – Facilitate collaboration across a wide range of projects
- **Performance Measurement** – Facilitate common measurement tools for understanding the evolution of community need and progress to goal
- **Leverage tools, support and mentoring** – One-stop shop office for a wide range of tools, ideas, support and mentoring

Near Term Roles and Responsibilities

COALITION

(Private Sector / Non-Profit / Philanthropic Leaders)

1. Obtain endorsement and **build support for the digital equity action agenda** among key stakeholders
2. **Coordinate advocacy to secure require funding** from federal, state, local and philanthropic sources, and drive the economic and societal impact narrative across sectors
3. Advance **methods for increased and ongoing stakeholder engagement**, coordination and activation

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(City & County)

4. **Finalize strategy for public investment**, including engaging with stakeholders on plans
5. Codify **detailed fiber and asset maps** to inform infrastructure deployment strategy
6. Pursue the appropriate methods of **creating a public-private partnership for fiber to the home** at scale

SHARED

(Local Government & Coalition)

7. **Set up program management office and define the governing model** to secure resources for the action agenda
8. **Develop implementation plan, putting in place execution teams** with detailed work plans with defined owners, timelines, milestones and associated costs
9. **Align on the goals and KPIs of the action agenda and subsequent implementation plan**, and establish mechanisms to track progress across partners on an ongoing basis
10. **ISP engagement** and begin conversations to build the collaboration and partnership model

Thank You

FRANKLIN COUNTY
DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

Funding Scenario A

$181M for 5 Years

Primary Investments:

- Gap Connectivity
- Devices
- Outreach
- PMO
- Training

Connectivity is focused on near-term Gap Network for 24,000 households and long-term fiber

Funds equipment to establish regional high-speed backbone, FC data center, fiber and connectivity to 42 municipalities and 696 locations and FC EMA&HS

CONNECTIVITY

- Regional Network, $101M
- Gap Network, $36M

DEVICES

- Computing and other devices for up to 24,077 participating and eligible households
- $12.04M

TRAINING

- 15 hours of training for up to 24,077 participating and eligible households
- Summer Tech
- Inclusive Skills
- Certified Tech Training
- $9.02M

OUTREACH

- Digital Force of Navigators & Ambassadors
- $5.95M

PMO – $6.1M

ADMINISTRATIVE – $1.33M

Funding Scenario B

$44M for 5 Years

Primary Investments:

- Devices
- Backbone
- Outreach
- PMO
- Training

Connectivity is focused on planning and the long-term

Funds equipment to establish regional high-speed backbone

CONNECTIVITY

- Fiber & Network Planning, $500,000
- 400 Gbps Regional Backbone, $8.56M

DEVICES

- Computing and other devices for up to 24,077 participating and eligible households
- $12.04M

TRAINING

- 15 hours of training for up to 24,077 participating and eligible households
- Summer Tech
- Inclusive Skills
- Certified Tech Training
- $9.02M

OUTREACH

- Digital Force of Navigators & Ambassadors
- $5.95M

PMO – $6.1M

ADMINISTRATIVE – $1.33M

Funding Scenario C

$80M for 5 Years

Primary Investments:

- Gap Connectivity
- Devices
- Outreach
- PMO
- Training

Connectivity is focused on near-term Gap Network for 24,000 households and long-term fiber

Funds equipment to establish regional high-speed backbone

CONNECTIVITY

- Gap Network, $36M
- Fiber & Network Planning, $500,000
- 400 Gbps Regional Backbone, $8.56M

DEVICES

- Computing and other devices for up to 24,077 participating and eligible households
- $12.04M

TRAINING

- 15 hours of training for up to 24,077 participating and eligible households
- Summer Tech
- Inclusive Skills
- Certified Tech Training
- $9.02M

OUTREACH

- Digital Force of Navigators & Ambassadors
- $5.95M

PMO – $6.1M

ADMINISTRATIVE – $1.33M