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NEW HAMPSHIRE
DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN

2024

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NEW HAMPSHIRE DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN

Draft Plan for Public Comment — January 9, 2024

This document presents a draft of the New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan and is being released for public comment in advance of the submission of the final draft to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) by the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs. Input regarding the draft document is welcome and encouraged.

Input on the draft plan can be provided through this form:
https://www.nhdigitalequity.org/public-comments/

The Digital Equity Planning Team would like to thank the many individuals and organizations who have contributed to this proposed plan and related information-gathering efforts.

Please contact Charlie French at charlie.french@unh.edu or 603-862-0316 with any questions regarding the information found below. A virtual session to collect feedback in January 2024 will also be held. Call-in details (Zoom or phone) can be found at nhdigitalequity.org

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July of 2023, the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) was awarded $510,216 by the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) to lead the development of a five-year plan to connect residents statewide with access to high-speed internet, digital devices, training, and the services and resources made possible through digital technologies. The effort, in partnership with the National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE) and the Digital Equity Research Center at the Metropolitan New York Library Council, seeks to close the digital divide by eliminating barriers to economic opportunity and fostering a sustained infrastructure, support, and access to digital services by diverse individuals and communities. For this plan, digital equity is the principle that all individuals and communities have equitable access to and use of digital technologies and the internet, regardless of socioeconomic status, location, or background (See Appendix 2, Glossary of Terms).

This proposed Digital Equity Plan was developed in alignment with the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, which will provide $196,560,278.97 to support the expansion of broadband infrastructure statewide (see Appendix 3, BEAD Collaboration). NH BEA's Five-Year Broadband Action Plan has been developed to guide that portion of the work (See Appendix 4, Cooperative Agreement).

To bridge the digital divide, the Digital Equity Plan and the BEAD Broadband Action Plan work in concert to address the state's physical infrastructure requirements, such as broadband availability gaps, as well as the need for digital equity programs. Such digital equity programs aim to educate individuals, enhancing their understanding of internet access and usage, while also ensuring that internet devices and associated services are accessible and affordable for residents of the state.

The goal of the New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan is to ensure that individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status, geographical location, or other demographic factors, have access to and opportunities for meaningful participation in the digital world. This proposed plan lays forth a comprehensive set of goals and strategies to bridge the digital divide and address disparities in access to technology, internet connectivity, digital skills, and digital resources. In doing so, the plan seeks to advance opportunities for workforce and economic development, education, healthcare, civic engagement, and a myriad of resources facilitated by digital technologies.

This proposed plan is contingent upon acceptance by the federal government and sufficient funding to support each element of the plan, including efforts suggested to enable more sustainable initiatives and programs beyond the timeframe of the plan.

II. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND CONTENT

Although a vast majority of New Hampshire residents already have access to high-speed internet (93%), and the State is amidst additional buildout to reach 100% access to broadband, many face unique challenges in getting connected. For example, over 81% of the state is forested, making it difficult to reach some rural locations in the North Country, Southwest, and Upper Valley regions with broadband and other critical services that rely on digital technologies. Although demographic trends are improving across the state, with a large senior population, residents are often forced to adapt to more unfamiliar (and rapidly changing) technologies. Responses to a statewide survey concerning digital equity identify the need for more affordable broadband services and access to devices capable of adapting to technological advancements and evolving work environments. This proposed plan provides a blueprint for the development of a statewide infrastructure of responsive technical assistance and pathways that help overcome these challenges and enable diverse populations to meaningfully participate in the digital economy.

This proposed plan is contingent upon a variety of factors, including funding availability, partner and stakeholder participation, and the related buildout of highspeed internet in communities across New Hampshire.

HOW THE PLAN WAS CREATED

In developing this plan, the University of New Hampshire Extension, NCDE, and METRO's Digital Equity Research Center directly engaged over 1,000 stakeholders through 92 meetings with digital equity partners and constituents of covered populations between November 2022 and October 2023.
Those meetings included 26 focus groups with participants representing covered populations, 24 meetings with partner organizations that have a shared goal of enhancing digital equity, 8 sector summits focused on key plan objectives and metrics, 1 statewide asset advisory council meeting, 2 statewide forums, 9 meetings with regional digital equity coalitions, and over 25 key informant interviews. The planning team also utilized US Census data and generated data from a statewide survey that was completed by over 3,500 individuals representing diverse populations across the state to understand their needs, challenges, and opportunities.

THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE PLAN

The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined within this plan serve all individuals living in New Hampshire, as the plan seeks to foster economic, health, educational, civic equity, and housing inclusion. However, federal guidelines also require a specific focus on the following eight covered populations:

1. Individuals 60 years of age and older;
2. Incarcerated individuals;
3. Individuals living in low-income households;
4. Individuals with disabilities;

5. People with English language barriers;

6. Racial and ethnic minorities;

7. Rural residents; and

8. Veterans.

Networks formed by and representing these covered populations in New Hampshire were engaged in a series of in-person and online forums, a statewide survey, and an "asset inventory" seeking to identify organizations that provide digital equity resources.

Consistent both with the Digital Equity Act's stipulation to engage these stakeholders in need-sensing and priority-setting, the planning team's commitment has been not only to listen deeply to and serve these diverse stakeholders, but also to foster ongoing involvement ownership of the implementation process so that they may assess progress in understanding and addressing digital equity and systemic inclusion concerns, and shape the allocation of federal digital equity resources over the next several years.

KEY PLAN OBJECTIVES AND METRICS

The plan aims to improve upon the five key objectives outlined in the Digital Equity Act: access to affordable broadband, computers, assistive devices with tech support, digital literacy skill development, and cybersafety skill development. The planning team collaborated closely with state and local leaders to explore how investments over the next five years can contribute to those five key objectives while also interacting with the State's own goals, plans, and outcomes in the following areas:

1. **Economic opportunity** through improved access to broadband, computers, and digital navigator assistance in support of business retention, expansion, recruitment, entrepreneurship, access to banking services, and workforce development for high-demand occupations.

2. **Educational opportunity** through improved digital access and skills for learners of all ages, from expectant parents to seniors. This involves enhancing digital pedagogy to meet the needs of diverse learners—including K12, afterschool, adult education, and postsecondary learners—while also addressing challenges like device addiction and cyberbullying.

3. **Healthcare** strategies that aim to leverage digital access and skills to expand access to telehealth and teletherapy resources.

4. **Civic engagement** efforts focus on enhancing community participation and civics education in schools, while addressing social isolation that may accompany increased digital access.

5. **Housing security** initiatives focus on improving digital access to human services for individuals and families experiencing housing insecurity, including those in public housing.

KEY FINDINGS REGARDING THE NEEDS OF COVERED POPULATIONS

Through direct engagement with covered populations, as well as with organizations and agencies that serve them, a picture of the needs across and within the covered populations was established. The following are high-level assessments of broadly identified needs across the several covered populations that underpin the strategies and programs within this proposed plan (see expanded narrative and

supporting data in Section VI): Access to devices and reliable and affordable internet was universally identified as a significant barrier by all covered populations.

- Digital literacy was identified as the most significant barrier among individuals over 60, followed by internet safety and protecting seniors from frauds and malicious content.

- The main impediment to digital equity for racial and ethnic minorities is lack of inclusion in decision-making in schools, institutions, and communities, as well as lack of access to online services and digital resources.

- Individuals with a language barrier indicated that websites, web-based resources, curriculum, and services are often not accessible in multiple languages and that it is difficult to access multilingual tech support and navigation assistance.

- Rural populations identified a lack of access to affordable, high-speed internet as a barrier. Additionally, rural constituents expressed concern over how broadband providers can sustain affordable pricing plans after federal funds expire.

- Veterans identified lack of access to web-based resources and services like benefits platforms, vocational training, and mental health and substance use resources, as well as lack of tech support to help them navigate device use and web-based content.

- Constituents representing individuals with disabilities identified basic digital literacy as a key limitation to individuals' ability to use assistive devices and technologies. Affordability is also a barrier for those relying on government benefits.

- A barrier facing incarcerated populations is access to web-based resources and content—curricula, telehealth, job-placement support, etc.—due to security issues in the corrections environment. Lack of digital literacy skills was also identified.

- A key barrier for low-income individuals and households is internet affordability and lack of awareness of programs that support access, like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

PAST EFFORTS FOCUSED ON DIGITAL EQUITY AND BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

New Hampshire has a long history of supporting digital equity. In 2015, with support from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the University of New Hampshire partnered with Regional Planning Commissions, the New Hampshire Municipal Association, the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs (formerly Department of Resources and Economic Development), and other organizations to develop nine Regional Broadband Infrastructure Plans and a statewide Roadmap for Broadband Expansion.

Further, each of the nine regions of the state formed Broadband Coalitions to identify needs as well as advocate for resources to expand broadband access and guide the statewide and regional plans' implementation. In 2020, New Hampshire was one of the first states to utilize CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Funds to support broadband expansion before such efforts were incentivized and funded through the American Rescue Plan Act's Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) in 2021. CPF funding is already being utilized to provide access to high-speed internet to more than 48,000 previously unserved or underserved households, with more to come.

"New Hampshire is a national leader when it comes to deploying critical resources targeted at increasing access to reliable, high-speed internet services. We look forward to identifying new opportunities to bridge the digital divide and connect Granite Staters with the digital economy."

- Taylor Caswell, BEA Commissioner

This Digital Equity Plan also incorporates insights from statewide summits on digital equity for economic development that have been ongoing since 2011. These gatherings, facilitated by the New Hampshire-based National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE), have united leaders in banking, economic development, and education. The focus has been on leveraging resources from the Community Reinvestment Act and foundations to distribute refurbished devices and software, develop digital equity toolkits, and engage in strategic planning. The efforts initiated during these summits were accelerated by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and will serve as a foundation for ongoing work in the coming years.

A detailed listing of assets and ongoing efforts in support of digital equity are outlined in section IV of this plan, Broadband Needs and Assets, and specific organizations that were identified through the asset inventory are cataloged in Appendix 8.

SUMMARY OF VISION AND GOALS

This plan sets forth a vision whereby all New Hampshire residents have access to resources, skills, and other supports needed to participate in today's digital world, and a set of core objectives that help enable all residents to have equitable access to the tools and resources needed to thrive in today's digital world, regardless of their background, geography, identify, or ability to access resources. The five objectives that this plan centers on, which are the basis for plan metrics, are:

1. Affordable and reliable broadband access;
2. Access to computers and assistive devices, coupled with tech support;
3. Enhanced digital literacy skill development capacity;
4. Enhanced cybersafety skill development capacity; and
5. Enhanced accessibility of web portals to essential public resources.

In accordance with the federal Digital Equity Act, the plan seeks to advance these five goals in support of workforce and economic opportunity, educational opportunity, healthcare access, civic engagement, and other essential services. Each goal lays forth a set of objectives, strategies, and performance measures aimed at measurably improving the state's digital equity landscape.

III. THE PLAN

PURPOSE

New Hampshire's proposed Digital Equity Plan represents a potential blueprint that helps ensure state residents have access to digital resources and opportunities in the 21st century. In an era where digital access has become synonymous with access to education, economic opportunity, healthcare, and civic participation, this plan seeks to bridge the digital divide that has persisted within and among communities across the state. By harnessing the power of technology and sustained collaboration, this plan aims to empower every resident, regardless of their socioeconomic status, geography, or circumstance, to thrive in the digital age by seeking to ensure access to resources, skills, and other supports needed to participate in today's digital world.

VISION

Empower New Hampshire residents to thrive by enabling access to resources, skills, and other supports needed to participate in today's digital world.

This vision has informed each stage of the planning process. Consistent with the Digital Equity Act, attention is placed on the five key digital equity objectives and metrics and works to align with existing statewide and regional infrastructure, initiatives, and strategies to address opportunities and outcomes in economic, educational, health, civic engagement, and other essential services.

As many states' plans have done, the digital equity metrics in this plan also address multilingual tech and digital navigator support, and the need to address not only digital literacy and cybersafety skills, but also media literacy, information literacy, and AI skills, along with financial literacy skills, given the connection with bank Community Reinvestment and other financial inclusion advocates.

The plan lays out strategies for fostering and assessing impact regarding the five digital equity objectives and metrics.

MISSION

Ensure New Hampshire residents, regardless of their location or circumstances, have access to the digital tools, resources, and opportunities essential for success in the 21st century.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND METRICS

As noted in the executive summary, this plan focuses on five key objectives and metrics set forth by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), which are framed as goal areas. Within each of the five goals outlined below, which operate as this proposed plan's five overarching goals, is a set of objectives, comprised of specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) actions to achieve that goal.

The below goals, objectives, and metrics may require different strategies, ranging from the facilitation of statewide grant programs to partnering with third-party vendors to offer critical services. The specific methodology will depend upon available funding for such efforts and willingness of stakeholders and partners to participate in this proposed plan.

Goal 1: Affordable and Reliable Broadband Access

Make fast, safe, reliable, and affordable internet accessible and affordable to covered populations, enhancing their ability to access healthcare, educational resources, economic opportunities, civic and social engagement, and a host of other critical services.

Background and Context

Progress has been made to expand access to high-speed internet to unserved and underserved locations across the state ("served" means access at 100/20 Mbps, while "unserved" means there is no available access at 25/3 Mbps, and "underserved" means the speed is less than NTIA's 100/20 Mbps criteria for served). In fact, the state is ranked 10th overall in access to broadband according to a report by U.S. News & World Report, with over 93% of locations served with 100/20 Mbps. Rural regions of the state have been able to expand their broadband infrastructure with a combination of public and private investment. Further, the State recently received funding from the American Rescue Plan to expand its high-speed internet infrastructure, which to date is expected to bring access to at least 50,000 previously unserved and underserved homes.

Despite these and other advancements, New Hampshire residents face barriers and challenges to achieving widespread broadband adoption, particularly for covered populations identified for purposes of this proposed plan. Without additional efforts, opportunities for education, workforce development, healthcare access, and services and resources that are critical to low-income and underserved households and communities are not likely to be fully realized.

Needs and Gaps

Approximately 7% of locations across the state remain unserved and underserved, many of which are rural. Furthermore, even in places that are considered served by the Federal Communications Commission, some individuals and households cannot afford the cost of high-speed internet, while still others don't have access to a computer or device with which to access the Internet.

While some Internet providers do provide affordable internet pricing plans, there are concerns as to whether they can sustain these pricing plans after federal funds expire. Further, there is a lack of awareness of programs that can help to defray the cost of internet by eligible households, such as the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) program.

Existing Plans and Programs

Below are examples of existing local, regional, and statewide plans and efforts that advance one or more of the priorities outlined in this digital equity plan.

Statewide Planning Efforts: BEA's draft BEAD Proposal—subject to NTIA approval—states that New Hampshire's top priority for broadband deployment is to connect all unserved Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs), and to connect all underserved BSLs. Furthermore, the draft proposal states that if BEAD funds remain after each unserved and underserved location is connected, those funds may be used to connect Community Anchor Institutions that have less than 1 Gbps/1 Gbps service.

Southwest NH Planning Efforts: The first comprehensive broadband plan for the Southwest region was approved in 2015. A central goal of the plan is to "Eliminate gaps in broadband availability for all users and provide choices in cost and quality of service." in October 2020 Southwest Regional Planning Commission published the Monadnock Broadband Implementation Guide for their region. As a result of the study, the Monadnock Broadband Group was formed to research adoption rates, infrastructure

financing mechanisms, broadband legislation, the current state of the network, and other data pertinent to expanding broadband in southwest New Hampshire.

Lakes Region Planning Efforts: The town of Bristol recently went live with its new broadband service and has plans for expanding its broadband network throughout Grafton County.

North Country Planning Efforts: The North Country Regional Planning Commission's 2023-2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy identifies expanding broadband access as essential to the economic well-being of the region. "Lack of broadband access has also had a negative impact on educational attainment within the EED. Specifically, young adults wishing to take online classes and many children who have been taking virtual classes on and off throughout the pandemic. Limited access to fast and reliable broadband has left many children struggling to keep up with their education, (pp. 36-37).

Carroll County Broadband Initiative published the Carroll County, NH Feasibility Study in 2022. The study collected data and provided several options for expanding broadband infrastructure to the entire county. The study does not address broadband affordability for Carroll County residents, but it does assume the range of monthly revenue per customer to be between $65 and $125 for the proposed infrastructure expansion options.

Statewide Program Efforts: Local libraries in towns throughout the state offer a range of digital programs to their patrons, free of charge. Small, rural libraries might have several networked desktop computers available, while better-resourced libraries may offer digital navigators, free classes on a variety of topics aimed at increasing digital literacy, and even devices available for loan off-premises. Public libraries and the New Hampshire State Library and K12 schools are just some of the many Community Anchor Institutions that currently play a role in providing opportunities for low-income and rural residents to access online resources. Yet many libraries and schools, particularly those in rural communities, are situated in unserved and underserved locations where broadband infrastructure does not exist.

BEA recently closed its Broadband Matching Grants Initiative (BMGI) application period, with program awards funded through ARPA CPF. The BMGI Program will provide up to $25 million in matching grant funds to awarded municipalities and broadband service providers to cover up to 75% of the total costs for projects that will deliver high-speed internet to unserved and underserved locations that will be completed by December 31, 2026. Upon approval, the State's BEAD proposal will be further developed and rolled out, representing nearly $200 million in additional broadband infrastructure investment over the next several years.

Under a one-year FCC grant for Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Outreach to NCDE awarded in September 2023, a statewide network in New Hampshire of persons trained to provide ACP "enrollment assistance" is being developed to address the challenge that New Hampshire ranks low among states nationwide in the percentage of ACP-eligible households that are enrolled in this broadband subsidy program. As of this writing, 20% of NH's eligible households are enrolled. (As will be considered regarding Goal 2, the ACP outreach grant is also enabling the recruitment and training of digital navigators who can provide free assistance to those with limited digital skills to ensure they access broadband and computer access safely and effectively).

In mid-December 2023, the FCC informed NCDE and ACP Outreach grantees nationwide that funding for the ACP subsidy for eligible households is expected to run out by April 2024 unless Congress renews funding. While NCDE's ACP outreach initiative will continue promoting awareness and assistance with

ACP enrollment, NCDE and the DBEA Broadband Office are exploring the feasibility of creating a publicly available GIS map showing the locations of all known public Wi-Fi access points in the state. In 2024, a collaborative effort involving NCDE, UNH, the DBEA Broadband Office, Granite State News Collaborative, and the NH Inclusion Asset Advisory Council will encourage various organizations (municipalities, libraries, employers, agencies, etc.) to provide free public Wi-Fi access points and add pointers to the NH Wi-Fi access map. The NH Chief Information Officer, who serves as state commissioner for the Department of Information Technology, has committed to providing resources and guidance on accessing these free public Wi-Fi spots safely. If renewed, the map of known Wi-Fi access points will be beneficial. If not, the public Wi-Fi access map and promotion will be an important resource for many.

Objectives, Strategies, and Metrics

This plan acknowledges the importance of engaging partner organizations and internet service providers to expand broadband access throughout the state and defines objectives and action steps aimed at increasing awareness by residents of the ever-changing resources available that can help them safely and effectively connect.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase the number of New Hampshire households connected to highspeed internet with a minimum of 100/20 Mbps.

> **Strategy 1.1:** Leverage federal funds to expand broadband access by enabling more NH households to connect by providing or incentivizing more affordable Broadband plans that feature at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speed.
>
>> **Metric:** Increase the number of households accessing broadband with 100/20 Mbps by 10% per year over four years.

OBJECTIVE 2: Expand broadband internet access within Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs), including schools, libraries, and community centers.

> **Strategy 2.1**: Prioritize project funding requests that bring high-speed internet infrastructure to, or expand to, Community Anchor Institutions.
>
>> **Metric:** A substantive increase in the number of CAI's that have actionable plans, projects, or proposals in place for 1 Gig broadband access by 2029.

OBJECTIVE 3: Expand broadband access within public housing units and subsidized housing residences.

> **Strategy 3.1:** Support and supplement programs by partner organizations that serve to connect residents of public housing with high-speed internet.
>
>> **Metric:** Increase the number of residents of affordable housing units that have access to free or low-cost connectivity ($30 or under) by at least 10% per year over four years.

OBJECTIVE 4: Increase enrollment in programs that defray the cost of high-speed internet.

> **Strategy 4.1:** Target outreach to covered populations to make them aware of programs that can help defray the cost of high-speed Internet, such as ACP and affordable pricing plans by providers.
>
> **Strategy 4.2:** Work with internet service providers and partner organizations to promote and implement programs that defray the cost of high-speed internet

Metric: Support efforts that increase enrollment in initiatives like the ACP, aiming to double the number of households from covered populations enrolled in such programs by 2029.

The Long-Term Outcomes

Expanding access to, as well as increasing enrollment in, affordable, high-speed internet in New Hampshire would enhance workforce opportunities by enabling residents to connect to employment opportunities and remote work; improve public health and healthcare through telemedicine and teletherapy and better access to resources such as assistive technologies; enhance educational opportunities by making more educational resources available to diverse learners of all ages; foster civic engagement by providing opportunities for community involvement and information sharing; and enable residents receiving other essential services, such as housing support, to access a host of critical resources.

Goal 2: Access to Computers and Assisted Devices, Coupled with Technical Support

Help ensure New Hampshire residents have reliable access to computers and the support and knowledge needed to utilize digital technologies safely access healthcare, economic opportunities, civic and social engagement opportunities, and a host of other critical services.

Background and Context

The gap in access to digital devices by households is narrowing as the cost for entry-level devices lowers and more schools, workforce development organizations, and educational programs recognize the value of providing devices to diverse learners. Furthermore, through programs like ACP, broadband providers can opt to provide a one-time subsidy to qualifying households. Despite these advances, barriers still exist to expanding access to affordable computers and devices, particularly for individuals with disabilities, language barriers, limited incomes, and other barriers. In a poll of the state's 77 New Hampshire broadband providers that participate in the ACP program, only 44 said they are willing to offer the device subsidy. And fewer than 20% of these providers alert new and prospective ACP-eligible customers that they are eligible for the one-time device subsidy. What's more, the subsidy is not actually sufficient for most entry-level refurbished devices, and families with the greatest need often lack access to the cash or credit needed to finance the balance.

Equally as challenging as the lack of access to devices is the lack of access to "digital navigators" who provide technical support to assist users in using digital devices safely and effectively. The Digital Equity Act encourages states to couple device access with technical support for successful use of that device and the internet. However, the number of digital navigators is insufficient for the need and navigators are difficult to find for those not participating in internet service provider subsidy programs. Given growing linguistic diversity in many New Hampshire communities, there is both the need and a compelling opportunity to recruit and train linguistically diverse youths and adults to provide multilingual outreach, ACP (or similar programming) enrollment assistance, and digital navigator support. During the State's digital equity planning process, the need-sensing engagement with covered populations and leaders revealed statewide and local organizations that are eager to leverage modest capacity grant-financed training-of-trainers as both ACP enrollment assistants and digital navigators.

Needs and Gaps

Although home access to computers and digital devices has risen in New Hampshire in the past decade, significant gaps remain for households in poverty. The Pew Research Center found that "six in ten

households earning $100,000 or more (63% of households) report having home broadband services, a smartphone, a desktop or laptop computer, and a tablet, compared with only 23% of those living in lower-income households. Furthermore, many of those living in poverty only have access to a smartphone. The pandemic amplified both the visibility and social and economic costs of the gap in device access for low-income families, given the many financial and other barriers they face. Device access was also identified as a key barrier for the incarcerated population, preventing them from accessing online education, social services, family support programs, and other programs aimed at helping individuals to reenter the general population. Lastly, the disability community identified both a lack of assistive devices to support people with visual, hearing, and physical impairments, as well as a lack of literacy in how to use the devices.

To be successful in the long term, programs that subsidize households' computer and device access require matching resources from private and non-profit organizations and institutions. For this to happen at scale, potential donors first need to be educated about why and how to cost-effectively and impactfully integrate sustained funding for computer access and technical support into their corporate giving, workforce development, foundation grantmaking, hospital Community Benefit, and bank Community Reinvestment compliance. There is a need to demonstrate how device access supports civic engagement, housing security, economic and educational opportunity, and healthcare access impacts.

Existing Programs, Plans, and Resources

In addition to the device subsidy programs identified above, multiple programs in New Hampshire support the provision of computers, laptops, mobile, and assistive devices in schools and institutions. The National Collaborative for Digital Equity partners with financial institutions to provide refurbished laptops to school-age children, the UNH Institute on Disability manages an assistive device loan program for individuals with disabilities, and many adult education programs and senior centers make devices available for loan. Additionally, the NH Department of Education offers programs that provide an integrated curriculum that introduces digital literacy into classroom teaching.

Additionally, there are several National programs that support device access, including the US Department of Education's emergency relief funding for schools, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's inequality programs for low- and moderate-income families living in subsidized housing that provides a robust infrastructure for internet service and access to devices and digital navigator programs that guide internet navigation and access to devices.

Lastly, the FCC ACP outreach grant to NCDE focuses on educating philanthropic leaders, including corporate-giving, foundation, bank Community Reinvestment, and hospital Community Benefit compliance officers. The initiative emphasizes the value of funding new and refurbished computers and assistive devices for telehealth, workforce development, and educational programs for low-income individuals.

In March 2024, the "New Hampshire Leadership Summit on Digital Equity" in Manchester will bring together 150 state leaders from philanthropy, Community Reinvestment, discounted device providers, and organizations addressing the needs of lower-income clients across various sectors. The summit aims to enhance access to broadband, computers, and support in areas such as healthcare, K12 education, adult education, community college, and workforce development programs. Additionally, the event will include the recruitment of linguistically diverse youths and adults as enrollment assistants and digital navigators through organizations like AmeriCorps, VISTA programs, and public libraries.

Objectives, Strategies, and Metrics

OBJECTIVE 1: Support and expand programs for new and refurbished devices and laptops, along with tech support to ensure safe and effective use.

> **Strategy 1.1:** Prioritize project funding requests that expand access to refurbished laptops and devices with emphasis on covered populations such as low-income individuals, those with disabilities, seniors, and veterans.

>> **Metric:** Increase by 10% annually the number of households that benefit from programs that provide affordable, reliable, and suitable digital devices that meet their needs.

> **Strategy 1.2:** Educate NH philanthropic leaders on why and how to fund devices, bundled with resources and tech support, to enhance the impacts of their grantmaking on covered populations, such as incarcerated or recently released individuals and English language learners.

> **Strategy 1.3:** Launch a sustained public engagement campaign encouraging and assisting individuals, employers, public agencies and others to donate used devices for refurbishment.

>> **Metric:** Increase by 10% annually the number of refurbished computers and devices including desktop workstation bundles and laptops—donated to eligible programs.

OBJECTIVE 2: Improve access to and awareness of technical support and training in the use of assistive devices, including assistive technologies for those with disabilities.

> **Strategy 2.1:** Prioritize project funding requests that build awareness of technical support and training.

>> **Metric:** By 2029, all organizations that serve covered populations will be aware of and utilize available technical support and training by veteran service organizations and community groups serving low-income populations and the disabled community.

> **Strategy 2.2:** Promote, enhance, and expand existing and develop new programs that provide digital navigators to clients who are members of a covered population, such incarcerated or recently released individuals navigate newer technologies.

> **Strategy 2.3:** Develop a statewide network of linguistically diverse digital navigators that offers support, training, and professional credentialing to enhance the skills of technical support professionals who serve members of covered populations.

>> **Metric:** By 2029 develop a statewide network of at least 100 linguistically diverse digital navigators will provide professional development opportunities and best practice trainings to ensure that covered populations have access to skilled support in communities throughout the state.

Long-Term Outcomes

Economic Opportunity: Access to digital devices provides economic opportunity because it enables Granite Staters to acquire marketable digital skills, participate in the digital economy, and benefit from online services. Digital skills are essential for many jobs in the modern labor market, especially those that require high skill levels and creativity. The digital economy offers resources that facilitate entrepreneurship, innovation, as well as access to global markets and customers. Online services, such

as e-commerce, e-government, e-learning, and e-health, can improve the efficiency, convenience, and quality of services and activities. Additionally, communities that gain stable broadband access are better able to surmount challenges to economic development (e.g., business retention and expansion, firm recruitment, entrepreneurship, access to capital, credit and banking services).

Educational Opportunity: Access to digital devices expands educational opportunities and can help students learn more effectively, efficiently, and creatively. Digital devices, such as computers, tablets, and smartphones, provide students with access to a variety of online resources, such as e-books, videos, podcasts, games, simulations, and interactive tools. These resources can enhance students' engagement, motivation, and interest in learning, as well as support their development of digital skills, problem-solving, and creativity.

Healthcare Access: Access to digital devices is vital for receiving quality healthcare, given that electronic devices are used to monitor health, communicate with healthcare providers, order prescriptions, attend telehealth appointments, receive information, and access online health services. Telehealth offers many benefits, such as improving access to healthcare for people who live in remote or rural areas, have limited mobility, or face other barriers to in-person care; reducing the risk of exposure to infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, by allowing people to receive care from home; enhancing the quality and efficiency of healthcare by providing timely diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up; supporting chronic disease management and prevention by enabling self-monitoring, education, and feedback; and increasing patient satisfaction and empowerment by giving them more convenience and control over their health care.

Housing: Digital devices are essential for housing, enabling individuals to find, apply for, and sustain affordable housing. Computers, tablets, and smartphones connect people to online platforms, housing search engines, and websites offering details on units, prices, amenities, and locations. They streamline the submission of information and documents through online applications, eliminating queues and paper-based processes. Additionally, these devices support online payment systems for rent, utilities, and bills. Communication tools online empower individuals to contact landlords or housing agencies. Digital devices also provide access to online learning and training resources, improving financial literacy and housing stability skills. By enhancing access to workforce development and education, these resources help low-income residents achieve economic independence and reduce reliance on subsidized housing.

Goal 3: Enhanced Digital Literacy Skill Development

Help New Hampshire residents gain the knowledge and ability to effectively and efficiently use digital devices, as well as benefit from online resources and tools for healthcare, educational advancement, economic opportunity, and civic and social engagement.

Background and Context

Enhancing digital literacy skills is crucial for achieving digital equity in New Hampshire. Digital literacy refers to the ability to use digital technologies effectively and responsibly, as well as the ability to use digital devices, software, and applications effectively and efficiently, as well as to use them safely and securely. These skills include the ability to navigate the internet, use search engines, create, and share digital content, and protect personal information online. Parallel to the need for enhancing digital literacy is the need to foster information literacy skills, including media literacy, and using AI (Artificial Intelligence) safely, effectively, and ethically. Whereas digital literacy connotes the ability to use digital technologies and navigate the digital realm, media literacy refers to the ability to access, assess,

evaluate, and create digital content. Information literacy involves the related ability to find, evaluate, use, and communicate information. Given the sudden emergence of AI technology, digital content users of all ages will need each of these essential digital literacies, as well as the ability to use AI tools safely, effectively, and ethically (in ways that do not harm or deceive others).

Digital literacy skills are vital for digital equity because they help ensure that people have access to, and the ability to use, the internet and digital technologies. As was made apparent during the recent pandemic, digital literacy is essential for educational and social success, as well as career readiness. Students with digital literacy skills are more comfortable and confident in using technology for learning, while those without these skills may struggle to keep up with their peers. Enhancing digital literacy skills was identified in every focus group as an area of interest and most groups including cited expanding digital literacy skills, as necessary.

Needs and Gaps

While New Hampshire is one of the states that has a policy requiring public schools to provide learning opportunities in digital and information literacy, focus groups with educators revealed that there is insufficient support and training to allow for the effective delivery of digital literacy programming in schools. Further, the state's community colleges and the University System of New Hampshire do not require students to take courses or pass performance assessments in digital literacies.

Moreover, based on a review of data from 26 focus groups and a statewide survey as part of this planning process, the lack of digital literacy skills was identified as the most significant barrier to accessing and using technology for individuals over the age of 60, as well as for the incarcerated population, persons with disabilities, those with a language barrier, and individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group and those living in rural areas.

Existing Plans, Programs, and Resources

In New Hampshire, several programs assist in developing digital literacy skills. The New Hampshire Department of Education (DOE) provides support to schools and school districts through educational technology programs. The DOE also hosts an online learning management platform for information and resources for educators to develop programs and projects. The DOE also offers a toolkit that provides guidance and suggestions for districts to meet their digital literacy requirements and goals. Nationally, numerous programs and community-based organizations provide digital literacy skills including digital literacy accelerator programs, along with digital literacy initiatives through the US DOE provides an online digital skills library.

Objectives, Strategies, and Metrics

OBJECTIVE 1: Enhance digital skills training for covered populations such as seniors, low-income individuals and non-English speaking persons on basic computer use, internet navigation, online safety, accessing services, software applications, and assessing the quality of online information.

> **Strategy 1.1** Prioritize funding for programs that seek to develop or expand digital literacy.
>
> > **Metric:** Double the number of digital skills training courses offered at libraries, workforce centers, and in schools by 2029.

OBJECTIVE 2: Develop a clearinghouse or directory of online tutorials and resources to help individuals learn digital skills at their own pace.

Strategy 2.1 Utilize Digital Equity Implementation funding to develop a directory of resources that are vetted and cataloged using best practices in digital learning delivery.

> **Metric:** By 2025, go live with a 211-like referral help desk and website that points to free, self-paced, quality digital skill-building resources.

OBJECTIVE 3: Build capacity and resources to integrate digital literacy into curricula, from early education through educator preparation and higher education, so that current and future students of all ages acquire critical digital skills.

Strategy 3.1 Prioritize funding for programs that seek to integrate digital literacy into curricula through the development of institutional policies.

> **Metric:** See a measurable increase of public and private schools and other educational institutions that incorporate age-appropriate digital literacy curriculum across the education spectrum.

OBJECTIVE 4: Partner with libraries, community centers, schools, colleges/universities, and learning centers to provide access to computers, internet, and digital literacy resources.

Strategy 4.1 Prioritize support to libraries and other Community Anchor Institutions to expand access to computers and digital literacy resources.

> **Metric:** By 2029, expand the number of public libraries providing access to computers, internet connections, and digital literacy resources by 50% in all regions of the state.

OBJECTIVE 5: Increase the number of digital literacy educators available to teach covered populations and recruit linguistically diverse youth and adults to provide multilingual support.

Strategy 5.1 Partner with public libraries and organizations serving covered populations, including English learners, to establish a statewide network of digital navigators.

Strategy 5.2 Recruit and train linguistically diverse youth and adults to provide technical support and digital literacy resources in a variety of languages other than English.

> **Metric:** By 2029, enable each region of the state to have access to at least 5 trained digital navigators to support covered populations.

OBJECTIVE 6: Strengthen the digital pedagogy skills of educators to design and facilitate online and hybrid learning, employ competency-based learning, and address digital-age learner needs.

Strategy 6.1 Support educators in developing and implementing effective curricula and strategies that address the challenges of digital-age learners.

> **Metric:** By 2029, ensure that at least half of all educators surveyed across all education levels report that they are confident in their skills in online and hybrid learning delivery and competency-based learning to address the needs of digital-age learners.

Long-Term Outcomes

Digital literacy can help bridge the digital divide and provide Granite Staters with access to opportunities that might not be available otherwise. Without digital literacy skills, it can be very difficult for people with financial, geographic, language, and other barriers to take advantage of the many resources, services, and opportunities that the digital world has to offer. Below are opportunities related to each of the inclusion dimensions laid forth in this plan.

Economic Opportunity: Enhancing digital literacy skills is important for economic opportunity, as it helps individuals develop the skills they need to succeed in the workforce and in their personal lives. Digital skills are vital to job success, workforce development, and skills and economic enhancement.

Educational Opportunity: Digital literacy is vital for educational opportunities and advancement as it helps students remain competitive with their peers and keep up in an increasingly digital-friendly world. Without digital literacy skills, many students in covered student populations are already at a disadvantage, and instilling digital knowledge at an early age helps them remain competitive with other students. Educators at all levels need opportunities to develop, learn about, and successfully employ curricular resources to furnish their students with these skills.

Healthcare Access: Digital literacy skills are important for healthcare providers and patients alike. Digital literacy is important for healthcare because it can help healthcare workers provide quality care, work efficiently, provide information, and support patients as well. For patients, access to providers was cited as an important indicator of success and satisfaction. Digital literacy skills are critical for healthcare workers to coordinate and collaborate with patients, maintain and update records, ensure security, foster hybrid work environments, and training. Digital health literacy is also important for patients to understand their health information and their privacy concerns.

Housing: The disparity in access to the internet and digital devices corresponds closely with longstanding inequalities in income, education, race and ethnicity, age, immigration status, and geography. This is especially true for residents of public housing and other affordable housing programs statewide. Those with higher levels of digital skills typically incorporate more technology into their learning, exhibit more confidence in online engagements, and are less hesitant about finding trusted information online. Gains in digital skills enhance economic mobility that reduce reliance on homeless programs and housing subsidies, as both an ethical and practical imperative.

Civic Engagement: Enhanced digital literacy skills facilitate civic engagement because they enable people to find out about and take advantage of opportunities to participate in the democratic process and influence decisions that affect their lives. Community and civic engagement refer to the way that a community interacts with its residents, stakeholders, and governments on public issues like voting, volunteering, town meetings, annual budgets, economic development, schools, and municipal services.

Goal 4: Cybersafety Skills Development

Help ensure New Hampshire residents understand practices that promote and sustain the safe and secure use of digital tools and protect their data, and make technical support available to the public, public institutions, businesses, and other organizations to help promote safety and security.

Background and Context

The Digital Equity Act requires that states assess and strengthen their capacity to provide skills in cybersafety. Enhancing cybersafety skill development is crucial for ensuring the safety, security, and privacy of internet and device users of all ages, as well as that of private, local, and state organizations. Essential tools and skills are needed to protect against cyberbullying, identity theft, consumer fraud, misleading digital content, and evolving cyber threats. Often overlooked is the need to develop users' abilities, along with those who educate and support them, to mitigate the risks of device and social network addiction. The objectives outlined below aim to equip learners of all ages with critical cybersafety skills.

Needs and Gaps

A review of the input from 26 focus groups conducted during the planning process uncovered keen interest among educational system leaders and policymakers at all levels in building their capacity to equip all learners with essential cybersafety skills. These providers of K12, afterschool, adult education, educator preparation, workforce development, community college, four-year degree-granting, and other educational services emphasized the need and urgency to improve their ability to foster cybersafety skills, particularly for covered populations, library patrons, telehealth patients, and health providers.

Findings from the statewide public survey data show that many residents do not feel or know how to be safe online. Residents expressed limited knowledge of resources to help improve their awareness of privacy and cybersecurity. For example, in response to the survey question, "Do you feel safe using the internet?" 42% of people answered "No" out of 3,524 total survey responses. In addition, out of a total of 3470 survey responses, only 59% said they could find tools to reliably protect the privacy of their personal data. When asked, "Do you know how to stay safe online?" only 2% of the 2507 survey respondents ages 60 years or older responded "Yes."

Existing Program, Plans, and Resources

The NH Department of Information Technology (DoIT) has assessed how to align the state's digital equity plan with existing state efforts under a multi-year federal cybersecurity grant from the federal Department of Homeland Security aimed at strengthening state and local cybersecurity systems, as well as state policies and practices. The state continually improves and updates its cybersecurity plans and policies. Lastly, educational programs were launched by the University System of New Hampshire and the Community College System of New Hampshire to educate students in cybersecurity skills.

Objectives, Strategies, and Metrics

Objective 1: Expand outreach to covered populations so that they have the knowledge, resources, and technical support to enable them to use the internet safely and securely.

> **Strategy 1.1** Prioritize project funding requests that build cybersecurity awareness and skills and explore ways to build upon existing initiatives and programs.

> > **Metric:** By 2029, double the number of statewide programs serving covered populations that have cybersafety outreach and education elements.

Objective 2: Provide technical support to organizations, public institutions, businesses, and other organizations to help ensure that their data is safe and secure.

> **Strategy 2.1** Prioritize project funding requests that help organizations, public institutions, businesses, and other organizations secure data.

> > **Metric:** By 2029, reduce the number of incidents of data breaches at organizations, businesses, and public institutions by 25%.

Objective 3: Develop tools and resources that raise awareness of how to respond to cyber threats and increase cybersafety for covered populations.

> **Strategy 3.1** Support efforts to develop tools and resources that raise awareness among covered populations of cybersecurity threats.

Metric: By 2029, increase by 50%the number of tools and resources that engage covered populations and defend against cyber threats by 2029.

Long Term Objectives

Cybersafety skills development will help ensure safe access to digital tools and resources while equipping individuals with skills to identify and avoid threats to privacy and well-being. The following are opportunities that cybersafety skill development represents.

Economic Opportunity: Elevating cybersecurity skills development is key to economic opportunity in several ways. Individuals engaging with cybersecurity threats may be at risk of compromising personal and proprietary data that may negatively impact them financially in the short and long term. From the perspectives of organizations and local/state governments, enhanced cybersecurity skills development may reduce the risks of ransoms, lost productivity, hacking, data leaks, and other economic security issues.

Educational Opportunity: Educational opportunities are enhanced by heightened cybersafety skills in several ways, such as enhancing students' abilities to access online classroom tools, and course materials and submit assignments with confidence. Perceptions of risk may inhibit individuals from taking advantage of online educational opportunities for fear of compromising private and financial information. Increased awareness and understanding of cybersecurity systems can provide reassurance and trust in the integrity of online classroom platforms. Strengthening the abilities of educators at all levels to assist learners to avoid device and social network addiction, protect themselves from cyberbullying, consumer fraud, identify theft, and invasions of data privacy, will enhance learners' abilities to utilize digital resources safely and effectively.

Healthcare Access: Privacy is a central concern in healthcare access. Federal legislation requires that healthcare providers guarantee patient privacy. Increased cybersafety awareness can ease a patient's concerns about protecting confidentiality. Improved skills in protecting cybersafety empower individuals to confidently share their health records digitally, and benefit from telehealth services in secure and safe ways.

Housing: Cybersecurity is crucial for households, especially in public housing units where residents may face unique challenges. Robust cybersecurity protects against identity theft, financial fraud, and unauthorized access to smart technologies. In public housing, a strong cybersecurity framework enhances individual privacy, ensures the safety of the community, and enables residents to enjoy modern technologies securely.

Civic Engagement: Cybersecurity is crucial for civic engagement, safeguarding democratic processes by protecting voter information, preventing tampering with electoral systems, and ensuring transparent political processes at the local and state levels. A secure digital environment fosters open civic discourse, encourages participation without fear, and contributes to the resilience of democratic institutions. In essence, cybersecurity is integral to preserving the integrity of civic engagement and democratic principles.

Goal 5: Enhanced Access to Web Portals to Essential Public Resources

Ensure New Hampshire residents have improved access to online public resources through strategic actions that lead to greater accessibility in web design and improved information dissemination through

a variety of public and private channels that reach underserved New Hampshire residents quickly and effectively.

Background and Context

Web portals and online public services are essential gateways to information, services, and opportunities. Consequently, addressing the accessibility of these digital interfaces, especially for covered populations within this proposed plan, is paramount to guaranteeing that individuals, regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location, can fully participate in the myriad of economic, social, educational, and other benefits and services in this digital age.

Thus, improving the usability of important online public resources necessitates that content is provided in ways that are useful and understandable for the state's diverse population. Adaptive technologies that translate, dictate, or increase readability for those such as the visually challenged or hearing impaired, can be embedded throughout the state's website framework. Moreover, the websites and portals of public institutions must be easily navigable so that locating online public resources is intuitive and logical.

Needs and Gaps

In need-sensing forums with Granite United Way, NH's state CIO, members of the NH Inclusion Asset Advisory Council, and Welcoming NH's statewide network of linguistically diverse immigrants and refugees, concern was expressed that state agency websites are generally difficult to navigate, not available in other languages, out of compliance with W3C website accessibility standards, and are difficult for agencies to update and maintain with the latest relevant information. People with disabilities in NH also reported having difficulties accessing government information. Only 5% of 376 statewide public survey respondents with disabilities indicated that their internet searches for government information in the state met their needs. People with disabilities also reported challenges using the internet to enroll in Internet subsidy programs, such as the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Existing Program, Plans, and Resources

A number of ongoing efforts support the goals and priorities laid forth in this digital equity plan. For instance, New Hampshire's various state agencies and the United Way provide frequently used portals – e.g., NH Works, NH DHHS Programs and Services, and Granite United Way's 211 Help Desk. Through the NH Department of Information Technology's multiyear federal state and local government cybersecurity grant-funded initiative, progress is being made to make public agencies' websites fully compliant with federal cybersecurity standards.

Objectives, Strategies, and Metrics

OBJECTIVE 1: Build upon existing efforts to improve the accessibility of key websites that provide information on public resources, particularly those pertaining to services for members of covered populations.

> **Strategy 1.1:** Assess remaining needs relative to state agency websites and complete an assessment of additional, critical programs typically used by covered populations, and support efforts to address identified needs for improvement.

> **Strategy 1.2:** Ensure that key websites meet W3C global website accessibility standards.

>> **Metric:** By 2029, all state-based programs identify and seek to address website accessibility issues as part of an overarching strategy with defined goals and timelines.

OBJECTIVE 2: Support the development of a directory or portal of digital equity related resources, drawing from the asset inventory conducted as part of this plan's development.

> **Strategy 2.1:** Create, or support the creation of, an online directory of digital equity related resources, such as current programs highlighted in this plan's asset inventory, efforts resulting from this proposed plan, and other complimentary resources and initiatives, that is regularly managed to ensure information is accurate, relevant, and current.
>
> > **Metric:** Enable the launch of a digital equity resource directory or portal by 2025.

Long Term Objectives

Enhanced access to web portals to essential public resources is key to reaching underserved individuals and families in New Hampshire. There are many public support programs and resources related to digital equity that have a web presence, or have online applications, and centralizing such tools and resources is critical to helping reach all Granite Staters, especially those in covered populations under this proposed plan.

Economic Opportunity Improving user experience and increasing inclusivity of the state's web portal design for public services will enable more residents to utilize online services, as well as increase access to information on programs that provide economic opportunities, support, and resources through state agencies.

Educational Opportunity: Additional access and inclusivity for these web portals may improve the reach of programs for both children and adults seeking educational programs or support. Additional information dissemination may also better inform individuals about these resources.

Healthcare Access: Inclusive and accessible web portals are critical to ensuring that healthcare information and access are available to all individuals regardless of barriers they may face. Developing inclusively and accessibly designed websites and portals will reach more underserved individuals and families throughout the state.

Housing: Many resources in support of inclusive housing are online. Ensuring that the state's housing agency websites are more accessible will increase awareness of the state's supports that promote housing security.

Civic Engagement: Enhanced accessibility and inclusiveness of state web portals will enable more residents to be informed and engaged about topics important to civic participation, such as pending legislation, opportunities for public comment, and a better understanding of how state government works.

ALIGNMENT WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND STATE PRIORITIES

The objectives identified in this plan support and build upon the State of New Hampshire's existing economic and workforce development, health, educational, civic engagement, and other essential services. Below are ways that the New Hampshire digital Equity plan is being developed in support of existing plans, initiatives, and organizational efforts that integrate aspects of digital equity.

Workforce and Economic Development Priorities

New Hampshire's Economic Development and Expansion Strategy outlines five key goals in support of building a workforce and infrastructure needed for a vibrant and inclusive economy. The goals are to retain and recruit a modern workforce; connect tourism assets to talent recruitment; build resiliency in

high-growth sectors; fuel innovation through entrepreneurial initiatives; and acknowledge the role of infrastructure in driving the state's economy. The state plans to achieve these goals through focused efforts and programs to foster advanced skills training, customized curriculum, debt relief, internships, and apprenticeships. Recognizing the significance of digital equity in achieving these goals, this plan seeks to coordinate with state initiatives aimed at enhancing workforce development across diverse economic sectors. Of particular importance are tourism development, which is part of the state's economic engine, and business development. The state acknowledges the critical role that reliable, affordable, high-speed internet plays in promoting the state's natural beauty, as well as for recruiting, sustaining, and expanding businesses and entrepreneurs.

Alignment with Education Priorities

New Hampshire's education standards encompass knowledge, skills, and work-study practices, with an overarching goal of 60% of residents achieving post-high school education attainment. To support this educational objective, the digital equity plan focuses on enhancing the capacity of educational systems to provide universal digital access, impart digital literacy skills, and equip educators with digital pedagogy tools. The state's Department of Education, through its 306s task force, is finalizing proposed school approval rules, aligning with competency-based learning and performance assessment. These proposals, extensively reviewed through public hearings, have garnered support from various education associations, unions, and employers who recognize the importance of pedagogy that allows learners to demonstrate skills and workplace readiness.

Alignment with Health Priorities

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has outlined key health goals, including supporting citizens in achieving health and independence, meeting the diverse health needs of the population, addressing basic human needs, and providing treatment and support services for those with unique requirements. A key aspect of realizing these objectives involves overcoming digital divide barriers to universal telehealth access, encompassing issues of broadband affordability, device access, tech support, and multilingual digital navigator assistance. Recognizing the critical role of telehealth, especially highlighted during the pandemic, collaborative efforts involving the NH Hospital Association, UNH Center for Impact Finance, DHHS Office of Health Equity, and various foundations aim to work closely with digital equity leaders for the planning and implementation of strategies to ensure sustained and universal access to telehealth-based healthcare and medical services.

Alignment with Civic and Social Engagement Priorities

The New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan demonstrates how innovative policies can effectively align with civic engagement goals. By prioritizing digital inclusion and access for all residents, this plan promotes a more equitable and participatory society. Through improved connectivity and technology resources, it empowers citizens to actively engage in their communities, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. Organizations with a civic and social engagement mission—like UNH Cooperative Extension, community centers, Community Action Programs, Volunteer NH—are committed to working together to empower communities with the digital tools and resources to foster this sense of belonging and shared responsibility.

Alignment with Housing and Other Essential Services

The New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority and the state's local housing authorities recognize the importance of broadband access by homeowners, particularly those with financial limitations. As such, many of the state's public housing units provide low- or no-cost access to wi-fi internet and some even

provide access to computers and devices. A future goal is to establish sustainable partnerships with housing authorities and housing organizations to not only provide low-cost internet access, but also to launch programs that seek to build digital and financial literacy to increase access to workforce development, education, and a host of critical human services, such as health care.

A collaborative effort involving New Hampshire banks aims to enhance financial empowerment across diverse learners, from expectant parents to seniors. Aligned with the federal Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), the initiative recruits and trains financial literacy volunteers to address the banking needs of underbanked and unbanked households. These volunteers, fulfilling annual CRA requirements, assist in enrolling households in free Bank On-certified checking accounts, securing ACP broadband subsidies, and providing essential financial literacy classes. Two major NH banks have committed to collaborating with NCDE's Bank On NH and ACP Outreach grant focused on training volunteers to support rural low- and moderate-income individuals. This innovative approach efficiently extends banking services to rural residents while emphasizing the integration of digital equity into banks' CRA compliance and financial empowerment strategies. Through Bank On New Hampshire, the initiative seeks to engage bank and credit union leaders committed to sustaining and expanding efforts for financial inclusion and literacy.

Throughout the state, numerous committees and groups are actively addressing the digital divide, promoting digital equity, and expanding broadband access. Many of these entities have integrated foundational principles of digital equity and broadband access into their strategic and long-range plans, spanning from municipal comprehensive plans to regional and statewide plans (See Appendix 9 for Local, Regional, and State Plans). Throughout the planning process, the digital equity planning team collaborated with local and regional planning coalitions, broadband groups, and other planning initiatives to ensure alignment with existing efforts. Furthermore, as the regional digital equity coalitions are formed over the next year, deliberate effort will be made to include individuals and organizations that are integral to ongoing plans and initiatives.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

This plan lays forth a set of concrete goals, objectives, and strategies for advancing digital equity in New Hampshire (See Appendix 10, Summary of Goals, Objectives, and Strategies). To effectively implement these strategies, additional funding will be pursued to further develop the necessary framework and infrastructure, such as agency staff to administer and oversee initiatives and contracts with partnering third parties. Developing a more sustainable model that outlasts any provided federal funding will require collaboration with regional and statewide partners and stakeholders that can facilitate and continue the work and linkages with the covered populations beyond what the State itself may have the capacity or expertise to do. With that said, the following proposed overarching implementation strategies help ensure that the infrastructure, policies, and processes remain in place to support progress toward this plan's goals and objectives.

Overarching Strategy 1: Establish and Build Out Administrative Capacity and Seek Related Funding

To have an impact on disparities in access to digital resources and services, it is crucial to establish the administrative capacity, key partnerships, and funding to see these objectives and strategies through. This administrative and collaborative infrastructure would ensure effective communication, coordination, and facilitation of this proposed plan. The extent of the available administrative capacity and partner support would depend largely upon available funding and related resources.

Core Staff Support: Dedicated staff capacity is necessary to provide ongoing support to state and regional stakeholders and ensure that efforts and activities are aligned with the plan's goals and objectives. There is a need for staff to manage the allocation of resources and reinforce a common set of shared measurement practices by implementing partners.

Coordination/Collaboration: To effectively implement the digital equity plan with contributions from numerous organizations, it is essential to establish a structured framework for coordinating efforts across diverse partners. This involves convening partners and stakeholders, clarifying expectations, offering logistical support for project implementation, and ensuring collaborative efforts to optimize resource utilization. This structure is anticipated to be facilitated through or alongside regionally-based entities and statewide partners where appropriate. See Overarching Strategy 2 for additional information.

Communication: Any successful plan necessitates a clear communication strategy. This strategy should ensure mutual understanding among partners regarding goals, objectives, expectations, and efforts. Additionally, it should make the intended populations for digital equity efforts aware of available resources. People should know how to access these resources and have clear means to assess whether and how well these supports meet their needs. Such communication efforts are anticipated to be funneled through State agency staff, as well as contracted vendors and collaborative partners. See Overarching Strategy 4 for additional information.

Formative Measurement: To hold accountable those funded to design and carry out digital equity efforts at the local, regional, and state levels, tools and processes are needed that enable key stakeholders — including regional coalitions and statewide partners — to assess progress and inform

the implementation strategies as contextual factors evolve. See Overarching Strategy 5 for additional information.

Overarching Strategy 2: Foster a Culture of Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

The cornerstone of New Hampshire's Digital Equity Plan is the commitment to fostering a culture of collaboration and robust stakeholder engagement that both acknowledges and seeks to address the diverse needs of communities. Through cross-sector collaboration, and commitment to community engagement, this plan aims to harness the wealth of perspectives and expertise necessary to shape a digital equity plan that addresses the unique challenges and aspirations of Granite Staters.

Partnerships: Over eighty organizations were directly engaged in the planning process, many of which are implementing programs that serve to meet one or more of the plan's goals. This plan recognizes that these partner organizations will be instrumental in carrying out the goals and implementation strategies given their depth of experience, their current efforts, and their relationships with each of the covered populations.

Regional and Statewide Collaboration: This proposed plan emphasizes the need to establish or build upon a structure that actively involves regional and statewide stakeholders in the plan's implementation, particularly given regional variations in the needs of covered populations. This can be addressed by either forming regional digital equity coalitions or utilizing existing regional entities as the vehicles for bringing together representatives of stakeholders and members of covered populations. The goal of such collaboration is to actively engage stakeholders, pinpoint regional as well as statewide needs and provide support to ensure the successful implementation of the plan. Such an approach could also evolve into a statewide council, or leadership committee, that helps facilitate meetings and strategic next steps, if core staff, partners, and stakeholders see a need for such a leadership group.

Continued Engagement: For any plan to be responsive to its constituents' needs, a process must be in place for people and organizations to share needs, resources, and ideas. With support from NCDE and UNH Cooperative Extension, regional and statewide collaborators will be key to ensuring the continued engagement of local, regional, and statewide stakeholders and covered populations to ensure that implementation efforts address regional priorities and advance the plan's goals and objectives.

Overarching Strategy 3: Establish a Predictable and Open Process for Management, Distribution, and Oversight of Funds

Comprehensive implementation of a digital equity plan that addresses specific goals and objectives requires the development of processes for program, project, or contract awards for distribution of funds. Although core staff housed at BEA will be primarily responsible with oversight and administration of funds, awards to partner entities or contracts with third-party vendors to act upon the various strategies outlined in this proposed plan are likely required to go through the transparent and publicly engaging Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee and Governor & Executive Council approval processes. Additional structures will be needed to facilitate the award making process for related projects and programs, such as program rule design or scoring methodologies for equitable distribution of funds to approved projects.

Administration, Oversight, and Fund Distribution: Core BEA support staff will be charged with administering and overseeing the funding received and approved for use within this proposed plan, which will include among other things, program development for the purpose of project-based awards within the defined plan objectives as well as grant and contract administration concerning use of those

funds. Executing various aspects of this plan may entail the issuance of Request for Proposals (RFPs) leading to contracts with third parties to achieve defined objectives.

The acceptance and expenditure of federal funds will require authorization through public legislative and executive bodies, such as the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee and the Governor & Executive Council, with directly administered subawards, awards, or contracts also requiring additional authorization by the Governor & Council in most circumstances.

Any programs developed by use of these funds will entail public disclosure of program guidelines, such as eligibility requirements, application details, permitted uses and purposes of funding, and also take into account stakeholder and covered population input and feedback, and operate within applicable state and federal regulations.

State and Regional Priority Setting: Use of funds will not only function to advance defined objectives and strategies but also work to target and align with state and regional priorities and needs, utilizing the collaborative frameworks previously described as part of the implementation strategies for this proposed plan.

Transparency in Use of Funds: As part of its administration and oversight of these funds, the State will publicly post periodic reports detailing authorized uses and approved awards and contracts.

Overarching Strategy 4: Launch a Sustained Public Outreach and Engagement Campaign

New Hampshire, in collaboration with its diverse partners working to implement this proposed digital equity plan, is committed to building awareness of the myriad of available resources focused on broadening access to broadband and devices, helping improve their affordability, boosting digital literacy, enhancing cybersecurity and internet safety, and facilitating access to vital services and resources provided through digital technologies. To accomplish these goals, BEA will engage regional and statewide partners and stakeholders to launch a comprehensive public outreach and engagement campaign designed to do the following:

Promote Initiatives that Defray the Cost of High-Speed Internet: Central to expanding broadband access will be raising awareness of programs that reduce the cost of high-speed internet, such as the FCC's ACP, affordable pricing plans offered by internet service providers, and other programs designed to assist eligible households, such as those offered through organizations that assist individuals in signing up for these programs.

Promote Initiatives that Defray the Cost of Computers and Assistive Devices: To expand digital opportunities, it is vital to improve access to free and discounted computers and assistive devices. For example, FCC's ACP provides a one-time $100 device subsidy through local broadband providers in New Hampshire. Moreover, it will be critical to educate corporate giving, bank Community Reinvestment administrators, foundations, and hospital Community Benefits compliance leaders on how they can use New Hampshire's digital equity resources to maximize the impact of their philanthropic investments and integrate digital equity funding into their grantmaking portfolios long-term.

Direct People to Existing Resources: In order to leverage the current digital equity ecosystem, it is imperative to spread the word about it, including online portals and directories, such as the directory of digital equity assets developed as part of this plan, Inclusion Junction's pointers to navigator programs and ACP enrollment assistants, the state's 211 help desk, and other programs that serve the needs of diverse populations.

Enhance Cybersafety Awareness and Skills: A crucial step in fostering cybersafety awareness is to partner with institutions, organizations, and associations like the NH Department of Information Technology, Granite United Way, and AARP New Hampshire. These and other collaborators are key to promoting internet safety and guiding individuals to tools and resources that can help ensure their online safety.

Develop Media Partnerships to Promote Resources: Establishing media partnerships is crucial for promoting the diverse resources that support digital equity. This involves collaborating with multiple media channels, including print, online, radio, and television, to promote these resources and raise public awareness about digital equity resources.

Overarching Strategy 5: Establish a System for Measuring Outcomes and Plan Progress

A strategic measurement approach is essential to gauge the effectiveness of New Hampshire's efforts to address digital equity. The foundation for this measurement lies in the key metrics and indicators detailed in this plan. Through systematic tracking of these metrics, adapting strategies based on continuous evaluation, and fostering collaboration with partner organizations, the objective is not only to measure success but also to actively drive ongoing improvement in addressing the digital divide.

To implement an effective system for measuring success and progress, the following actions will be taken:

Baseline Assessment: Drawing from the survey and demographic data collected and compiled as part of this plan, a primary step will be to establish baseline metrics for measuring change concerning broadband and device access, digital literacy, cybersecurity, and other relevant indicators. These baseline indicators will serve as a reference point for measuring progress toward the plan's goals and objectives over time.

Robust Mechanism for Collecting Data: Once a baseline assessment is established, an effective mechanism for data collection will be put in place that involves the development and deployment of data collection methodologies (e.g., surveys, progress reports, indicator tracking systems, etc.), including those necessary any such metrics required by the federal government as part of any required quarterly or annual reporting.

Collaboration and Partnership Metrics: In addition to measuring progress towards the goals and objectives outlined in this plan, it will be vital to implement systems to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborations with partner organizations to ensure that they result in progress towards the plan's goals and objectives and result in enhanced regional and statewide capacity, a feature likely to be addressed as part of any award or contract terms with awardees, contractors, or partners.

Long-Term Sustainability Indicators: Because Federal implementation funds are finite, it will be vital to establish a set of indicators to assess the sustainability of digital equity efforts beyond the initial implementation phase. Such indicators could include ongoing community engagement and participation, continued investment by private and philanthropic partners, enhanced organizational capacity to address digital literacy statewide, and progress toward the goals and objectives in the plan.

Reporting and Transparency Mechanisms: Anticipated reporting and transparency mechanisms include any federal reporting requirements, public authorizations for use of funds, tracking and compilation of data for the purpose of assessing progress on key metrics and overall plan successes, award and contract compliance and oversight, periodic public reports on authorizations and use of funds, and recurring community partner and stakeholder engagement to provide progress updates.

TIMELINE

Below is a timeline for implementing the various activities across each of the strategies identified above.

2024 - 2025	Establish state and regional infrastructure to manage the digital equity plan implementation, including any additional core staff onboarding and development of regional collaborators. Formalize and advance any defined programs or project funding priorities in alignment with defined plan objectives. Deploy implementation funds to support priority programs and projects. Establish and develop public transparency tools. Establish and launch recurring regional and statewide digital equity partner conversations to discuss plan progress, milestones, and strategies. Hold Second Annual Statewide Digital Equity Summit Launch digital equity resource directory and continue to asset identification and build out. Launch campaign to build awareness of digital equity resources and boost enrollment in programs like ACP.
2026	Continue funded programs and projects (and deploy any remaining resources), awareness campaign, recurring regional and statewide digital equity partner conversations to discuss plan progress, milestones, and strategies, as well as transparency efforts. Conduct Third Annual Statewide Digital Equity Summit
2027	Assess progress towards achieving goals and metrics and identify new or ongoing needs or gaps. Continue funded programs and projects (and deploy any remaining resources), awareness campaign, recurring regional and statewide digital equity partner conversations to discuss plan progress, milestones, and strategies, as well as transparency efforts. Conduct Fourth Annual Statewide Digital Equity Summit
2028	Assess progress towards achieving goals and metrics and identify new or ongoing needs or gaps, including assessing outcomes relative to the covered populations defined within this plan. Continue funded programs and projects (and deploy any remaining resources), awareness campaign, recurring regional and statewide digital equity partner conversations to discuss plan progress, milestones, and strategies, as well as transparency efforts.

	Conduct Fifth Annual Statewide Digital Equity Summit, which will focus on strategies and resources to sustain digital equity efforts.
2029	Reassess outcomes relative to covered populations.
	Engage in any ongoing action steps that further sustainability of digital equity efforts.
	Conduct survey of partners, stakeholders, and covered populations to assess impact.

V: COLLABORATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

EFFORTS TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS AND COVERED POPULATIONS

The New Hampshire Digital Equity Planning team developed a multi-pronged engagement strategy to ensure that covered populations were meaningfully brought into the planning process to share issues and needs, as well as to identify potential strategies and solutions to address these issues and needs.

Leveraging NCDE's and UNH Extension's work with partners in diverse digital equity and broadband events and initiatives in New Hampshire over the past decade, the Planning Team identified people within the covered populations and organizations and institutions that provide services and resources directly to covered populations across the state. This led to the formation of an Asset Advisory Council, with representation from many organizations, to help facilitate connections with covered populations. Drawing upon input from the Asset Advisory Council, community contacts, and partner organizations, the following methodologies were incorporated to engage covered populations:

- Ripple Effect Mapping Focus Groups;
- Key Informant Interviews;
- Formation of Regional Digital Equity Coalitions;
- Meetings with key partner organizations;
- Statewide Survey;
- Statewide Asset Inventory;
- Statewide Asset Advisory Council;
- Virtual NH Brownbag Lunch & Learn Conversation on Digital Equity; and
- New Hampshire Summit on Digital Equity.

Ripple Effect Mapping Focus Groups with Covered Populations

As part of the needs assessment framework for better understanding the digital equity needs and desired future vision of the eight covered populations, UNH Extension, and NCDE conducted 26 focus groups, engaging over 200 individuals from across the state. The goal of the focus groups was to discern specific barriers to digital equity, characterize what success would look like if those barriers were removed, and generate ideas for actions, policies, and efforts that coalition partners can collectively pursue to achieve success. A process called ripple effects mapping (REM) was used, which entailed a combination of mind mapping (whereby concepts distilled out of the discussion are visually depicted), appreciative inquiry (an asset-based approach that focuses on strengths and opportunities), and qualitative analysis to synthesize results and identify common themes within and across covered populations. Participants representing the covered populations were brought together in a focus-group format to share barriers and opportunities and their characterizations of success. The input from the 26 focus groups was stratified into common themes that represent leverage points: places where small inputs can result in significant changes to the system (i.e., addressing those things that can serve as barriers to digital equity).

The specific objectives of the Ripple Effect Mapping Focus groups were as follows:

- Better understand the specific barriers to digital equity faced by covered populations, as well as gaps in resources to address those barriers and needs;

- Characterize what success would look like if those barriers were removed;

- Generate ideas for actions, policies, and efforts that coalition partners can collectively pursue to achieve success; and

- Create a visual map that depicts a desired future vision for digital equity for each covered population and pathways for achieving that vision.

Statewide Survey

A survey has gathered more than 3,500 responses from residents statewide to learn about individuals' internet use and aspirations. Outreach is being conducted to reach a representative sample of residents and a corresponding sample of members of covered populations across the state. This plan provides an analysis of the survey data, broken down by geography and by covered population.

Statewide Asset Inventory

An asset inventory is being used to identify digital inclusion assets across the state. As the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) describes, "This tool is designed to give a flexible framework for organizations to identify and organize digital inclusion resources, programs, and funding sources within a geographic area." The team has worked with the Asset Advisory Council to get as many organizations as possible across New Hampshire to complete the asset inventory that will be used to address the digital equity needs and barriers of the state's residents, including covered populations.

Statewide Asset Advisory Council

Another crucial element in the planning team's vision for a responsive statewide infrastructure for local digital equity and inclusion is the highly impactful New Hampshire Digital Equity Asset Advisory Council (see Appendix 7). The Council brings together leaders from organizations that represent and serve the eight covered populations, along with leaders of agencies, associations, and other organizations that address each of the five key plan objectives and metrics (economic, educational, healthcare, civic engagement, and housing). The Council meets via monthly Zoom calls. The role of the Asset Council members is to provide crucial assistance in identifying allies and funding sources that stand ready to be leveraged for greater impact and sustainability.

Regional Coalitions

The state of New Hampshire has multiple regional structures that contribute to planning and land use decisions in the state. For instance, there are four Collaborative Economic Development Regions (CEDRs) covering the state, in addition to 9 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), that have each identified a set of economic development needs and priorities, including enhancing the state's digital infrastructure. A recommendation of this plan is to either form Regional Digital Equity Coalitions that coincide with existing regional entities, such as the CEDRs or RPCs, or incorporate the efforts outlined in this plan into the ongoing roles of those existing regional entities.

The role of the Regional Digital Equity Coalitions, or a similar regional entity or collaborative, would be to a) garner input on key digital equity needs in each respective region to inform the development of the digital equity plan, b) function as an advisory board to help guide the use of federal funds in each region to implement digital equity projects during the implementation phase, and c) build partnerships

and pathways to sustaining digital equity efforts beyond the timeframe of the plan. Each coalition would have representation from the administering regional entity and representatives from each covered population.

Sector Listening Sessions

A series of virtual summits have been held to reflect each of the plan's key objectives and metrics (economic inclusion, educational opportunity, civic engagement, healthcare, and housing). Statewide Asset Advisory Council members have helped publicize the two-hour intensive listening/planning sessions, which were recorded and used to identify needs, gaps, and programmatic priorities to lay the groundwork for four years of capacity-funded implementation.

NH Brownbag Lunch & Learn Conversation on Digital Equity

During interactive brainstorming conversation on October 4, 2023, individuals, organizations, and institutions from across the state came together to explore local and regional digital divide needs and priorities that the New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan should address. The Zoom-based convening organized participants out into regional breakout groups given the often-nuanced needs and challenges facing the diverse geographies of the state, from rural to urban.

Statewide Summit on Digital Equity

In this online forum held in January of 2024, a first draft of New Hampshire's state plan was presented, summarized, and critiqued by participants. This virtual summit was promoted by the Planning Team, the NH Asset Inclusion Advisory Council, and the Granite State News Collaborative, and, as with all the planning process forums, will be recorded. Equally, the summit will be used in tandem with announcing the 30-day public comment period, enabling all interested stakeholders to critique and recommend improvements in the state plan.

EFFORTS TO ENGAGE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout the planning process, nearly 80 organizations and institutions were engaged in identifying needs and opportunities, reviewing plan priorities, and contributing ideas for potential projects and efforts in support of the plan. Representatives from many of the partner organizations serve on the State Asset Advisory Council. The following are key partner organizations that were engaged in the planning process and are committed to helping to carry the plan forward into the implementation phase.

AARP New Hampshire and the NH Commission on Aging

These partners helped arrange listening sessions to identify the high-priority digital divide concerns of New Hampshire's older residents and those who serve them. As with the other partners, they serve on the NH Asset Advisory Council and have committed to assisting with need-sensing, priority-setting, reviewing and critiquing NH's state plan, promoting engagement of elders and those who serve them on each of NH's nine regional digital equity coalitions, and to supporting formative evaluation, implementation, and capacity building during implementation of NH's state plan.

Bank On New Hampshire

Through a collaboration between NCDE, Cities for Financial Empowerment, and three dozen banks and credit unions in New Hampshire, low- and moderate-income individuals receive support in obtaining

low-cost or free checking accounts while developing financial literacy and asset-building skills. Because financial inclusion qualifies for credit under the federal Community Reinvestment Act, this partnership serves as a common way for banks to fulfill their CRA compliance requirement. The collaborative is also exploring the possibility of training financial literacy volunteers to provide free assistance, both online and in-person, to assist the underbanked and unbanked populations, especially in rural communities, while also assisting them to enroll in the ACP broadband program. The goal is to enable them to sign up for Bank On-certified checking accounts, utilize the ACP broadband subsidy, and enhance financial empowerment. The Planning Team aims to educate leaders in New Hampshire banks about integrating digital equity into their corporate giving, Community Reinvestment compliance, and rural customer recruitment strategies.

The Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH)

The CCSNH's chancellor, seven community college presidents, and senior leadership of the statewide system of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs are represented on the NH Asset Advisory Council. They are working with the planning team to develop strategies to foster digital access and skills for all their degree, certificate, and workforce development program participants, and to strengthen the digital pedagogy skills of their instructors and mentors.

Consumer Reports Office of Financial Fairness

This office was created in 2022 to identify, provide, and sustain free consumer education resources for those who cannot afford a Consumer Reports subscription/membership, it is committed to partnering with the Planning Team to utilize pointers from the drive images of donor-funded refurbished and new laptops for low-income recipients of all ages to grow access to and use of its exemplary, increasingly multilingual financial empowerment, consumer protection, and cybersafety resources.

Diversity Workforce Coalition

This statewide network brings together human resource management leaders across public and private sectors, to share best practices in recruiting, supporting, and retaining workforces that are welcoming for all Granite Staters. DWC has contributed significantly in outreach to individuals from and serving NH's coverer populations, to foster their engagement in need-sensing, goal setting, and eventual participation in formatively assessing efforts to implement NH's state plan.

Endowment for Health and the DEI Affinity Group of the New Hampshire Funders Forum

In addition to Welcoming NH, the NH-based Endowment for Health, and the statewide network of 55 grantmaking foundations, the NH Funders Forum, have provided invaluable assistance in engaging and alerting NH's persons of color to the digital equity initiative. The NH Funders Forum maintains four standing committees ("affinity groups") one in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). The DEI affinity group invited the planning team to facilitate a forum they hosted for NH's interested grantmaking foundation executives, on why and how best they might leverage the substantial BEAD and digital equity funding coming to NH to remove digital divide barriers to the impacts on poverty of their grantmaking. This conversation was initiated both to align with the Digital Equity Act's statutory expectation that the state's digital equity plan aligns with and supports major inclusion initiatives as well as to grow the understanding of NH philanthropic leaders about why and how they should integrate digital equity funding into their own grantmaking priorities.

Granite State News Collaborative (GSNC) and NH Public Radio

GSNC is a consortium of leaders in journalism across print, radio, and broadcast television. As with all the other partners noted here, GSNC has appointed a representative to serve on the NH Asset Advisory Council. They have supported the digital equity effort by promoting the in-person and virtual need-sensing forums and encouraging people from across the covered populations statewide to take the digital equity survey and complete the Asset Inventory. In addition, they have worked closely with the Planning Team, the New Hampshire Afterschool Network, and Franklin Pierce University's Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication to co-design a sustained initiative by which professional journalists across all media mentor diverse youths in the state's 24 afterschool programs across 60 rural, urban and suburban locations statewide to develop digital, media and information literacy and cybersafety skills while contributing print, podcast, and broadcast-quality videos highlighting their community's digital divide priorities and efforts to address them. In addition, the senior leadership of NH Public Radio, a GSNC member, expressed interest in developing and leveraging their extensive social networking and solutions journalism capabilities to support public engagement and digital navigator training.

Granite United Way (GUW)

Granite United Way mobilizes volunteer and philanthropic support to provide services to over 400,000 New Hampshire residents. GUW administers one of the nation's more than 250 Help Desks nationwide that have received permission from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to utilize the 211 number and "brand to provide a web- and phone-based help desk staffed by trained information referral specialists who can respond to users online, by phone, and via TDD and TDY for those with hearing and visual impairments, and with on-call translators on retainer.

Harbor Care

Harbor Care is a leading provider of veterans' services and has been instrumental in engaging veterans in identifying their priority digital divide needs and concerns, as well as helping veterans access the internet and use digital devices safely and effectively.

New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions

New Hampshire's nine Regional Planning Commissions aid municipalities in land use regulation, public infrastructure development, and economic development. Since 2011, they have been pivotal in broadband and digital equity planning, leading regional coalitions, contributing to Broadband mapping, and securing resources for infrastructure expansion. Looking ahead, they are ready to support digital equity efforts, engage constituents, identify needs, and back local projects with Digital Equity Plan funds. A key role of Regional Planning Commissions has been to help rural communities overcome barriers to digital equity. Challenges include limited affordable broadband in rural areas, impacting telehealth, public hearings, and banking services where branches aren't economically viable. UNH's Cooperative Extension enhances this effort, contributing social capital, knowledge, and networks to engage rural stakeholders in digital equity planning and implementation.

New Hampshire Center for Nonprofits

The Center has been an invaluable partner in disseminating information to the state's several hundred nonprofit organizations about opportunities for covered populations and those who serve them to participate in the state's planning processes.

New Hampshire Coalition for Business and Education (NHCBE)

This coalition is comprised of state and local leaders from chambers of commerce, corporate philanthropy, foundations, schools, colleges, and state agencies concerned with educational and economic opportunity, and inclusion. NHCBE provides outreach to corporate giving programs to grow sustained philanthropic support for NH's digital equity and systemic inclusion initiatives. Founded and led by a previous chair of the New Hampshire State Board of Education, NHCBE has made it a priority to foster the transition from traditional "sit-and-get" lecture-based pedagogy and standardized test-based accountability to competency-based learning facilitation and performance assessments, in support of more robust and inclusive pathways to in-demand living-wage occupations in New Hampshire.

New Hampshire Commission on Aging

This longstanding commission recently released "New Hampshire's State Plan on Aging 2024-2027". Among its priorities is fostering digital access and skills for New Hampshire's seniors, while enhancing their knowledge of how to recognize and thwart cybersecurity threats such as identity theft and fraud. The Commission has helped alert the Granite State's seniors and those who provide services to them of opportunities to shape, help implement, and formatively assess the state's digital equity initiatives.

New Hampshire Department of Corrections

This agency has led needs-sensing regarding providing digital access and literacy skills for those in incarceration so they will be better prepared. The Planning Team has assisted agency officials in connecting with the BEAD planning team to explore whether and how best educational facilities on the grounds of state correctional facilities can provide broadband access (and, with federal Digital Equity capacity funds, computer access and digital literacy skill development) in ways consistent with strict cybersecurity requirements.

New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE)

NHDOE's offices of adult education, afterschool programs, and career and technical education have been actively involved in mobilizing their statewide networks of educators to participate in need-sensing forums, the digital equity survey and asset inventory, and in developing strategies to mobilize educators and the diverse youths and adults they serve to develop digital skills and greatly improve digital access for all learners and digital pedagogy for their educators.

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS)

NHDHHS's office of health equity and staff implementing the Whole Family Approach to Jobs initiative have participated actively in need-sensing and priority-setting sessions. They mobilized caseworkers to become trained in how to assist their low- and moderate-income clients to enroll in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program and will continue serving as important allies in efforts to leverage digital opportunity resources for much greater access to telehealth and teletherapy services.

New Hampshire Department of Information Technology

In collaboration with the planning team, Granite United Way's 211 Help Desk, and the US Department of Labor-funded SkillsCommons initiative, the NH Department of Information Technology (DoIT) has assessed how best to align the state's digital equity plan with the federal cybersecurity grant from the Department of Homeland Security. The federal DHS funding supports DoIT in strengthening state and local cybersecurity systems. Concurrently, federal digital equity capacity funding complements these efforts by enhancing cybersafety skills (digital equity metric #4) and improving the accessibility and inclusiveness of portals like Granite United Way's 211 Help Desk. This inclusiveness involves compliance with global website standards for accessibility and ensuring digital content availability in diverse languages. Collaborators include USDOL-funded SkillsCommons, DHS's cybersecurity initiative, FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program, and USDOC's digital equity and BEAD initiatives, with support from the private philanthropic sector. These partnerships emphasize the need for seed investments to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness of the 211 Help Desk and similar portals in New Hampshire, aiming to enhance information on digital, financial, economic, and educational inclusion.

New Hampshire Funders Forum (NHFF)

NHFF is comprised of the senior leadership of the state's 55 grantmaking foundations and aims to share best practices, explore joint philanthropic investments, and offer professional development for foundation leaders. Established in 2018, NHFF has created four affinity groups, including the "DEI Affinity Group," which recently invited NCDE to present on leveraging federal BEAD and digital equity funds. To enhance the impact of grantmaking on multigenerational poverty, this plan seeks to deepen the understanding of the state's grantmaking leaders on integrating digital equity into their portfolios for sustained efforts beyond federal funds. Foundation leaders who participated in a Zoom-based "New Hampshire Forum on Healthcare Access and Digital Equity" expressed interest in learning how to expand healthcare access and address social determinants of health through investment in digital equity. This forum aims to co-develop strategies that increase access to telehealth services, as well as explore how grant makers can enhance their digital equity expertise and collaborate with state hospitals, the Department of Health and Human Services, and other partners to provide telehealth access.

New Hampshire Learns Alliance (NHLA)

Comprised of the senior leadership from several statewide professional associations of K12 educators and administrators from CAST and NCDE, the Alliance was formed at the start of the pandemic to coordinate the mobilization of resources urgently needed to ensure educational access, engagement, and success for all NH students and to greatly improve the skills of their educators to design and deliver online and hybrid learning. The Alliance has recognized the need for sustained collaboration to improve the skills of New Hampshire's current and future educators and those who provide pre-service and in-service development for them, to meet the needs of digital-age learners.

New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA)

NHMA represents New Hampshire's 234 municipalities and actively advocates for policies supporting expanded access to broadband internet and provides an important perspective, especially regarding broadband affordability in rural areas. NHMA serves as a convenor and stands ready to support dissemination and engagement regarding digital equity planning, implementation, and formative evaluation. As with the other digital equity planning partners referenced in this plan, NHMA has appointed a representative to serve on the NH Asset Advisory Council.

New Hampshire National Guard, NH Veterans Advisory Committee, and NH Department of Military and Veterans Services

The Planning Team has held in-person and online forums in partnership with Veterans organizations that bring unequalled understanding, voice, and agency to the involvement of New Hampshire's veterans in shaping, formatively evaluating, and implementing the state plan. These partners bring voice, agency, and accountability for low- and moderate-income Granite Staters and those who serve them. All the partners that the Planning Team has engaged with through need-sensing and priority-setting will remain crucial allies not only for the revision of NH's state plan for digital equity and systemic inclusion, but also for its implementation, formative evaluation, accountability, and institutionalizing.

New Hampshire State Library

The New Hampshire State Library and a statewide network of 200 public libraries are assisting with planning to expand and institutionalize digital navigator training for linguistically diverse youths and adults, promoting virtual and in-person librarian assistance to patrons in support of healthcare, economic and educational, housing inclusion and civic engagement, and making the empirical case that sustained support for a much more multilingual audiobook collection should be provided after federal digital equity funds expire. More than any other profession, librarians have been active in conceiving and sustaining local digital inclusion efforts. As noted above, the NHSL has a network of several dozen public libraries across the state that want to expand existing and create new local programs in support of the plan's goals. Barriers to activating an expanded, library-supported digital navigator network include the cost of paid release time for staff in smaller, rural public libraries, and transportation cost to attend professional development training.

SkillsCommons

SkillsCommons, hosted by the California State University System's chancellor's office, has evolved from a ten-year $1.9 billion federal grant program administered by the US Department of Labor. This program provides multi-year grants to 750 community colleges nationwide, focusing on developing, piloting, assessing, revising, and publishing free "open educational resources" (OER). These instructional materials aim to equip predominantly low-income youths and adults with the skills needed for in-demand, living-wage occupations in the community college's labor market. Grant recipients are mandated to publish their curated OER materials in SkillsCommons. This platform then directs educators, workforce development programs, and company-based workplace education providers nationwide to these resources, along with state and federal services highlighting in-demand living-wage occupations at various geographic levels. The SkillsCommons team collaborates with the planning team, NH's IT Commissioner, United Way, and others to enhance the inclusivity, compliance with W3C global website accessibility standards, and usability of NH's 211 Help Desk and similar portals for digital equity (metric #5). The objective is to improve their capacity to guide users to resources related to digital, financial, educational, and economic inclusion.

University of New Hampshire Center for Impact Finance

This center has played a key role in mobilizing the leadership of the NH Hospital Association, NH Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Health Equity, and Dartmouth College's Center for Advancing Rural Health Equity, to co-develop with the Planning Team's strategy for fostering sustainable, nearly universal access in NH to telehealth services, through investments of federal BEAD and Digital Equity capacity funding. The Center for Impact Finance, which conceived and leads an

annual "financial innovations roundtable" for the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, is advising the CEOs and CIOs of NH's 27 tax-exempt nonprofit hospitals on how best to more impactfully deploy the approximately $57 million they collectively expend each year to meet the federal Community Benefits statute that requires nonprofit hospitals to make philanthropic investments in order to retain their federal tax-exempt status. The Center has persuaded and assisted the 27 hospitals, for the first time, to pool their Community Benefits resources and deploy them in tandem for greater strategic impact. They have identified telehealth access as one of their foremost shared priorities, and so are eager to work with the Planning Team, DBEA and other digital equity partners.

UNH Institute on Disabilities and Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc.

Along with the NH Veterans Advisory Committee, AARP-NH and NH Commission on Aging, these partners have pledged to assist the Planning Team to identify digital divide barriers faced by those with disabilities and their service providers (e.g., regarding assistive devices and user support in how to use them safely and effectively). In addition, they stand ready to assist with ongoing voice, agency, and accountability for those with disabilities and their caregivers, and to assist with identifying, enhancing, and promoting digital equity assets.

The University System of New Hampshire (USNH)

USNH is comprised of three postsecondary institutions: the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University, and Keene State University. The Chancellor of USNH and the presidents of each institution have expressed deep commitment to serving the needs of communities across the state. Not only does USNH play a pivotal role in enhancing workforce skills, but it maintains programs across multiple campuses that seek to expand access to telehealth resources, on-line professional development programs, assistive technologies for seniors and those with disabilities, and resources for multi-lingual learners and educators.

Volunteer New Hampshire (VNH)

This statewide nonprofit provides an integrated menu of supports for New Hampshire's AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteer programs, growing the capacity of these programs to provide volunteers of all ages with meaningful learning and civic engagement opportunities while contributing to local efforts to address their communities' quality of life concerns. VNH has committed to mobilizing NH's volunteers and those who support them to promote outreach and engagement in efforts that develop digital access and skills.

Welcoming New Hampshire

This statewide network of leaders representing immigrants and refugees and those who serve them brings lived experience, voice, and agency for all eight of the covered populations, especially English learners, persons of color, and low-income individuals and families. This network is expected to play an especially mission-critical role in developing NH's capacity to provide multilingual tech support and digital navigator assistance, and to alert those for whom English is not their first language of the digital equity and systemic inclusion resources available to address their needs and requiring their critical feedback for formative evaluation and accountability.

VI: BROADBAND NEEDS AND ASSETS SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In October-November 2023, as referenced in Section V, a survey was circulated to residents across New Hampshire to learn more about the needs, challenges, and opportunities of Granite Staters related to accessing high-quality and affordable internet service, devices, skills training and digital support. The survey was open to all residents and was completed by more than 3,500 individuals representing diverse populations across the state. A complete list of findings from the survey data, and the methodology used, are provided in Appendix 7.This section delves into the results of that survey and provides an overview of the broadband and digital equity needs of residents across the state, with a focus on the covered populations introduced in Section II. This section also identifies the community, regional, and statewide assets that are in place to address the needs. For a detailed breakdown of the current state of digital equity, needs, and assets, see Appendix 8. Below is a summary.

SUMMARY OF STATEWIDE BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY NEEDS

Key findings from publicly available datasets, as well as the New Hampshire Statewide Digital Equity Survey, are presented first below before highlighting the unique needs of covered populations in the state. The data here help to provide the baseline for the following key measurable objectives: (1) broadband availability and adoption; (2) device availability and adoption; (3) digital skills and literacy; (4) awareness and use of measures to secure individual online safety and cybersecurity; and (5) online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services provided by the state.

Broadband Availability

The data from the FCC's National Broadband Map show that New Hampshire has 517,584 total locations with 481,308, or 93 percent, served with speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps.

- Served: 481,308 locations with speeds greater than 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload (100/20)

- Underserved: 10,153 locations with speeds less than 100/20 Mbps and greater than or equal to 25/3 Mbps

- Unserved: 26,123 locations with speeds less than 25/3 Mbps.

These findings show that while high-speed internet access is available to 93% of the population, challenges remain concerning the number of residents who can successfully adopt the internet at home.

Broadband Adoption

Broadband adoption is measured by the number of households with an internet subscription. Data from the American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates show that 89% of households in New Hampshire subscribe to broadband internet access. 6.5% of households have a cellular data plan only and 8% of all households in the state have no internet access of any kind.
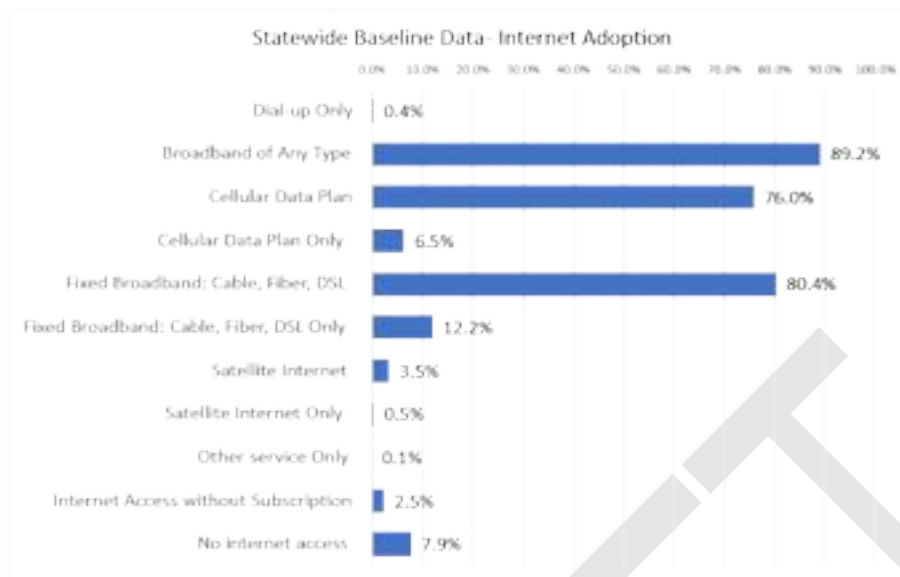
Internet Subscription Types in New Hampshire

Baseline data for the types of Internet subscriptions used in New Hampshire households comes from the American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates in ACS table: *B28002 – Presence and Types of Internet Subscriptions in Household*.

Barriers to Broadband Adoption

- For those who are unable to adopt broadband in New Hampshire, cost was reported as the number one reason for non-adoption. 54 people responded to the question: "Are there other reasons you do not have home internet other than cost?" While the sample size is small, the findings correspond with national data and trends on broadband adoption as reported by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Pew Research Center, and other research centers. In the New Hampshire statewide survey, 83% reported that the cost is too high

- 57% reported that internet service is not available

- 15% reported that they do not have a computer

These barriers were identified based on a small sample of only 54 individuals in a statewide survey who responded that they did not have internet service of any kind at home. These data are supported by findings in the US Census' American Community Survey that show 8% of New Hampshire residents have no internet access, 6.5% only have a cell phone plan for internet access, and only 15% of households with annual incomes between $50,000 to $74,999/year have broadband internet service.

Ability to Pay for Internet Service

The statewide public survey asked New Hampshire residents to indicate how much they pay for internet service at home each month. As the diagram below shows, 34% of residents reported that they pay over $100 each month for internet service.

Statewide Survey - How much do you pay for internet each month?

Price range	Percentage
$0 - $9.99	2%
$10 - $19.99	1%
$20 - $29.99	2%
$30 - $39.98	4%
$40 - $49.99	7%
$50 - $74.99	24%
$75 - $100	27%
Over $100	34%
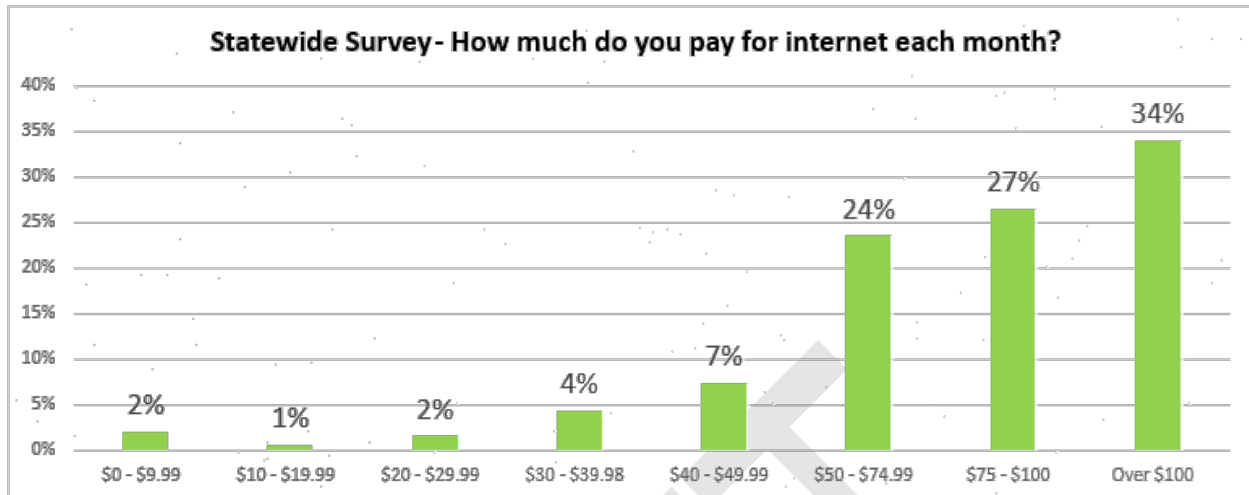
The percentages above are based on 3392 survey responses to the question: *"How much do you pay for internet each month?"*

In addition, the statewide public survey asked residents to indicate how much they can pay for internet service at home each month. As the diagram below shows, only 32% of residents indicated that they are able pay over $100 each month for internet service.
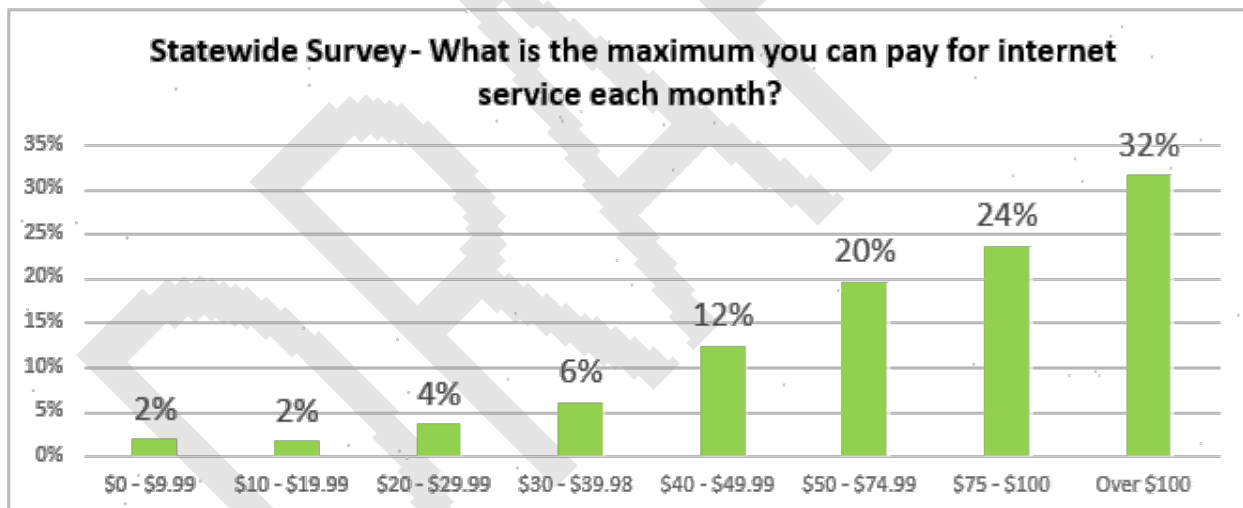
Statewide Survey - What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?

Price range	Percentage
$0 - $9.99	2%
$10 - $19.99	2%
$20 - $29.99	4%
$30 - $39.98	6%
$40 - $49.99	12%
$50 - $74.99	20%
$75 - $100	24%
Over $100	32%

Percentages based on 3424 survey responses to the question: *"What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month? Please respond with a price per month in dollars."*

Additionally, 68% of individuals over 60 years old in the state of New Hampshire indicated that they were unable to pay more than $75 a month.

Statewide Survey, Aging Individuals- What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?
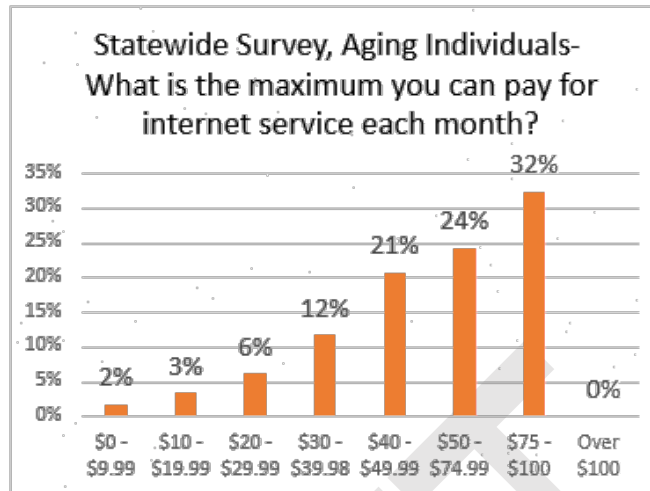
Percentages above are based on 2407 people who identified as age 60 or older who responded to the question, "*What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey."

The statewide survey asked a follow-up question to understand how difficult it is for residents across the state to pay for internet service. These responses are shown in the diagram below.

Statewide Survey- How difficult is it to pay for your internet service each month?
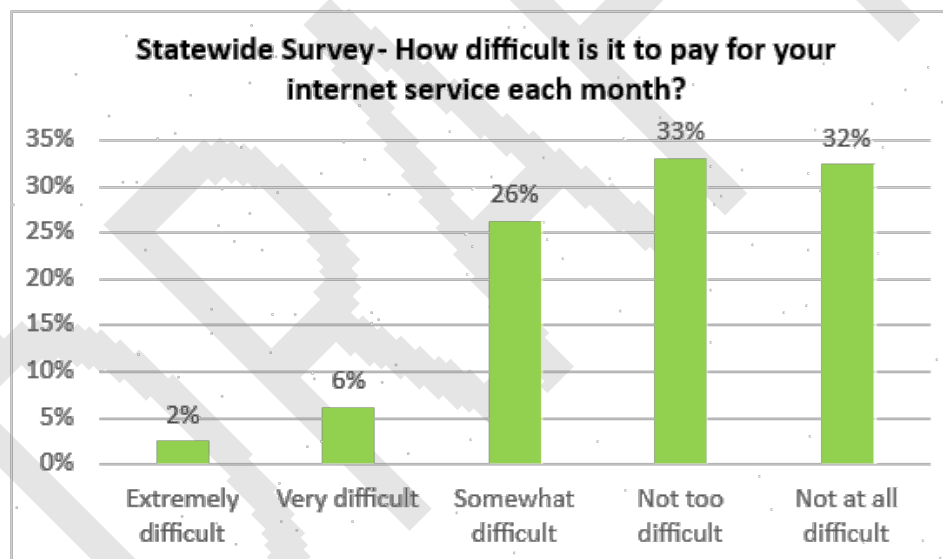
The percentages above are based on 3432 survey responses to the question: *"How difficult is it to pay for your internet each month?"*

Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program

The statewide public survey asked New Hampshire residents about their awareness of broadband affordability using the following question: "*Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet access affordable?*"

- 71% of people responding to this question said "No." Only 29% of people responding to this question were aware of the ACP and responded "Yes"
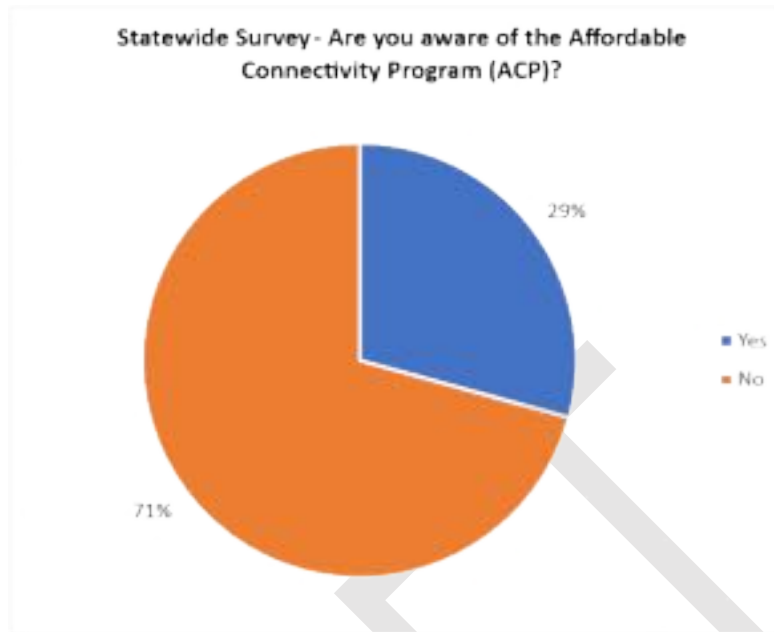
Statewide Survey - Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?

Percentages based on 3489 survey responses to the question: "*Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?*")

The findings suggest that while internet service may be available in most parts of the state, significant outreach and support may be needed to help covered populations successfully adopt high-speed internet service at home, including options for affordable internet service.

Device Ownership

Baseline data for the types of devices owned by New Hampshire residents comes from the American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates pictured below.
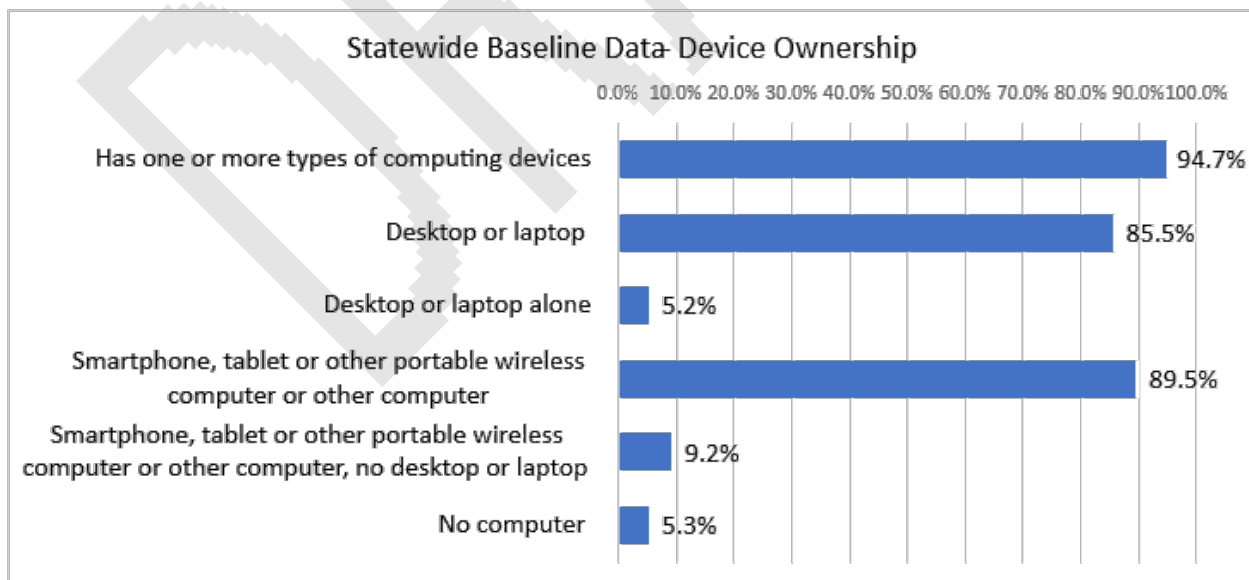
Statewide Baseline Data- Device Ownership

Has one or more types of computing devices	94.7%
Desktop or laptop	85.5%
Desktop or laptop alone	5.2%
Smartphone, tablet or other portable wireless computer or other computer	89.5%
Smartphone, tablet or other portable wireless computer or other computer, no desktop or laptop	9.2%
No computer	5.3%

Our statewide survey provided more details on the availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices, as expressed by New Hampshire survey respondents.

Device Availability

Our statewide survey asked residents whether they believed they had enough technology at home to complete daily activities. The percentages pictured below are based on 3539 survey responses.

Statewide Survey - Do you have enough technology equipment at home to complete your daily activities for personal reason, work, or school?

- Yes: 92%
- No: 6%
- Don't know: 2%
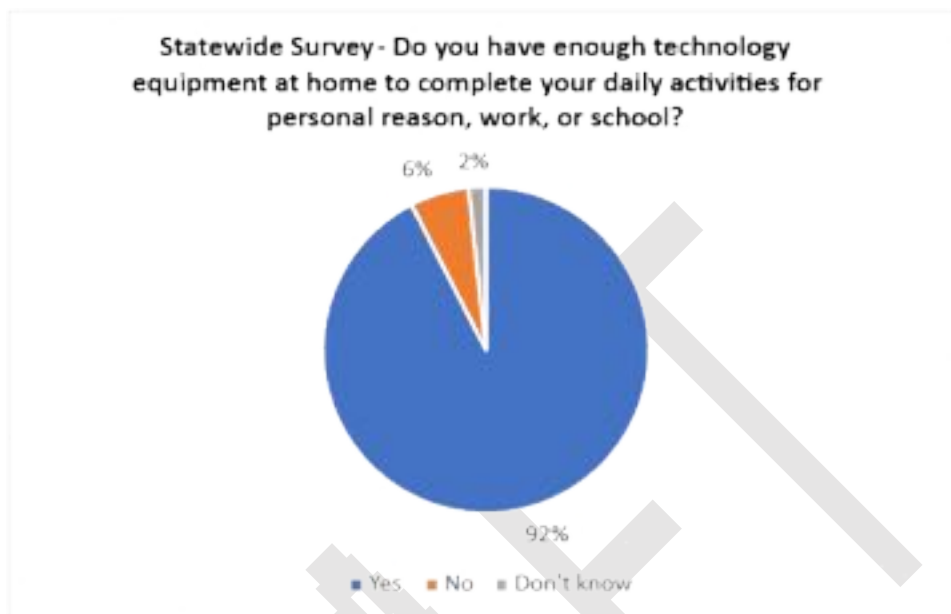
Device Adoption

Our statewide survey also asked residents what devices they have used the most to use the internet at home in the last 6 months. Percentages based on 3536 survey responses.

Statewide Survey - What devices have you used the most to use the internet at home in the last 6 months?

Device	Percentage
Cell phone	82%
Accessible/Adapted device	2%
Desktop computer	32%
Laptop computer	67%
Tablet (or similar device)	48%
Gaming console	8%
Other type of Internet-connected device	8%
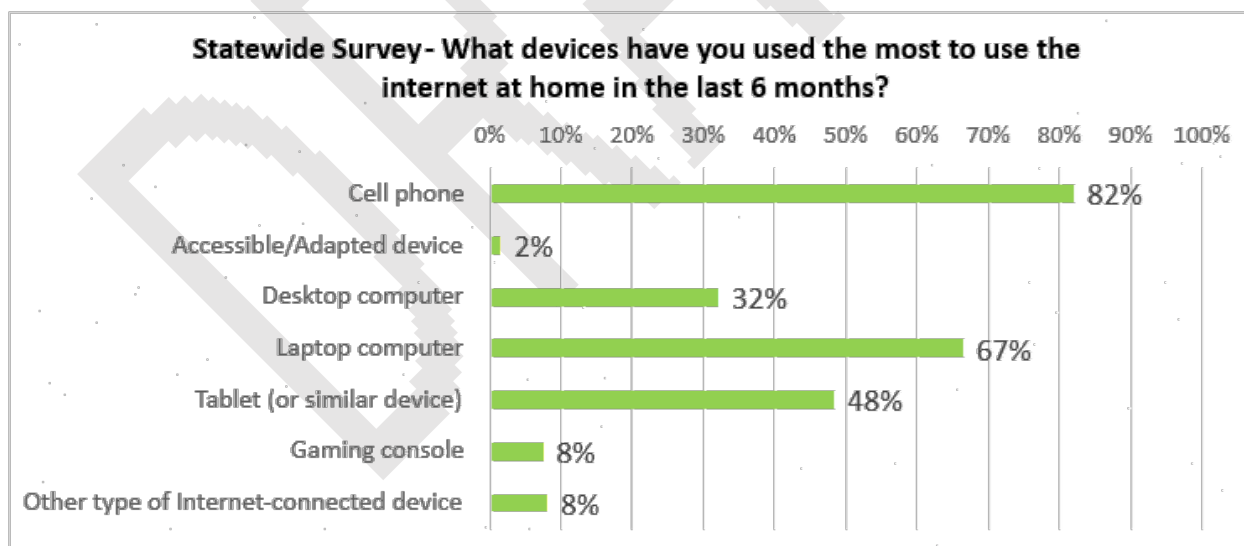
Digital Skills and Literacy

Our statewide survey sought to understand self-reported skills and abilities of New Hampshire residents and their digital skills. The majority of residents in the state were able to use computers and the internet to send email, use Word processing software, apply for jobs, find health information, use online training materials, access online financial services, shop online, find educational materials, and use social

media. **However, when asked whether residents were able to find privacy protection tools online, only 59% of total 3470 survey respondents reported that they were able to do it themselves.**
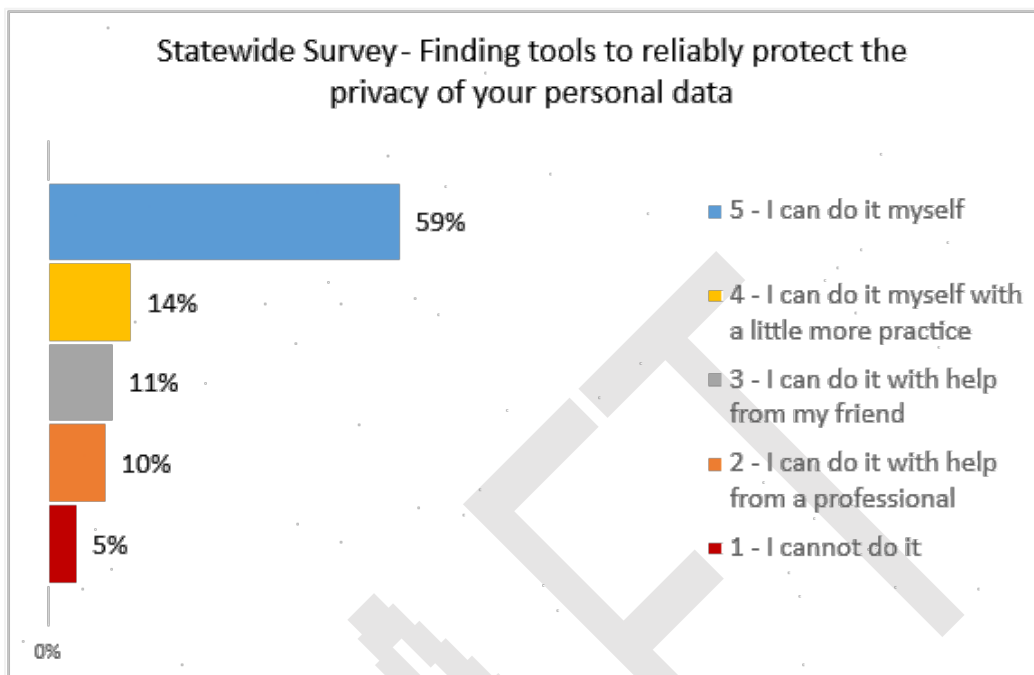
Awareness and Use of Measures to Secure Online Privacy and Cybersecurity

New Hampshire residents answered three survey questions on their awareness and use of measures to secure their online privacy and cybersecurity. The findings show that many residents do not feel or know how to be safe online and residents expressed limited knowledge of resources to help improve their awareness of privacy and cybersecurity.

In response to the question, "Do you feel safe using the internet?"

- 42% of people answered "No"

- 23% answered "Sometimes"

- In response to the question, "Do you know how to stay safe online?"

- 50% of people answered "No"

- 26% answered "Sometimes"

- In response to the question, "Who do you ask for help in identifying safe information on the internet?"

- 65% said that they would ask a "Friend or family member" for help.

- 30% of people were not sure who to ask for help.

Ability to Feel Safe Online

Statewide Survey – Do you feel safe using the internet?

- Yes: 7%
- Yes, but I would like to learn more about how to tell if an email, program, or website is safe: 19%
- Yes, but sometimes I ask others if the email, program, or website is safe: 9%
- Sometimes: 23%
- No: 42%
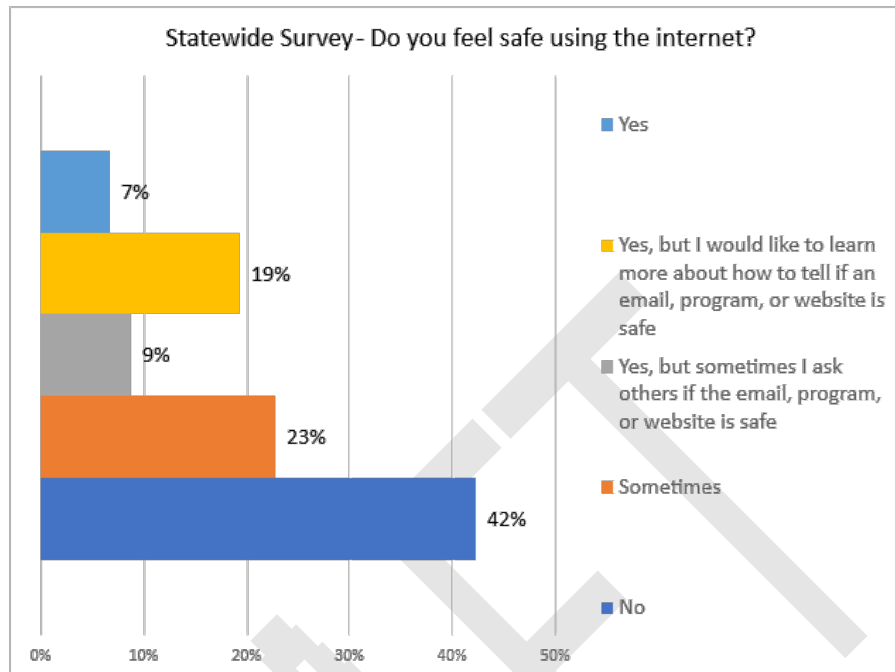
Percentages based on 3,265 survey responses to the question: *Do you feel safe using the internet?*

Sources for Online Safety Assistance *

Who do you ask for help in identifying safe information on the internet?

- Public library: 5%
- Friend or family member: 63%
- Church or community organization: 2%
- Not sure: 30%
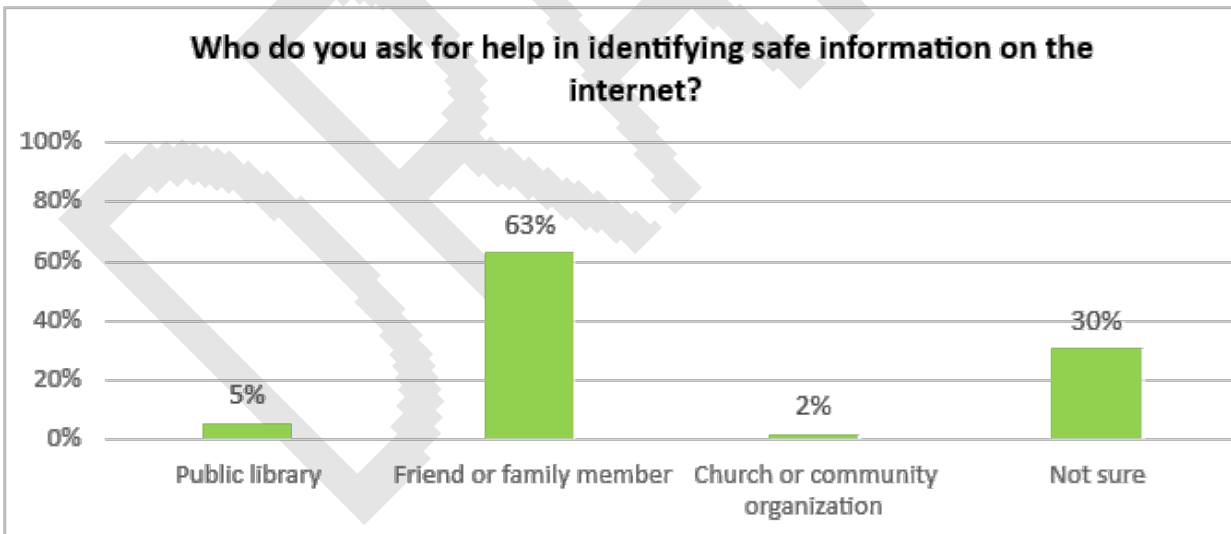
* (Percentages based on 2,912 survey responses to the question: *Who do you ask for help in identifying safe information on the internet?*)

SUMMARY OF NEEDS OF COVERED POPULATIONS

Twenty-six focus groups were facilitated, engaging individuals and organizations representing each of the eight covered populations to learn about the challenges they face in accessing and navigating the internet, as well as their goals and aspirations. Additionally, the planning team conducted listening sessions with organizations like AARP to better understand the needs of seniors, Welcoming New

Hampshire to identify the needs and challenges of immigrants and refugees, and veteran-serving organizations like Veterans Affairs to identify challenges facing that population.

Below is a summary of the conversations that took place during the focus group sessions with the eight covered populations identified by the federal government for purposes of these funds and this plan. The needs mentioned within those discussions may not be exclusive to each covered population but instead reflect topics identified within each focus group session. Moreover, the forum for conversations varied based on timing and availability of participants, whereas some were in person and others online.

Low-income Individuals and Households

Focus group participants representing low-income persons and those who serve them identified key challenges facing individuals and families and families with low incomes. These include the need for greater access to broadband and devices, education and training, and key services that can be accessed digitally such as health care. Participants highlighted that overcoming these challenges can be aided by utilizing key public assets, such as public libraries, municipal complexes, etc., and creating additional engagement pathways between leaders, municipalities, and internet and technology providers to better create and market existing programs and increase affordability to address challenges.

Individuals 60 Years of Age and Older

The participants of this session included individuals over 60 from across the state, as well as representatives from AARP in New Hampshire, ranging from Executive staff to leads of various programs, such as those working with seniors with impairments. Access to high-speed internet and easy-to-use digital devices emerged as key themes throughout the focus group discussion. Participants also identified key barriers to access: lack of understanding of technology, lack of awareness of places seniors can access broadband and devices such as community centers and libraries, and concerns about security (e.g., data and information vulnerabilities, scams, etc.). Additionally, a strong theme centered around impairments that many seniors have, such as auditory and visual impairments, mobility issues, cognitive issues, motor skills issues, etc.

Incarcerated and Post-Incarcerated Population

The incarcerated community faces unique challenges regarding access to the Internet and digital tools and services. The primary concern is around access to digital tools and services in a secure environment. All systems within the perimeter need to be secure to not allow incarcerated individuals to contact the outside world, which could open the door to targeting and victimizing individuals. As a result of the security challenges, which require hands-on oversight given the lack of technology infrastructure for security, there is limited availability of technology tools, such as tablets, two-way video, and other devices. The security challenges also make it difficult to connect to educational curricula, vocational training, telehealth, religious services, and many other resources that could build the skills and well-being of incarcerated individuals. Issues and challenges identified by the post-incarcerated community include access to the internet, devices, and training as key gaps. More salient, they identified access to digital educational resources, such as family support groups, parenting counselors, and other community re-entry supports. Post-incarcerated populations often have limited exposure to digital devices and lack the digital literacy skills to be able to use tools and services effectively. As such, there is a deep need for training that gives post-incarcerated individuals with relevant work skills that track with good-paying jobs.

Veterans

Digital equity efforts can help address inequities by providing all veterans with equal access to digital resources such as telehealth video appointments, education, career opportunities, social connections, vocational endeavors, and substance use disorder programs. These are crucial services in modern life and are especially important for veterans. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital equity for this group. In 2020, the Department of Veterans Affairs experienced a 1000% increase in telehealth video appointments due to the pandemic—an example of the importance of the Internet for veterans to access benefits, education and career opportunities, and social connections.

Individuals with Disabilities

The needs of the disability community depend on the type of disability (e.g., visual, physical, cognitive, or auditory, etc.). Each disability has its own needs, including the need for adaptive devices or technologies. Multiple organizations support adaptive technologies in New Hampshire, from Northeast Passage to school-based programs that serve a diverse age range. Funding to support adaptive technologies, which can be expensive and may only impact a small number of people, is lacking. The NH Department of Education provides resources through various programs (SPED, etc.), but additional resources are needed to serve the adult population. Lastly, to use adaptive technologies, there must be a basic level of digital literacy. It is challenging for many to access digital literacy resources. Lastly, there is a need for enhanced technical support and hands-on assistance to support the basic use of digital tools, resources, and devices, as well as adaptive technologies. Making this technical support available through schools, institutions, community centers, libraries, etc., will be critical to ensuring digital literacy among the disability community.

Individuals with a Language Barrier

The participants of the focus group session reflecting this covered population—the majority of whom represented refugees and immigrants—identified a lack of access to digital devices and broadband internet, as was the case with other covered populations. They also identified a gap in digital content available in multiple languages, such as information about resources, programs, translation services, etc. Further, there is a lack of multilingual technology support, as well as barriers to accessing other resources, such as vocational training, telehealth, and employment resources. Furthermore, there appears to be a cultural stigma associated with digital technologies—aside from video games and Roblox—so there is a need to build trust with the linguistically diverse learner community. This entails parent education and awareness building. Lastly, there is a need for building digital literacy, but doing so is not only relevant to curricula but also for practical purposes such as enhancing one's ability to access resources, workforce opportunities, educational resources, etc. Important to note, this focus group session identified general literacy as a key challenge for those with limited or no reading and writing ability. Navigating digital devices is challenging for those with low literacy levels.

Individuals who are Members of a Racial or Ethnic Minority Group

The participants of this session identified accessibility to devices and connection, digital literacy, community building, and improved resiliency as major gaps. They also identified the importance of supportive policies that emphasize the need for systemic and intentional inclusion moving forward. Current inequitable access to opportunities was a key theme of discussion, particularly around digital literacy. Strategies and actions that were identified by focus group participants to overcome these and barriers included more effort to include racial and ethnic minorities in the policy and decision-making process, partnering with service providers to develop programs that expand access to services and devices, tapping into state and federal grants to build out programming, utilizing social media and

existing networks to expand the opportunities for capacity building around greater inclusion in policies and programming, creating literacy requirements for schools around technology and the digital world, and lastly, better incorporating digital literacy into curricula.

Individuals who Primarily Reside in a Rural Area

The participants of this session identified access to devices, reliable and affordable internet service, and training as gaps in services for rural individuals and communities. The group identified access to technology and infrastructure, resources and services, internet safety, education and training, access to healthcare, and economic development opportunities as the main themes of the discussion. Strategies identified by the group to overcome these gaps included investing in public/private partnerships to assist rural individuals and communities with access to devices and services that they can afford and operate, providing educational and vocational opportunities, more resources to support literacy, and access to devices that fit the needs of the user (like job training that entails digital literacy skills and increases the possibility of attaining meaningful employment), greater leveraging of community assets to increase accessibility (such as libraries, municipal buildings, community centers to increase participation and knowledge).

Native American Community

While there are no federally recognized tribes or tribal lands in New Hampshire, there is a rich history of indigenous settlement in the state and a vibrant network of Granite Staters of Native descent today. Persons of Native American heritage come from the Abenaki, Androscoggin, Cowasuk, Kennebec, Missisquois, Norridgewock, Pennacook, Penobscot, Pequawket, Sokokis, and Wawencok tribes (New Hampshire Magazine, 2023). According to the NH digital equity survey results, affordability is a major barrier for the 25 respondents who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, half of whom indicated they could not afford internet service that is $50 or more per month. Furthermore, although approximately one-third of respondents would be eligible for a subsidy under the Affordable Connectivity Program, 80% indicated that they were unaware of the program. This suggests that there is a need for outreach and support to help individuals and households identifying as Native American to get connected to affordable internet. To assist with outreach and engagement, the Planning Team has been working closely with the leadership of the NH Funders Forum's DEI Affinity Group, and the program officer for the state's multi-year Endowment for Health's "race and equity" initiative aimed at fostering more welcoming, inclusive communities, especially regarding educational opportunity, workforce development, criminal justice and law enforcement, and civic engagement.

ASSET INVENTORY SUMMARY

Developing an inventory of existing digital equity and inclusion organizations, programs, and services ("assets") is a critical step to understanding New Hampshire's digital equity ecosystem and developing a plan for the allocation of federal dollars. In August 2023, the digital equity planning team released the New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Asset Mapping Survey to begin this work. The Asset Mapping Survey and accompanying Dashboard are gathering information from the following:

- Local, regional, and state agencies that serve members of covered populations
- K-12, higher education, and adult education schools
- Nonprofit and community-based organizations
- Internet Service Providers operating in New Hampshire

- Other organizations or companies offering digital training or services to residents of the state

Information has been collected on 123 unique assets via the inventory form and a separate survey of public libraries which was circulated earlier in the year. **The full Digital Equity and Inclusion Asset Inventory and details about the populations being served across the state can be found at the end of Appendix 8.** Additional submissions and revisions are being accepted at https://arcg.is/18muSf0.

Digital Equity & Inclusion Programs/Services Offered Across New Hampshire

The following graphic outlines the types of digital equity & inclusion programs and services being provided by respondents:

The University of New Hampshire is using the information collected via the Asset Inventory to develop a prototype Asset Mapping tool which will allow digital equity advocates and residents across the state to locate and update information about digital inclusion programs and services. This resource will continue to expand and evolve in the coming years. This community-maintained map and database will be helpful to the regional Digital Equity Coalitions and members of the public who wish to locate resources and services. The figure below shows an early prototype of the tool, which can also be viewed at https://arcg.is/1KTWKf1:

LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND STATE ASSETS IN SUPPORT OF KEY PLAN OBJECTIVES AND METRICS

There are many digital equity assets across the state that address the five key plan objectives and metrics: workforce development, education, healthcare, civic and social engagement, and housing. These assets include organizations, programs, and services that serve covered populations and help provide access to the internet, digital devices, digital skills training, and/or other resources. The following are the ways the state supports the goals outlined in this digital equity plan.

Workforce Development Assets

The NH Digital Equity Planning team has worked closely with the leadership and membership of the NH Works (see https://www.nheconomy.com/nhworks), with logistical support from the NH Dept. of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) Office of Workforce Opportunity. The Consortium brings together leaders from across the state Departments of Employment Security, Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, and the Community College System of NH (CCSNH). The Consortium fosters strategic economic and workforce development partnerships between employers seeking to fill in-demand living-wage jobs, workforce development, career and technical education, and adult education providers, and those who serve low- and moderate-income (LMI) learners.

BEA is in the process of updating its multiyear strategic plan for workforce development and is pleased to work closely with developers of NH's state digital equity plan to (a) remove digital access barriers (broadband, device, and multilingual tech support), (b) enhance digital skills, and (c) promote the development of more inclusive pathways into careers requiring higher levels of digital skills. Workforce developers have also underscored the need to (d) enhance their mentors' and instructors' knowledge of digital instruction strategies to engage digital-age learners more effectively.

Education Assets

The Planning Team collaborated with leaders across New Hampshire's educational landscape, with a focus on digital equity funding to achieve several goals, including, (a) eliminating access barriers for learners and educators, (b) improving digital-related skills, (c) diversifying the educational workforce, and (d) enhancing digital pedagogy aligned with competency-based learning and performance assessments. Members of the NH Department of Education's "306s" task force proposes requirements for K12 learners to demonstrate digital skills through performance-based assessments, shaping policy discussions in adult education, afterschool programs, and community colleges. The digital equity plan targets K12, adult education, and workforce development programs to address the gap in "digital pedagogy." This approach seeks to equip educators with essential digital tools and skills that would benefit diverse and low-income learners. These tools empower educators and regional coalitions to assess progress in equipping learners with crucial digital skills.

Healthcare Assets

The State has worked closely with leadership from the NH Department of Health and Human Services, NH Hospital Association, UNH's Center for Impact Finance, caregivers for veterans and seniors, the NH-based Endowment for Health, and other partners to ensure significantly more equitable access to telehealth services and resources, especially for low- and moderate-income, linguistically diverse, and rurally isolated patients of all ages across the state. State and healthcare and policy leaders are working to develop a multi-year plan to enhance digital access, multilingual digital navigator support, and multilingual and multicultural outreach, e.g., in partnership with Welcoming NH's strong network of groups that represent and serve NH's immigrants and refugees, and with Granite United Way's 211 NH Help Desk (staffed 24 x 7 x 365 by trained information referral specialists with TDD/TDY access and on-call translators – to optimize awareness and use of these digital access and skill development resources.

Civic and Social Engagement

The planning team collaborates with New Hampshire Civics and the New Hampshire Civic Learning Coalition to reduce digital divide barriers in civics education for diverse PreK-12 learners and educators. Plans are also in the works to partner with the Granite State News Collaborative (GSNC), New Hampshire Public Radio, New Hampshire Afterschool Network, and Franklin Pierce University's Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication to develop multimedia news coverage addressing digital divide challenges, relevant digital equity resources, and local progress assessments. Special programming will provide youth with insights into careers relying on digital skills, allowing hands-on experience with audio, video, and text production technology, fostering civic skills and digital literacies. These civic engagement partners are committed to raising awareness about digital divide challenges and available resources through various media channels, including broadcast, print, text messaging, podcasts, and social networks. They aim to engage diverse stakeholders across all populations in assessing progress and meeting inclusion needs.

Other Essential Services

The Planning Team is working closely with New Hampshire's state and local public housing authorities, veterans and senior housing programs, and those that serve persons experiencing homelessness, to develop a multiyear plan to adopt/adapt the acclaimed Housing and Urban Development (HUD) ConnectHome model–a collaborative platform for community leaders, local governments, nonprofit

organizations, and private industry to produce locally-tailored solutions for narrowing the digital divide for HUD-assisted residents living in designated communities across the country. The goal is to equip as many housing programs statewide as possible with the capacity to ensure that every resident enjoys full digital access (broadband, personal computer, multilingual tech, and digital navigator support), digital skill development opportunities, and orientation to the NH 211 Help Desk and, through this significantly more inclusive and accessible portal, the full array of systemic inclusion supports for financial, economic, educational, and healthcare inclusion.

Coordinating Planning Across Sectors

There are four key ways in which coordinated planning will optimize digital equity and systemic inclusion impacts. First, the planning teams for Broadband Expansion and Adoption (BEAD) and digital equity work closely to deliver affordable broadband to unserved areas, aligning with federal digital equity funding to address five digital equity metrics.

Second, the Digital Equity planning process engages the NH Asset Advisory Council to mobilize leaders across various sectors. The Council promotes state and regional listening sessions and recruits representatives for regional digital equity coalitions and encourages service providers to identify their resources in the "Asset Inventory" to enhance their capacity to offer digital equity services.

Third, the Planning Team encourages collaboration between leaders in different key plan objectives and metrics, fostering connections between economic, healthcare, civic engagement, and other forums. For example, improving housing residents' digital access for public benefits, telehealth access, adult education, community college courses, apprenticeship programs, and digital navigator support, aligning with the state plan's commitment to digital equity and systemic inclusion.

Fourth, educating New Hampshire's philanthropic, hospital Community Benefit, and bank Community Reinvestment leaders on removing digital divide barriers shows promise. The goal is to encourage these investors to incorporate digital equity into their philanthropic portfolios. The national "One Percent for Digital Equity" campaign proposes that if banks commit just 1% of their annual Community Reinvestment Act compliance spending to digital equity, it will generate $5 billion in sustained annual funding yearly. Banks' inclination to allocate CRA resources consistently supports the potential for sustained support beyond federal digital equity and broadband funds.

APPENDIX 1: WHERE NTIA REQUIREMENTS ARE ADDRESSED IN THE PLAN

STATUTORY REQUIREMENT	SECTION ADDRESSED IN THE PLAN
1. Identification of barriers to digital equity faced by Covered Populations in the State.	Section VI
2. Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting, among each Covered Population located in that State	Section III
3. An assessment of how the measurable objectives identified will impact and interact with the State's: • Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes; • Educational outcomes; • Health outcomes; • Civic and social engagement; and • Delivery of other essential services.	Section III
4. A description of how the State plans to collaborate with key stakeholders in the State.	Sections IV and V
5. A list of organizations with which the Administering Entity for the State collaborated in developing the Plan.	Section V
ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	SECTION ADDRESSED IN THE PLAN
1. A stated vision for digital equity.	Section III
2. A digital equity needs assessment.	Section VI
3. An asset inventory.	Section VI
4. A coordination and outreach strategy, including opportunities for public comment by, collaboration with, and ongoing engagement with representatives of each category of covered populations within the State and with the full range of stakeholders within the State	Section IV and V
5. A description of how municipal, regional, and/or Tribal digital equity plans will be incorporated into the State Digital Equity Plan.	Section III
6. An implementation strategy that is holistic and addresses the barriers to participation in the digital world, including affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and digital navigation. The strategy should (a) establish measurable goals, objectives, and	Section III

proposed core activities to address the needs of covered populations, (b) set out measures ensuring the plan's sustainability and effectiveness across State communities, and (c) adopt mechanisms to ensure that the plan is regularly evaluated and updated	
7. An explanation of how the implementation strategy addresses gaps in existing state, local, and private efforts to address the barriers.	Section III
8. A description of how the State intends to accomplish the implementation strategy described above by engaging or partnering with: Workforce agencies, labor organizations and community-based organizations; and institutions of higher learning.	Sections III and IV
9. A timeline for implementation of the plan	Section IV
10. A description of how the State will coordinate its use of State Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding and its use of any funds it receives in connection with the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, other federal or private digital equity funding.	Section IV

APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Below is a list of terms essential for understanding and implementing the New Hampshire Digital Equity Plan's objectives and strategies.

Accessibility: People with different abilities have an equal opportunity to the physical tools and virtual environments needed to acquire the same information, visit the same places, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as persons without different abilities.

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP): And FCC benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare, and more.

Broadband: High-speed internet access that allows for the transmission of large amounts of data at fast speeds, enabling various online activities such as streaming, video conferencing, and more.

Broadband Infrastructure: The physical and technological components required for the delivery of broadband services, including fiber-optic cables, cell towers, and network equipment.

Community Anchor Institutions: Large and often public institutions, such as universities, community colleges, schools, public housing, public libraries, hospitals, nonprofits, and other institutions that are rooted in place and serve as economic engines in the communities they serve.

Covered Populations: Specific vulnerable populations identified in federal law, including (1) low-income households, (2) seniors, (3) incarcerated individuals, (4) veterans, (5) individuals with disabilities, (6) individuals with a language barrier, (7) racial and ethnic minorities, (8) rural residents.

Devices: Types of equipment that can be used to connect to the internet. Examples include desktop computers, laptop computers, tablets, notebook computers, handheld computers, and smartphones.

Digital Access Centers: Facilities or locations where individuals can access computers and the internet for educational, employment, or other purposes, often in underserved areas.

Digital Divide: The gap that exists between those who have access to digital technologies and the internet and those who do not, often along lines of income, race, or geography.

Digital Divide Mapping: The process of identifying areas with limited broadband access to prioritize infrastructure development and digital inclusion efforts.

Digital Equity: The principle that all individuals and communities have equitable access to and use of digital technologies and the internet, regardless of socioeconomic status, location, or background.

Digital Inclusion: The effort to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, have access to and can effectively use digital technologies, including hardware, software, and the internet.

Digital Literacy: The suite of necessary skills associated with using technology to enable people to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information.

Digital Subscriber Line (DSL): A way to connect your home to the Internet. It uses a telephone wall jack and a telephone line. It allows phone calls to be made while the Internet is being used.

Download Speed: How fast you can download data from a server in the form of images, videos, text, files, and audio to your device, measured in Megabits per second (Mbps). See also upload speed.

E-Rate Program: A federal program that provides discounts on broadband services and equipment to eligible schools and libraries, helping to bridge the digital divide for educational institutions.

Fiber Optic Network: A high-speed data transmission technology using thin strands of glass or plastic (fibers) to transmit data as pulses of light, offering high bandwidth and low latency.

Speed Test: A tool or application used to measure the speed and quality of an internet connection, helping to identify areas with inadequate broadband access.

Telehealth: The use of digital technologies, such as video conferencing, to provide healthcare services remotely, especially useful in rural or underserved areas.

Underserved Communities: Populations that have limited access to reliable broadband internet due to geographical, economic, or other barriers.

Upload Speed: How fast you can send information from your computer to another device or server on the internet, measured in Megabits per second (Mbps). See also download speed.

APPENDIX 3: BEAD COLLABORATION

The Digital Equity Planning Team has worked closely with Mission Broadband's team charged by DBEA with developing NH's BEAD (Broadband Equity Access and Deployment) Plan. The BEAD team has been provided with comprehensive access and orientation both to all of the digital equity forum recordings, participant rosters, and detailed notes on insights garnered regarding NH's digital divide needs, assets and opportunities, as well as to invitations to co-present, since the BEAD planning contract was awarded, at all forums held with covered populations and leaders. Data from the digital equity survey and asset inventory have been shared in real time.

The BEAD planning team, BEA's Office of Broadband Initiatives, and the Digital Equity Planning Team have agreed that unexpended NH BEAD funds, if any, after financing broadband to unserved and unserved areas and not yet connected community anchor institutions, may be allocated for digital equity priorities not yet fully addressed through federal Digital Equity Capacity funding provided to the State.

APPENDIX 4: COOPERATIVE PROJECT AGREEMENT

COOPERATIVE PROJECT AGREEMENT
between the
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, Department of Business and Economic Affairs
and the
University of New Hampshire of the UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

A. This Cooperative Project Agreement (hereinafter "Project Agreement") is entered into by the State of New Hampshire, **Department of Business & Economic Affairs**, (hereinafter "State"), and the University System of New Hampshire, acting through **University of New Hampshire**, (hereinafter "Campus"), for the purpose of undertaking a project of mutual interest. This Cooperative Project shall be carried out under the terms and conditions of the Master Agreement for Cooperative Projects between the State of New Hampshire and the University System of New Hampshire dated November 13, 2002, except as may be modified herein.

B. This Project Agreement and all obligations of the parties hereunder shall become effective on the date the Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire approve this Project Agreement ("Effective date") and shall end on **06/30/24**. If the provision of services by Campus precedes the Effective date, all services performed by Campus shall be performed at the sole risk of Campus and in the event that this Project Agreement does not become effective, State shall be under no obligation to pay Campus for costs incurred or services performed; however, if this Project Agreement becomes effective, all costs incurred prior to the Effective date that would otherwise be allowable shall be paid under the terms of this Project Agreement.

C. The work to be performed under the terms of this Project Agreement is described in the proposal identified below and attached to this document as Exhibit A, the content of which is incorporated herein as a part of this Project Agreement.

Project Title: **New Hampshire Digital Equity Planning Grant Plan**

D. The Following Individuals are designated as Project Administrators. These Project Administrators shall be responsible for the business aspects of this Project Agreement and all invoices, payments, project amendments and related correspondence shall be directed to the individuals so designated.

State Project Administrator	**Campus Project Administrator**
Name: Wayne Goulet	Name: Karen Jensen
Address: NH Department of Business & Economic Affairs 100 North Main Street, Suite 100 Concord, NH 03301	Address: University of New Hampshire 51 College Road Durham, NH 03824
Phone: 603-271-4846	Phone: 603-862-2172

E. The Following Individuals are designated as Project Directors. These Project Directors shall be responsible for the technical leadership and conduct of the project. All progress reports, completion reports and related correspondence shall be directed to the individuals so designated.

State Project Director	**Campus Project Director**
Name: Matthew Conserva	Name: Charles French
Address: NH Department of Business & Economic Affairs 100 North Main Street, Suite 100 Concord, NH 03301	Address: University of New Hampshire 59 College Road Durham, NH 03824
Phone: 603-271-4963	Phone: 603-862-0316

Campus Authorized Official _KJ_
Date _6/6/23_

F. Total State funds in the amount of $511,216.00 have been allotted and are available for payment of allowable costs incurred under this Project Agreement. State will not reimburse Campus for costs exceeding the amount specified in this paragraph.

Check if applicable
☐ Campus will cost-share _____ % of total costs during the term of this Project Agreement.

☒ Federal funds paid to Campus under this Project Agreement are from Grant/Contract/Cooperative Agreement No. **33-30-DP065** from U.S. **Department of Commerce** under CFDA#**11.032** . Federal regulations required to be passed through to Campus as part of this Project Agreement, and in accordance with the Master Agreement for Cooperative Projects between the State of New Hampshire and the University System of New Hampshire dated November 13, 2002, are attached to this document as Exhibit B, the content of which is incorporated herein as a part of this Project Agreement.

G. Check if applicable
☐ Article(s) _____ of the Master Agreement for Cooperative Projects between the State of New Hampshire and the University System of New Hampshire dated November 13, 2002 is/are hereby amended to read:

H. ☒ State has chosen not to take possession of equipment purchased under this Project Agreement.
☐ State has chosen to take possession of equipment purchased under this Project Agreement and will issue instructions for the disposition of such equipment within 90 days of the Project Agreement's end-date. Any expenses incurred by Campus in carrying out State's requested disposition will be fully reimbursed by State.

This Project Agreement and the Master Agreement constitute the entire agreement between State and Campus regarding this Cooperative Project, and supersede and replace any previously existing arrangements, oral or written; all changes herein must be made by written amendment and executed for the parties by their authorized officials.
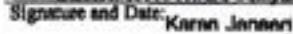
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the University System of New Hampshire, acting through the University of New Hampshire and the State of New Hampshire, **Department of Business and Economic Affairs** have executed this Project Agreement.

By An Authorized Official of:
University of New Hampshire
Name: Karen Jensen
Title: Director of Pre-Award Compliance
Signature and Date: Karen Jensen

By An Authorized Official of: the New Hampshire Office of the Attorney General
Name: Mark W. Dell'Orfano
Title: Attorney
Signature and Date: 06/14/2023

By An Authorized Official of:
Business and Economic Affairs
Name: Taylor Caswell
Title: Commissioner
Signature and Date: 6/14/2023

By An Authorized Official of: the New Hampshire Governor & Executive Council
Name:
Title:
Signature and Date: JUN 2 8 2023

SECRETARY OF STATE

Campus Authorized Official KJ
Date 6/6/23

APPENDIX 5: ASSET INVENTORY SURVEY RESPONSES: DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSTION VISION AND NEEDS

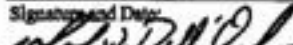| What is your organization's vision for digital equity & inclusion?	What would your organization need to achieve that vision?
All refugees and immigrants in New Hampshire have affordable internet access and the tools to use it effectively.	Dollars to continue providing digital literacy programs.
[our organization] strives to facilitate the reutilization of gently used devices and parts so assistive technologies are available to any who need them.	Funding, volunteers, awareness building, new adaptive technologies, partnerships
Available & affordable access necessary to live in today's digital environment.	
Creating and sustaining an inclusive library community where all patrons are welcomed and valued.	A.D.A. compliance helps in physical structure and online resources. Adaptive tools. Foreign language materials. Training.
[our organization] vision is to help support the citizens we serve by ensuring their digital equity needs are met. It's critical that NH citizens have access to laptops, and such equipment in order to navigate everyday life needs. This would include all of the elements found within the social determinants of health.	In many instances it comes down to having adequate funding to support the vision. Additionally, having the resources to organizations within the state to mitigate obstacles to digital equity needs.
Digital access for all refugee families.	Free Wi-Fi, free cell phones, possibly free laptops
Equity: Provide more devices and information to library patrons; educate staff members on digital equity and inclusion. Inclusion: Purchase more hotspots, laptops/Chromebook as checkout kits; hold "tech" classes that discuss digital access, security and safety.	Funding for devices and another staff member to assist with classes and cataloging items.
Full access (including end user comfort, confidence, knowledge, and access) for NH residents to participate in formal and informal health and educational activities, including the full range of telehealth and educational activities.	Ubiquitous, inexpensive or free broadband and mobile coverage across the state. Resources to provide individual and organization training to support full use of the technology.
Improving access for our ELL workers to career development.	Laptop computers and better broadband bandwidth.
Our Library's goal for digital equity has always been for everyone in our local community to have immediate access to digital technologies and resources, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. The ongoing challenge has been to develop and leverage infrastructure, tools and resources needed to bridge the digital divide and ensure equal access to digital resources, information, and opportunities for our local community.	Language resources with focus on English as a second language for our large Nepalese community; audio technologies for our hearing-impaired patrons, and vision technologies for our visually impaired patrons; broadband access; staff training.
Our vision for digital equity and inclusion is that everyone would have access to training that would teach them to use digital tools, preferably by trained	Access to trained, reliable volunteers and funding for mobile printing.

volunteers through a program like AmeriCorps. Librarians do a lot of tech help and troubleshooting, but we have many roles to fulfill in our communities and acting as digital navigators for everyone who needs it is not feasible for us. Mobile printing is also something that is often requested by our patrons and would serve a wide variety of demographics (such as people who only use cell phones), but at the moment this service is not funded by our town budget.	
Our vision is to promote ideas that can improve access to communication and information through the internet and cell service for Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing people.	Funding for: 1. staff to provide technical assistance to consumers who need help getting connected to the internet or cell service; 2. to purchase devices that are not otherwise available in other programs (i.e. ATinNH, Telephone Equipment Assistance Program, National Deafblind Equipment Distribution Program) for consumers to use; and 3. staff to provide technical evaluations to help consumers determine what devices and services would meet their needs.
That all residents have adequate digital resilience to participate in their communities, families and work effectively.	Tech Coordinators to manage devices, tech integrators to teach digital literacy and train teachers to integrate digital literacy skills into their curriculum, Paid teacher training time, money to maintain equipment, for students to have access to reliable internet, quality devices and the skills to use them.
That all seniors will have access to digital devices and have the training and broadband access to use them for social inclusion, telehealth, and information search.	Greater cooperation with health care providers to offer and use telehealth.
[our organization] shall strive to provide quality services and materials to meet the cultural, educational and informational needs of our diverse and changing community.	Continued community support and funding.
[our organization] is an interprofessional center for digital health learning and application. Our mission is to promote digital health education, research, and development with an interprofessional approach to teaching, service, and community initiatives. Our vision is to foster the exploration, innovation, and utilization of digital health technologies to support health and wellbeing through increased access to care and professional training.	Through our current and future projects, we are helping to build New Hampshire future workforce with an emphasis on rural. We are rolling out programming with rural partners to engage community members in telerehabilitation programming run by our students and faculty. Through this programming we aim to provide greater access to health resources for individuals in rural areas. We have a goal of creating a train the training program, but mostly need funding to hire individuals at our rural sites. These individuals will be guided by [our organization] and trained on best practices in collaboration with local entities. Educational programming will then be implemented on the local level.
To help our students secure affordable connectivity and devices that work for them.	Affordable internet and smart devices.

To provide access to the resources of the Internet to all members of the community without charge.	Devices for public to use; preferably that they can borrow and take home; expanded bandwidth for number of users.
Trustworthy New Hampshire news and information should be available to all New Hampshire residents via the media platforms they access.	We need investment in our Spanish-language news service. We also need investment in our digital production capacity.
We are committed to providing access to the internet and technology along with the learning resources our patrons need in order to use these tools effectively to enhance their lives.	We need funding and infrastructure for internet connections at speeds that allow patrons to have full use of emerging online tools and information. We need staff positions and staff development that allows us to provide assistance in the best ways for patrons in our community.
We are currently working to upgrade our 1924 building for better Wi-Fi connectivity which includes installing 26 access points that are more powerful so that all students and teachers can access the Internet, at the same time, during classes or anytime they need to. We also want to increase the number of NorthStar Digital Literacy classes we offer.	We need funds for new access points, cables, and labor. We need money for more NorthStar teachers.
We are involved with NorthStar and have the ability to do classes.	Money for laptops.
We believe everyone should have equitable access to digital services and are interested in how we can assist.	
We believe in the importance of information accessibility for a healthy democracy and support the critical evaluation of information in all its forms to ensure its reliability.	A sustained message, and support to communicate that message, about the importance of digital equity. A planned effort to promote the library as a leader in digital equity with monetary support to promote the educational opportunities the library provides. Public.
We envision everyone in the community having reliable (affordable) broadband internet access, including the library.	We would need funds to purchase more computers/laptops and a hot spot.
We hope to ensure that all of our students have access to a computer and internet at all times.	We would need more laptops to add to our Computer Loaner Program, as well as hotspots.
We need all students to be able to have reliable Wi-Fi and devices so they can access classes from anywhere.	We need funds for more Chromebooks.
We want to be able to upgrade all technology when needed and offer classes/workshops for teaching others how to use it.	Funds.
We would like to see every home with access to internet and to be able to offer technology classes on a broader basis.	Money for staffing and a partner for broadband for all.
Zoom capable computers, stronger bandwidth to connect citizens with needed resources.	New technology.

APPENDIX 6: DIGITAL EQUITY ASSET ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

AARP New Hampshire	Christina Fitzpatrick
Bank On New Hampshire	Dr. Mary Ford
DEI Directive	Malobi Achike
Diversity Workforce Coalition	Monica Zulauf
Endowment for Health	Melina Hill Walker
Get Tech Smart	Flo Nicholas
Granite State News Collaborative	Melanie Plenda
Granite United Way	Paula Gay and Stephanie Turek
Harbor Care	Bill Belecz and David Tille
Laconia Housing Authority	Tom Cochran
Manchester Housing and Urban Development	Ashlyne Lawrence
NAACP Manchester	James McKim
National ABIDE Leaders Network (Accessibility, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity & Equity)	Jenelle Leonard
National Ctr. for Competency-Based Learning	Fred Bramante
National Education Association – NH	Dr. Irv Richardson
NeighborWorks Southern NH	Paul McLaughlin
NH Afterschool Network	Shelli Roberts & Kim Meyer
NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions	Mike Tardiff
NH Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	Dana Foulds
NH Center for Nonprofits	Kathleen Reardan
NH Charitable Foundation	Michael Turmelle
NH Commission on Aging	Rebecca Sky
NH Dept. of Corrections	Nicholas Duffy, Scott Young and John Maddaus
NH DOE Office of Adult Education	Sarah Wheeler
NH DOE Office of Career & Technical Education	Jeff Beard
NH DHHS Office of Health Equity	Reuben Hampton

NH DHHS Whole Family Approach to Jobs/NH Works	Gene Patnode
NH Dept. of Information Technology	Denis Goulet
NH Dept. of Military Affairs	Dep. Adj. General Warren M. Perry
NH Manufacturing Extension Partnership	Tony Fernandez and Zenagui Brahim
NH Municipal Association	Margaret Byrnes
NH National Guard	Brenton Fraser
NH Public Radion	Jim Schachter
NH State Library	Bobbi Slossar
NH Tech Alliance	Julie Demers
Northeast Deaf & Hard of Hearing	Kristi Stellati
United Way of Greater Nashua	Michael Apfelberg
University of New Hampshire Center for Impact Finance	Dr. Michael Swack
University of New Hampshire GRANIT	David Justice
US Department of Labor, Apprenticeship Programming for Care Economy	Lauren Smith and Wynn Young
Welcoming New Hampshire	David Holt

APPENDIX 7: CURRENT STATE OF BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY, NEEDS, AND ASSETS

Introduction

This section begins with an overview of residential broadband availability and broadband adoption statewide, before providing a breakdown of digital equity needs and barriers by covered population. The residential internet service, adoption, and device data from existing data sources (NTIA, ACS, etc.) provide a Statewide Baseline. Significant digital equity issues impacting each covered population are then highlighted from our statewide survey data and ripple mapping focus group findings. This section concludes with an overview of a list of digital equity assets that exist across the state, gathered through our asset inventory survey.

Methodology

To develop a baseline understanding of the current state of broadband adoption and broadband availability, including the digital equity needs of covered populations in New Hampshire, we compiled data from several sources, and aggregated over New Hampshire's nine Regional Planning Commission areas. The University of New Hampshire Extension team determined that examining the needs of New Hampshire residents within each of the nine Regional Planning Commission regions would best facilitate broad engagement across the state, as New Hampshire moves into implementation.

The baseline profiles for New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission areas were produced early in the UNH team's planning process, specifically to guide both community outreach and to inform the development of questions in the state-wide digital equity and inclusion survey. Combined, the baseline data profiles, and the additional data collected in the state-wide survey make up the needs assessment used in this report.

The following existing data sources were used to produce New Hampshire's baseline understanding of digital equity and inclusion needs:

Data Source	Baseline Data Metrics
NTIA/US Census, DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023 https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html	Total state population and breakdown by New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission areas Number of estimated residents in each Covered Population group within each New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission area Percentage of households lacking a computing device or a broadband subscription, within each New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission area
US Census, American Community Survey 2021 5 Year Estimates https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/	Percentage of residents with internet subscriptions of various types (dial-up, cellular, fixed broadband, satellite, other, and those with no internet access

2020 US Decennial Census https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/2020-census-main.html	Percentage of residents by race/ethnicity within each New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission area
GRANIT New Hampshire Political Boundaries - https://www.nhgeodata.unh.edu/datasets/NHGRANIT::new-hampshire-political-boundaries/explore	New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission geographic areas

Broadband Availability

This section provides an analysis of served, underserved, and unserved locations presented by Mission Broadband in the BEAD Volume 1 Draft. This data provides a picture of broadband availability across the state using the Federal Communications Commission's data from the FCC's Broadband DATA Map as of December 31, 2022, and updated October 10, 2023.

Key Findings

The data show that New Hampshire has 517,584 total locations with 481,308, or 93 percent, served with speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps.

- **Served**: 481,308 locations with speeds greater than 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload (100/20)

- **Underserved**: 10,153 locations with speeds less than 100/20 Mbps and greater than or equal to 25/3 Mbps

- **Unserved**: 26,123 locations with speeds less than 25/3 Mbps.

- **Note**: There are no federally recognized tribal lands in New Hampshire.

Map of Served Locations *

Last updated 10/10/23 - BDC as of December 21st 2022
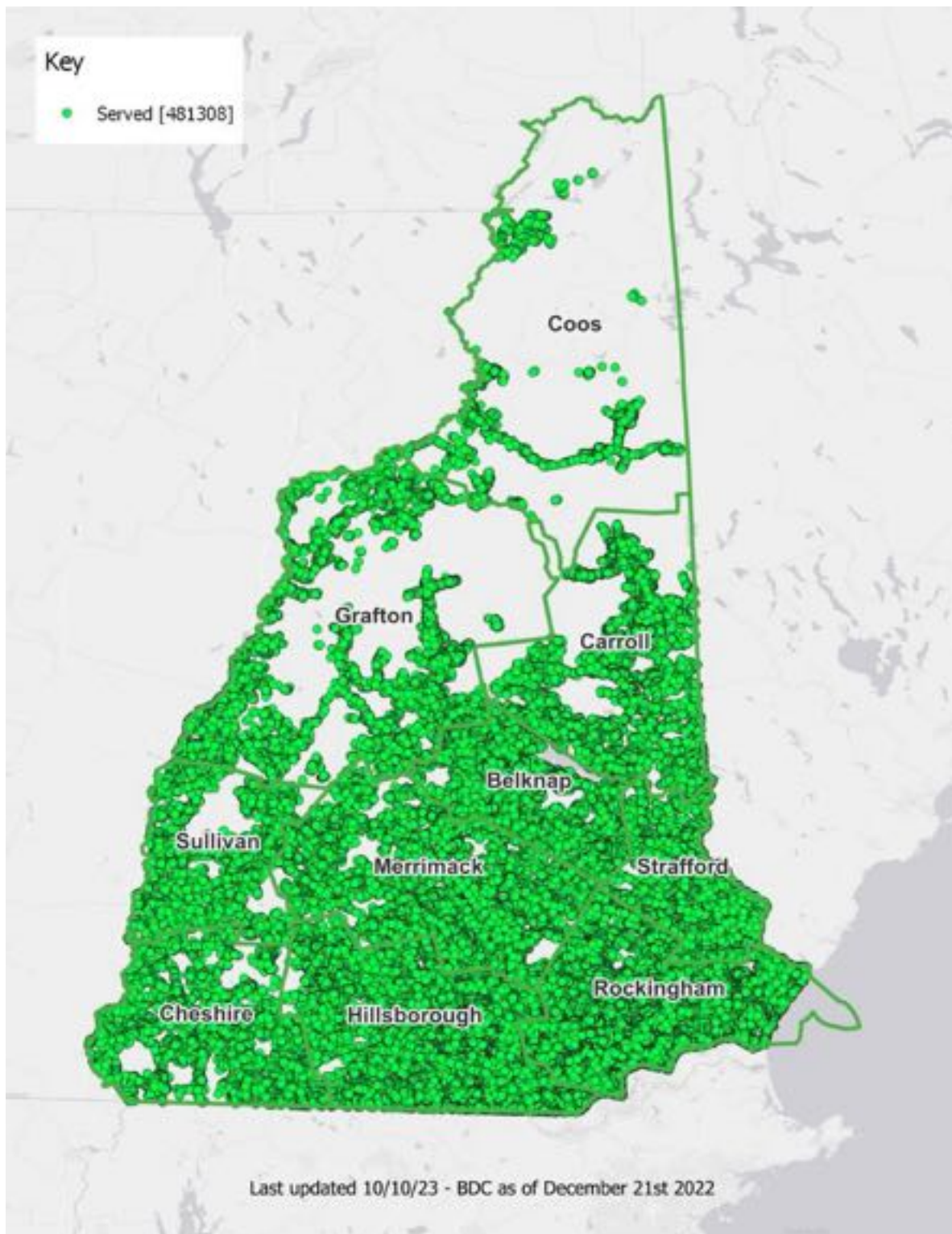
* 481,308 locations with speeds greater than 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload (100/20). (Map courtesy of Mission Broadband)

Map of Underserved Locations *
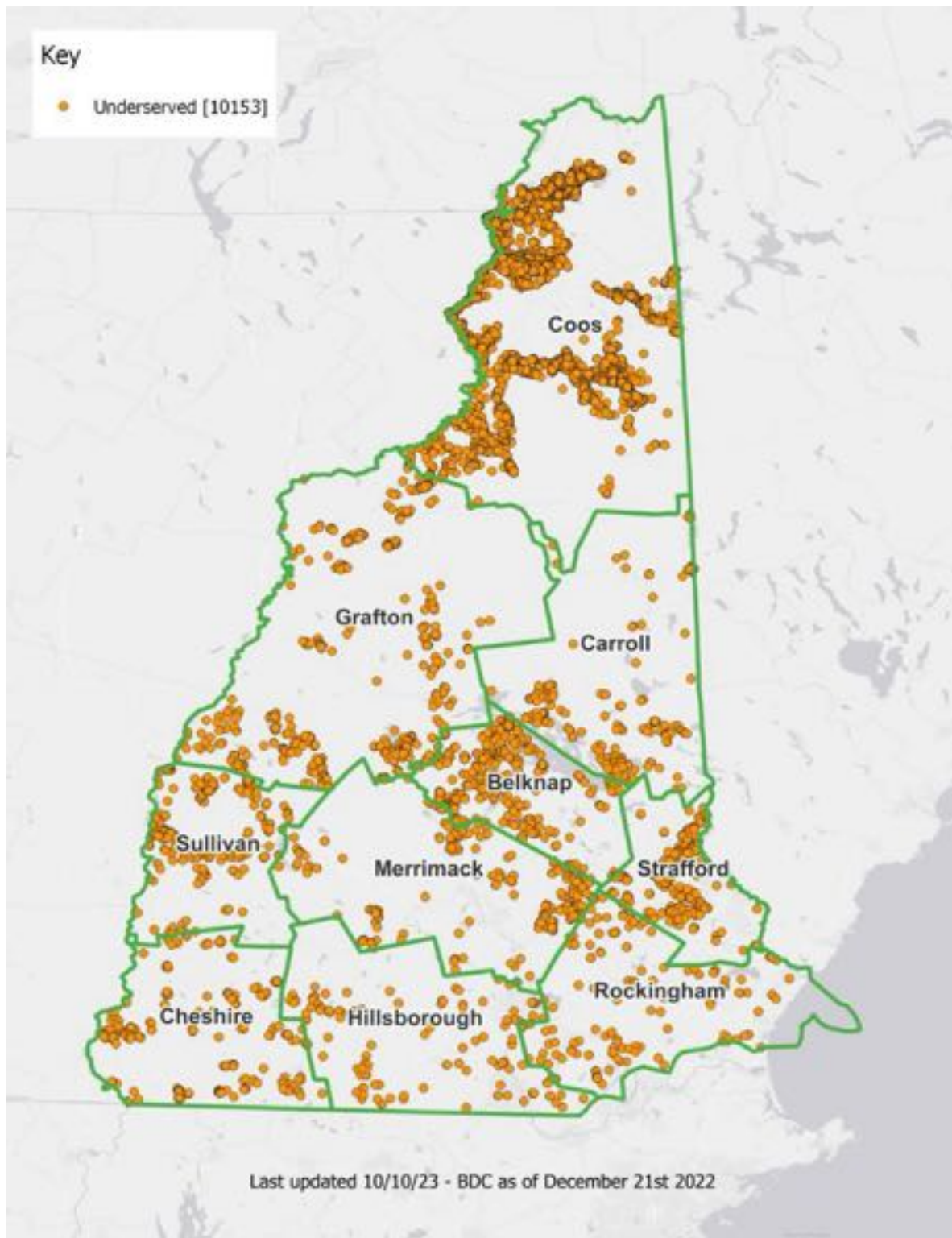
* 10,153 locations with speeds less than 100/20 Mbps and greater than or equal to 25/3 Mbps. (Map courtesy of Mission Broadband)

Map of Unserved Locations *

Last updated 10/10/23 - BDC as of December 21st 2022
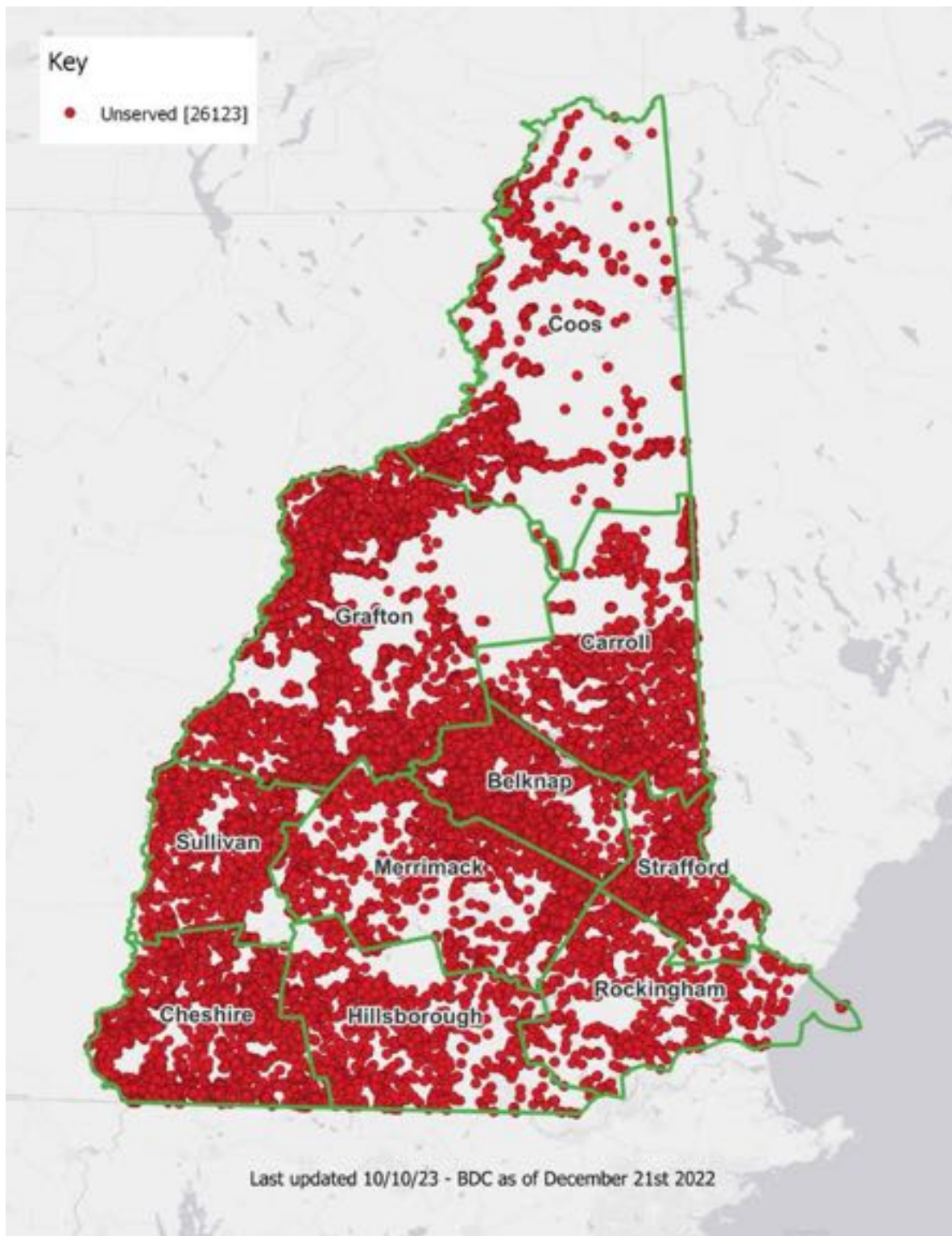
* 26,123 locations with speeds less than 25/3 Mbps. (Map courtesy of Mission Broadband)

Broadband Adoption

Broadband adoption is measured by the number of households with an internet subscription. Data from the American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates show that 89% of households in New Hampshire subscribe to broadband internet access. 6.5% of households have a cellar data plan only and 8% of all households in the state have no internet access of any kind.
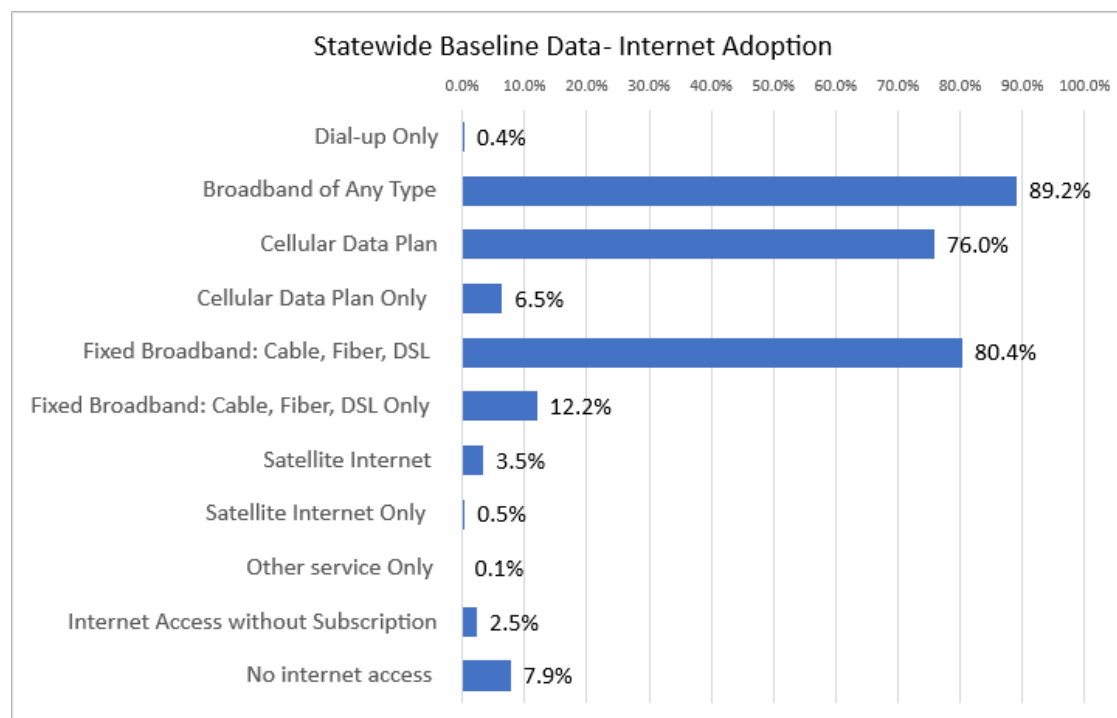
Uses population estimates based on the 2019 ACS 1 Year file.

Broadband Adoption Breakdown by Income, Age, Education, and Race

Income

The table below presents New Hampshire households' income in the last 12 months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Presence and Type of Internet Subscription in the Household, from the US Census American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates (table B28004).

Household Income & Type of Internet Subscription	Population Estimate	Population Percentage	Margin of Error
Total Population - New Hampshire	540,498		±1,974
Less than $10,000:	18,333	3%	±1,185
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	87	0.02%	±56
With a broadband Internet subscription	12,495	2%	±922
Without an Internet subscription	5,751	1%	±683
$10,000 to $19,999:	31,819	6%	±1,517
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	150	0.03%	±67
With a broadband Internet subscription	20,720	4%	±1,188
Without an Internet subscription	10,949	2%	±954
$20,000 to $34,999:	53,499	10%	±1,895

With dial-up Internet subscription alone	280	0.05%	±106
With a broadband Internet subscription	40,884	8%	±1,615
Without an Internet subscription	12,335	2%	±1,011
$35,000 to $49,999:	53,522	10%	±1,789
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	317	0.06%	±98
With a broadband Internet subscription	46,311	9%	±1,752
Without an Internet subscription	6,894	1%	±614
$50,000 to $74,999:	86,088	16%	±2,029
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	318	0.06%	±115
With a broadband Internet subscription	78,761	15%	±1,809
Without an Internet subscription	7,009	1%	±707
$75,000 or more:	297,237	55%	±2,875
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	427	0.08%	±113
With a broadband Internet subscription	287,694	53%	±2,925
Without an Internet subscription	9,116	2%	±716

Education

The table below presents New Hampshire's Educational Attainment by Presence and Type of Internet Subscription in the Household, from the US Census American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates (table B28006).

Educational Attainment by Presence of a Computer and Types of Internet Subscription in Household	Population Estimate	Population Percentage	Margin of Error
Total Population - New Hampshire	970,185		±574
Less than high school graduate or equivalency:	59,509	6%	±1,918
Has a computer:	51,138	5%	±1,778
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	171	0.02%	±68
With a broadband Internet subscription	45,774	5%	±1,633
Without an Internet subscription	5,193	1%	±756
No computer	8,371	1%	±771
High school graduate (includes equivalency), some college or associate's degree:	**535,748**	**55%**	**±4,180**
Has a computer:	509,432	53%	±4,227
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	1,447	0.15%	±276
With a broadband Internet subscription	483,582	50%	±4,066
Without an Internet subscription	24,403	3%	±1,555
No computer	26,316	3%	±1,569
Bachelor's degree or higher:	374,928	39%	±4,561
Has a computer:	370,229	38%	±4,551

With dial-up Internet subscription alone	824	0.08%	±249
With a broadband Internet subscription	361,435	37%	±4,479
Without an Internet subscription	7,970	1%	±1,013
No computer	4,699	0.48%	±552

Age

The table below presents New Hampshire residents' Age by Presence and Type of Internet Subscription in the Household, from the US Census American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates (table B28005).

Age by Presence of a Computer and Types of Internet Subscription in Household	Population Estimate	Population Percentage	Margin of Error
Total Population - New Hampshire	1,332,094		
Under 18 years:	259,916	20%	±202
Has a computer:	258,112	19%	±515
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	290	0.02%	±198
With a broadband Internet subscription	250,495	19%	±1,041
Without an Internet subscription	7,327	1%	±930
No computer	1,804	0.14%	±469
18 to 64 years:	830,500	62%	±430
Has a computer:	814,902	61%	±1,428
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	1,047	0.08%	±305
With a broadband Internet subscription	784,719	59%	±2,825
Without an Internet subscription	29,136	2%	±2,179
No computer	15,598	1%	±1,396
65 years and over:	241,678	18%	±436
Has a computer:	216,863	16%	±1,282
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	1,494	0.11%	±272
With a broadband Internet subscription	202,518	15%	±1,556
Without an Internet subscription	12,851	1%	±1,086
No computer	24,815	2%	±1,210

Race/Ethnicity

The table below presents New Hampshire residents' Race/Ethnicity by Presence of a Computer and Type of Internet Subscription in the Household, from the US Census American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates (tables B28009A, B28009B, B28009C, B28009D, B28009E, B28009F, B28009G B28009I).

American Indian or Alaska Native (ACS Table B28009C)	Population Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	1,921	±307
Has a computer:	1,872	±304
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	4	±8

	Population Estimate	Margin of Error
With a broadband Internet subscription	1,752	±303
Without an Internet subscription	116	±85
No Computer	49	±28
Asian or Asian American (ACS Table B28009D)	**Population Estimate**	**Margin of Error**
Total:	35,185	±969
Has a computer:	34,532	±990
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	19	±32
With a broadband Internet subscription	33,462	±1,047
Without an Internet subscription	1,051	±411
No Computer	653	±259
Black or African American (ACS Table B28009B)	**Population Estimate**	**Margin of Error**
	19,	
Has a computer:	18,811	±1,126
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	6	±12
With a broadband Internet subscription	17,940	±1,210
Without an Internet subscription	865	±406
No Computer	569	±271
Hispanic or Latino (ACS Table B28009I)	**Population Estimate**	**Margin of Error**
Total:	53,374	±333
Has a computer:	52,369	±479
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	9	±11
With a broadband Internet subscription	50,309	±893
Without an Internet subscription	2,051	±793
No Computer	1,005	±281
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (ACS Table B28009E)	**Population Estimate**	**Margin of Error**
Total:	482	±220
Has a computer:	389	±211
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	8	±14
With a broadband Internet subscription	304	±164
Without an Internet subscription	77	±120
No Computer	93	±62
Some Other Race (ACS Table B28009F)	**Population Estimate**	**Margin of Error**
Total:	10,872	±1,394
Has a computer:	10,634	±1,383
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	0	±28
With a broadband Internet subscription	10,311	±1,424

	Population Estimate	Margin of Error
Without an Internet subscription	323	±258
No Computer	238	±113
Two or More Races (ACS Table B28009G)	**Population Estimate**	**Margin of Error**
Total:	88,356	±6,984
Has a computer:	86,632	±6,856
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	258	±431
With a broadband Internet subscription	83,143	±6,871
Without an Internet subscription	3,231	±1,295
No Computer	1,724	±808
White or Caucasian (ACS Table B28009A)	**Population Estimate**	**Margin of Error**
Total:	1,215,287	±2,265
Has a computer:	1,175,601	±3,173
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	2,772	±527
With a broadband Internet subscription	1,127,610	±4,293
Without an Internet subscription	45,219	±2,719
No Computer	39,686	±2,085

Statewide Survey Results

Introduction and Methodology

US Census data presented above only addresses one category of need. To supplement this baseline understanding of digital equity needs in New Hampshire, a survey was developed and distributed statewide to identify residents' needs and gather additional data across all measurable objectives.

To ensure that statewide survey responses were representative of covered populations in New Hampshire, baseline data population numbers for each covered population and for two additional at-risk population groups, were used to estimate the number of statewide survey responses needed from each covered population group at a state level.

For the additional covered population, "Native Americans, Members of Registered Tribe or Indigenous Community", population numbers from the 2020 Decennial Census were used to estimate the number of survey responses needed. The 2020 Decennial Census tracks "American Indian and Alaska Native" and "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" separately, mirroring our survey's individual demographic question "What is your race?". A demographic question was asked concerning household residents, responses for which align with the listed covered populations in the Digital Equity Act and additional at-risk populations. The Household Demographic question on covered populations provides the option "I am a Native American or belong to a registered tribe or indigenous community" which is a single answer related to indigeneity that combines the two Census demographic categories.

How target survey response numbers per covered population were calculated

In June 2023, the NTIA and US Census Bureau published the *Digital Equity Act Community Resilience Estimates*, compiled from the US Census American Community Survey, and the 2020 Decennial Census. This dataset provides population estimates at the census tract level for all covered populations.

W]Dr. John Horrigan, who was consulted on a target total sample size, advised that a sample size of 2,000 is generally enough to obtain decent subsamples of populations of interest (e.g., each covered population group). Each of these groups (with some obvious overlaps) comes to between 15% and 20% of the general population. If, for example, African Americans are 15% of the general population, a survey with 2,000 respondents will have about 300 African American respondents, which is a reasonable number of cases for reliable statistical analysis.

Based on this advice, a statewide target of 2500 surveys was set. To calculate the number of responses per covered population, the percentage of the total state population was calculated and multiplied 2500 by that percentage to get the number of target responses The target response number was then multiplied by the percentage of each covered population to get the target response rate for each covered population group.

Barriers to Broadband Adoption

For those who are unable to adopt broadband in New Hampshire, cost is the number one reason which corresponds with national data and trends on broadband adoption as reported by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Pew Research Center, and other research centers. The following responses come from our statewide survey of residents that resulted in 3,564 responses over a two-month period between September-November 2023.

The top three barriers to broadband adoption are below.

1. Cost

2. Internet service is not available

3. Do not have a computer

Statewide Survey - Are there other reasons you do not have home Internet?

Reason	Percentage
Internet service is not available	57%
Cost is too high	83%
Outstanding bill	4%
Service is unreliable	13%
Do not need it	2%
Do not have a computer	15%
Do not want it	0%
Concerned about safety and security	0%
Other	9%
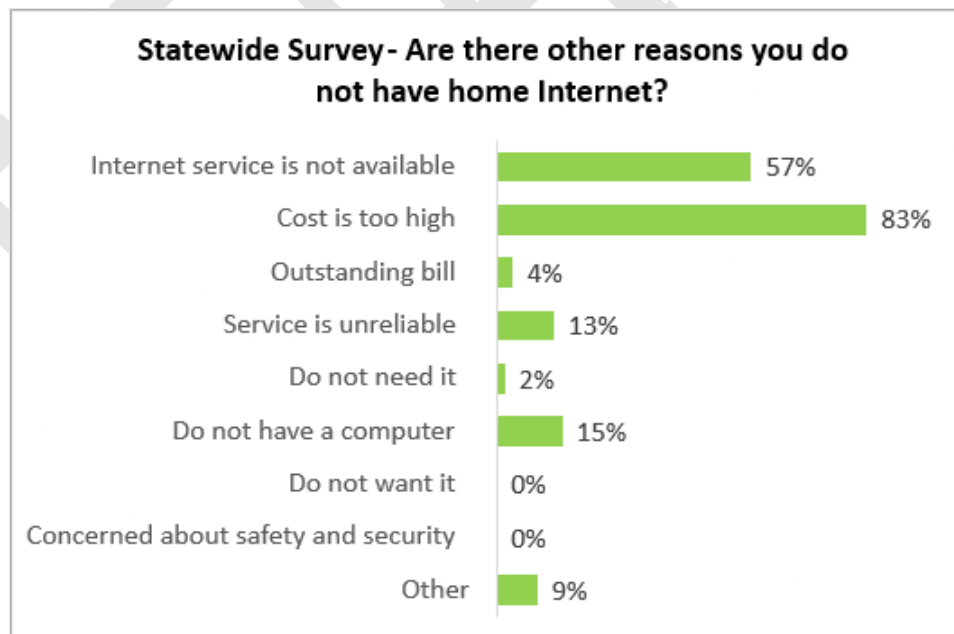
(Percentages based on 54 survey responses to the question: *Are there other reasons you do not have home internet other than cost? You can choose more than one answer.* Note: This question was only asked of respondents who answered "No" to the question: *Do you have internet at home?*)

Ability to Pay for Internet Service – Part I *

Statewide Survey - How much do you pay for internet each month?
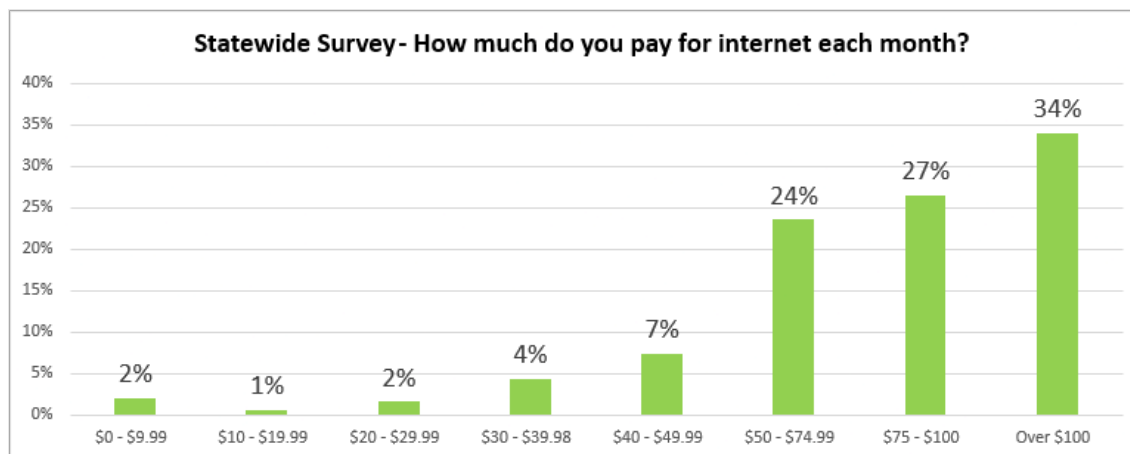
* (Percentages based on 3392 survey responses to the question: *How much do you pay for internet each month?*)

Ability to Pay for Internet Service – Part II*

Statewide Survey - How difficult is it to pay for your internet service each month?
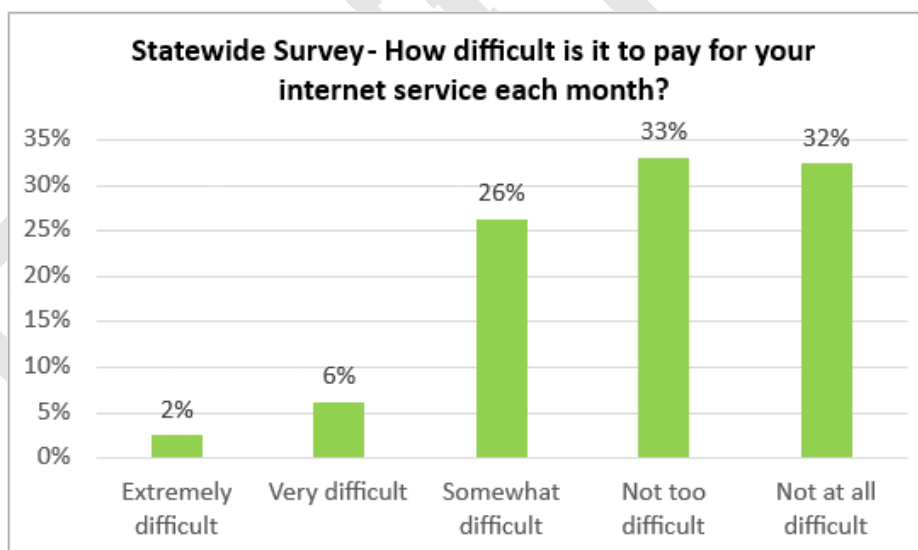
* (Percentages based on 3432 survey responses to the question: *How difficult is it to pay for your internet each month?*)

Ability to Pay for Internet Service – Part III *
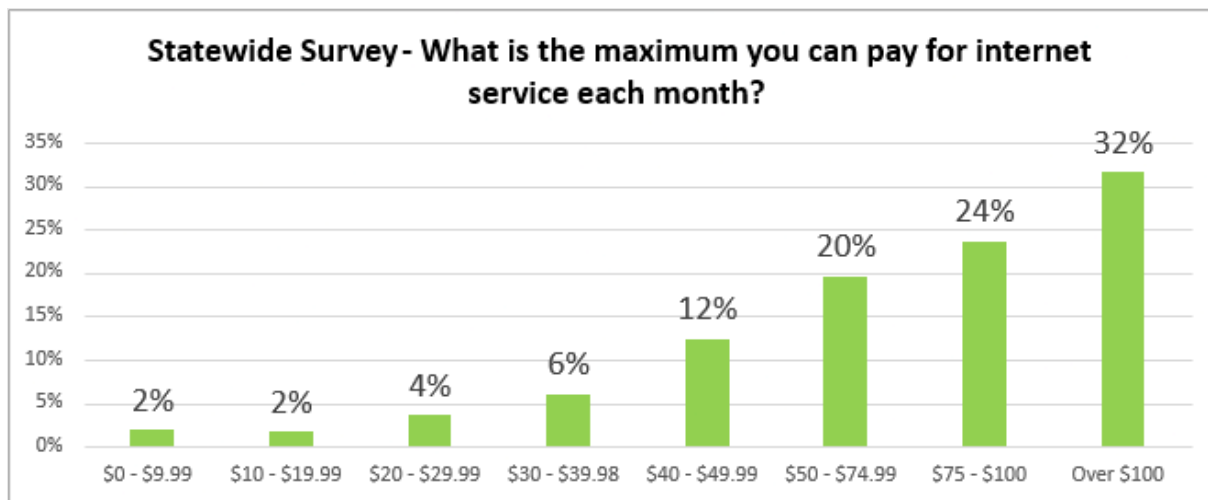
Statewide Survey - What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?

* (Percentages based on 3424 survey responses to the question: *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month? We're looking for a price per month in dollars.*)

Internet Access Outside the Home *

Statewide Survey - If you do not have Internet at home, where else do you get access?
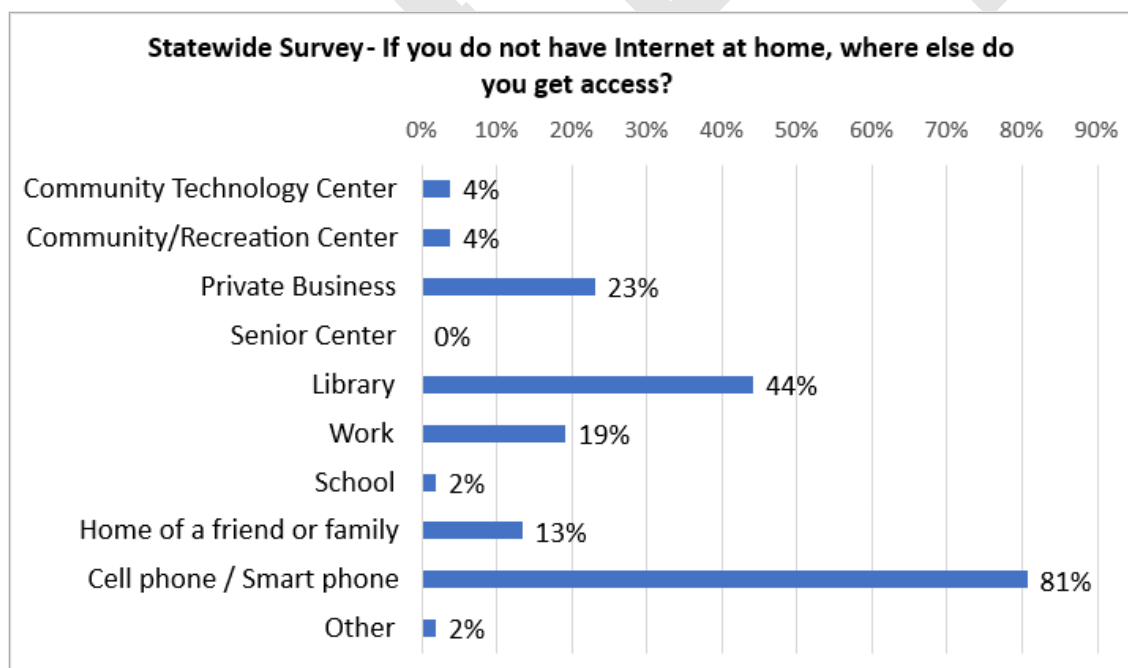
* (Percentages based on 52 survey responses to the question: *If you do not have internet at home, where else do you get access?* Note: This question was only asked of respondents who answered "No" to the question: *Do you have internet at home?*)

Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program *
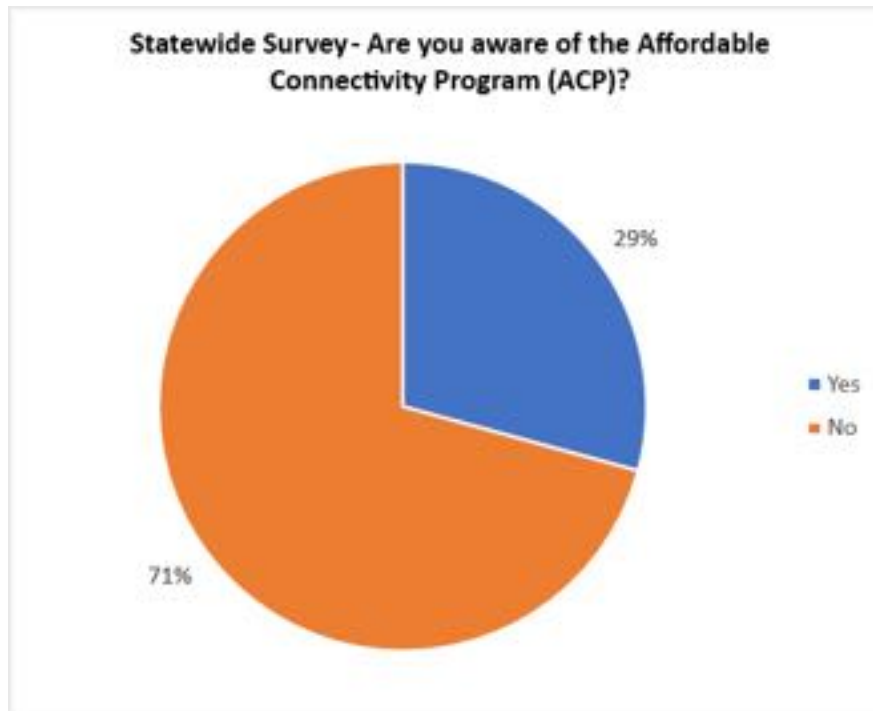
Statewide Survey - Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?

29% Yes
71% No

* (Percentages based on 3489 survey responses to the question: *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?*)

Additional Digital Equity Needs and Barriers Statewide

This section provides additional needs assessment data from our statewide survey of residents related to the following four areas: (1) the availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices; (2) digital skills and literacy; (3) awareness of, and the use of, measures to secure the online privacy of, and cybersecurity with respect to, an individual; and (4) the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services.

Part I – The Availability and Affordability of Consumer Devices and Technical Support

Device Ownership
Baseline data for the types of devices used in New Hampshire households comes from the American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates in ACS table: *B28010 Computers in Household*.
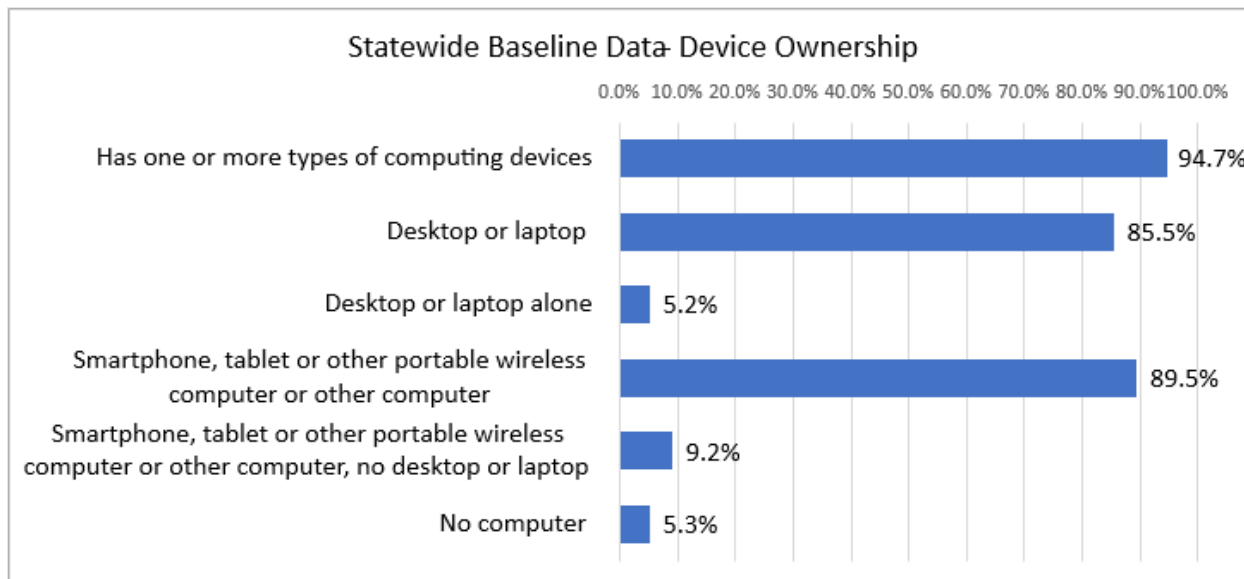
Statewide Baseline Data- Device Ownership

Category	Percentage
Has one or more types of computing devices	94.7%
Desktop or laptop	85.5%
Desktop or laptop alone	5.2%
Smartphone, tablet or other portable wireless computer or other computer	89.5%
Smartphone, tablet or other portable wireless computer or other computer, no desktop or laptop	9.2%
No computer	5.3%

Our statewide survey provided more details on the availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices, as expressed by New Hampshire survey respondents.

Device Availability *

Statewide Survey - Do you have enough technology equipment at home to complete your daily activities for personal reason, work, or school?

- Yes 92%
- No 6%
- Don't know 2%
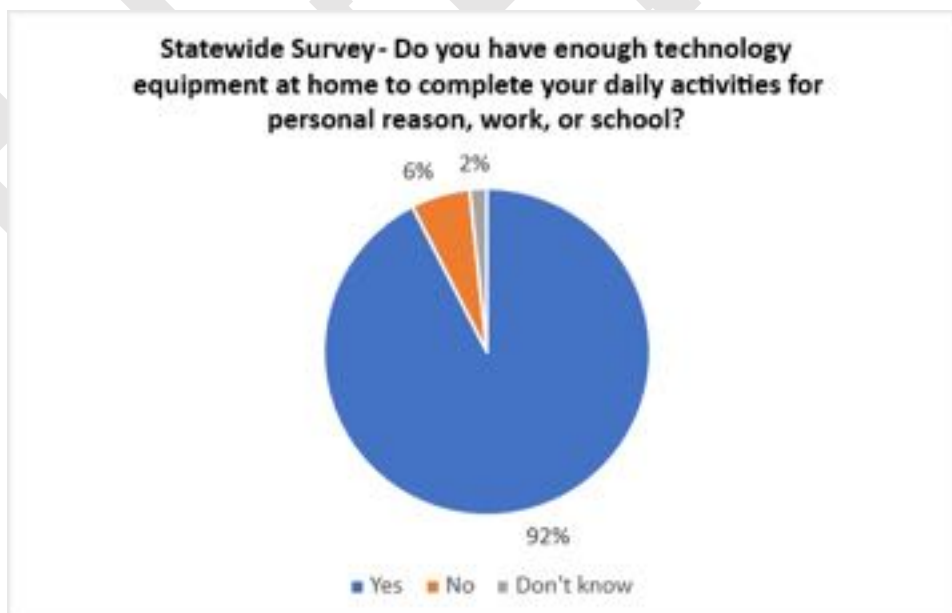
* (Percentages based on 3539 survey responses to the question: *Do you have enough technology equipment at home to complete your daily activities for personal reason, work, or school?*)

Device Affordability *
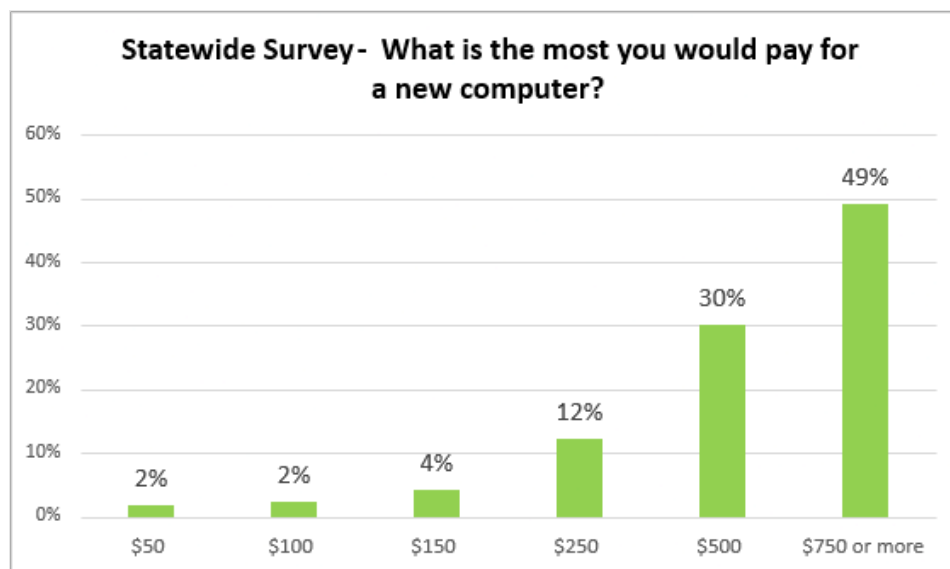
* (Percentages based on 3497 survey responses to the question: *What is the most you would pay for a new computer? A new computer in this case means a laptop or desktop with a keyboard, mouse, and monitor.*)

Digital Device Adoption *
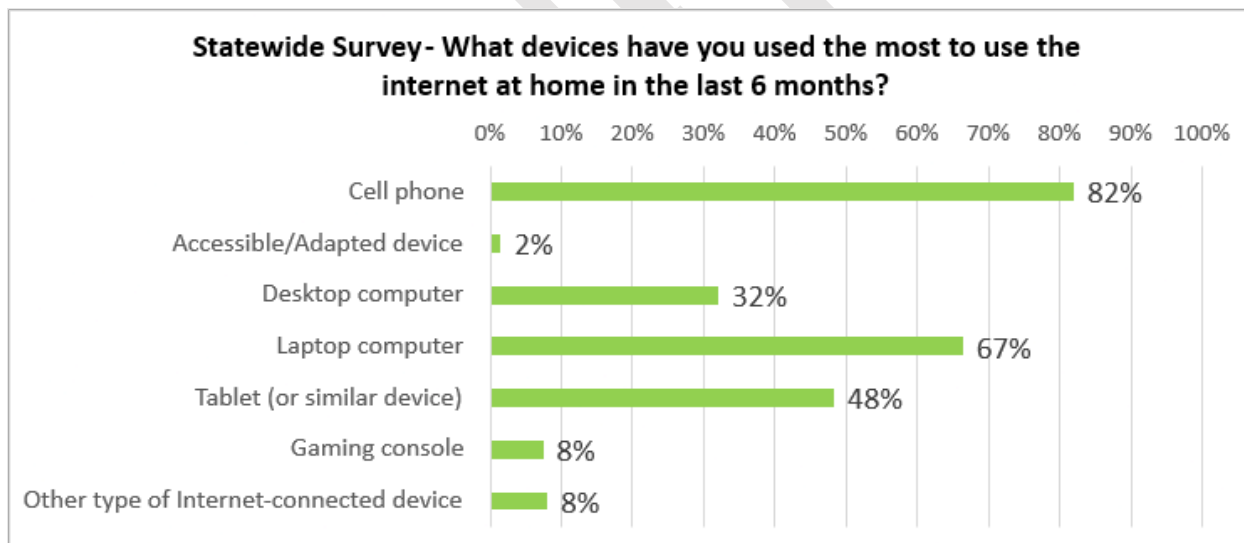
* (Percentages based on 3536 survey responses to the question: *What devices have you used the most to use the internet at home in the last 6 months? You can choose more than one answer.*)

Technical Issues *

Statewide Survey - In the past 6 months, which of these devices do not work?

Device	Percentage
Cell phone	12%
Accessible/Adapted device	1%
Desktop computer	6%
Laptop computer	12%
Tablet (or similar device)	7%
Peripherals (monitors, keyboards, mice, webcams, etc.)	4%
Other Office Devices (monitors, keyboards, mice, webcams, etc.)	3%
Other type of Internet-connected device	6%
None of the above	71%

* (Percentages based on 3321 survey responses to the question: *In the past 6 months, which of these devices do not work? You can choose more than one answer.*)

Troubleshooting *

Statewide Survey - How did you solve with the problem (of devices not working)?

Response	Percentage
I contacted user support for help	27%
I fixed the problem myself	37%
I fixed the problem with help from friends or family	20%
I was unable to fix one or more of these devices	25%
I found help online	15%
I went to a local computer store	7%
I went to a community institution, such as school, library, or church	3%

* (Percentages based on 1029 survey responses to the question: *How did you solve the problem? You can choose more than one answer.*)

Technical Support *
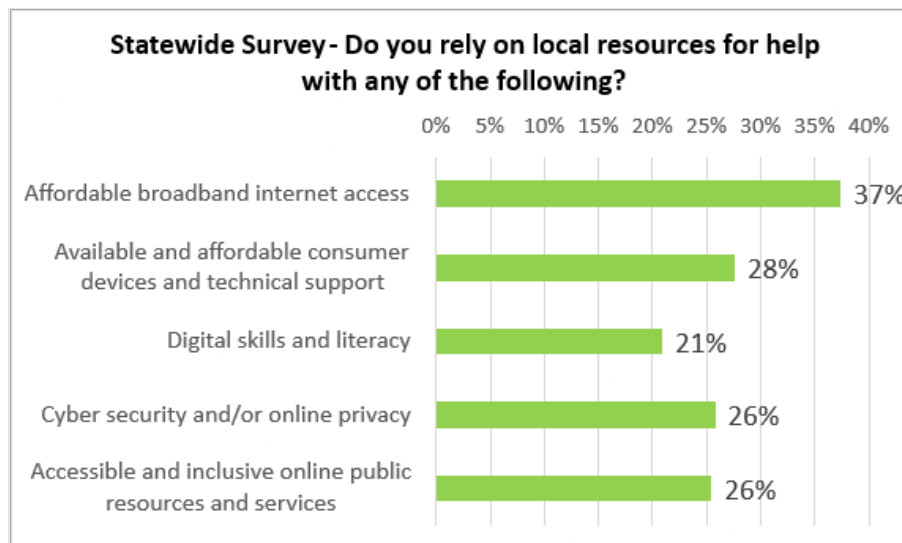
* (Percentages based on 987 survey responses to the question: *Do you rely on local resources for help with any of the following: (Select all that apply)*)

Technical Support Sources *
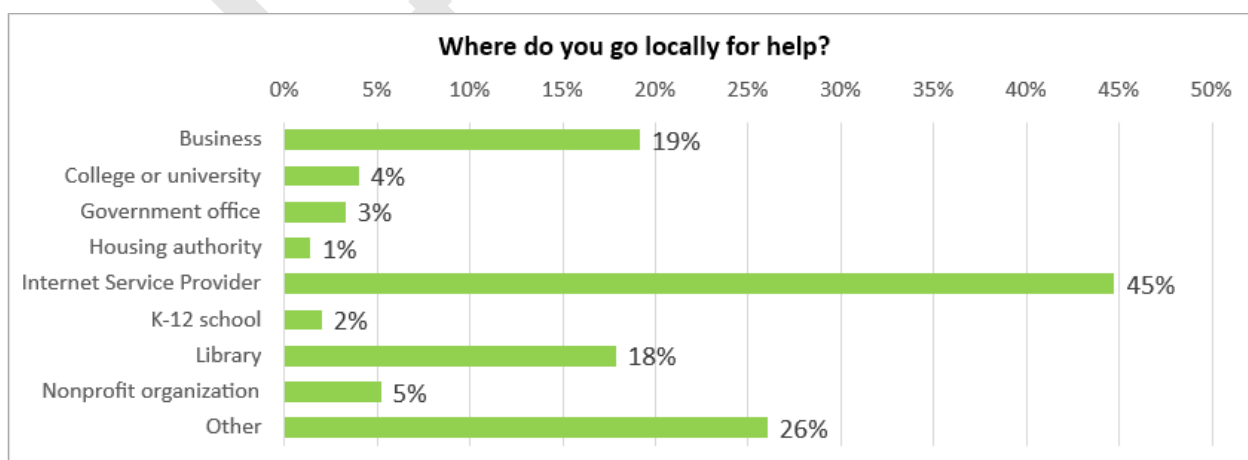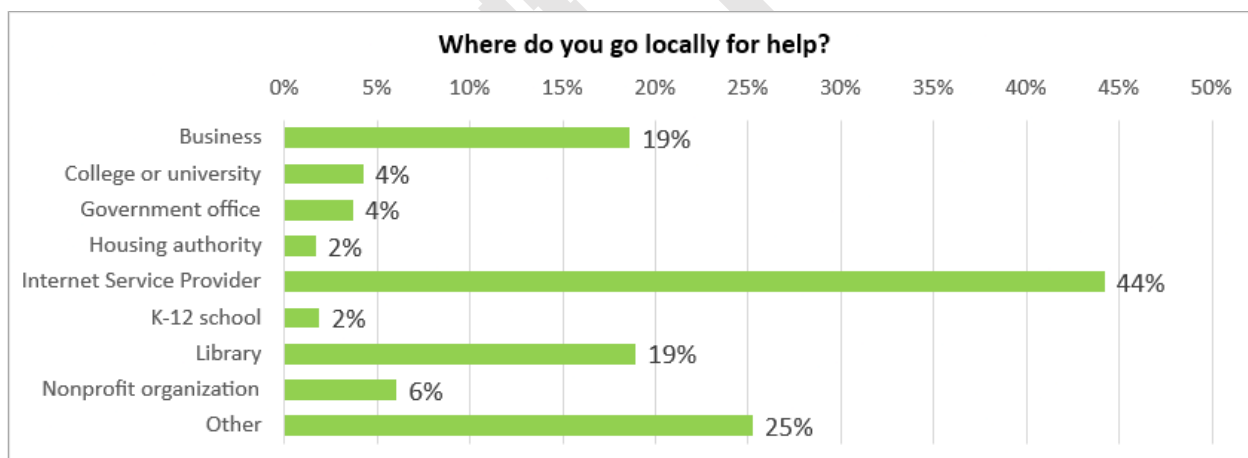
* (Percentages based on 938 survey responses to the question: *Where do you go locally for help?*)

Part II – Digital Skills and Literacy

This section provides an analysis of the survey data regarding the self-reported skills and abilities of New Hampshire residents and their digital skills.

Ability to Use Email *
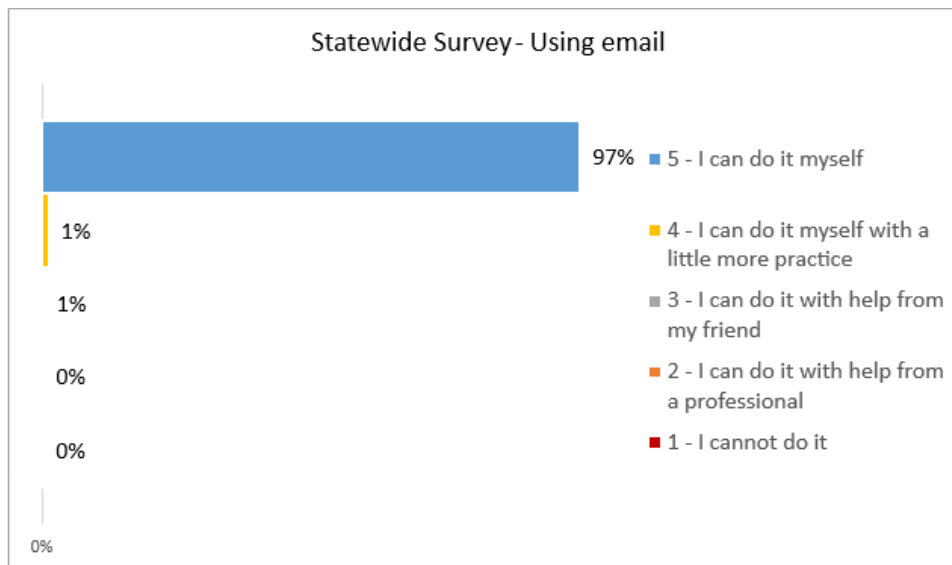
* (Percentages based on 3498 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Using email*)

Ability to Use Word Processing Software *
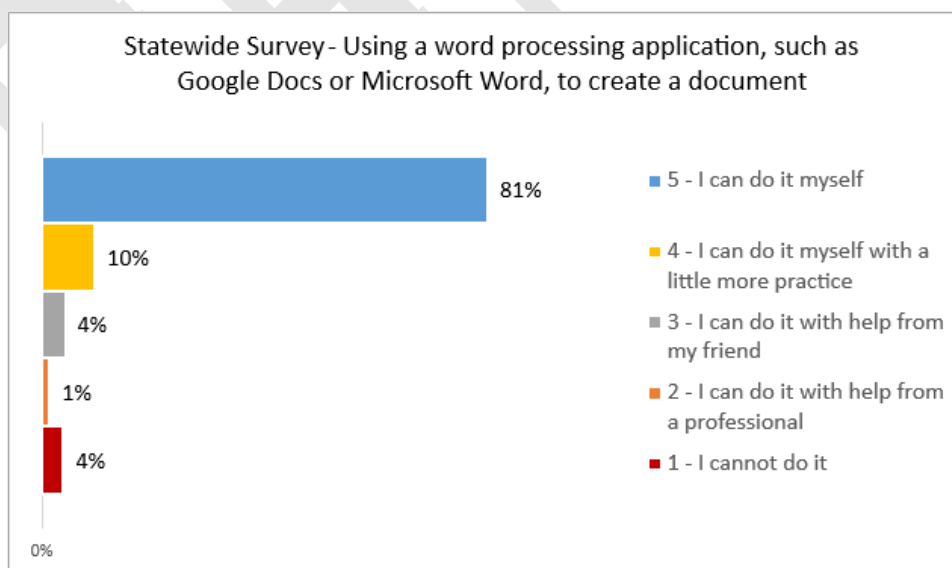
* (Percentages based on 3483 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Using a word processing application such as Google Docs or Microsoft Word, to create a document*)

Ability to Apply for Jobs*

* (Percentages based on 3350 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Searching for and applying for jobs, including creating and submitting a resume*)

Ability to Find Health Information *

* (Percentages based on 3454 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Finding reliable information about a health or medical condition)*

Ability to Use Online Training Materials *

Statewide Survey - Taking a course or training materials to improve your job skills

- 5 - I can do it myself — 80%
- 4 - I can do it myself with a little more practice — 11%
- 3 - I can do it with help from my friend — 3%
- 2 - I can do it with help from a professional — 3%
- 1 - I cannot do it — 3%

* (Percentages based on 3363 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Taking a course or training materials to improve your job skills*)

Ability to Access Online Financial Services *

Statewide Survey - Accessing online banking or financial services

- 5 - I can do it myself — 90%
- 4 - I can do it myself with a little more practice — 4%
- 3 - I can do it with help from my friend — 3%
- 2 - I can do it with help from a professional — 1%
- 1 - I cannot do it — 2%

* (Percentages based on 3492 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Accessing online banking or financial services*)

Ability to Shop Online *

Statewide Survey - Online shopping

- 95% — ■ 5 - I can do it myself
- 2% — ■ 4 - I can do it myself with a little more practice
- 1% — ■ 3 - I can do it with help from my friend
- 0% — ■ 2 - I can do it with help from a professional
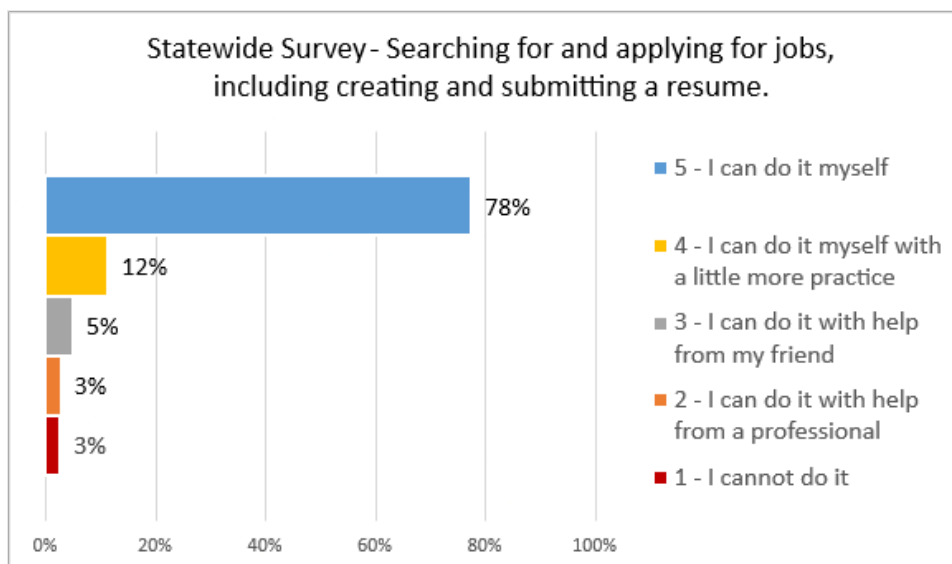- 1% — ■ 1 - I cannot do it
- 0%

* (Percentages based on 3494 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Online shopping*)

Ability to Find Online Educational Materials *

Statewide Survey - Finding educational materials and information

- 83% — ■ 5 - I can do it myself
- 8% — ■ 4 - I can do it myself with a little more practice
- 3% — ■ 3 - I can do it with help from my friend
- 2% — ■ 2 - I can do it with help from a professional
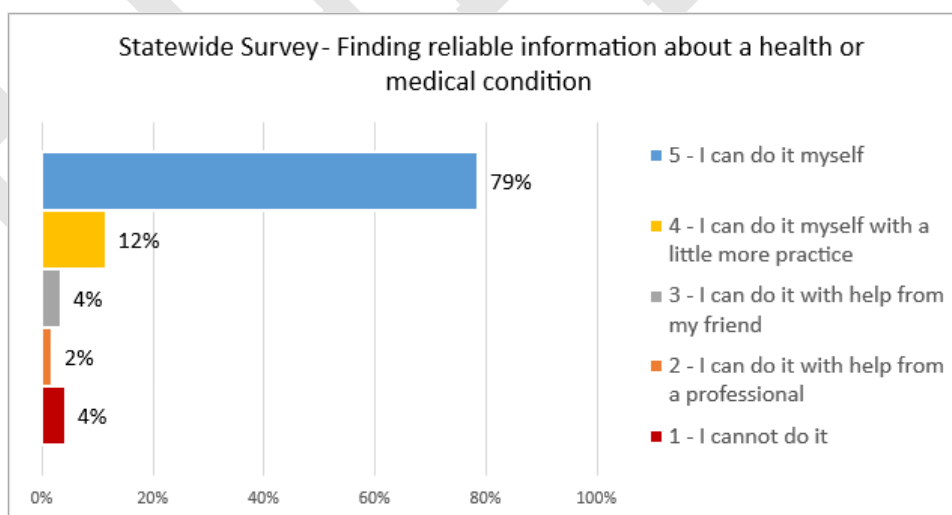- 5% — ■ 1 - I cannot do it
- 0%

* (Percentages based on 3175 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Finding educational materials and information*)

Ability to Use Social Media *

Statewide Survey - Using social media like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn

- 84% — 5 - I can do it myself
- 7% — 4 - I can do it myself with a little more practice
- 4% — 3 - I can do it with help from my friend
- 0% — 2 - I can do it with help from a professional
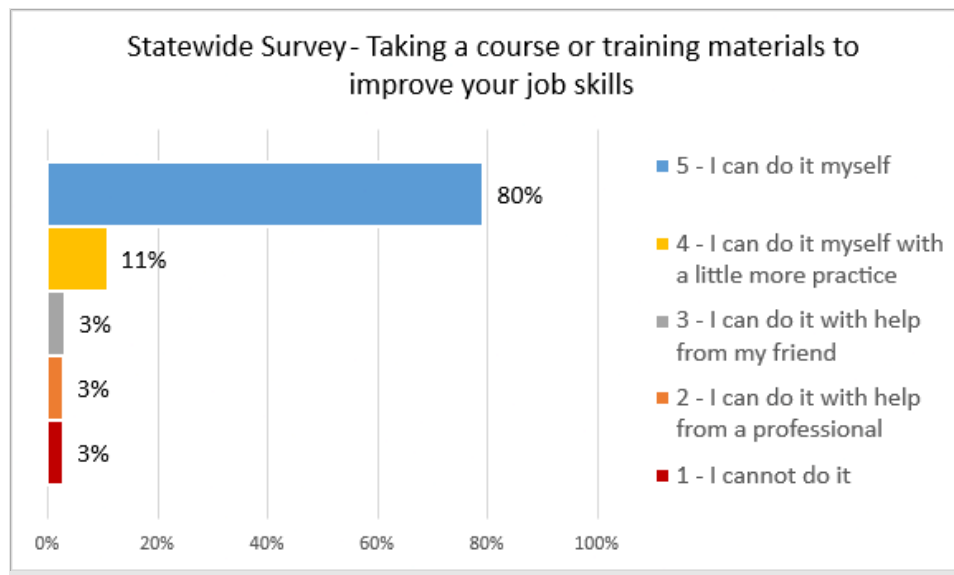- 5% — 1 - I cannot do it

* (Percentages based on 3385 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Using social media like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, LinkedIn*)

Ability to Use Online Video Applications *

Statewide Survey - Using video software, such as Zoom, for work, school, or doctor's appointments

- 79% — 5 - I can do it myself
- 12% — 4 - I can do it myself with a little more practice
- 4% — 3 - I can do it with help from my friend
- 1% — 2 - I can do it with help from a professional
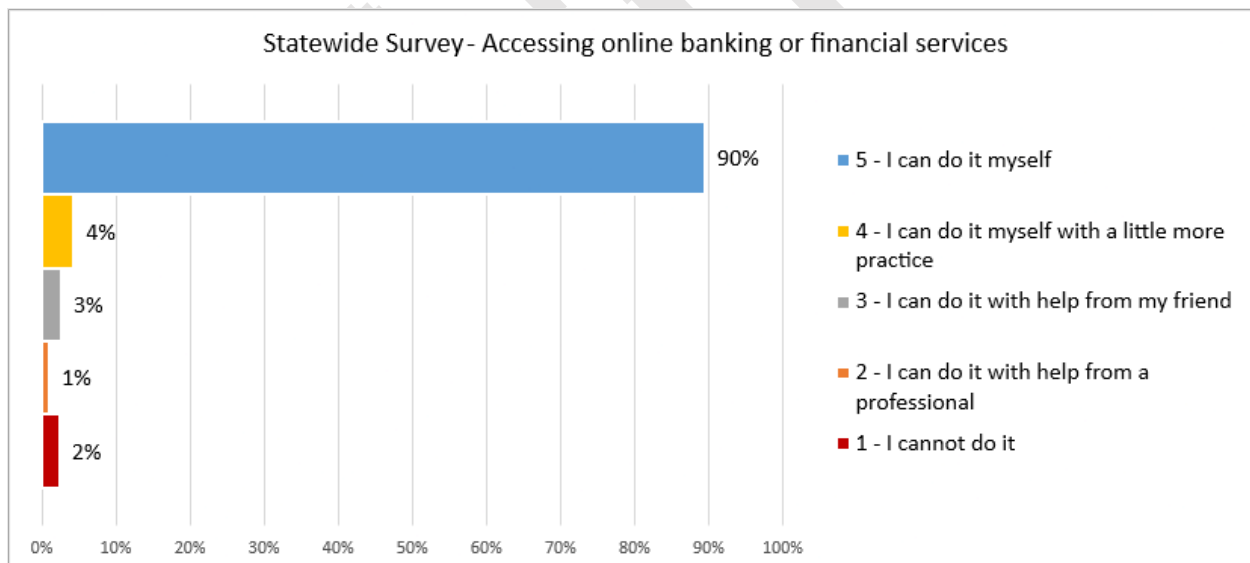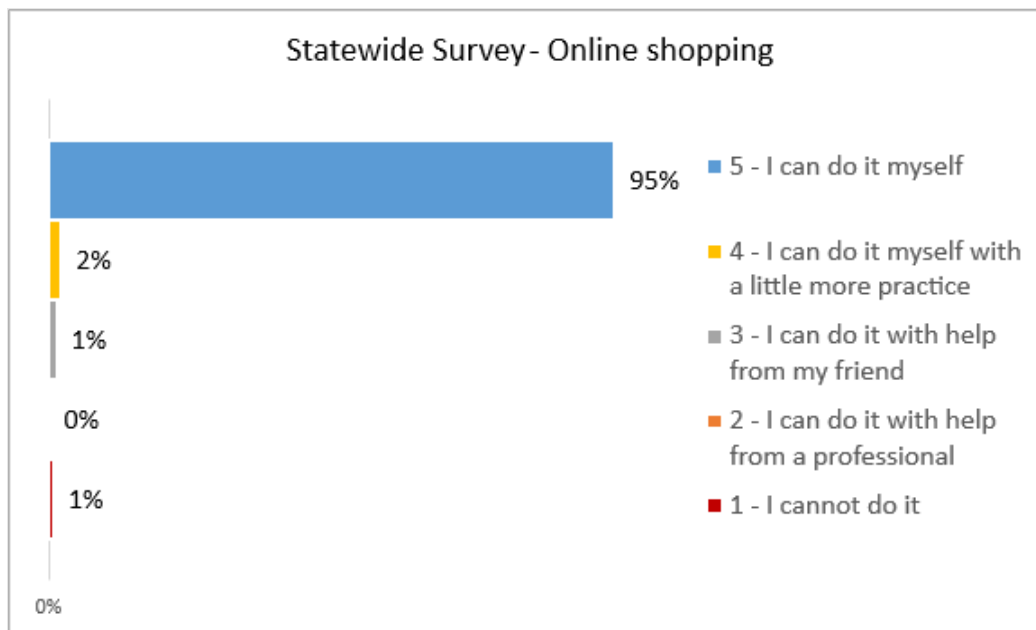- 4% — 1 - I cannot do it

* (Percentages based on 3464 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Using video software, such as Zoom, for work, school, or doctor's appointments*)
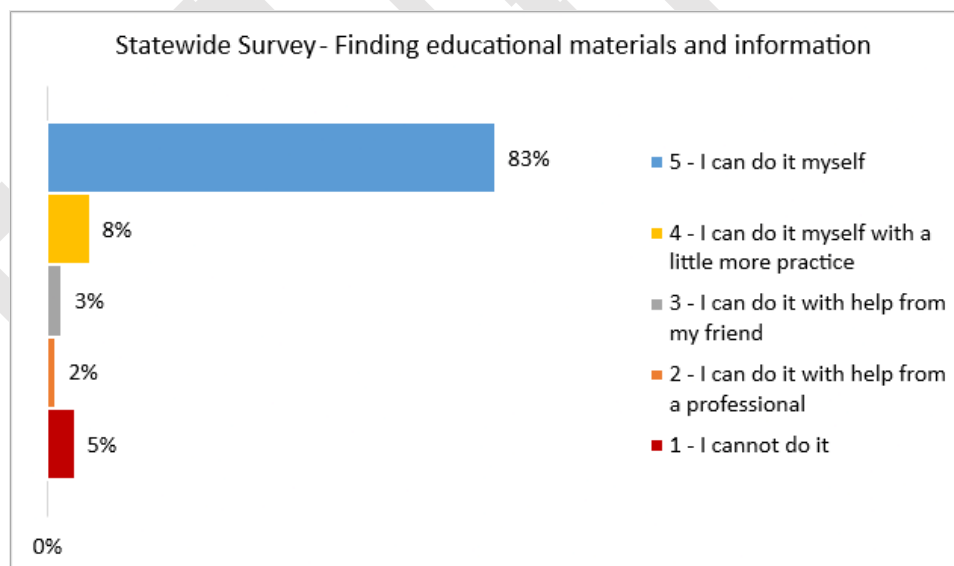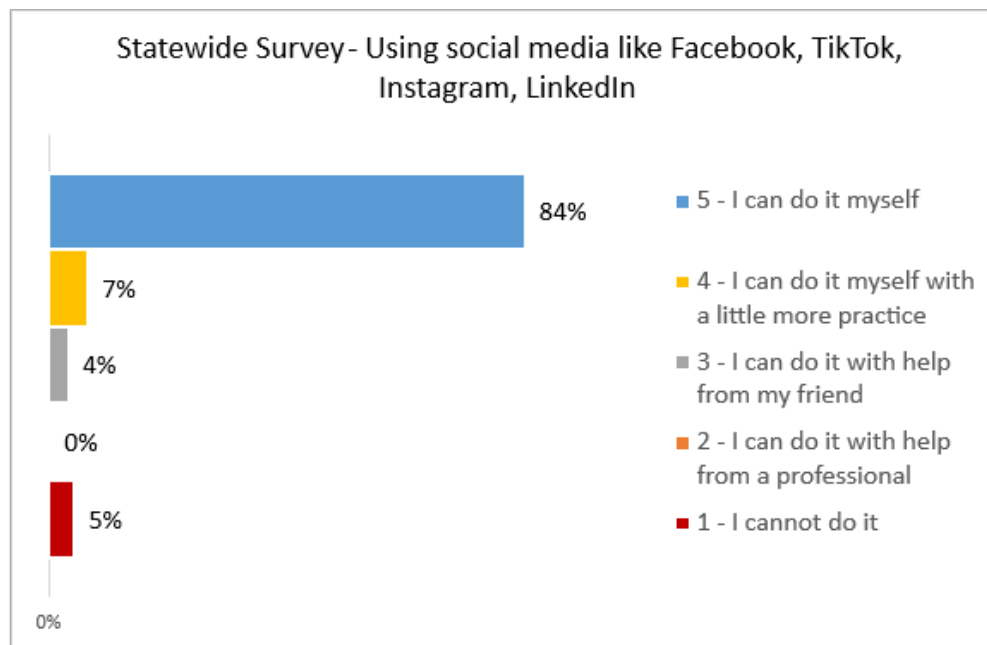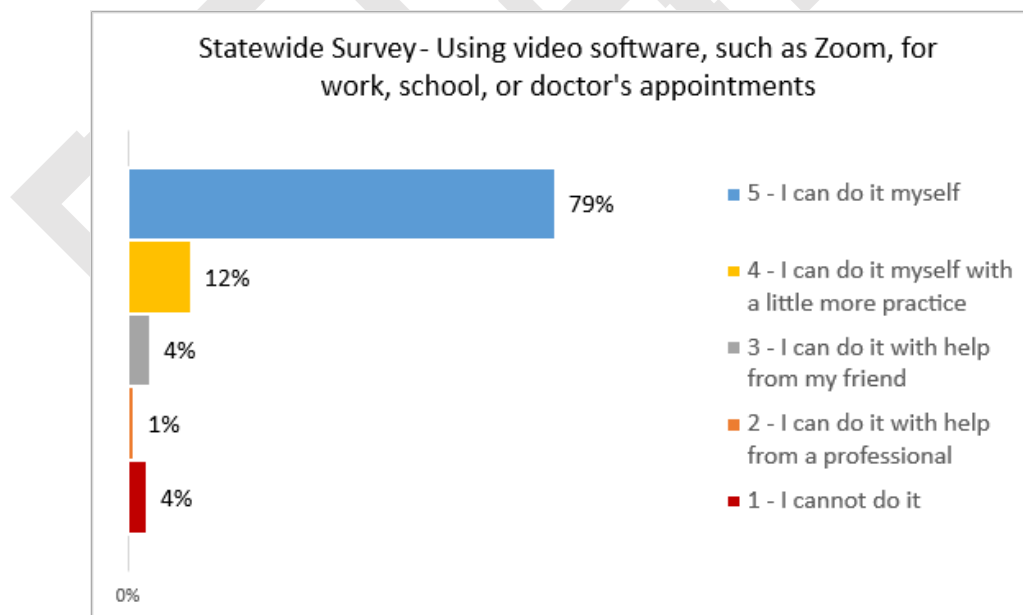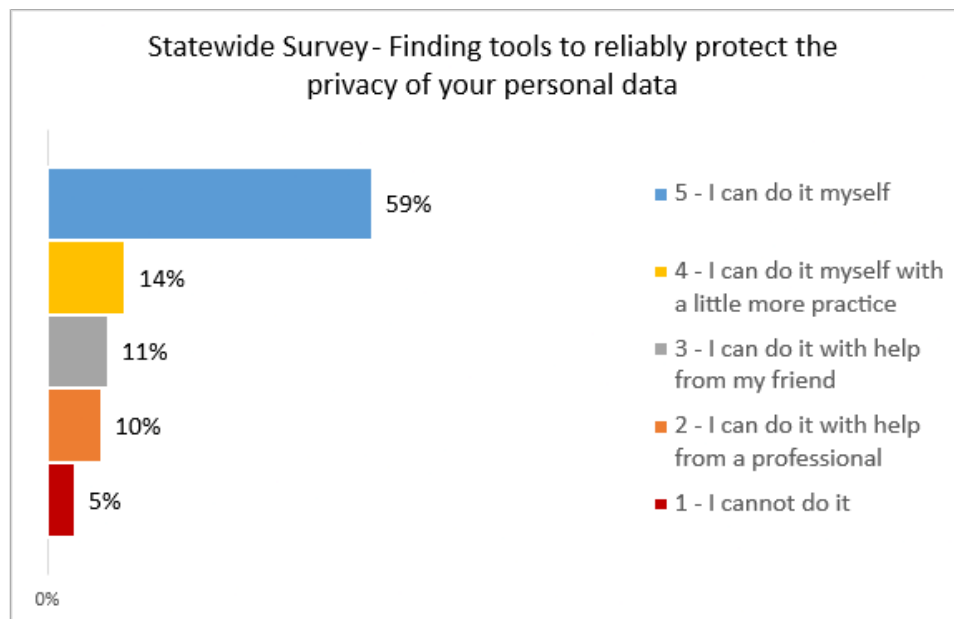
Ability to Find Privacy Protection Tools *

* (Percentages based on 3470 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Finding tools to reliably protect the privacy of your personal data*)

Part III - Awareness and Use of Measures to Secure Online Privacy and Cybersecurity

New Hampshire residents answered three survey questions on their awareness and use of measures to secure their online privacy and cybersecurity. Findings suggest that many residents may not feel or know how to safe online, and expressed limited knowledge of resources to help improve their awareness and knowledge of privacy and cybersecurity tools and strategies.

- **Do you feel safe using the internet?**: 42% of people answered "No" and 23% answered "Sometimes".

- **Do you know how to stay safe online?**: 50% of people answered "No" and 26% answered "Sometimes".

- **Who do you ask for help in identifying safe information on the internet?**: 65% of people said that they would ask a "Friend or family member" for help, 5% would get help at a public library, and 2% would get help from a "Church or community organization". 30% of people were not sure who to ask for help.

These findings suggest that there is a need for digital literacy training on privacy and cybersecurity broadly for all New Hampshire residents, increased support for anchor institutions and community organizations to provide this training, and the need to promote awareness of this digital literacy topic and the availability of programs, services, and institutions in the state where residents can get help.

Ability to Feel Safe Online *

Statewide Survey - Do you feel safe using the internet?
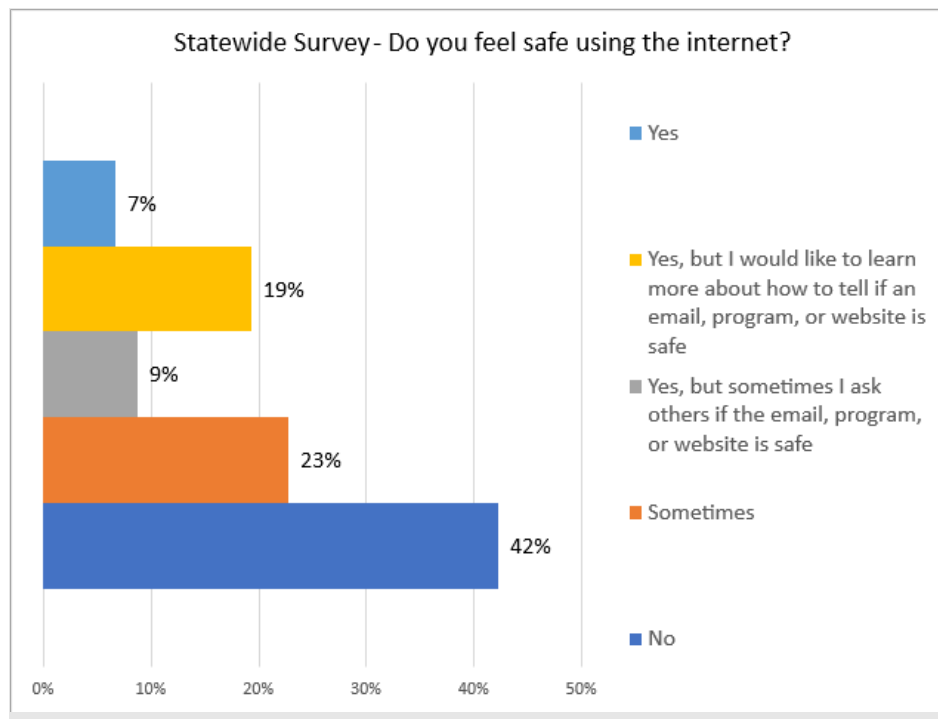
* (Percentages based on 3524 survey responses to the question: *Do you feel safe using the internet?*)

Awareness of Online Safety Measures *

Statewide Survey - Do you know how to stay safe online?
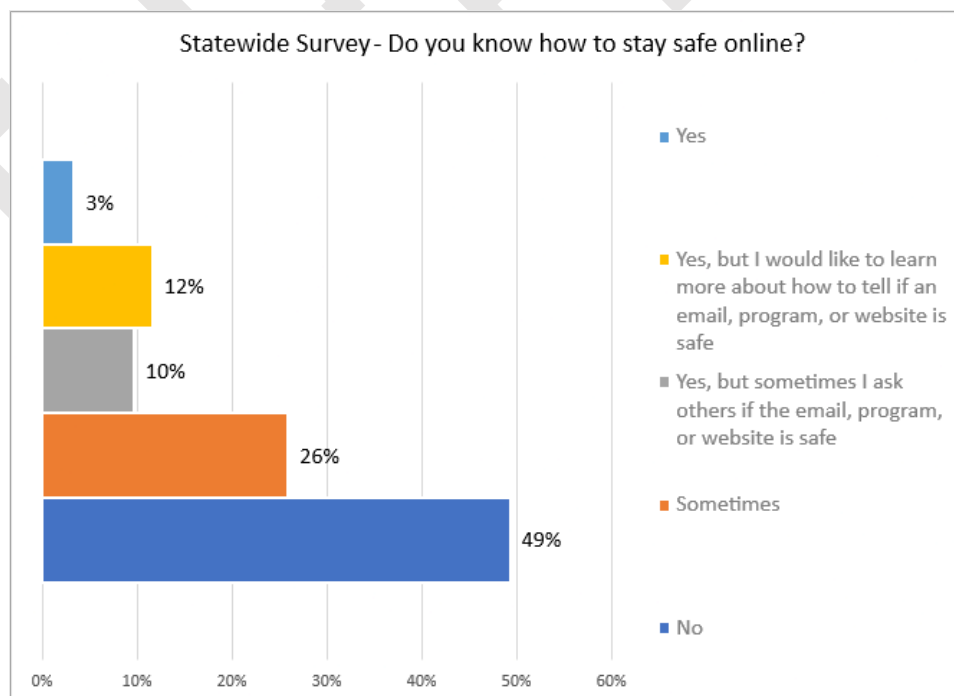
* (Percentages based on 3516 survey responses to the question: *Do you know how to stay safe online? (e.g., knowing how to determine whether emails are from trusted institutions like banks, or how to judge whether a free program you found online should be installed)*)

Sources for Online Safety Assistance *

Who do you ask for help in identifying safe information on the internet?
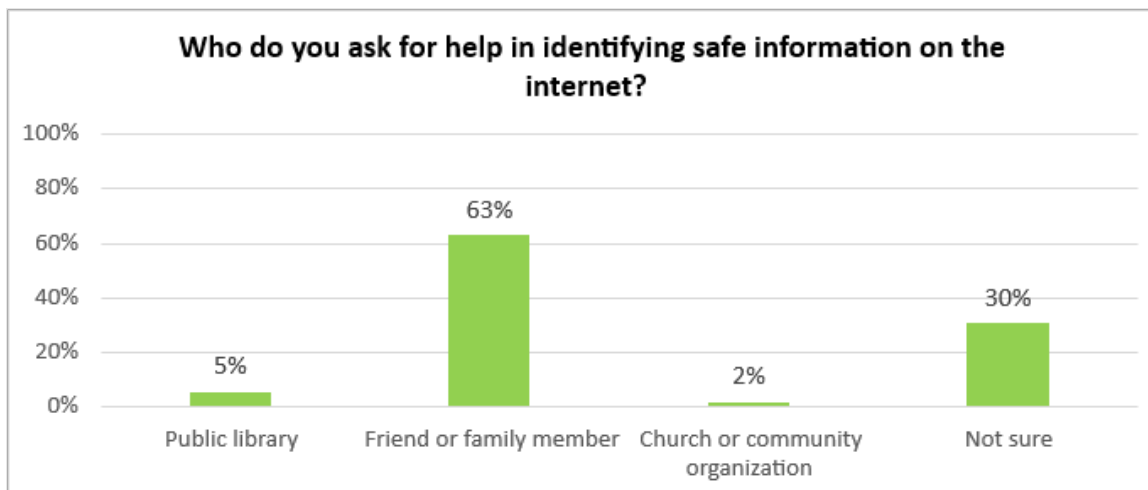
* (Percentages based on 3165 survey responses to the question: "*Who do you ask for help in identifying safe information on the internet?*")

Part IV - The Online Accessibility and Inclusivity of Public Resources and Services

Ability to Access Public Benefits Online *

Statewide Survey - Seeing my public benefits or applying for my public benefits
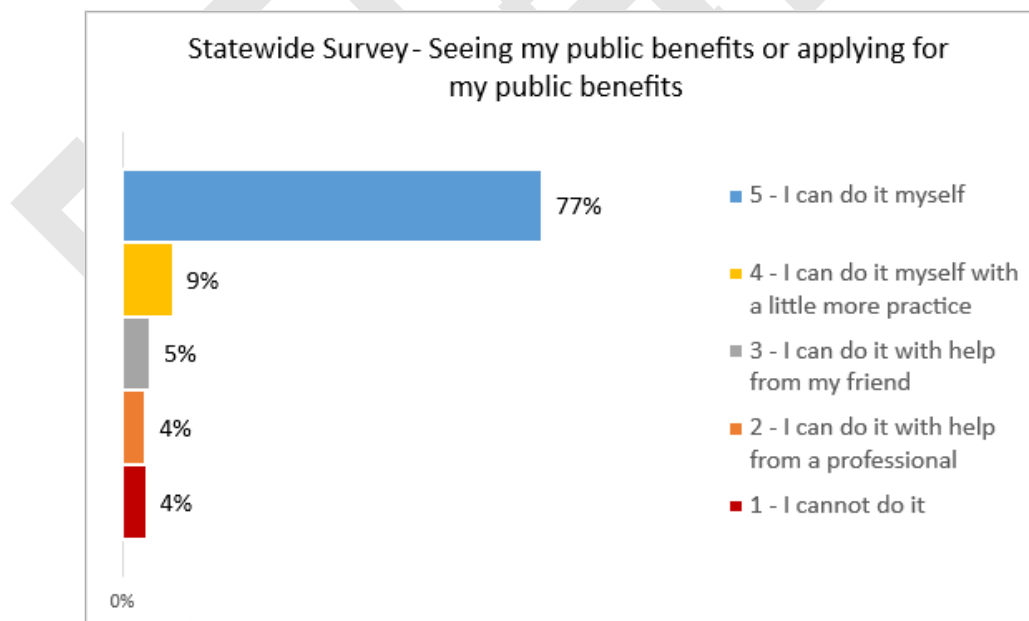
* (Percentages based on 3273 survey responses to the question: *If you were asked to do these activities using the internet, can you complete the activities? – Seeing my public benefits or applying for my public benefits*)

Accessing Online Public Resources *

In the past year, have you used the internet to do any of the following?

Activity	Percentage
Find information about government services or resources (i.e., voter registration, DMV, property...	89%
Search for official government statistics or documents	60%
Access recreational or tourist information	78%
Find information about public health issues	67%
Apply for or manage government benefits (e.g., SNAP, TANF, Social Security)	39%
Enroll in Internet subsidy programs (Affordable Connectivity Program)	6%
Other	5%

* (Percentages based on 3296 survey responses to the question: *In the past year, have you used the internet to do any of the following? (Select all that apply)*

Accessibility of Online Public Resources – Part I *

Statewide Survey - Were these resources easy for you to find?

Rating	Percentage
5 - Easy	48%
4	31%
3	16%
2	3%
1 - Hard	2%

■ Find information about government services or resources (i.e., voter registration, DMV, property information/building permits)
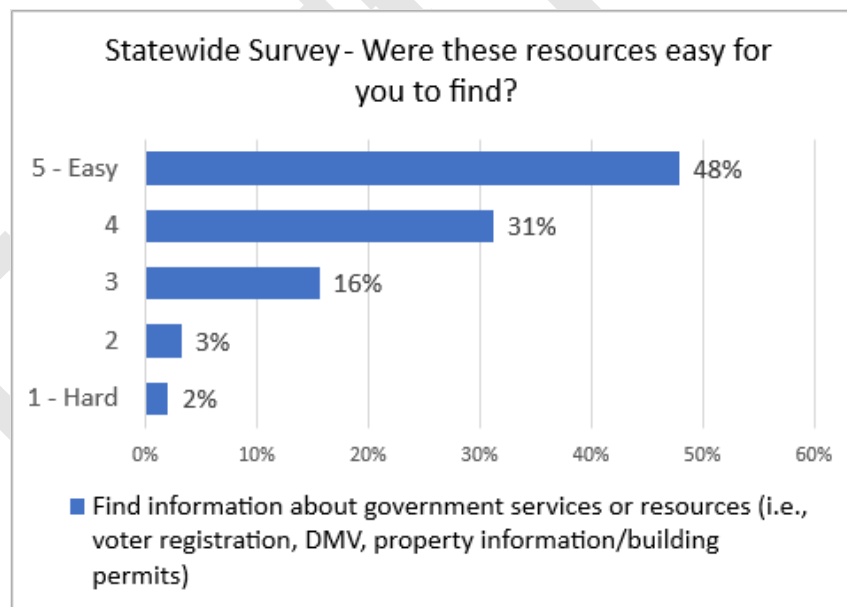
* (Percentages based on 3169 survey responses to the question: *Were these resources easy for you to find? – Find information about government services or resources (i.e., voter registration, DMV, property information/building permits*)

Accessibility of Online Public Resources – Part II *

Statewide Survey - Were these resources easy for you to find?

Rating	Percentage
5 - Easy	35%
4	29%
3	23%
2	7%
1 - Hard	6%

■ Search for official government statistics or documents
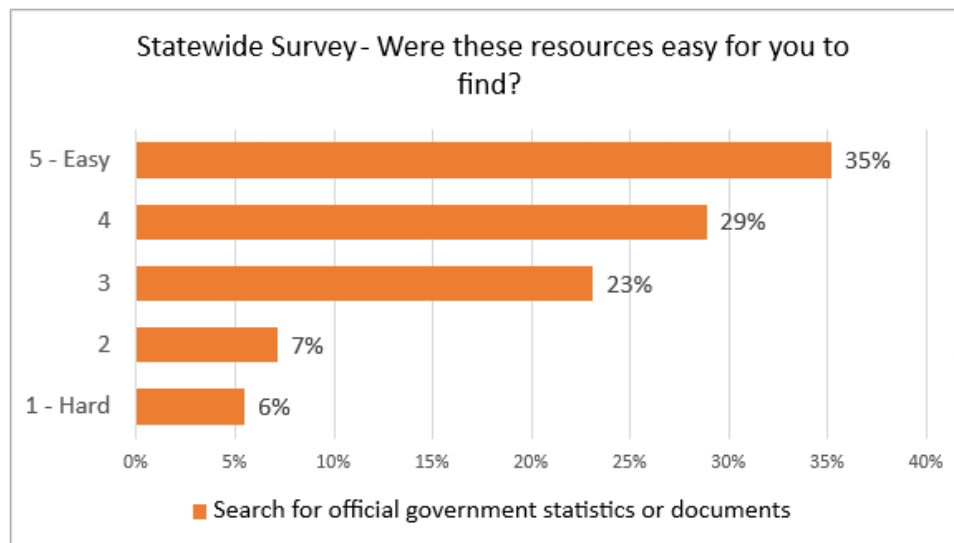
* (Percentages based on 2737 survey responses to the question: *Were these resources easy for you to find? – Search for official government statistics or documents*)

Accessibility of Online Public Resources – Part III *

Statewide Survey - Were these resources easy for you to find?

Rating	Percentage
5 - Easy	66%
4	22%
3	8%
2	2%
1 - Hard	2%

■ Access recreational or tourist information

* (Percentages based on 2961 survey responses to the question: *Were these resources easy for you to find? – Access recreational or tourist information*)

Accessibility of Online Public Resources – Part IV *

Statewide Survey - Were these resources easy for you to find?

5 - Easy	49%
4	29%
3	13%
2	4%
1 - Hard	4%

■ Find information about public health issues
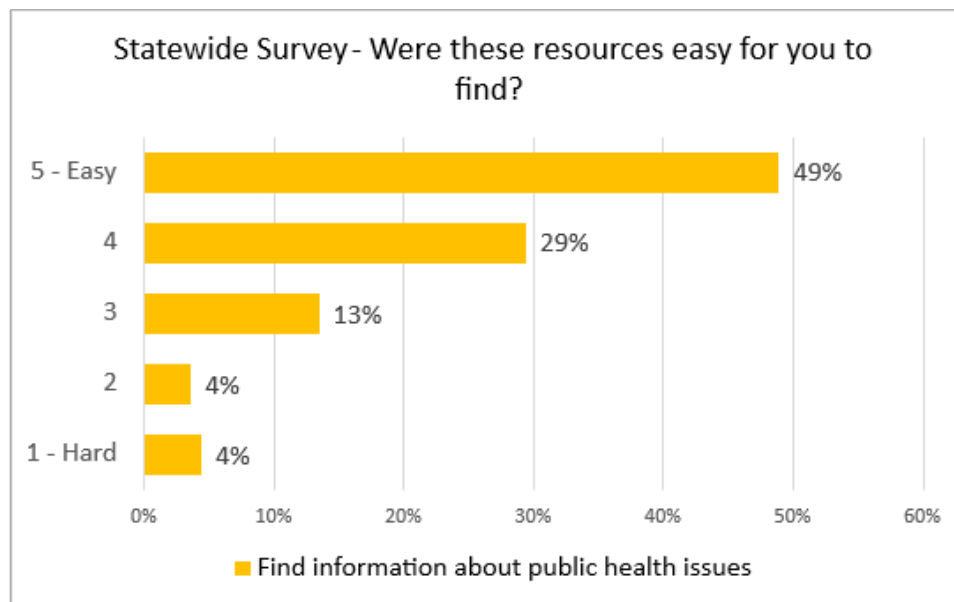
* (Percentages based on 2771 survey responses to the question: *Were these resources easy for you to find? – Find information about public health issues*)

Statewide Survey - Were these resources easy for you to find?

5 - Easy	42%
4	24%
3	16%
2	7%
1 - Hard	10%

■ Apply for or manage government benefits (e.g., SNAP, TANF, Social Security)

* (Percentages based on 1922 survey responses to the question: *Were these resources easy for you to find? – Apply for or manage government benefits (e.g., SNAP, TANF, Social Security)*)

Accessibility of Online Public Resources – Part V *
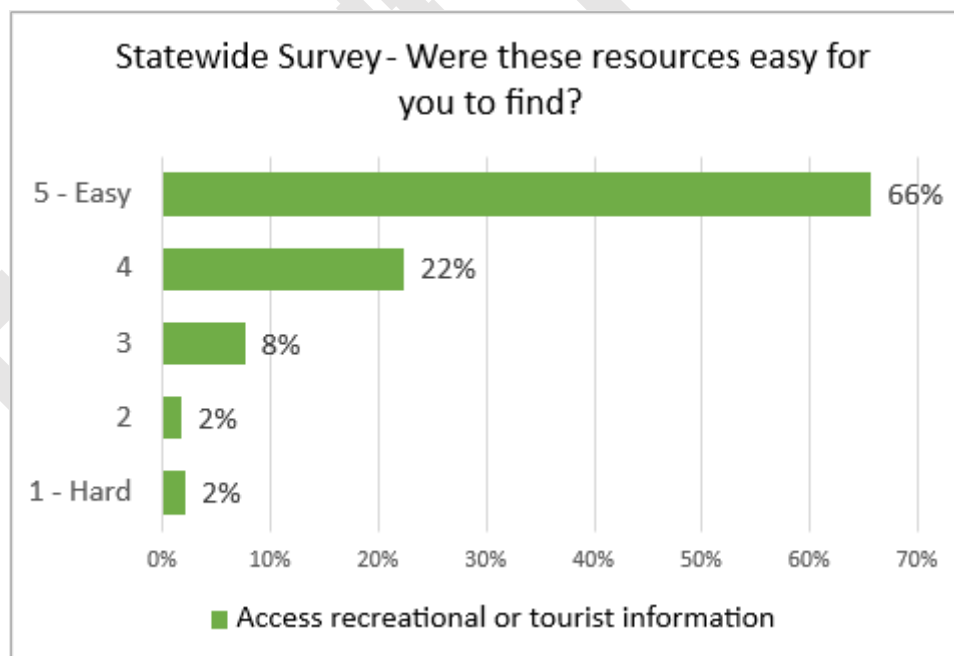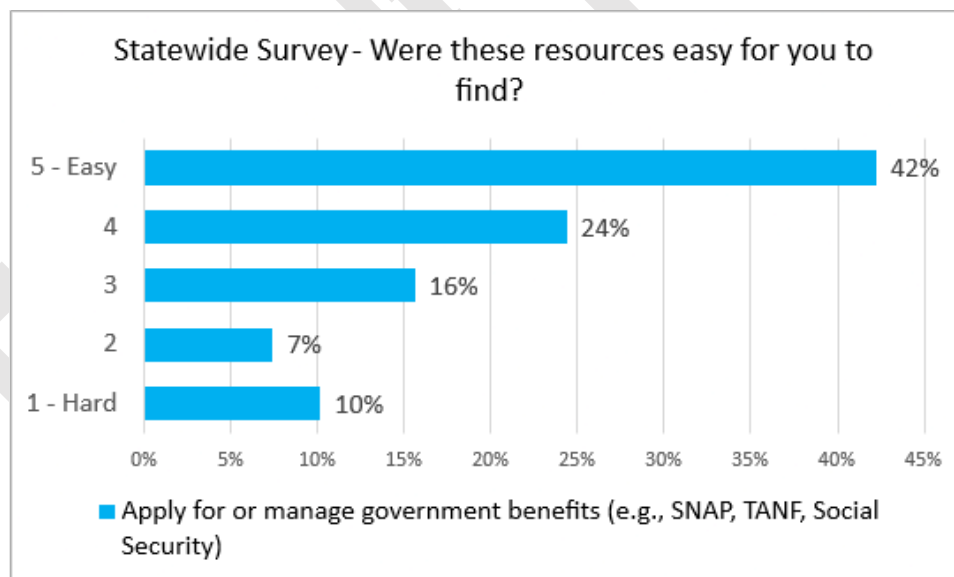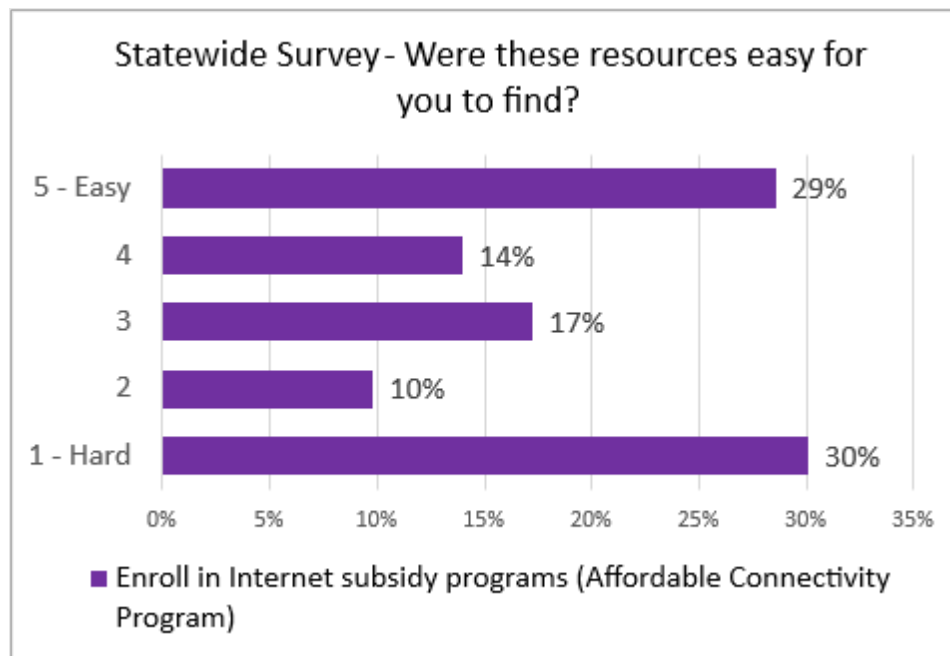

* (Percentages based on 1056 survey responses to the question: *Were these resources easy for you to find? – Enroll in Internet subsidy programs (Affordable Connectivity Program)*))

Public Satisfaction with Government Information Sources *
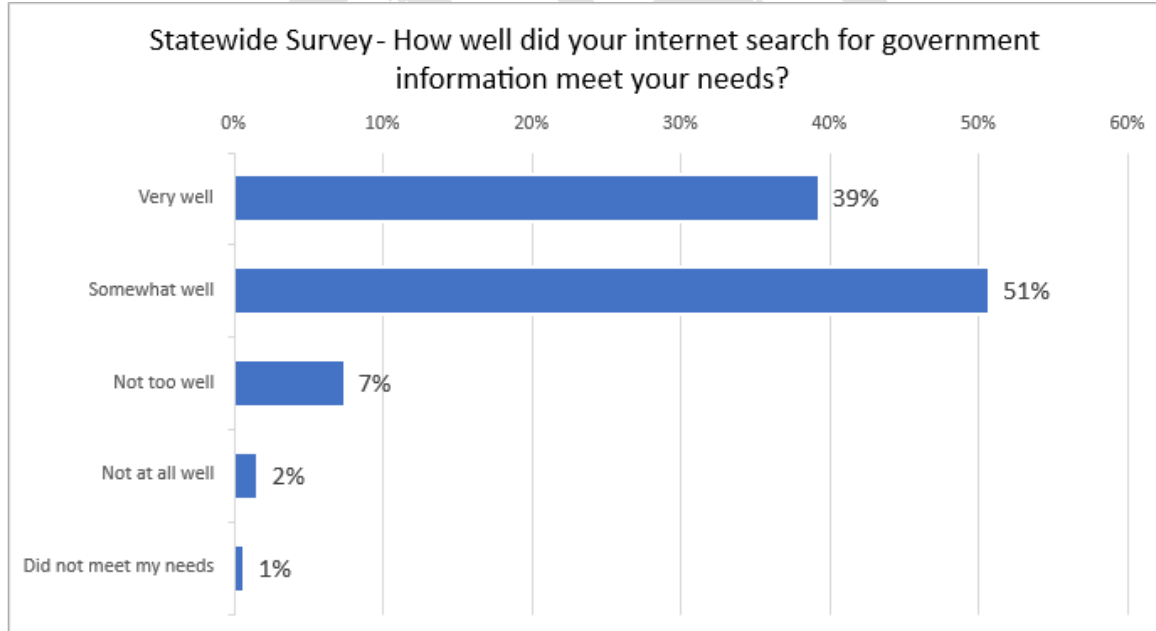
* (Percentages based on 3094 survey responses to the question: *How well did your internet search for government information meet your needs?*)

Needs and Barriers of Covered populations

This section provides a breakdown of the statewide survey data by highlighting the digital equity needs and barriers facing covered populations in New Hampshire. It begins with an overview of the total numbers of covered populations in the state before providing breakdowns for each covered population.

Covered Populations in New Hampshire

Statewide - Covered Populations

Population in Covered Households	11.3%
Aging individuals	24.2%
Veterans	7.2%
Individuals with disabilities	12.9%
Individuals with a language barrier	10.3%
Rural residents	55.6%
Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	9.0%
Individuals currently incarcerated or recently returned	0.3%
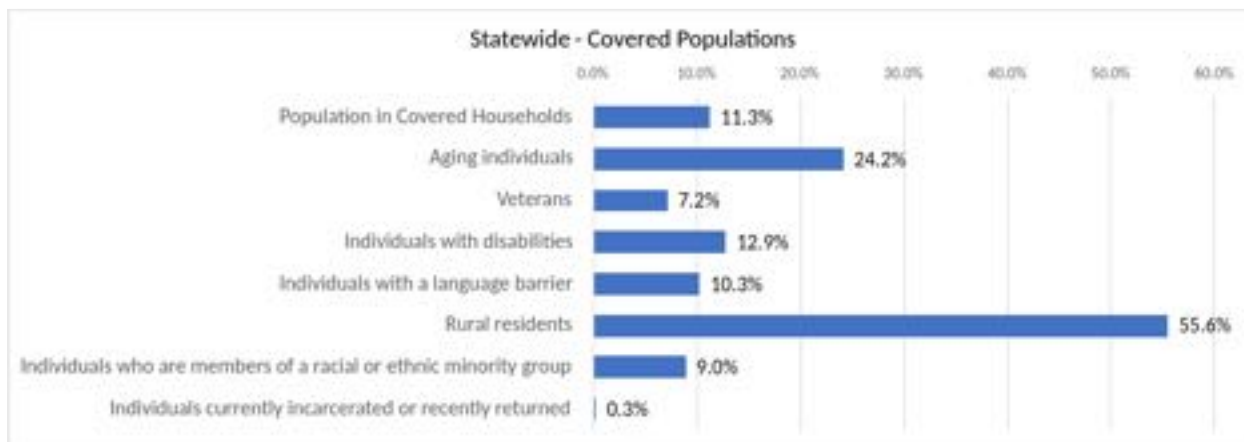
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)

Additional Populations

Statewide - Additional Populations

American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.03%
Immigrants living in New Hampshire	5.6%
Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community	0.4%
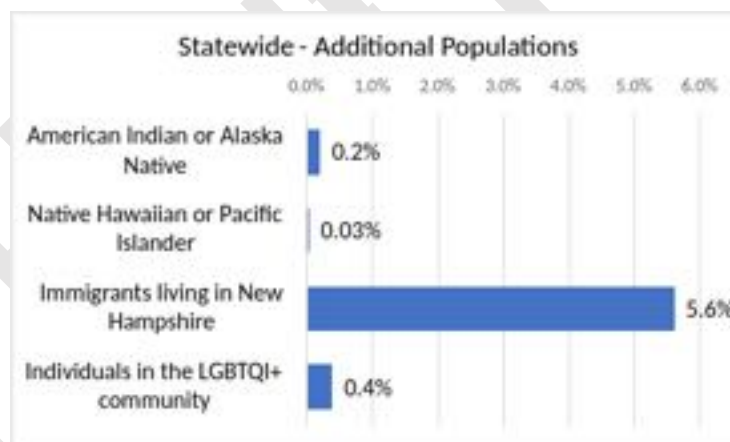
(2020 Decennial Census, ACS 1Y2021)

Low-income individuals

The US Census Bureau provides a definition of household annual income considered low-income using the *Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC)*. "Poverty Thresholds" are identified using a combination of annual household income, size of the household, and number of children under 18, poverty thresholds. The Digital Equity Act identifies "Individuals living in Covered Households" as residents living in a household with an annual income less than 150% of the US Census Bureau's poverty threshold. Here we refer to individuals in covered households as "low-income".

Survey responses from low-income households were identified using the answer to three questions:

- How many people live in your household? Please include yourself in the number.

- How many people in your household are 18 years or younger?

- How much is your house's annual income before taxes?

A function was coded to compare the three values to the poverty thresholds identified by the US Census Bureau in each survey response, providing a count of the number of surveys from individuals in a low-income household.

The *Population in Covered Households* among survey responses is the sum of responses to the first question above for all surveys identified as from a low-income household.

	#	%
Population in Covered Households	**165629**	**11.3%**
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 165629 residents in covered households in the state.)

	#	%
Population in Covered Households	1456	N/A
Responses from Individuals in Covered Households	539	15%
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentage based on 539 survey respondents living in households that were identified as low-income in the statewide survey based on annual income, household size, and US Census Poverty Thresholds. Population in these covered households was calculated using the household size indicated by these respondents.)

Low-Income Households' Ability to Pay for Broadband *

Statewide Survey, Covered Households - What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?
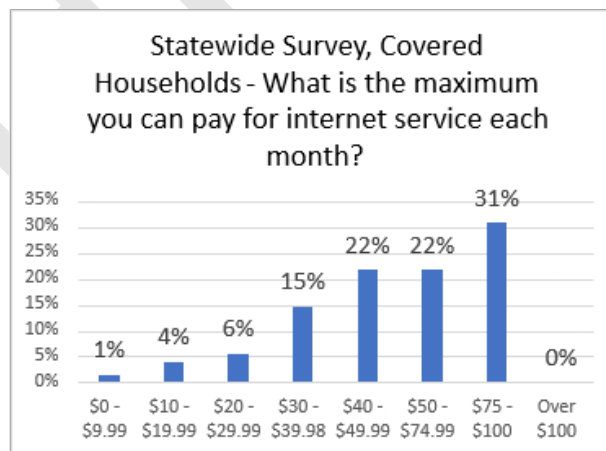
(Percentages are based on 470 people who were identified as low-income who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Low-Income Households' Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
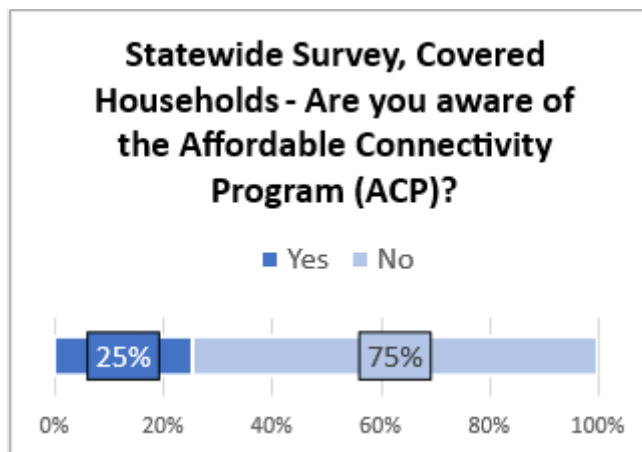
(Percentages are based on 530 people who were identified as low-income who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Low-Income Individuals (Ripple Mapping Data)

Participants of this session identified key challenges facing individuals and families and families with low incomes. These include the need for greater access to infrastructure and devices, education and training, and key services that can be accessed digitally such as health care. Participants highlight that overcoming these challenges can be aided by utilizing key public assets as foundational knowledge distribution centers (like public libraries, municipal complexes, etc.), and creating additional engagement pathways between leaders, municipalities, and internet and technology providers to better create programs and increase affordability to address challenges.

Aging individuals

	#	%
Aging individuals	353582	24.2%
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 353582 residents aged 60 years or older in the state.)

	#	%
Aging individuals	2515	71%
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

 (Percentage based on 2515 people who identified as 60 years of age or older in the statewide survey.)

Aging Individuals' Ability to Pay for Broadband *
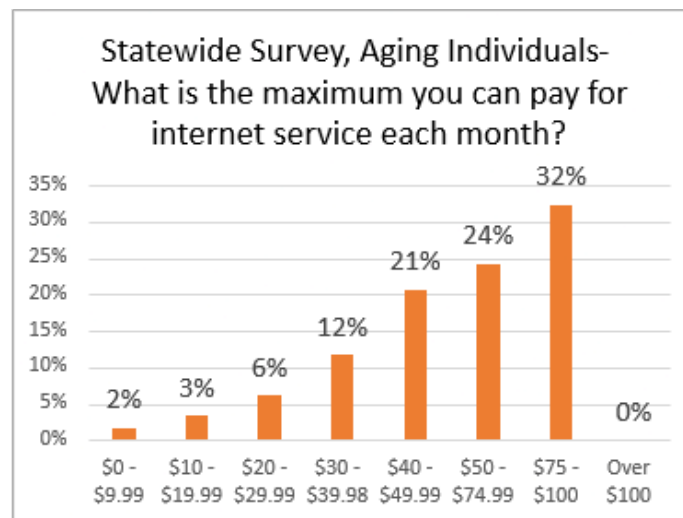
* (Percentages are based on 2407 people who identified as age 60 or older who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Aging Individuals Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *
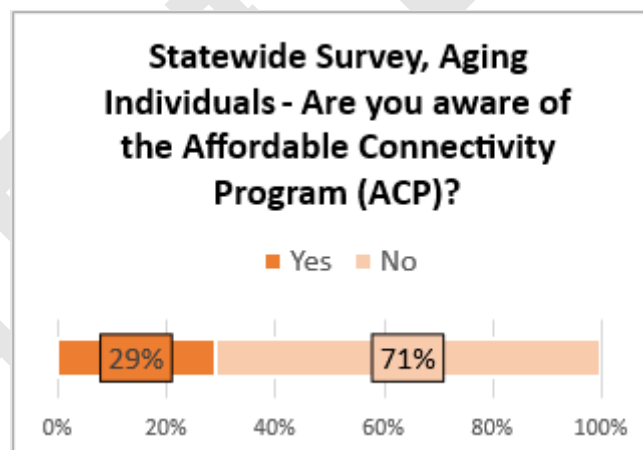
* (Percentages are based on 22472 people who identified as age 60 or older who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Aging Individuals (Ripple Mapping Data)

The participants of this session represented various facets of AARP in New Hampshire, ranging from Executive staff to leads of various programs, such as those working with seniors with impairments. Access to high-speed internet and easy-to-use digital devices emerged as key themes. Constituents also identified key barriers to access: lack of understanding of technology, lack of awareness of places seniors can access broadband and devices such as community centers and libraries, and concerns about security (e.g., data and information vulnerabilities, scams, etc.). Additionally, a strong theme centered around impairments that many seniors have, such as auditory and visual impairments, mobility issues, cognitive issues, motor skills issues, etc.

Incarcerated Populations

	#	%
Incarcerated or recently returned populations	4596	0.3%
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 4596 residents incarcerated in a non-federal facility in the state.)

	#	%
Incarcerated or recently returned populations	9	0.3%
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentage based on 9 people who identified as incarcerated or recently returned in the statewide survey.)

Incarcerated Individuals' Ability to Pay for Broadband *
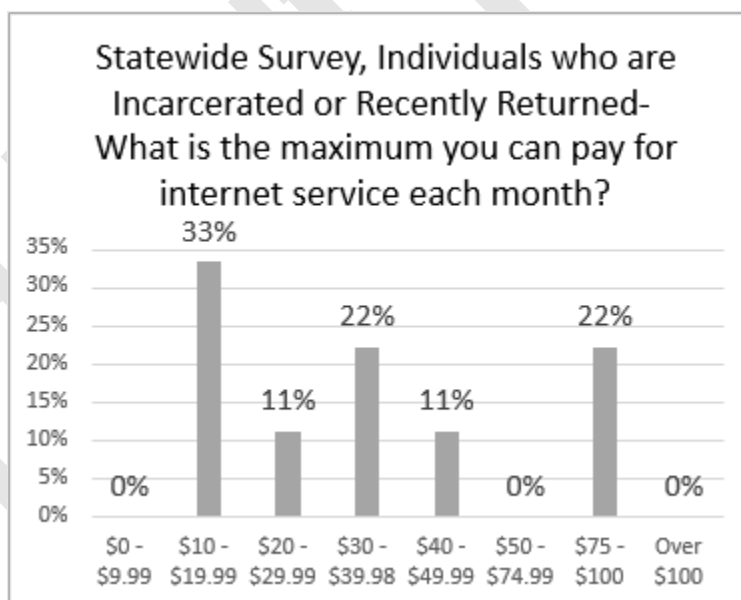
* (Percentages are based on 9 people who identified as incarcerated or recently returned who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Incarcerated Populations' Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *
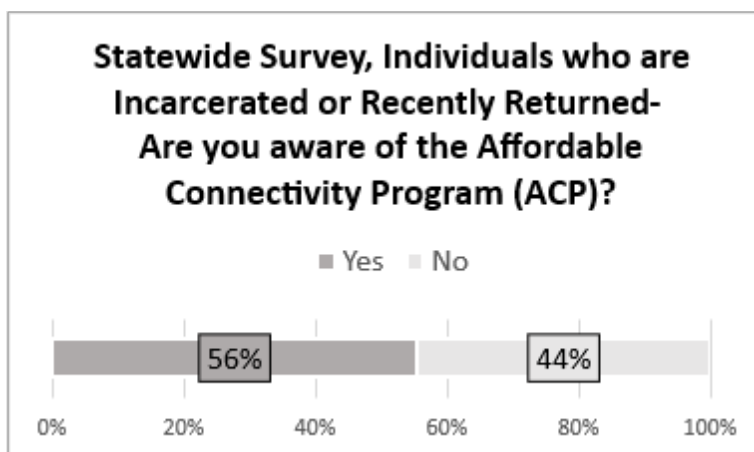
Statewide Survey, Individuals who are Incarcerated or Recently Returned- Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?

Yes 56% No 44%

* (Percentages are based on 9 people who identified as incarcerated or recently returned who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Incarcerated Populations (Ripple Mapping Data)

The incarcerated community has unique challenges regarding access to the internet and digital tools and services. The primary concern is around access to digital tools and services in a zero-trust environment. All systems within the perimeter need to be secure to not allow incarcerated individuals to contact the outside world, which could open the door to targeting and victimizing individuals. As a result of the security challenges, which require hands-on oversight given the lack of technology infrastructure for security, there is limited availability of technology tools, such as tablets, two-way video, and other devices. The security challenges also make it challenging to connect to educational curricula, vocational training, telehealth, religious services, and many other resources that could build the skills and well-being of incarcerated individuals. Issues and challenges identified by the post-incarcerated community include access to the internet, devices, and training as key gaps. More salient, they identified access to digital educational resources, such as family support groups, parenting counselors, and other community re-entry supports. Post-incarcerated populations often have limited exposure to digital devices and lack the digital literacy skills to be able to use tools and services effectively. As such, there is a deep need for training that gives post-incarcerated individuals with relevant work skills that track with good-paying jobs.

Veterans

	#	%
Veterans	105548	7.2%
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 105548 veterans in the state.)

	#	%
Veterans	5559	16%

(Percentage based on 538 people who identified as a veteran in the statewide survey.)

Veterans' Ability to Pay for Broadband *

Statewide Survey, Veterans- What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?
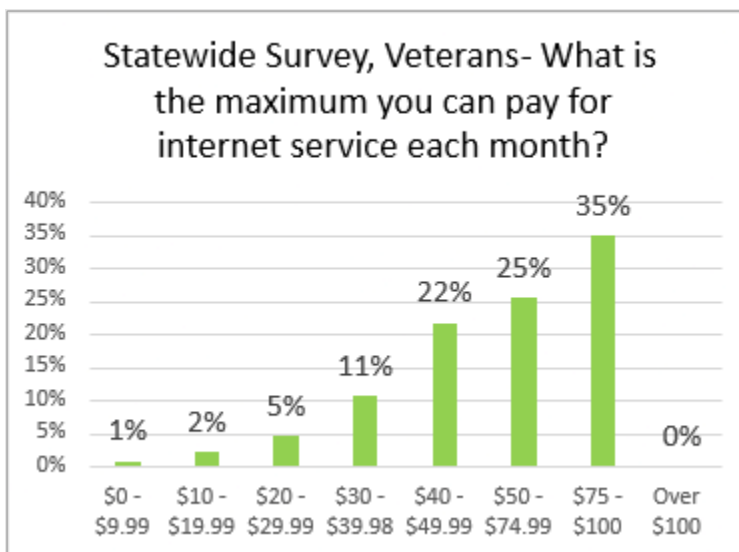
* (Percentages are based on 540 people who identified as veterans who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Veterans' Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *

Statewide Survey, Veterans- Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?
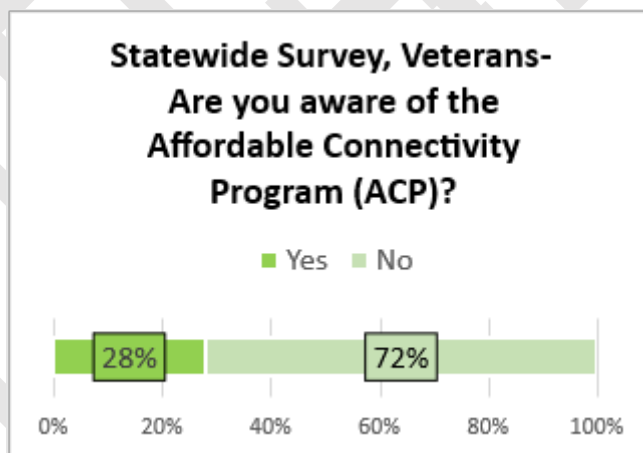
* (Percentages are based on 556 people who identified as veterans who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Veterans (Ripple Mapping Data)

The needs of veterans are diverse, given that this population spans a wide age spectrum. Expressed needs were around connectivity in veterans' facilities, the need for greater access to telehealth resources, and a desire by older veterans to sustain social connections, which can be challenging. As well, digital technologies can provide veterans with employment resources, and access to telehealth and mental health resources. For instance, the demand for telehealth appointments by veterans

increased tenfold during the pandemic. Yet not all veterans have the digital literacy skills or internet connectivity to connect with telehealth resources. Furthermore, there is a lack of substance misuse telehealth services, which are needed by many veterans.

Individuals with Disabilities

	#	%
Individuals with disabilities	**187874**	**12.9%**
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 187874 individuals with disabilities in the state.)

	#	%
Individuals with disabilities	**422**	**12%**
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentage based on 422 people who identified as an individual with disabilities in the statewide survey.)

Individuals with Disabilities' Ability to Pay for Broadband *

Statewide Survey, Individuals with Disabilities - What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?

$0 - $9.99	$10 - $19.99	$20 - $29.99	$30 - $39.98	$40 - $49.99	$50 - $74.99	$75 - $100	Over $100
4%	6%	8%	16%	21%	19%	26%	0%
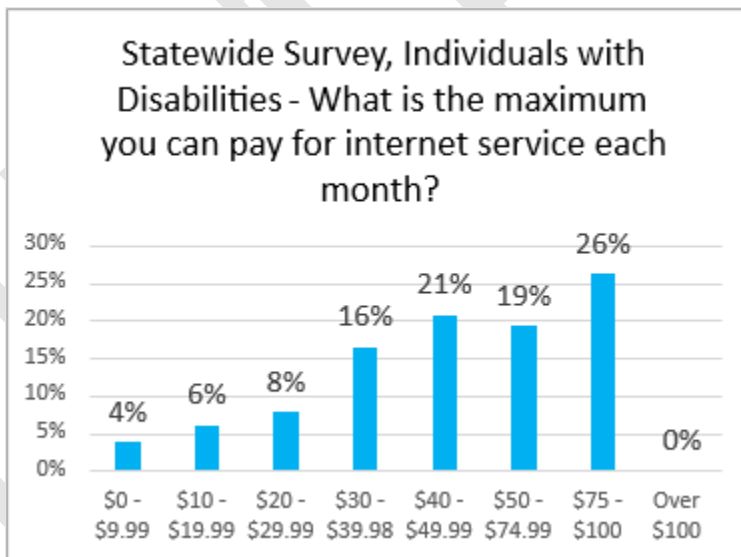
* (Percentages are based on 401 people who identified as an individual with disabilities who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Individuals with Disabilities Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *

Statewide Survey, Individuals with Disabilities – Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?

■ Yes ■ No

| 37% | 63% |
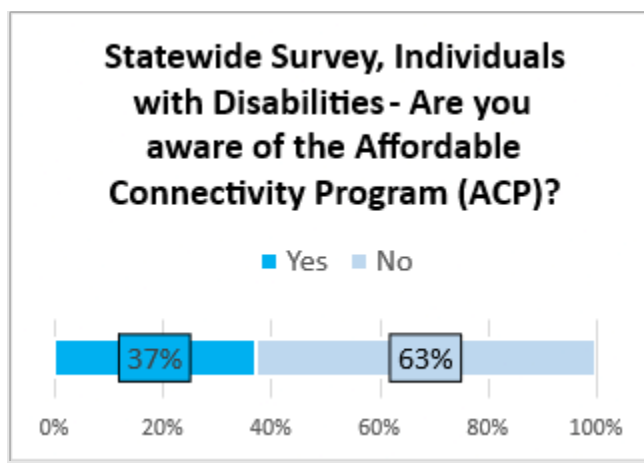
* (Percentages are based on 412 people who identified as an individual with disabilities who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Individuals with Disabilities (Ripple Mapping Data)

The needs of the disability community are nuanced, as it depends on the type of disability (e.g., visual, physical, cognitive, or auditory, etc.) Each particular disability has its own needs, including the need for adaptive devices or technologies. There are multiple organizations that support adaptive technologies, from Northeast Passage to school-based programs that serve a diverse age range. Funding to support adaptive technologies, which can be expensive and may only impact a small number of people, is lacking. The NH Department of Education provides resources through various programs (SPED, etc.), but resources are needed to serve the adult population. Lastly, to use adaptive technologies, there must be a basic level of digital literacy. It is often hard to access digital literacy resources. Lastly, there is a great need for enhanced technical support and hands-on assistance to support basic use of digital tools/resources/devices, as well as adaptive technologies. Making this technical support available through schools, institutions, community centers, libraries, etc., will be critical to ensuring digital literacy among the disability community.

Individuals with a Language Barrier

	#	%
Individuals with a language barrier	150979	10.3%
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 150979 individuals with a language barrier in the state.)

	#	%
Individuals with a language barrier	136	4%
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentage based on 136 individuals identifying as having a language barrier in the statewide survey.)

Ability to Pay for Broadband for Individuals with a Language Barrier *
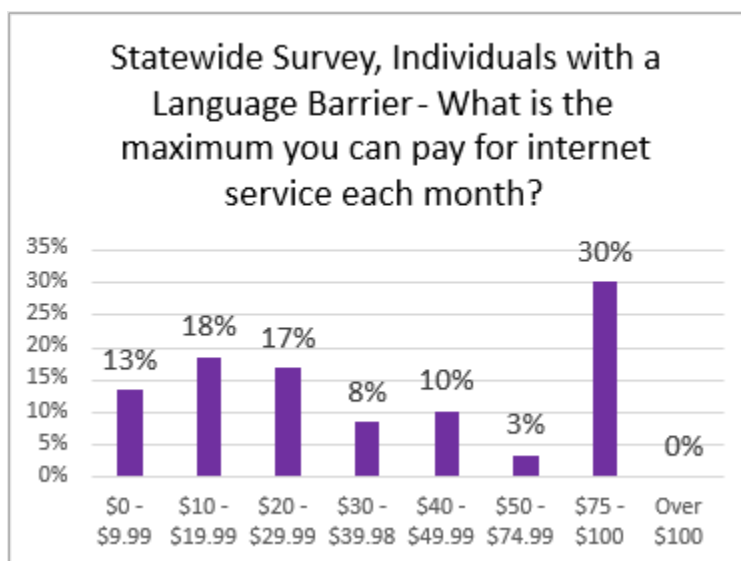
* (Percentages are based on 60 people who identified as having a language barrier who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Individuals with a Language Barrier Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *
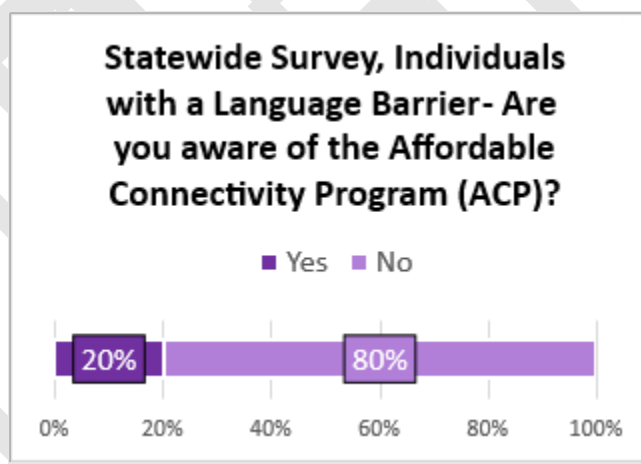
* (Percentages are based on 133 people who identified as having a language barrier who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Individuals with a Language Barrier (Ripple Mapping Data)

The participants of the focus group session representing this covered population—the majority of whom represented refugees and immigrants—identified lack of access to digital devices, broadband internet, as was the case with other covered populations. They also identified a gap in digital content available in multiple languages, such as information about resources, programs, translation services, etc. Further, there is a lack of multilingual technology support. Overall, the opportunities for

linguistically diverse youth are different from the opportunities for native English speakers, as there is a lack of community support services, the ability to access the internet and devices, as well as barriers to accessing other resources, such as vocational training, telehealth, and employment resources. Furthermore, there appears to be a cultural stigma associated with digital technologies—aside from video games and Roblox—so there is a need to build trust. That entails parent education and awareness building. Lastly, there is a need for building digital literacy, but doing so is not only relevant to curricula but also for practical purposes such as enhancing one's ability to access to resources, workforce opportunities, educational resources, etc. Mentioned but not discussed in this focus group session were general literacy challenges for those with limited or no reading and writing ability. Navigating digital devices is challenging for those with low literacy levels.

Individual Members of a Racial or Ethnic Minority Group

	#	%
Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	**131033**	**9.0%**
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 131033 individual members of a racial or ethnic minority group in the state.)

	#	%
Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	**126**	**4%**
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentage based on 126 people who identified as a member of a racial or ethnic minority group in the statewide survey.)

Ability to Pay for Broadband for Individual Members of a Racial or Ethnic Minority Group *
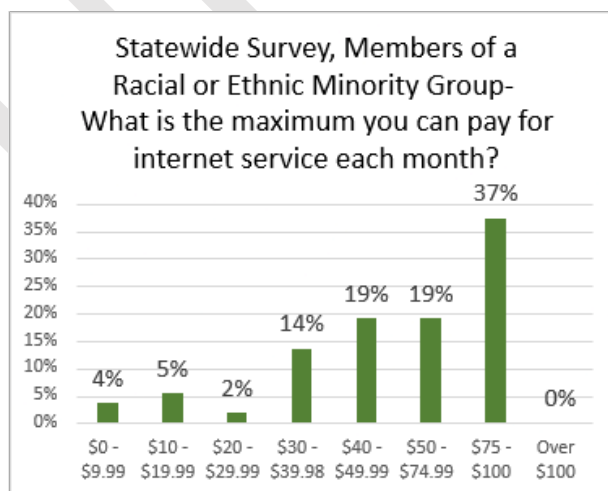
* (Percentages are based on 110 people who identified as a member of a racial or ethnic minority group who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Members of a Racial or Ethnic Minority Group Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *
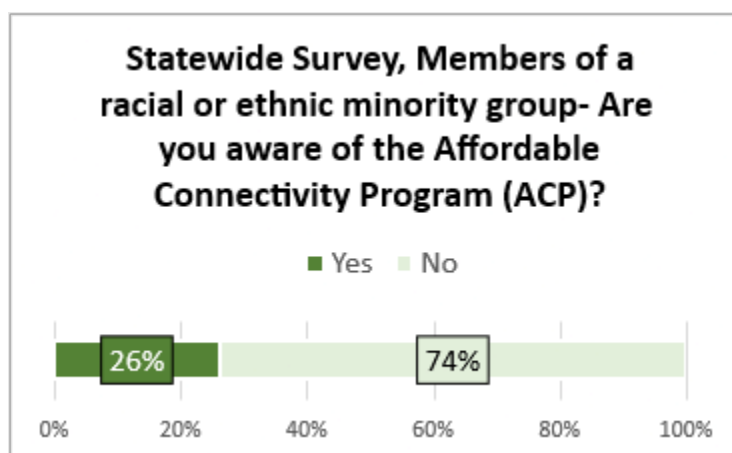
* (Percentages are based on 122 people who identified as a member of a racial or ethnic minority group who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Individual Members of a Racial or Ethnic Minority Group (Ripple Mapping Data)

The participants of this session identified accessibility to devices and connection, digital literacy, community building, and improved resiliency as major gaps. They also identified the importance of supportive policies that emphasize the need for systemic and intentional inclusion moving forward. Discussion on current inequitable access to opportunities underscored the themes of this session – especially surrounding digital literacy and resiliency. Some strategies and actions that were identified to overcome barriers included more effort to include racial and ethnic minorities in the policy and decision-making process, partnering with service providers to develop programs that expand access to services and devices, tapping into state and federal grants to build out programming, utilizing social media and existing networks to expand the opportunities for capacity building around greater inclusion in policies and programming, and lastly, creating literacy requirements for schools around technology and the digital world and better incorporating digital literacy into curricula.

Rural Residents

	#	%
Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	811830	55.6%
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 811830 individuals who reside in a rural area in the state.)

	#	%
Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	1220	34%
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentage based on 1220 individuals who identified as residing in a rural area in the statewide survey)

Ability to Pay for Broadband for Rural Residents *
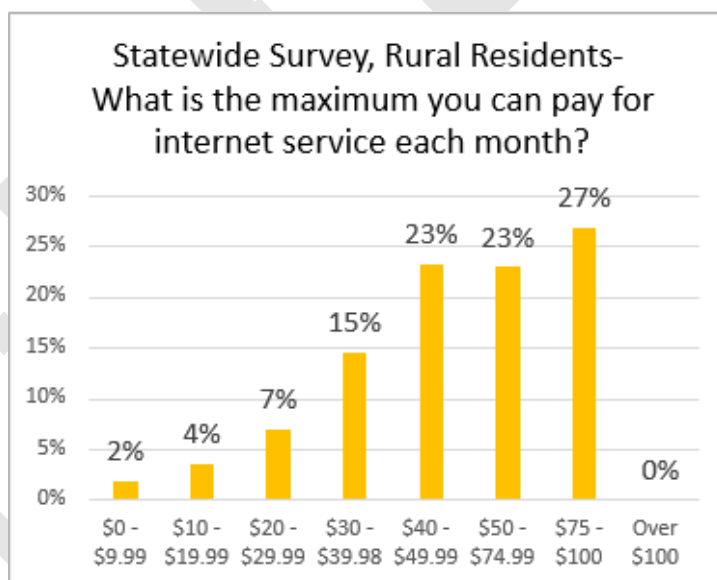
* (Percentages are based on 11177 people who identified as residing primarily in a rural area who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Rural Residents' Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *
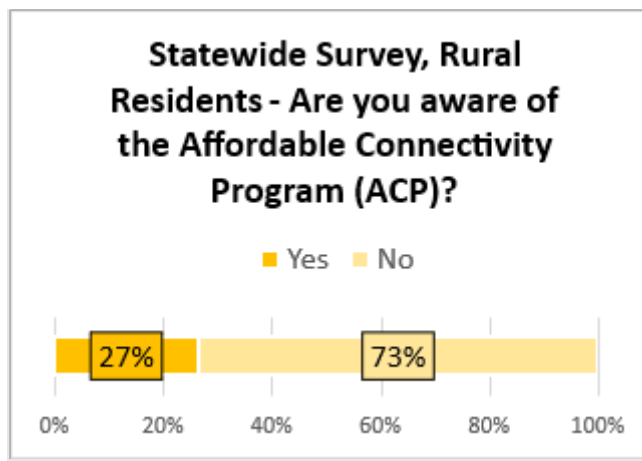
* (Percentages are based on 1204 people who identified as residing primarily in a rural area who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Additional Populations

Immigrants living in New Hampshire

	#	%
Immigrants living in New Hampshire	**82127**	**5.6%**
(US Census American Community Survey, 2021 1-year estimates)		

(Percentage based on 82127 immigrants living in the state.)

	#	%
Immigrants living in New Hampshire	**171**	**4.8%**
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentage based on 111 individuals who identified as an immigrant living in the state in the statewide survey)

Ability to Pay for Broadband for Immigrants living in New Hampshire *
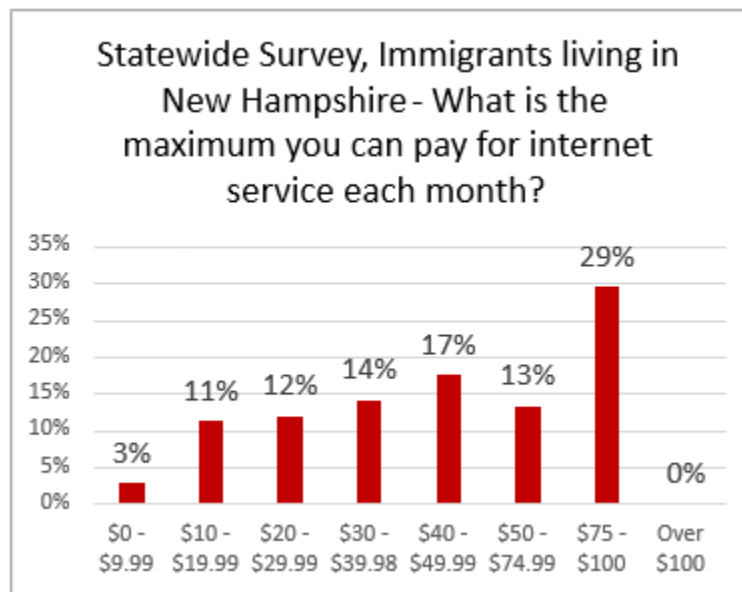
* (Percentages are based on 143 people who identified as an immigrant living in the state who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Immigrants living in New Hampshire Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *
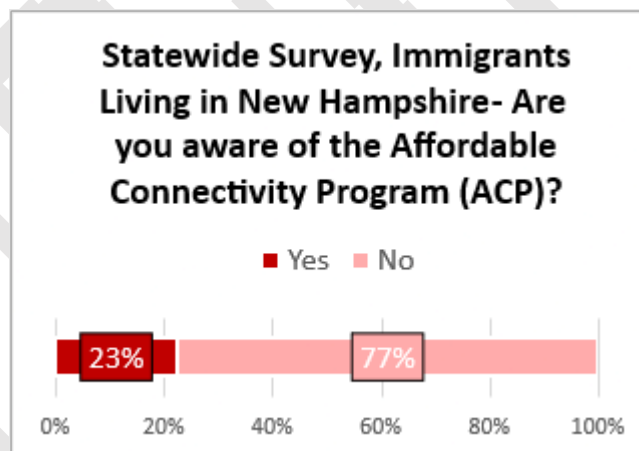
* (Percentages are based on 164 people who identified as an immigrant living in the state who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community

	#	%
Individuals in the LGBTQI+ Community	**7762**	**55.6%**
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentage based on 7762 individuals in the LGBTQI+ community in the state.)

	#	%
Individuals in the LGBTQI+ Community	**202**	**5.7%**
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentage based om 202 people who identified as an individual in the LGBTQI+ community in the statewide survey)

Ability to Pay for Broadband for Individuals in the LGBTQI+ Community*
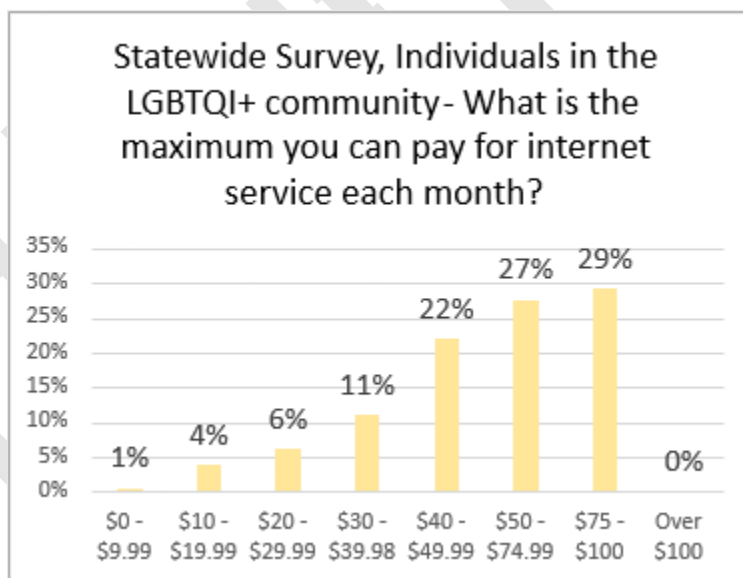
* (Percentages are based on 182 people who identified as an individual in the LGBTQI+ community who responded to the question, :*What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

Individuals in the LGBTQI+ Community Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Statewide Survey, Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community- Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?

■ Yes ■ No

34% | 66%
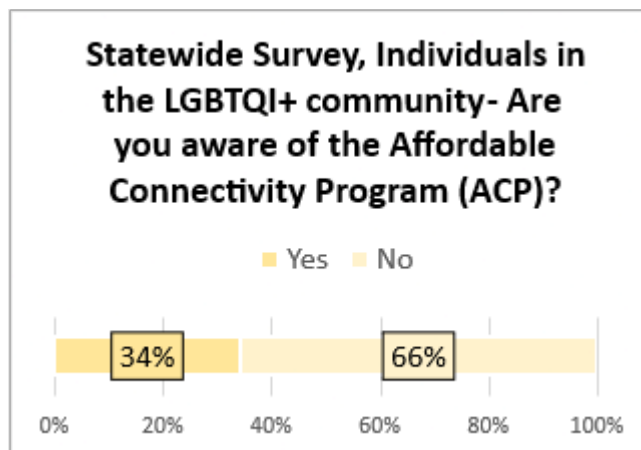
* (Percentages are based on 201 people who identified as an individual in the LGBTQI+ community who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

	#	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4089	0.2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	647	0.03%
(NTIA DE Act Community Resilience Estimates, June 2023)		

(Percentages based on 4089 American Indian or Alaska Native individuals and 647 Native Hawaiian od Pacific Islander individuals who reside in the state. The US Census American Community Survey identifies only these two categories for indigenous people living in the US.)

	#	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	29	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0%
(New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Survey)		

(Percentages based on 29 people identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native in the statewide survey. The survey asked one individual demographic question on race with two options aligning with the US Census American Community Survey)

Ability to Pay for Broadband for American Indian or Alaska Native populations *

Statewide Survey, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander - What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?
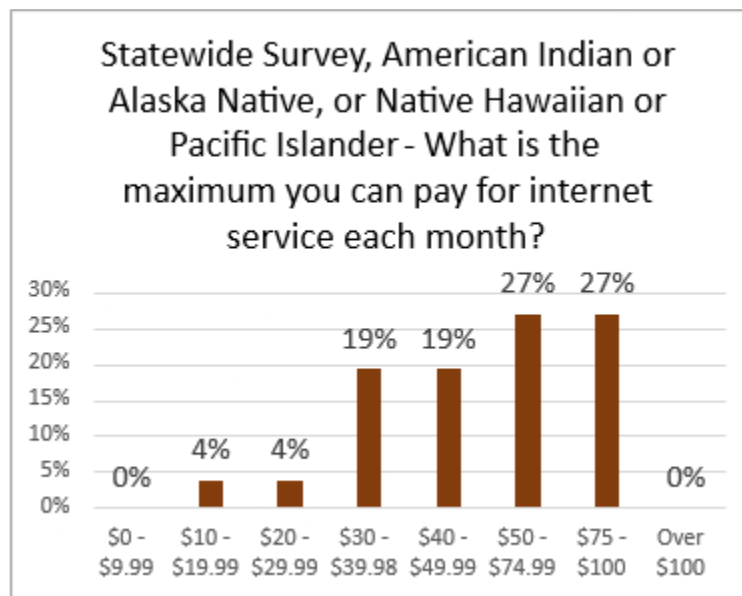
* (Percentages are based on 26 people who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native who responded to the question, *What is the maximum you can pay for internet service each month?* in the statewide survey.)

American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) *

Statewide Survey, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander - Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?
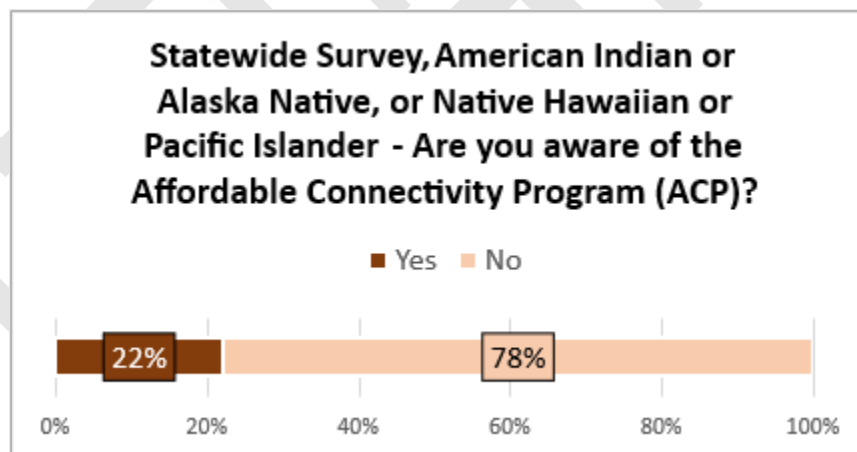
* (Percentages are based on 27 people who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander who responded to the question, *Are you aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that helps make internet affordable?* in the statewide survey.)

Digital Equity Assets

**Statewide Asset Inventory: Introduction and Methodology**

Developing an inventory of existing digital equity and inclusion organizations, programs, and services ("assets") is a critical step to understanding New Hampshire's digital equity ecosystem and developing a plan for the allocation of federal dollars. In August 2023, the digital equity planning team released the

New Hampshire Digital Equity & Inclusion Asset Mapping Survey to begin this work (See Appendix 6, Asset Inventory Survey Responses). Developed by the Digital Equity Research Center, the Asset Mapping Survey seeks input from the following:

- Local, regional, and state agencies that serve members of covered populations
- K-12, higher education, and adult education schools
- Nonprofit and community-based organizations
- Internet Service Providers operating in New Hampshire
- Other organizations or companies offering digital training or services to residents of the state

Information has been collected on 108 unique assets via the inventory form and a separate survey of libraries which was circulated earlier in the year. New Hampshire's Digital Equity and Inclusion Asset Inventory, organized by region, can be found later in this section. Most responses have come from education, community development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion-focused organizations and entities, as reflected in the chart below.

Primary Focus Area

Focus Area	Percentage
Community Development	27%
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	23%
Education	43%
Faith-Based	1%
Health	13%
Homelessness	5%
Housing	7%
Labor/Workers Rights	2%
Workforce/Job Training	18%
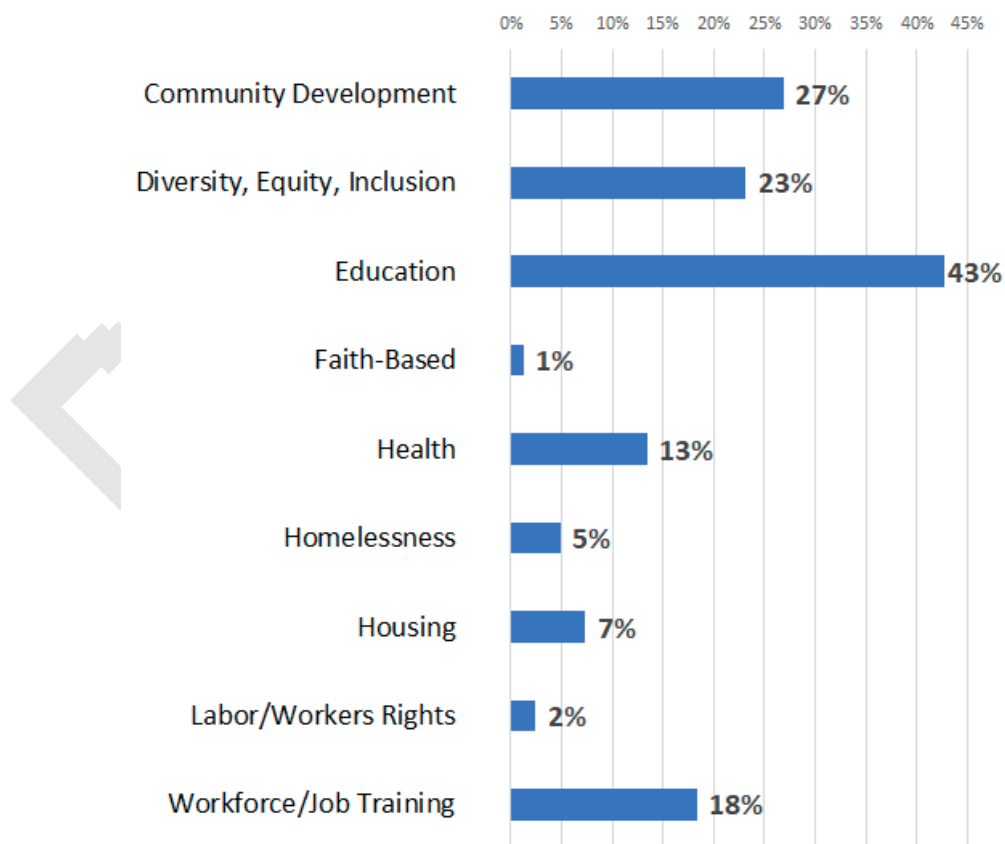
There is a noticeable need for additional responses from housing authorities, local and state government entities, and other organizations/programs which specifically serve covered populations but do not currently offer digital equity and inclusion services. The University of New Hampshire is using the information collected via the Asset Inventory to develop a prototype Asset Mapping tool which will

allow digital equity advocates and residents across the state to locate and update information about digital inclusion programs and services. This resource will continue to expand and evolve in the coming years. This community-maintained map and database will be helpful to the regional Digital Equity Coalitions and members of the public who wish to locate resources and services. The figure below shows an early prototype of the tool:

Digital Equity Programs/Services Offered Across New Hampshire

The following graphic outlines the types of digital equity & inclusion programs and services being provided by respondents:
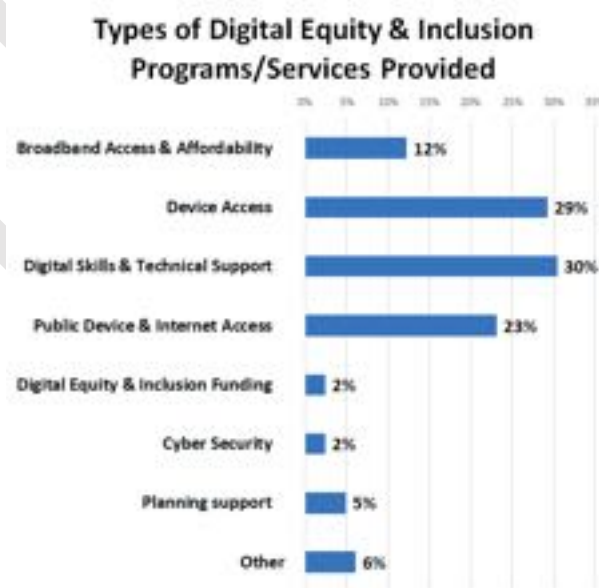
- "Devices for public to use; preferably that they can borrow and take home"

- "We need funds for more Chromebooks."

- "We would need more laptops to add to our Computer Loaner Program, as well as hotspots."

- "Dollars to continue providing digital literacy programs."

- "Access to trained, reliable volunteers and funding for mobile printing."

- "Ubiquitous, inexpensive or free broadband and mobile coverage across the state."

- "We need funding and infrastructure for internet connections at speeds that allow patrons to have full use of emerging online tools and information."

- "We need investment in our Spanish-language news service"

- "A sustained message, and support to communicate that message, about the importance of digital equity."

- "Language resources with focus on English as a second language for our large Nepalese community; audio technologies for our hearing-impaired patrons, and vision technologies for our visually impaired patrons"

- "A.D.A. compliance help in physical structure and in online resources. Adaptive tools. Foreign language materials. Training."

Digital Skills Training & Technical Support

Existing digital skills training & technical support initiatives:

Courses	One-on-one	Workshops
9	17	10

Twenty organizations reported offering these services in-person, and thirteen offer them online. Spanish is the most supported language other than English, followed by Arabic. Thirteen organizations offer services in languages other than the top ten languages spoken in New Hampshire.

Digital Equity and Inclusion Visions and Needs

The Asset Mapping Survey collects information about each entity's vision for digital equity and inclusion, as well as the resources and support they need to achieve that vision. De-identified responses to these questions are compiled in Appendix 6. These may be helpful to other organizations, entities, and programs looking to create digital equity visions, or to funders interested in developing grant priorities to support this work. While these visions vary depending on the communities served and services being offered, these statements reflect a common desire for New Hampshire residents to have access to devices, affordable internet, and learning resources.

The needs articulated by respondents in order to achieve their vision fell within a wide range of activities and services. Some of the most prominent needs are outlined below.

More devices:

"Devices for public to use; preferably that they can borrow and take home"

- "We need funds for more Chromebooks."

- "We would need more laptops to add to our Computer Loaner Program, as well as hotspots."

Affordable connectivity:

• "Ubiquitous, inexpensive or free broadband and mobile coverage across the state."

• "We need funding and infrastructure for internet connections at speeds that allow patrons to have full use of emerging online tools and information."

Funding for programs & labor:

• "Dollars to continue providing digital literacy programs."

• "Access to trained, reliable volunteers and funding for mobile printing."

Communication support:

• "We need investment in our Spanish-language news service"

• "A sustained message, and support to communicate that message, about the importance of digital equity."

• "Language resources with focus on English as a second language for our large Nepalese community; audio technologies for our hearing-impaired patrons, and vision technologies for our visually impaired patrons"

• "A.D.A. compliance help in physical structure and in online resources. Adaptive tools. Foreign language materials. Training."

The implementation plan outlined in Section V addresses how these needs can be met to support assets across New Hampshire in carrying out their visions for digital equity and inclusion.

Key Digital Equity Assets by Region

Statewide Asset Inventory

The below list reflects the organizations that have submitted information for the dashboard currently under development. Submit or update information about your organization, services, and populations served: https://arcg.is/18muSf0

		Low-income households	Aging Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a language barrier	Rural residents	Members of racial or ethnic minority groups	American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Immigrants or refugees living in New Hampshire	Incarcerated Populations	Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community
Abbie Greenleaf Library	Library	X	X				X					X
Acworth Silsby Library	Library											

		Low-income households	Aging Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a language barrier	Rural residents	Members of racial or ethnic minority groups	American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Immigrants or refugees living in New Hampshire	Incarcerated Populations	Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community
Amoskeag Health	Local Nonprofit											
Ascentria Care Alliance - Services for New Americans	Local Nonprofit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Belmont Public Library	Library											
Berlin Public Library	Library											
Bethlehem Public Library	Library	X	X				X					
Blaisdell Memorial Library	Library											
Building Community in New Hampshire	Local Nonprofit	X				X		X		X		
Canaan Town Library	Library											
Chesley Memorial Library	Library	X	X	X	X							
Chesley Memorial Library	Library											
Chesterfield Public Library	Library											
Chocorua Public Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Community Tech Network	National Nonprofit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CompuDopt												
Concord Public Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Converse Free Library	Library											
Cook Memorial Library	Library	X	X	X	X		X					X
Department of Health & Human Services	State Gov't.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

		Low-income households	Aging Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a language barrier	Rural residents	Members of racial or ethnic minority groups	American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Immigrants or refugees living in New Hampshire	Incarcerated Populations	Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community
Digitunity												
Dover Adult Learning Center	Local Nonprofit	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Elliot Hospital	Healthcare											
Enfield Public Library	Library											
Epsom Public Library	Library											
Errol Public Library	Library											
Exeter Public Library	Library											
Fiske Free Library	Library											
Franklin Public	Library											
Fuller Public Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Gafney Library	Library											
Gale Library	Library											
George H Stowell Free Library	Library											
George H. and Ella M. Rodgers Memorial Library	Library											
George H. Bixby Memorial Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
GEP Dodge Library	Library											
GetSetUp	Private Sector		X	X								
Gibson Center for Senior Services Inc	Local Nonprofit	X	X	X	X		X					
Gilford Public Library	Library											

		Low-income households	Aging Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a language barrier	Rural residents	Members of racial or ethnic minority groups	American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Immigrants or refugees living in New Hampshire	Incarcerated Populations	Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community
Goffstown Public Library	Library											
Granite State News Collaborative	Local Nonprofit											
Hall Memorial Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X					X
Hampstead Public Library	Library											
Hampstead Public Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hampton Falls Free Library	Library											
Harrisville Public Library	Library											
Hollis Social Library	Library											
Holy Cross Family Learning Center	Local Nonprofit											
Hooksett Library	Library	X	X		X		X	X		X		X
Hooksett Library	Library											
Hooksett Public Library	Library											
Hopkinton Town Library	Library											
Hopkinton Town Library	Library											
Ingalls Memorial Library	Library											
Institute for Health Policy & Practice	Local Nonprofit											
International Institute of New England	Local Nonprofit	X	X			X		X		X		
International Institute of New England - Manchester	Local Nonprofit	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X

		Low-income households	Aging Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a language barrier	Rural residents	Members of racial or ethnic minority groups	American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Immigrants or refugees living in New Hampshire	Incarcerated Populations	Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community
International Institute of New England - Manchester	Local Nonprofit	X	X		X	X		X		X		
Jackson Public Library	Library											
Jaffrey Public Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Joseph Patch Library	Library											
Keene Public Library	Library											
Kensington Library	Library											
Kingston Community Library	Library	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Laconia Adult Education	Adult Education											
Laconia Public Library	Library											
Lane Memorial Library	Library	X	X	X	X							
Lane Memorial Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Leach Library	Library											
Lebanon Public Libraries	Library											
Lee Public	Library											
Madbury Public Library	Library											
Manchester Adult High School - Adult Diploma Program	Adult Diploma Program	X			X		X	X				X
Manchester City Library	Library											
Marlow Town Library	Library											

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Mary E. Bartlett Memorial Library	Library											
Meriden Library	Library											
Miner Memorial Library	Library											
Minot-Sleeper Library	Library											
Moultonborough Public Library	Library											
Mt. Caesar Union Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mt. Caesar Union Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MY TURN, Inc.	Local Nonprofit											
Nashua Adult Learning Center, Inc.	Local Nonprofit	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		
Nashua Public Library	Library											
Nesmith Library	Library											
New Castle Public Library	Library											
New Hampshire Public Radio	Local Nonprofit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Newbury Public Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NH Citizens Health Initiative/UNH Project ECHO	Higher Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NH GRANIT	Higher Education											
NH State Commission on Aging	State Gov't		X									
North Hampton	Library											

		Low-income households	Aging Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a language barrier	Rural residents	Members of racial or ethnic minority groups	American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Immigrants or refugees living in New Hampshire	Incarcerated Populations	Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community
Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services	Statewide Nonprofit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Olive G Pettis Library	Library											
Orford Free	Library											
Orford Social	Library											
Ossipee Public Library	Library											
Ossipee Public Library	Library	X	X				X					
PELHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY	Library											
Pembroke Town Library	Library											
Peterborough Town Library	Library											
Philbrick-James Library	Library	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Philbrick-James Library	Library											
Philip Read Memorial Library	Library											
Plaistow Public Library	Library											
Portsmouth Public Library	Library											
Richards Free Library	Library											
Richmond Public Library	Library											
Rochester Public Library	Library											
Rochester Public Library	Library											
Rodgers Memorial Library	Library											
Rye Public Library	Library											

		Low-income households	Aging Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a language barrier	Rural residents	Members of racial or ethnic minority groups	American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Immigrants or refugees living in New Hampshire	Incarcerated Populations	Individuals in the LGBTQI+ community
Seabrook Library	Library	X	X	X	X			X		X		X
Second Start	Local Nonprofit					X				X		
Second Start	Local Nonprofit											
SNHU Center for New Americans												
Somersworth Public Library	Library											
Stephenson Memorial Library	Library											
The Goodwin Library	Library											
UNH Center for Digital Health Innovation	Higher Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
UNH Institute on Disability, ATinNH	Higher Education		X		X							
Walpole Town Library	Library											
Walpole Town Library	Library											
Weare Public Library	Library											
Webster Memorial Library	Library											
Welcoming NH	Local Nonprofit											
Whipple Free Library	Library											
WIlliam D. Weeks Memorial Library	Library											
Wilmot Library	Library											
Wilton Public & Gregg Free Library	Library											
YMCA of Greater Nashua	Local Nonprofit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Summary of Needs, Barriers, and Assets

The data above show that while significant needs exist with regards to broadband adoption and digital skills training, particularly around online privacy and cybersecurity, across the state, there are strong statewide and regional community-based assets that can be leveraged to address these needs and barriers. Public libraries and the New Hampshire State Library, adult education programs, and K-12 schools are just some of the many assets that can play a role in addressing these needs and barriers. Broadband affordability issues impacting covered populations and middle-class individuals and families, highlighted in this section, can be addressed through increased awareness and adoption of the Affordable Connectivity Program, as well as additional strategies listed in the next section.

APPENDIX 8: LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND STATEWIDE PLANS AND COMMITTEES

State and Regional Broadband Plans
Northern Border Regional Commission Strategic Plan: https://www.nbrc.gov/userfiles/files/Resource%20Guides/NBRC%20Strategic%20Plan%2C%202017-2022%20-%20%20Full%20Study.pdf
Southwest NH Broadband Plan: https://www.greenfield-nh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3176/f/uploads/southw-1.pdf

Local and Regional Broadband Committees
Monadnock Broadband Group: https://www.swrpc.org/programs-services/broadband/monadnock-broadband-group/
Bristol Broadband Initiative: https://www.bristolnh.gov/home/news/bristol-officially-launches-its-high-speed-internet-service
Dublin Broadband Committee: https://www.townofdublin.org/broadband-committee
Henniker Broadband Committee: https://www.henniker.org/henniker-broadband-committee
Troy Broadband Committee: https://www.troy-nh.us/index.asp?SEC=F28EF50A-F087-4CBD-A7D7-8224ABA6795A&Type=B_BASIC&mobile=false
Winchester: https://www.winchester-nh.gov/broadband-committee
Peterborough Broadband Expansion Group: https://www.peterboroughnh.gov/departments/community___economic_development_/broadband_expansion.php
Piermont: https://townofpiermontnh.org/broadband-committee/
Portsmouth Community Broadband Group: https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/legal/events/community-broadband-working-group-0

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) Addressing Broadband and Digital Equity
Strafford: https://strafford.org/plans/ceds/
Regional Economic Development Center: https://www.redc.com/ceds
Sullivan County CEDS: https://www.sullivancountynh.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1351/Sullivan-County-CEDS---July-2022
Southern Regional Planning Commission CEDS: https://www.snhpc.org/community-economic-development/economic-development/pages/comprehensive-economic-development
Central NH CEDS: https://www.lakesrpc.org/ceds/cedsindex.asp
Lakes Region CEDS: https://www.lakesrpc.org/ceds/cedsindex.asp
Southwest RPC CEDS: https://www.swrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CEDS_2015_Final.pdf

Goal 1: Affordable and Reliable Broadband Access			
Needs and Gaps	**Objective**	**Strategy**	**Metrics**
7% of locations across New Hampshire remain underserved for broadband, many of which are rural	Increase the number of New Hampshire households connected to high-speed internet with a minimum of 100/20 Mbps.	Leverage federal funds to expand broadband access by enabling more NH households to connect by providing or incentivizing more affordable Broadband plans that feature at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speed.	Increase the number of households with access to 100/20 Mbps by 10% per year over four years
	Expand broadband internet to community anchor institutions (CAIs), including schools, libraries, and community centers	Prioritize project funding requests that bring high-speed internet to CAIs Expand broadband internet access within Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs), including schools, libraries, and community centers.	All CAI's have plans, projects, or proposals in place for 1 Gig broadband access by 2029 A substantive increase in the number of CAI's that have actionable plans, projects, or proposals in place for 1 Gig broadband access by 2029.
	Expand broadband access to public housing units and subsidized housing residences.	Support and supplement programs by partner organizations that serve to connect residents of public housing with high-speed internet.	Increase the number of residents of affordable housing units that have access to free or low-cost connectivity ($30 or under) by at least 10% per year over four years.
Only 25% of low-income households	Increase enrollment in programs that defray	Target outreach to covered populations to make them aware of	Support efforts that increase enrollment in initiatives like the ACP,

are aware of the ACP in New Hampshire	the cost of high-speed internet.	programs that can help defray the cost of high-speed Internet, such as ACP and affordable pricing plans by providers Work with internet service providers and partner s to promote and implement programs that defray the cost of high-speed internet beyond the scope of the digital equity plan	aiming to double the number of households from covered populations enrolled in such programs by 2029.

Goal 2: Access to Computers and Assistive Devices, Coupled with Tech Support			
Needs and Gaps	**Objective**	**Strategy**	**Metrics**
Of the state's 77 New Hampshire Broadband providers that participate in the ACP program, only 44 said they are willing to offer the device subsidy Fewer than 20% of these providers alert new and prospective ACP-eligible customers that they are eligible for the one-time device subsidy	Support and expand programs for new and refurbished devices and laptops, along with tech support to ensure safe and effective use	Prioritize project funding requests that expand access to refurbished laptops and devices with emphasis on covered populations such as low-income individuals, those with disabilities, seniors, and veterans. Educate NH philanthropic leaders on why and how to fund devices (bundled with resources and tech support, to enhance the impacts of their grantmaking on covered populations, such as incarcerated or recently released	Increase by 10% annually the number of refurbished computers and devices including desktop workstation bundles and laptops—donated to eligible programs.

Needs and Gaps	Objective	Strategy	Metrics
		individuals and English language learners. Launch engagement campaign encouraging and assisting individuals, employers, agencies, and others to donate devices for refurbishment	
The number of digital navigators is insufficient for the need and navigators are difficult to find for those not participating in internet service provider subsidy programs	Improve access to and awareness of technical support and training in the use of assistive devices, including assistive technologies for those with disabilities	Prioritize project funding requests that build awareness of tech support and training Promote, enhance, and expand existing programs that currently provide digital navigators to clients who are members of a covered population, such incarcerated or recently released individuals navigate newer technologies. Develop a statewide network of linguistically diverse digital navigators that offers support, training, and credentialing to enhance and grow the skills of technical support professionals who serve members of covered populations	By 2029, organizations that serve covered populations will be aware of, and utilize available technical support and training by veteran service organizations and community groups serving low-income populations and the disabled community. By 2029 a statewide network of at least 100 linguistically diverse digital navigators will provide professional development opportunities and best practice trainings to ensure that covered populations have access to skilled support in communities throughout the state

Goal 3: Enhanced Digital Literacy Skill Development			
Needs and Gaps	Objective	Strategy	Metrics

Focus groups with New Hampshire educators revealed that there is insufficient support and training to allow for the effective delivery of digital literacy programming in schools The lack of digital literacy skills was identified as the most significant barrier to accessing and using technology for individuals over the age of 60, as well as for the incarcerated population, persons with disabilities, those with a language barrier, and individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group and those living in rural areas	Enhance digital skills training for covered populations such as seniors, low-income individuals and non-English speaking persons on basic computer use, internet navigation, online safety, accessing services, software applications, and assessing the quality of online information.	Prioritize funding for programs that seek to develop or expand digital literacy	Double the number of digital skills training courses offered at libraries, workforce centers, and in schools by 2029.
	Develop a clearinghouse or directory of online tutorials and resources to help individuals learn digital skills at their own pace	Utilize Digital Equity Implementation funding to develop a directory of resources that are vetted and cataloged using best practices in digital learning delivery.	By 2025, go live with a 211-like referral help desk and website that points to free, self-paced, quality digital skill-building resources.
	Build capacity and resources to integrate digital literacy into curricula, from early education through educator preparation and higher education, so that current and future students of all ages acquire critical digital skills	Prioritize funding for programs that seek to integrate digital literacy into curricula through the development of institutional policies.	See a measurable increase of public and private schools and other educational institutions that incorporate age-appropriate digital literacy curriculum across the education spectrum.
	Partner with libraries, community centers, schools, colleges/universities, and learning centers to provide access to computers, internet, and digital literacy resources.	Prioritize support to libraries and other Community Anchor Institutions to expand access to computers and digital literacy resources.	By 2029, expand the number of public libraries providing access to computers, internet connections, and digital literacy resources by 50% in all regions of the state.

	Increase the number of digital literacy educators available to teach covered populations and recruit linguistically diverse youth and adults to provide multilingual support.	Partner with public libraries and organizations serving covered populations, including English learners, to establish a statewide network of digital navigators.

Recruit and train linguistically diverse youth and adults to provide technical support and digital literacy resources in a variety of languages other than English. | By 2029, enable each region of the state to have access to at least 5 trained digital navigators to support covered populations. |
| | Strengthen the digital pedagogy skills of educators to design and facilitate online and hybrid learning, employ competency-based learning, and address the needs of digital-age learners | Support educators in developing and implementing effective curricula and strategies that address the challenges of digital-age learners | By 2029, ensure that at least half of all educators surveyed across all education levels report that they are confident in their skills in online and hybrid learning delivery and competency-based learning to address the needs of digital-age learners. |

Goal 4: Enhanced Cybersafety Skill Development and Capacity			
Needs and Gaps	**Objective**	**Strategy**	**Metrics**
Focus groups with providers of K12, afterschool, adult education, educator preparation, workforce development, community college, four-year degree-	Expand outreach to covered populations so that they have the knowledge, resources, and technical support to enable them to use the internet safely and securely	Prioritize project funding requests that build cybersecurity awareness and skills and explore ways to build upon existing initiatives and programs.	By 2029, double the number of statewide programs serving covered populations that have cybersafety outreach and education elements.

	Provide technical support to organizations, public institutions, and businesses to help ensure that their data is safe and secure	Prioritize project funding requests that help organizations, public institutions, businesses, and other organizations secure data.	By 2029, reduce the number of incidents of data breaches at organizations, businesses, and public institutions by 25%.
granting, and other educational services emphasized the need and urgency to improve their ability to foster cybersafety skills, particularly for covered populations, library patrons, telehealth patients, and health providers	Develop tools and resources that raise awareness of how to respond to cyber threats and increase cybersafety for covered populations.	Support efforts to develop tools and resources that raise awareness among covered populations of cybersecurity threats.	By 2029, increase by 50% the number of tools and resources that engage covered populations and defend against cyber threats by 2029.

Goal 5: Enhanced Access to (and Inclusivity of) Web Portals to Public Resources			
Needs and Gaps	**Objective**	**Strategy**	**Metrics**
In need-sensing forums concern was expressed that state agency websites are generally difficult to navigate, not available in other languages, out of compliance with W3C website accessibility standards, and are difficult for agencies to update and maintain with the latest relevant information.	Build upon existing efforts to improve the accessibility of key websites that provide information on public resources, particularly those pertaining to services for members of covered populations.	Assess remaining needs relative to state agency websites and complete an assessment of additional, critical programs typically used by covered populations, and support efforts to address identified needs for improvement. Ensure that key websites meet W3C global website accessibility standards.	By 2029, all state-based programs identify and seek to address website accessibility issues as part of an overarching strategy with defined goals and timelines.
	Support the development of a directory of digital equity resources, drawing from the asset inventory conducted	Create, or support the creation of, an online directory of digital equity related resources, such as current programs	Enable the launch of a digital equity resource directory or portal by 2025.

	as part of this plan's development	highlighted in this plan's asset inventory, efforts resulting from this proposed plan, and other complimentary resources and initiatives, that is regularly managed to ensure information is accurate, relevant, and current.	