Ohio Digital Opportunity Plan

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Department of Development

BroadbandOhio

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1. Executive Summary

BroadbandOhio is working to bring reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to every Ohioan — in their home and in their community. Statewide, approximately 1.3 million Ohioans still lack high-speed internet access. This is, in part, due to issues with infrastructure availability: Of the 4.5 million locations in Ohio, 188,000 remain unserved (4 percent) and 144,000 remain underserved (3 percent)[1]. The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program seeks to address infrastructure.

In Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan, **BroadbandOhio seeks to address the issues beyond connectivity that affect Ohioans' access to high-speed internet, such as affordability, access to devices, and digital skills.** Statewide data show that:

- Of the 1.99 million Ohio households eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), 1,091,094 (44%) have enrolled (54.8% of those eligible)[2].
- One-in-five (20%) Ohioans feel that they do not have sufficient device access to meet household needs, even though the majority (83%) prioritize having access to a device where they live[3].
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of low-income households in Ohio cite price as the primary reason for not having home internet[4].

The impact of these issues varies by region and by covered population group.

- Fifty percent of the households without subscriptions are located in 10 of Ohio's 88 counties, especially Cuyahoga (161,000), Franklin (107,000), Hamilton (79,000), Montgomery (62,000), and Summit (54,000) counties[5].
- Lowest adoption rates are in Appalachian counties[6].
- Adoption gaps are disproportionate in low-income households and among aging people and people with disabilities[7].
- For internet devices, the same trend is present, but with smaller gaps[8].

Achieving a more digitally inclusive Ohio will empower people across the state to fully engage in their communities, seek and maintain employment, better connect with loved ones, learn, and access healthcare and other essential services. BroadbandOhio cannot achieve this alone. Fostering collaborative partnerships and empowering underserved communities are critical to ensure no Ohioan is left offline.

To develop Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan, BroadbandOhio took a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to collaboration and stakeholder engagement. BroadbandOhio leveraged existing stakeholders,

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1 State of Ohio Five-Year Action Plan BEAD Program, *BroadbandOhio, June 2023*
2 Affordable Connectivity Program, *Institute for Local Self Reliance, November 2023*
3 *Ohio Internet Access Survey, BroadbandOhio, 2023*
4 *Ibid*
5 State of Ohio Five-Year Action Plan BEAD Program, *BroadbandOhio, June 2023*
6 *Ohio Internet Access Survey, BroadbandOhio, 2023*
7 *Ibid*
8 *Ibid*

developed new relationships, and used multiple outreach channels. This approach ensures that the plan represents all Ohioans, with a special focus on covered populations.

Through ongoing partnerships and participation in listening sessions and surveys, more than 6,000 stakeholders have already contributed to building the plan and Ohio's key strategies for closing the digital divide. These stakeholders represent state government agencies, local government agencies, internet service providers, community-based nonprofits, and residents, among others.

Ohio's key strategies center around continued support to regional and local partners, many of whom have prioritized digital inclusion efforts for decades. In alignment with this ethos, Ohio's 2023 Broadband Strategy priorities, and Ohio's BEAD goals and objectives, Ohio's key strategies for digital opportunity are to:

1. Continue Stakeholder Engagement
2. Expand Broadband Infrastructure
3. Increase Access to Affordable Broadband
4. Increase Access to Digital Skills Training and Technical Support, including Training and Support around Privacy, Security & Safety
5. Increase access to Affordable Devices
6. Support the Accessibility & Inclusivity of Public Resources & Services

Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan is a living document that will continue to be updated to best reflect the needs of Ohioans. The Plan offers readers context on the current state of the digital divide in Ohio and considers the next steps through implementation.

2. Vision for Digital Opportunity

BroadbandOhio is working to bring reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to every Ohioan, in their home and in their community[9]. While broadband expansion projects are increasing connectivity across Ohio and improving access to high-speed internet, gaps in access to affordable internet, internet-enabled devices, and digital skills training and technical support remain barriers.

Our vision of a more digitally inclusive Ohio extends beyond connectivity, encompassing equal opportunity to access quality education, healthcare, job opportunities, government services, and cultural resources online. By fostering collaborative partnerships and empowering under-resourced communities to accomplish its goals, Ohio will ensure that no one is left behind.

By building an inclusive, connected, and technologically proficient society, BroadbandOhio aspires to create a thriving, resilient, and forward-looking Ohio that maximizes the potential of its residents. Together, we can shape a future where digital opportunity serves as the bedrock for progress, social cohesion, and collective prosperity across Ohio.

"High-speed internet is no longer a luxury – it's a critical necessity for everything from school to work to healthcare. We must end the digital divide in our state, and by giving our rural and unserved areas access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet, we will enhance economic growth in these communities and bring about new opportunities for residents."

— *Ohio Governor Mike DeWine*

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9 *High-speed internet and broadband are used interchangeably throughout this document to refer to internet service with 100/20 mbps download/upload speeds.*

3. Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

BroadbandOhio has built a broad network of partners across local government, other state agencies, internet service providers, and community-based nonprofits since it was established in March 2020. These public- and private-sector stakeholders share a common interest in collaborating to help close the digital divide in Ohio.

3.1   Developing Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan

To develop Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan, BroadbandOhio took a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to collaboration and stakeholder engagement. BroadbandOhio leveraged existing stakeholders, developed new relationships, and used multiple outreach channels. This approach ensures that Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan represents all Ohioans, with a special focus on covered populations.

This section describes the groups and strategies leveraged for outreach and engagement through the State Digital Equity Planning Grant process and accomplishments where relevant. These groups and strategies will continue to be utilized throughout the implementation process.

BroadbandOhio Alliance

The BroadbandOhio Alliance provided the first opportunity to connect with BroadbandOhio's network of stakeholders. Since the office was established in March 2020, the Alliance has grown to more than 500 members. The Alliance convenes quarterly to provide updates on BroadbandOhio's efforts and an opportunity for best practice sharing from stakeholders to inform Ohio's digital ecosystem.

Broadband Working Group

BroadbandOhio facilitates the Broadband Working Group, which convenes various state government agencies to enable cross-agency cooperation and collaboration on broadband-related efforts. Monthly meetings allow the Working Group to regularly align on priorities and existing state efforts to improve outcomes across Ohio. The Working Group consists of InnovateOhio, Department of Development (Office of Workforce Transformation, Governor's Office of Appalachia), Department of Education, Department of Administrative Services, Department of Higher Education, OARnet, and the Ohio Education Computer Network Management Council.

Regional Digital Inclusion Alliances

As part of the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, BroadbandOhio established Regional Digital Inclusion Alliances (RDIAs), dividing the state into five commonly recognized regions (Northwest, Northeast, Central, Southeast, Southwest). Each RDIA is led by one organization, supported by a steering committee of representatives from across the region with experience serving the covered populations. RDIA lead organizations are existing community leaders that serve as collaborative partners to BroadbandOhio, facilitating local and regional outreach and engagement efforts to best inform Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan.

In the Fall of 2022, BroadbandOhio released a stakeholder engagement survey to gauge statewide interest in participating in the regional planning process. Of the more than 100 responses to the survey, 18 organizations indicated their interest in leading planning efforts in their RDIA region. Through a competitive process that evaluated existing experience and readiness, the following organizations were selected and awarded planning grant funds to lead their RDIA:

Northwest Ohio – Toledo Lucas County Public Library

The Toledo Lucas County Public Library convenes the Greater Toledo Digital Equity Coalition[10], a cross-sector alliance composed of more than 50 individuals representing various community and professional sectors. The Coalition commissioned the Bowling Green State University Center for Regional Development to conduct a Lucas County digital equity gap analysis of the region and has built priorities, strategic goals, and an action plan from its findings. The Coalition also maintains a digital equity fund through the library's 501(c)3 to support its work in connecting community members with technology and digital skills training.

Northeast Ohio – The Cleveland Foundation

The Cleveland Foundation convenes the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity Coalition, a group of more than 70 organizations across different sectors and fields dedicated to building a stronger, more equitable and resilient digital community in the region. The Coalition is working to ensure all households have adequate computing devices, competitive internet coverage available through Cuyahoga County, and digital skills classes. Before the Coalition, the Foundation established its Digital Excellence Initiative, a collaborative effort to ensure successful participation in the digital world and economy among residents. In partnership with Cuyahoga County, the Foundation helped to launch and continues to support the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity fund, a funding collaborative of organizations to support high-speed internet access during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, that continues today.

Central Ohio – Smart Columbus

Smart Columbus convenes the Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition[11] (DEC), a dedicated group of more than 30 Franklin County and regional organizations representing government, education, healthcare, social service, private sectors, and institutions. Smart Columbus facilitated a county-wide planning process to develop the Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda, which includes interrelated priorities and key initiatives to address the digital divide across Central Ohio. As part of the Franklin County DEC, Smart Columbus has also funded affordable high-speed internet pilots and neighborhood outreach efforts.

Southeast Ohio – Buckeye Hills Regional Council

Buckeye Hills Regional Council convenes the region's Broadband Coalition[12] and has been working with local, state, and federal partners to address broadband issues for over a decade. From what was first a primary focus on mapping and infrastructure, Buckeye Hills now views broadband as a holistic issue through the lens of digital equity.

Southwest Ohio – United Way of Greater Cincinnati

The United Way of Greater Cincinnati has an extensive network of public and private partners, as well as non-traditional partners like faith-based organizations and other grassroots groups in the region, and expertise in convening stakeholders to improve outcomes across the organization's key impact areas. As a newcomer to the digital inclusion space, the United Way is working to deploy its resources in support of digital inclusion, building a coalition, and establishing itself as a key voice in these efforts.

In total, RDIA lead organizations hosted 32 in-person listening sessions, six virtual listening sessions, 20 stakeholder interviews, and 10 community pop-up events, reaching over 600 Ohioans from March-June 2023. Regional outreach and engagement by RDIA lead organizations continues today and will continue through implementation.

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10 *Toledo Lucas County Public Library -* Digital Equity and Inclusion
11 Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition
12 *Buckeye Hills Regional Council -* Broadband

Organizations that had completed the stakeholder engagement survey but were not selected to lead were contacted by RDIA lead organizations to participate in stakeholder engagement efforts and included in the BroadbandOhio Alliance. They were also encouraged to become members of steering committees and to continue their involvement throughout the process of creating the digital opportunity plan.

Ohio's Digital Opportunity Summit

BroadbandOhio and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance cohosted a statewide Digital Opportunity Summit kick-off event for the State Digital Equity Planning Grant in February 2023 at the Columbus Metropolitan Library's Main Branch. The event featured presentations from local, state, and national leaders in the digital inclusion space, offering best practices, key insights, and helpful resources for implementing change-driving programs.

The event offered an opportunity to engage nearly 300 stakeholders representing government, education, healthcare, social services, nonprofits, the private sector, and internet service providers, among others. In addition to registered attendees, the event took place in an open area

Lt. Governor Jon Husted at the Digital Opportunity Summit

of the library where members of the public were able to engage as well. All registered attendees and interested members of the public who shared contact information were then added to the BroadbandOhio Alliance to receive BroadbandOhio updates moving forward.

BroadbandOhio Statewide Listening Sessions

In addition to RDIA lead efforts, BroadbandOhio hosted 32 in-person listening sessions across the five RDIA regions and six virtual sessions to support stakeholder outreach and engagement for both the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) and State Digital Equity Planning Grant Programs. Sessions were tailored to specific stakeholder groups (business and internet service providers, local government, nonprofits and community organizations, Ohio residents) but open to all to attend.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

BroadbandOhio also interviewed key state agencies and partners that serve the covered populations. This group of agencies includes but is not limited to, agencies responsible for workforce development, transportation, economic development, education, health, family services, agriculture, and natural resources. The objective of each interview was to capture insight into each agency's priorities and potential synergies with BroadbandOhio, specifically:

- Agency overview, including mission and responsibilities
- Goals, strategies, and priorities
- Barriers to access and adoption of broadband, digital devices, and digital skills
- Existing programs and partners
- Potential solutions and areas for collaboration

Internet Access Survey

BroadbandOhio, with support from RDIA leads and their networks, also deployed an Internet Access Survey, available for stakeholders to complete online or in-person at community anchor institutions across the state from April-June 2023. Additional surveys were mailed with stamped return envelopes to 10,000 households in unserved communities across the state.

The resident survey included 21 questions total, with 16 across six topics and five on location and demographics.

Topic areas included:
- County
- Internet access & willingness to pay
- Issues with internet access
- Affordable Connectivity Program
- Perception of internet importance and access
- Internet usage
- Support from Ohio
- Demographic Information

BroadbandOhio received 5,188 valid resident responses across all forms of the survey from across the state's 88 counties, representing each of the covered populations.

Public Comment Period

BroadbandOhio's public comment period for the Digital Opportunity Plan began on August 17, 2023, and was held through the end of Friday, September 22, 2023 (37 days). BroadbandOhio conducted outreach and engagement activities to encourage feedback during this period, which included:

- Publication on BroadbandOhio's website: The Digital Opportunity Plan was posted on BroadbandOhio's "Make Your Voice Heard" webpage for public comment.
- Outreach to existing networks: An e-mail went out to alert RDIA lead organizations, the Broadband Alliance, and the Broadband Working Group that the plan was posted for public comment, with instructions on how to access the draft and submit. Organizations were encouraged to share widely with their networks.
- Public comment sessions: Several RDIA lead organizations hosted virtual and in-person public comment sessions, gathering residents and other local stakeholders to provide comments on the plan.
  - Virtual Northeast Ohio Public Comment Session
  - In-person Northeast Ohio Public Comment Session
  - Virtual Central Ohio Public Comment Session
  - Virtual Southwest Ohio Public Comment Session
  - Hybrid Southeast Ohio Public Comment Session
- Meeting with Ohio Department of Education: BroadbandOhio met with the leadership of the Office of Exceptional Children to discuss barriers and resources for students with disabilities for inclusion in the plan.

- Presentation for Ohio Accelerate Program: BroadbandOhio shared a presentation with Accelerate participants, encouraging participants – primarily local government leadership and partners – to provide public comment. The Accelerate Program helps local leaders learn more about broadband deployment and create local plans to help bring high-speed internet to their communities. More information can be found in section 5.1.2.

A total of 118 comments from the public were received during the public comment period.

3.2   A Note on Indigenous Peoples in Ohio

There are currently no reservations and no federally recognized tribes in Ohio. Therefore, no tribal digital equity plans were available for incorporation into the state plan and tribes are not included in the covered populations, and therefore not expressly outlined as part of measurable objectives.

3.3   Ongoing Outreach and Engagement

Ongoing outreach and engagement will allow BroadbandOhio to maintain and continue to expand its network of stakeholders as the Digital Opportunity Plan is updated and implemented to ensure that it continues to represent all Ohioans with a special emphasis on covered populations.

BroadbandOhio will continue to convene the Alliance quarterly, the Working Group monthly, and RDIA lead organizations bi-weekly moving forward. The Digital Opportunity Summit will be held annually.

The Digital Opportunity Plan will be revisited on an annual basis to assess priorities and strategies and make updates as needed. Strategies including listening sessions, key stakeholder interviews, and surveys will be deployed as needed.

BroadbandOhio continues to reach out to additional organizations that serve covered populations to ensure they are represented in the Digital Opportunity Plan.

4. Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes

BroadbandOhio facilitates the Broadband Working Group, which convenes various state government agencies to enable cross-agency cooperation and collaboration on broadband-related efforts. Monthly meetings allow the Working Group to regularly align on priorities and existing state efforts to improve outcomes across Ohio. The Working Group consists of InnovateOhio, Department of Development (Office of Workforce Transformation, Governor's Office of Appalachia), Department of Education, Department of Administrative Services, Department of Higher Education, OARnet, and the Ohio Education Computer Network Management Council.

Beyond the Working Group, BroadbandOhio worked with key state agencies as part of the State Digital Equity Planning process to ensure that Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan is aligned with key state priorities in the categories described below:

- Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes
- Educational outcomes
- Health outcomes
- Civic engagement
- Delivery of other essential services

This section provides an overview of current programming across state agencies that aligns with digital opportunity efforts. A detailed crosswalk can be found in "9.6 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes" on page 75. As Ohio forwards its digital opportunity objectives, the expectation is to see improvement across all categories.

4.1 Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes

Ohio's Broadband & 5G Workforce Strategy

Ohio's Broadband & 5G Workforce strategy outlines a plan for industry career awareness and creating more training and education programs in the state. Significant public and private investments are being made in broadband and 5G at the state and federal level, which, in turn, is expected to create tens of thousands of jobs in Ohio, for all Ohioans, over the next decade. The strategy addresses three key issues:

1. Increasing broadband industry career awareness by exposing middle school and high school students to the industry through curriculum and internships
2. Developing and supporting more education and training programs to educate and train Ohioans
3. Capitalizing on state and federal funding programs, like TechCred and WIOA, to help finance the education and training that will bring to market the talent supply needed for the broadband and 5G industry in Ohio[13]

Filling the demand for skilled labor to build infrastructure is a key step forward in supporting increased access to broadband in unserved and underserved areas.

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13 Strengthening Ohio's Broadband & 5G Workforce, *BroadbandOhio*

TechCred

The TechCred program helps Ohioans learn new skills and helps employers build a stronger workforce with the skills needed in today's technology-infused economy. Eligible credentials must be industry-recognized, technology-focused, and short-term. Technology-focused credentials prioritize the development of digital skills and include those related to software development or utilization, cyber security, broadband and 5G technology, and other emerging fields. Employers will be reimbursed up to $2,000 for each credential their employees earn.

Individual Microcredential Assistance Program

The Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP) helps Ohioans participate in a training program to receive a credential at no cost. IMAP training providers cover all tuition, fees, and additional costs to help individuals learn new skills and earn a credential that can lead to a good job.

Ohio offers 136 training programs, 128 of which can be completed online from anywhere in the state. In 2022, more than $6.1 million was awarded to 24 training providers to help 4,278 Ohioans[14].

High School Tech Internship Pilot Program

The High School Tech Internship pilot program is a competitive opportunity for Ohio employers to receive reimbursement for establishing a recruitment pipeline by hosting high school interns in tech-related roles. Educational entities work closely with business partners to apply for this program. The goal of the internship is to provide businesses with the tech talent they need while also providing students with valuable work experience at an early age. Interns are expected to perform job duties similar to what is expected of an entry-level employee in technology roles. Specifically, they will work on software development, data, cloud and IT infrastructure, cybersecurity, and other technology-focused projects. Businesses are reimbursed up to 100 percent of the wages paid to interns to encourage employers to hire high school students in technology roles. Businesses are also eligible to earn bonuses for each student who earns a credential[15].

Ohio Central School System and Workforce Development

The Office of Workforce Development, under the purview of the Ohio Central School System (OCSS) within the Office of Holistic Services of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), collaborates with various state agencies and private-sector businesses to offer training and education credentials in transferrable job skills that provide work opportunities to restored citizens, as well as employment opportunities for incarcerated adults. The Office was created to train the incarcerated to build Ohio's workforce and collaborates closely with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services to inform training.

14 Ibid
15 High School Tech Internship Pilot Program, *Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation*

ODRC's 2023 Roadmap & 2022 Accomplishments outlines key achievements and future goals for the Department to support additional workforce development opportunities, which include:

- Tower technician program was implemented as a part of Ohio 5G Sector Partnership
- Create an IT workforce development program
- Implement **21st-century** career technical programs, including fiber optic technician and 5G broadband

OCSS also participates in Ohio's Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership, where partners provide advice and recommendations to inform Ohio's broadband and 5G workforce strategy.

OhioMeansJobs

OhioMeansJobs helps Ohioans find jobs, learn career skills, meet the requirements of government benefits, and more, on their webpage and at Job Centers across Ohio. OhioMeansJobs offers resources to help specific groups with their job and career needs, including older adults, restored citizens, and military service members[16].

4.2   Educational outcomes

Ohio Connectivity Champions

Powered by the Management Council, Ohio Connectivity Champions works to remove barriers to internet access for families[17]. Efforts include ensuring Ohioans have home internet access for online learning, telehealth, job seeking and applying, and skills development; helping school districts with deployment and development of connectivity programs; ACP enrollment and education; and coordinating with stakeholders including the Ohio Department of Education, libraries, digital equity coalitions, and Ohio's Information Technology Centers. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Connectivity Champions helped schools and districts link to and maximize the use of a $50 million BroadbandOhio Connectivity Grant aimed at immediately expanding broadband services across Ohio[18].

Similar roles, referred to as Tech Trainers or Digital Navigators, are employed by organizations across the state to provide similar support to residents.

Future Forward Ohio

Future Forward Ohio encompasses the Ohio Department of Education's strategic priorities for helping students recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Three key coordinating strategies, including Overcoming Obstacles to Learning, are guiding the Department's work. *Overcoming Obstacles to Learning* means addressing barriers that prevent students from engaging in learning, such as attendance, mental health, and high-speed internet access. Ohio is ensuring more students and families have access to additional learning opportunities at home, such as online learning through programs and services. This includes a $3 million investment to continue the work of the Connectivity Champions[19].

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16 OhioMeansJobs
17 The Management Council coordinates and supports the collaborative efforts of Ohio's Education Computer Network, providing technology solutions that support educational success.
18 Ohio Connectivity Champions
19 Future Forward Ohio*, Ohio Department of Education, 2023*

Ohio Educational Technology Agencies

Ohio's eight Educational Technology Agencies (Ed Techs) provide services that optimize the use of classroom technologies to improve student and school staff performance. Ohio Ed Tech services are particularly targeted to help Ohio educators meet and exceed state academic and technology performance standards, state report card requirements, and state professional development goals[20].

Ohio Central School System

As discussed in the workforce section, the Ohio Central School System (OCSS), housed within the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC), supports incarcerated adults with education, tech trade certifications, apprenticeships, and employability. Through OCSS, ODRC provides access to educational and workforce development opportunities for more than 44,396 individuals across its facilities.

ODRC's 2023 Roadmap & 2022 Accomplishments outlines key achievements and future goals for the Department to support additional educational opportunities, which include:

- Distribution of 10,000 additional Chromebooks for reentry and education; and
- Implementing Google classroom as a pilot at the Ohio Reformatory for Women[21].

Currently, each of ODRC's 28 facilities, from highest security to lowest, has some form of college offering through the Department's partnership with six colleges and universities across the state.

4.3   Health outcomes

Ohio State Health Improvement Plan

Ohio's State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) is a tool to strengthen state and local efforts to improve health, well-being, and economic vitality in Ohio. With the long-term goal of ensuring Ohioans achieve their full health potential, the SHIP takes a comprehensive approach to achieving equity and addressing the many factors that shape our health, including housing, poverty, education, and trauma.

The SHIP looks to address inequity by prioritizing populations with outcomes that are at least 10% worse than outcomes for Ohio overall when disaggregated data is available. These populations include racial and ethnic minorities, older adults, low-income individuals, rural populations, and people with a disability, among others that directly align with the covered populations outlined in the State Digital Equity Planning Grant.

The SHIP framework highlights three priority factors and evidence-informed strategies to achieve objectives within each factor. The 2020-2022 SHIP framework priorities include access to care – health insurance coverage, local access to healthcare providers, and unmet need for mental health care – with strategies that could be achieved for all Ohioans with access to digital inclusion initiatives. For example, a key strategy for ensuring local access to healthcare providers is telehealth[22]. The following sections will outline BroadbandOhio's efforts to expand access to telehealth services.

20 Ohio Ed Techs, ODE
21 2023 ODRC Roadmap, ODRC
22 State Health Improvement Plan, Ohio Department of Health

As updates are made every few years, BroadbandOhio staff remain active contributors to the Ohio Department of Health's State Health Assessment and SHIP process.

School-Based Telehealth Projects

BroadbandOhio is working to expand telehealth access and usage via targeted programming, including two existing school-based telehealth projects across multiple districts in southeast Ohio. These projects have provided nearly 22,000 students with access to telehealth services beginning in 2020. School-based health initiatives ensure that students are in school, healthy, and ready to learn, improving educational attainment and both education and health care outcomes.

Switzerland of Ohio Local School District/Telehealth in Schools Blueprint

In March 2020, Ohio announced a multi-phased telehealth pilot project to connect K-12 students in the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District to robust behavioral health services while also providing high-speed internet connections to community members. Switzerland of Ohio is Ohio's largest geographic school district, serving all of Monroe County and parts of Belmont and Noble Counties in rural, southeast Ohio. At the time, the district contracted with two counselors from Southeast, Inc. to provide in-person services to students across the district. Travel time across the district and cell phone coverage between buildings posed unique challenges for the district and behavioral health counselors to best serve students in need.

In February 2021, the pilot was operational, and the Telehealth in Schools Blueprint was released to share lessons learned and to support school districts across the state in implementing their telehealth programs.

Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center

In May 2021, Ohio announced a second telehealth pilot project in the Muskingum Valley Educational Center (MVESC) service area. The project supports telehealth services in 15 school districts (54 school buildings), in partnership with nine behavioral health providers, spanning six counties in Appalachian Ohio.

By spring 2023, all 54 school building sites across the 15 districts were operational. Additionally, school psychologists at MVESC are now being trained in-house to perform tele-assessment. Student tele-assessment will begin in fall 2023.

MVESC continues to look for opportunities to expand telehealth services to neighboring districts and telehealth services and training opportunities to other related services professionals.

Statewide Telehealth Administrator

BroadbandOhio has partnered with OCHIN as a statewide telehealth administrator to help expand access to crucial healthcare services for Ohio's K-12 students. OCHIN is a nonprofit leader in equitable health care innovation and a trusted partner to a growing national partner network, supporting access to care for systemically underserved communities. OCHIN will support administrators in 10 districts in planning telehealth programs in their school buildings. The partnership with OCHIN was announced in February 2023 and remains in progress.

Other Statewide Telehealth Resources

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC)'s Office of Holistic Services promotes optimal wellness by providing integrated client-centered services. The Office oversees Behavioral Health Operations and Medical Operations.

ODRC has successfully implemented telemedicine, linking institutions across the state and Medical Operations with the Franklin Medical Center and the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Telemedicine improves communication and continuity of care while decreasing transportation costs. ODRC is currently working toward modernizing the telehealth platform with OSU.

Additionally, ODRC, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Medicaid, has developed the Medicaid Pre-Release Enrollment Program (MPREP) to eligible incarcerated individuals in Medicaid before their release from prison. Individuals eligible for pre-release care coordination are assigned a Care Manager by their Managed Care Organization (MCO). The MCO Care Manager requests to schedule a video or teleconference with the member 7-14 days before release to develop a transition plan (i.e., schedule doctor's appointments in the community, provide access to transportation, connect the member to other community services, etc.)[23].

4.4   Civic and other social engagement

While high-speed internet is not required to vote in Ohio, access to online resources makes the entire process simpler, increasing the likelihood that residents will participate in elections.

Ohio Secretary of State

The Ohio Secretary of State has a "Register to Vote and Update Your Registration" webpage, with links to online voter registration, instructions to vote by mail and in-person, how to find polling locations, and deadlines, among other quick resources for those with questions about any part of the process. Residents can also use the webpage to find updated voter identification requirements and learn more about securing an Ohio ID at no cost.

4.5   Delivery of other essential services

Many industries across various sectors are pivoting resources and services online, from the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles to government benefits and financial services. BroadbandOhio is looking to support community anchor institutions (CAIs) with gigabit internet service so they can serve as digital hubs for Ohioans to access these necessary resources. CAIs include hospitals, libraries, higher education institutions, and other community support organizations. Many other state agencies are also looking to support digital opportunities among the Ohioans they serve as well. A number of these agencies with programs and services are detailed below.

Ohio Department of Administrative Services

Ohio's Website Accessibility policy establishes minimum website accessibility requirements for information provided on public-facing State of Ohio websites. The policy went into effect in July 2021. Webpages created after the effective date are required to be compliant and all State of Ohio public-face webpages were required to be compliant within two years of the effective date[24].

23 Office of Holistic Services, *ODRC*
24 Website Accessibility, *State of Ohio Administrative Policy, Ohio Department of Administrative Services*

Ohio Department of Aging

The Ohio Department of Aging fosters sound public policy, research, and initiatives that benefit older Ohioans. The department has developed a strategic framework, required by the federal Older Americans Act, to provide leadership that improves and promotes the quality of life and personal choices for older Ohioans, adults with disabilities, and their families and caregivers. Ohio's 2023-2026 State Plan on Aging prioritizes strengthening community conditions, including access to technology and broadband, to support healthy aging among Ohioans. Broadband access, affordability, and digital skills training are also listed as key strategies to improve social connectedness among older adults[25].

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (ODODD) is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families. Many Ohioans with developmental disabilities encounter obstacles in daily tasks and activities, including accessing education and jobs. Technology can help people overcome these barriers and live fuller lives. Ohio's Technology First Taskforce is an initiative to ensure people with developmental disabilities have increased opportunities to live, work, and thrive in their homes and communities through state-of-the-art planning, innovative technology and supports that focus on their talents, interests, and skills. The main priority of the Technology First initiative is to increase the use of innovative technology solutions within service delivery and operations for people with developmental disabilities[26].

In alignment, BroadbandOhio is providing high-speed internet connectivity to help hundreds of central Ohioans with developmental disabilities retain their independence and receive specialized care without having to leave home. BroadbandOhio awarded $600,000 in grants for a one-year pilot program to provide broadband access to up to 500 residents with developmental disabilities so they can access critical remote support services. Remote supports – such as motion detectors, bed and shower sensors, tablets, and more – allow off-site providers to monitor and respond to someone's health and safety needs using real-time video conferencing technology such as StationMD, an online telehealth platform offering a broadband network of board-certified clinicians, Skype or FaceTime. The project aims to reduce emergency room visits, enhance record-keeping, and improve the quality of patient care. The findings from the pilot project will be aggregated into a report that will provide insights into the utility of using remote supports that can then be shared with other agencies to assist with decision-making around supporting high-speed internet access.

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25 State Plan on Aging, 2023-2026, *Ohio Department of Aging*
26 Ohio Technology First Taskforce, *Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities*

Ohio Housing Finance Agency

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) facilitates the development, rehabilitation, and financing of low-to moderate-income housing. The Agency's programs help first-time home buyers, renters, senior citizens, and others find quality affordable housing that meets their needs. Each year, the Agency awards tax credits to developers, scored according to a federally required Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), to build high-quality, affordable housing. The 2022-2023 QAP requires developers seeking tax credits to install broadband infrastructure in their developments. Residents must have access to broadband services in their units. Developers do not pay for resident's service but must provide free access to high-speed internet in common areas. In previous QAPs, broadband was a recommendation for both newly constructed buildings and rehabilitation. By making this a requirement, OHFA staff hope to create opportunities for Ohioans who would not have had access[27].

Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) develops and supervises the state's public assistance, workforce development, unemployment compensation, child and adult protective services, adoption, childcare, and child support programs. ODJFS strategies ensure the most efficient, effective delivery of services and programs, which often means requiring digital skills and devices. To ensure that many of Ohio's most vulnerable populations are not left behind by this shift, ODJFS offers free iPads through various assistance programs.

Ohio Public Library Information Network

The Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) provides broadband internet connections and related information services to Ohio public libraries. OPLIN's primary mission is to ensure the equity of access to digital information for all residents of Ohio. This means ensuring that all Ohioans have fast, free public internet access through the state's 251 independent local public library systems, as well as the use of high-quality research databases not freely available online.

As part of their FY2023-2025 Strategic Plan, OPLIN offers libraries subscriptions to a digital literacy assessment and tutorial service and supports widespread adoption of the tools as part of libraries' digital equity efforts within their communities[28]. Currently, Ohio's public libraries offer the Northstar Digital Literacy program.

Northstar Digital Literacy Program

The Northstar Digital Literacy program defines the basic skills needed to perform tasks on computers and how to effectively and safely be online. The program provides online, self-guided modules to assess an individual's ability to perform tasks based on these skills. Each assessment moves the learner up a level in their digital literacy skills.

Standards and modules encompass:

- Essential Computer Skills – Basic Computer Skills, Internet Basics, Using Email, Windows OS, Mac OS
- Essential Software Skills – Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs

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27 Broadband Access in New Construction, *Ohio Housing Finance Agency*
28 FY2023-2015 Strategic Plan, *OPLIN*

- Using Technology in Daily Life – Social Media, Information Literacy, Career Search Skills, Accessing Telehealth Appointments, Supporting K-12 Distance Learning, Your Digital Footprint[29]

This programming is available at no cost to all Ohioans through Ohio's libraries.

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) is dedicated to the mission of reducing recidivism among those they touch and the vision of reducing crime in Ohio. The Office of Reentry strives to connect individuals with communities, programs, and services to facilitate successful reintegration and has largely transitioned to electronic, web-based resources that require connectivity, devices, and digital skills to navigate. Key resources include:

- Relink – Relink is a free, user-friendly online resource tool that considers the entire continuum of care. It organizes and displays service providers by geo-location and categories of service in real-time, dramatically streamlining the connection between individuals in need and the critical services they seek to get help.
- findhelp – findhelp is a user-friendly platform that connects people in need and the programs that service them with dignity and ease. The tool simplifies the application process to access resources.

FINDER Tool

The FINDER Tool is a database available on BroadbandOhio's website. Organizations and businesses can submit information on digital resources and services like devices, hotspots, device donation locations, and digital literacy training. Ohio residents can utilize the tool's Search function to help locate these resources by zip code or region.

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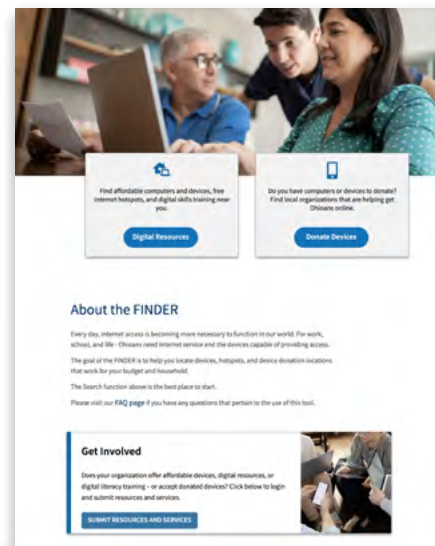
29 Northstar Digital Literacy

5. Current State of Digital Opportunity: Barriers and Assets

5.1 Asset Inventory

Ohio conducted an asset inventory of digital inclusion resources available to implement Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan and address the needs and gaps to achieve the State's goals and objectives for digital opportunity. The section below provides a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, list of findings to date, including existing resources, programs, and local plans that promote digital inclusion.

Ohio's asset inventory will continue to be updated as new resources are shared. Organizations can continue to share their information in the BroadbandOhio Digital Inclusion Asset Mapping Survey. Ohio ultimately plans to map digital inclusion assets in a user-friendly tool to allow residents to search for specific resources or browse options in their community.

5.1.1 Digital Inclusion Assets by Covered Population

Ohio has compiled a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, list of existing resources that promote digital inclusion across the state. This can be found in **"Digital Inclusion Assets" on page 54.**

5.1.2 Existing Digital Opportunity Plans

Digital inclusion has been a priority for communities across Ohio for decades. Communities have both independently, and with state support, developed plans and engaged in efforts to close the digital divide. Existing and in-progress digital opportunity plans and programming to support planning are described below. Information from these plans was incorporated throughout the state Digital Opportunity Plan.

Broadband Community Accelerator Program

Ohio's Broadband Community Accelerator program was developed in partnership with the Benton Institute for Broadband and Society and Heartland Forward. The program educates and supports community leadership teams as they create their community's broadband vision and goals and pursue the best possible broadband solutions for their area. In its first cohort, Ohio's program supported five communities (four counties and one region) in building broadband plans. A second cohort began in Fall 2023.

Cleveland Digital Equity Plan

The City of Cleveland has taken major steps toward creating a digitally equitable Cleveland by releasing a Request for Proposals on internet infrastructure projects to connect as many digitally disconnected households in the city as possible, hiring the city's first Digital Equity and Inclusion Manager, and developing Cleveland's Digital Equity and Inclusion plan. The planning process began in 2023 and will continue until a neighborhood-led and -fed strategy for closing the digital divide is developed with input from residents of the city's 17 wards.

Digital Equity in Lucas County: Examining Community Barriers to the Digital World in Lucas County

The Lucas County Digital Equity Gap Analysis[30] was developed by the Center for Regional Development (CRD) at Bowling Green State University on behalf of the Greater Toledo Digital Equity Coalition. CRD collected and analyzed data to determine the current state of digital connectivity and access to digital resources in the greater Toledo community. The Gap Analysis also includes the priorities, strategic goals, and action plan developed by the Coalition to close the digital divide. The analysis was completed in May 2023.

Digital Equity & Inclusion: Planning for Greater Cleveland's Future

Digital Equity & Inclusion: Planning for Greater Cleveland's Future represents the work of the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity Coalition to develop long-term, sustainable solutions toward closing the digital divide. The plan explains what has been achieved by the Coalition since 2020 and what work is left to be done based on input from the Coalition's over 70 member organizations. The plan was published in May 2023.

Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda

The Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda[31] was constructed using Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition (DEC) insights gleaned from coordinated crisis response and resident engagement work that began in 2020 and builds upon the Franklin County DEC's 2021 Digital Equity Framework. The Action Agenda defines and articulates the issues, approaches, and foundational work needed to achieve digital equity in Central Ohio. The six-month process to document the Action Agenda was collaborative and included a diverse set of perspectives and implementers across the community. The Action Agenda was completed and published in October 2022 and remains a living document.

Action Agenda was developed with a specific focus on benefiting covered households and intended to be implemented with special emphasis on the following groups, which align with covered populations: historically underrepresented populations; housing insecure; older adults; veterans; disabled; students; justice-involved; and new Americans, immigrants, and migrant families.

Southwest Ohio Regional Digital Equity Plan

The Connecting Southwest Ohio Coalition partnered with the University of Cincinnati's Evaluation Services Center to create Southwest Ohio's first Regional Digital Equity Plan and address the digital divide in a 16-county region through affordable broadband access, digital skills, tech support, and access to internet-enabled devices. Coalition members solicited community input received from pop-up listening sessions, stakeholder interviews, and design workshops. The plan is forthcoming.

Summit County Digital Equity Framework

Summit County is taking a major step toward digital equity and inclusion with the creation of a Summit County Digital Equity Framework[32] in partnership with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance. This work includes a Summit County Digital Equity Coalition, including members from all 31 communities in the county, and an Equity Strategy, which is forthcoming.

30 Lucas County Digital Equity Gap Analysis, *Toledo Lucas County Public Library, 2023*
31 Franklin County Digital Equity Action Agenda, *Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition, 2022*
32 Summit Connects, *County of Summit, 2023*

As they are completed and published, BroadbandOhio will continue to reference local and regional digital opportunity plans in future iterations of the state Digital Opportunity Plan.

5.1.3   Existing Digital Opportunity Programs

Ohio has compiled a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, list of existing resources that promote digital inclusion across the state. This can be found in **"Digital Inclusion Assets" on page 54.**

5.1.4   Broadband Access and Adoption

Below are resources to help Ohioans access the internet either at home or in their communities.

Ohio Connectivity Champions

As mentioned, Ohio Connectivity Champions work to remove barriers to internet access for families by ensuring Ohioans have home internet access for online learning, telehealth, job seeking and applying, and skills development; helping school districts with deployment and development of connectivity programs; and coordinating with stakeholders, including the Ohio Department of Education, libraries, digital equity coalitions, and Ohio's Information Technology Centers.

Similar roles, referred to as Tech Trainers or Digital Navigators, are employed by organizations across the state to provide similar support to residents.

Ohio Public Library Information Network

The Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) provides broadband internet connections and related information services to Ohio public libraries. Their primary mission is to ensure that all Ohioans have fast, free public internet access through the 251 independent local public library systems in Ohio. OPLIN's Find a Library tool allows you to search for a local library or browse lists by county.

Ohio Wi-Fi Hotspot Locations

InnovateOhio, with BroadbandOhio, has been working with providers to find public hotspot locations that Ohioans can use in areas where they may not have access to internet from home. In addition to all of Ohio's public libraries, the Ohio Wi-Fi Hotspot Locations webpage includes internet service providers, K-12 school districts, and higher education buildings that provide public access.

5.1.5   Broadband Affordability

This section describes programs, services, and other resources that help make home internet more affordable to Ohioans.

Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) benefit program. Approximately 1.993 million Ohio households – 41% of all Ohio households – are eligible for the ACP. Nearly 55% (54.8%) of eligible households across Ohio are enrolled. The Cleveland metropolitan area leads enrollment for the program within Ohio at 57% of eligible households, followed by the Columbus metropolitan area at 55%[33]. Ohio is a leader among states for ACP enrollment.

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33 Affordable Connectivity Program, *Institute for Local Self Reliance, November 2023*

ACP provides a discount of up to $30 per month toward internet service for eligible households. Of the 78 internet service providers that participate in the ACP across the state, 13 offer low-cost plans that would cost $0 to residents enrolled in the program[34]. See **"Internet Service Providers Participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) for Home Internet" on page 69** for a complete list of ACP-participating providers.

2023 ACP Outreach Grant Program

In FY2023, nine organizations across Ohio received nearly $2.5 million from three FCC grant programs to support ACP outreach in their communities. The National Competitive Outreach Program funded seven Ohio organizations to serve as trusted community messengers for the ACP in historically underrepresented communities; the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program funded eligible entities to increase awareness of and encourage participation in the ACP for households receiving federal housing assistance; and the ACP Navigator Pilot Program funded neutral, trusted entities to assist consumers in applying for the ACP[35]. See **Figure 1** below for a complete list of ACP Outreach Grant Program grantees.

Figure 1. ACP Outreach Grant Program Grantees	
2023 ACP Outreach Grant Program	**Organization**
National Competitive Outreach Program	Ashtabula County Community Action Agency
	United Way of Greater Cincinnati
	Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio
	Cuyahoga County
	Famicos Foundation
	University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center
	City of Columbus
ACP Navigator Pilot Program	Cuyahoga County Public Library
Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program	Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority

Ohio Connectivity Champions

Beyond ensuring internet access, the Connectivity Champions promote and assist households in enrolling in cost-saving programs such as the ACP.
Similar roles, referred to as Tech Trainers or Digital Navigators, are employed by organizations across the state to provide similar support to residents.

Internet Assistance Project

To meet Ohio's Technology First priorities, the Ohio Department of Development Disabilities (DODD) is empowering people with developmental disabilities and their families to explore the use of technology.
To address concerns among this population about limited digital skills, access to technology and internet connectivity, and concerns with safety and privacy, DODD launched the Internet Access Project. The Internet Assistance Project provides funding to eligible county boards of developmental disabilities to support the

34 Companies Near Me, Universal Service Administrative Co., 2023
35 Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant Program, FCC, 2023

boards in providing internet assistance to people with developmental disabilities[36].

Save the Dream Ohio – Utility Assistance Plus

Through the Save the Dream Ohio-Utility Assistance Plus program, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency provides eligible Ohio homeowners with financial assistance to pay delinquent utility bills—including internet service—in addition to property taxes and other housing costs not included in mortgage payments[37].

Community-Owned Broadband Networks

Communities across Ohio have developed locally owned networks, which are often able to offer high-speed, reliable internet access at costs lower than most internet service providers would offer for the same quality service. These networks not only serve as a tool for increasing affordable access, but they also encourage competition, foster consumer choice, and drive local and regional economic development[38]. **"Community-Owned Broadband Networks" on page 72** lists community-owned networks across the state that may be available for local government, businesses, and residents.

5.2   Needs and Gaps Assessment

Access to and affordability of high-speed internet are the top priorities among all Ohioans. When asked how Ohio could best support them, respondents to Ohio's Internet Access Survey prioritized expanded internet access and increased affordability of home internet in their area. While 70% of respondents have a home internet and phone plan, availability and price are cited as the primary reasons for not having a home internet subscription. This section describes the digital opportunity needs of Ohioans and assesses the gaps that will be addressed by Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan.

5.2.1   Covered Population Needs Assessment

Together, Ohio's covered populations make up 77% of the state's total population. A breakdown of these populations can be found in **Figure 2** below. This section provides an overview of the needs of each covered population group.

Figure 2

State's population breakdown of covered populations

Percent of Population

Population	Percent
All covered	76.7%
Incarcerated	0.6%
Veterans	5.7%
With a language barrier	14.6%
With a disability	14.6%
Hispanic	4.5%
Black	11.9%
Racial or ethnic minority	21.7%
In households with incomes at below or below 150%…	21.2%
Aged 60 or over	24.4%
Rural	32.5%

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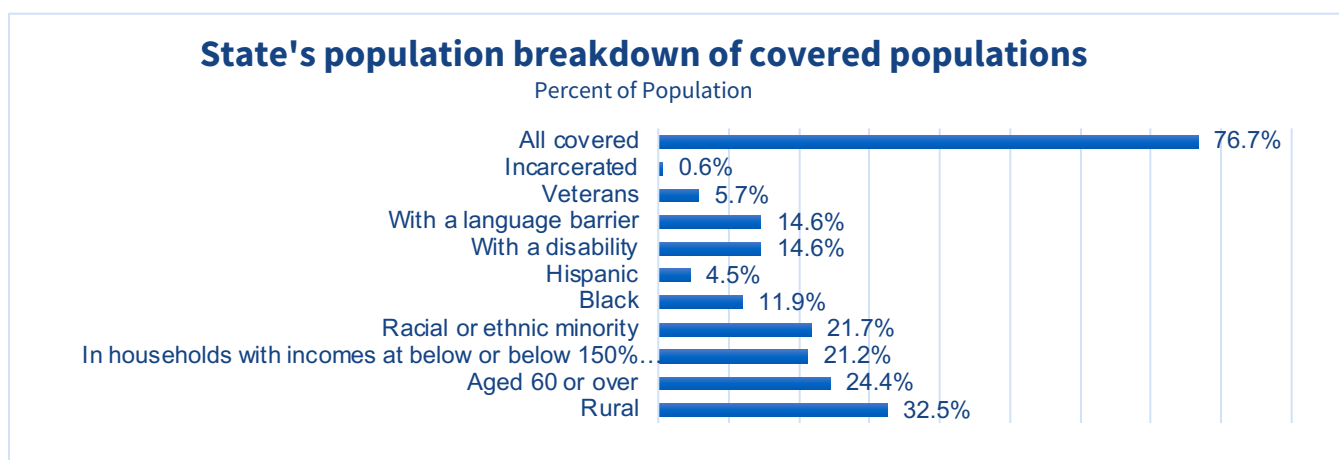
36 Internet Assistance Project, *Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities*
37 Save the Dream Ohio – Utility Assistance Plus, *Ohio Housing Finance Authority*
38 Community-Based Broadband Solutions *Report, 2015, The White House*

Covered Households

Barriers

Covered households are those earning incomes at or below 150% of the poverty line. Access to affordable broadband is a top concern for these individuals. Beyond a lack of infrastructure, the cost of home internet is prohibitive, limiting adoption.

While 70% of respondents to Ohio's Internet Access Survey have both home and internet plans, only 57% of low-income respondents had both home and data plans. **Two-thirds of low-income respondents cited price as the primary reason for not having home internet.**

Respondents believe that the lack of competition among internet service providers keeps prices high and further worry that with the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), they will not have any affordable options. Already, many residents are just above the ACP qualification threshold but do not earn enough to afford a full-priced subscription. **Among low-income respondents, 67% pay $51 or more for their monthly home internet bill, but only 24% are willing to pay this much for the speed and reliability they require.** Yet, over half of low-income respondents (58%) were not aware of the ACP. For those aware, a lack of qualification was cited as the primary reason among low-income residents for not enrolling in the ACP.

For covered households, a lack of home internet is a barrier to education and employment opportunities. Residents are not able to access training or other educational opportunities to build skills or earn certifications or degrees; they cannot search for and apply for jobs, which are increasingly posted online and require online applications; they cannot accept work-from-home positions; and they cannot use online platforms such as eBay, Etsy, or other sites for supplemental income.

A lack of home internet is also a barrier to healthcare and government services which have largely shifted resources online, including telehealth appointments, chat features in electronic health records to communicate with providers, and benefit program applications.

Beyond these more practical reasons, residents want home internet for social connections, entertainment, and play.

Furthermore, residents at listening sessions felt that devices, when available, were too costly. Computers, iPads, and other devices are available at public libraries, but residents often report transportation as an enormous challenge for getting to these services.

Needs

Affordable internet is crucial for all Ohioans, especially those in covered households. Organizations throughout the state are advocating for the continuation of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), and the State of Ohio has included affordability requirements for internet service providers funded through BEAD and the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant (ORBEG). Beyond this, organizations throughout the state have found creative solutions to offering affordability in their communities.

DigitalC, a nonprofit technology social enterprise based in Cleveland, will offer a $18-a-month high-speed internet plan to Cleveland households. DigitalC already operates in several low-income neighborhoods in Cleveland, but this initiative will include all city neighborhoods, and all residents will be eligible regardless of income. DigitalC uses both state and local government funding, as well as philanthropic funds. Just outside of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and the State invested in a partnership with the nonprofit PCs for People to offer a $15-a-month high-speed internet plan to roughly 25,000 Cuyahoga County households in many of the county's least connected communities.

Engaging nonprofit providers and local government in high-speed internet service delivery may offer solutions for affordability and transparency for all Ohioans.

Organizations around the state are also advocating for changes to the ACP that would allow eligible households to use their device credit more freely. As it currently stands, eligible households can receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers[39]. Allowing this credit to be used with a local device refurbishing organization, a Goodwill store, or even at online stores like eBay would offer more opportunities for eligible households to find an affordable device that meets their needs.

Regional and local organizations are working to develop more robust device ecosystems to ensure that programs and residents have access to the devices they need. These programs employ varying methods for device or monetary donation to refurbish used devices, purchase new devices, or build "digital equity funds" to allow for future spending, as needed. Naturally, resources vary by community or region. A statewide device ecosystem can ensure equitable access to an adequate number of affordable devices, or funding, for programs, and thus residents, across the state.

Supporting free or low-cost, accessible digital skills programming and technical support will continue to be necessary as more Ohioans have affordable access to high-speed internet and devices.

Aging Individuals

Barriers

Ohio has more than 2.8 million residents aged 60 or older, who account for nearly one-quarter of the state's total population[40]. Ensuring that older adults remain involved and included in communities for as long as possible benefits everyone. Home internet is a crucial part of remaining connected, yet older Ohioans face numerous barriers.

Ohio's Strategic Action Plan on Aging (SAPA) indicates that while most older Ohioans can cover their basic needs, many are not prepared for life after work[41]. Many older Ohioans who provided feedback on Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan shared that the cost of service is increasingly an issue for residents on fixed incomes because they must balance internet costs with other essential services. This is especially true as internet providers raise costs year after year. Seventy-two percent of respondents to Ohio's Digital

39 Affordable Connectivity Program, *Federal Communications Commission*
40 Older Americans Month, *Ohio Department of Aging*
41 Summary Assessment of Older Ohioans, *Ohio Department of Aging*

Access Survey have both home and data plans. Availability and price as cited as primary reasons for not having home internet.

Three-quarters of respondents pay $51 or more for their home internet bill monthly, but only slightly more than one-third (37%) are willing to pay this much for the speed and reliability they require. Older Ohioans indicated that the Affordable Connectivity Program is crucial for them to continue with a home internet subscription. Older Ohioans fear the loss of the program—predicted in spring 2024—will prevent them from accessing the programs and services they have come to rely on. **The majority of older Ohioans (89%) want to see Ohio increase the affordability of home internet in their area.**

Based on feedback from listening sessions, older Ohioans and the organizations representing them indicated a sense of fear or mistrust with technology and engaging online, where many find themselves the target of scams. This, coupled with the high cost of a home subscription, makes spending money on broadband a lower priority.

Shame and embarrassment were other common themes heard among older adults at listening sessions. Older adults are knowledgeable and highly skilled in other arenas but may lack the digital skills of younger generations. The shame or embarrassment of not being able to use a device or engage with a program online may keep these individuals from making attempts. Negative experiences with impatient family members or caregivers exacerbate these feelings and may make older adults hesitant to reach out for support.

A lack of digital skills can be a significant barrier to older job seekers and often limits social engagement opportunities and overall quality of life.

Needs

In addition to the affordable internet and device initiatives mentioned earlier, organizations across the state are advocating for an expansion of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to categorically qualify older adults. Many older adults who provided feedback on the Digital Opportunity Plan do not qualify for the ACP but must still balance the rising costs of a home internet subscription with other essential services on a fixed income.

Digital navigators and digital skills programming offer much-needed services across the state for all Ohioans. Older adults in particular would benefit from tailored programming, using language and concepts that are familiar to them to tackle topics like internet safety, password management, and device troubleshooting. Empathetic support from patient instructors, who are willing to teach without taking over, could significantly improve learning experiences for seniors[42].

Given the importance of hobbies and personal interests among older adults, technology solutions and training could be contextualized around these interests to increase relevance and motivation[43].
The majority of older adult respondents (95%) cited the need for the internet as important.

42 Central Ohio Region Community & Stakeholder Engagement Insights & Findings Report, June 2023
43 Ibid.

Community centers like Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center (ASC3) implement positive initiatives to empower primarily older adults to learn technology. Their humanitarian-centered philosophy provides a nurturing atmosphere tailored to participants' interests to allow them to learn and thrive regardless of educational and/or financial barriers.

Rural Residents

Barriers

Lack of infrastructure remains the number one need in rural areas. **Most respondents to Ohio's Internet Access Survey in rural areas (88%) would like Ohio to expand internet access in their areas.** Topography across Ohio's Appalachian region, as well as low population density across all of Ohio's rural areas, make these areas costly and generally less desirable for internet service providers to build to. Where some infrastructure does exist, the high cost of line extension and other fees to connect directly to a home is often prohibitive for households. **Most respondents in rural areas (89%) would also like Ohio to increase the affordability of home internet in their areas**.

Where broadband infrastructure does exist, often the quality diminishes the farther residents live from more densely populated town centers. **Over half (51%) of respondents in rural areas experience unreliable home internet at least weekly and (50%) cite a lack of alternative options and speed as their biggest issues.** Residents will often have to travel to a library or other community anchor institution to access reliable broadband. Per residents in Ohio's rural communities, a lack of public transportation or walkable community infrastructure — like sidewalks and well-lit paths — makes travel difficult for residents who live in more remote areas. This makes accessing community institutions for digital skills training or devices difficult as well. Without large retailers or organizations that refurbish devices, the high cost of devices has residents relying on device-lending programs at these locations. Alternative connectivity solutions, when deployed in rural communities, have limitations as well. Satellite and wireless technologies are unreliable and often cost-prohibitive. Residents have described having access to service only in the fall or winter months when foliage can't interfere with signals.

Needs

Rural residents need increased access to affordable, reliable, high-speed home internet. BEAD and Ohio's Residential Broadband Expansion Grant programs are expanding high-speed internet to unserved and underserved households across the state. This funding, and the requirements that come along with it, ensure that Ohioans will have access to affordable service over the coming years.

BroadbandOhio is also working to ensure that no Ohioan is more than five miles from a community anchor institution (CAI) with access to high-speed internet. Beyond in-home access, access at CAIs allows for a variety of opportunities, including after-school programs, maker spaces, and digital skills training. In ensuring that households are within five miles of a CAI, BroadbandOhio makes access to these institutions a little bit less difficult for residents. BroadbandOhio will continue to find opportunities to expand access to service, programming, and devices, and look toward local and regional organizations to continue to advocate for closing the digital divide for Ohio's rural residents.

Individuals with Disabilities

Barriers

Assistive technology is revolutionizing life for individuals with disabilities. Without broadband infrastructure and affordable home subscriptions, these technologies cannot be utilized in the home. **About two-thirds of respondents to Ohio's Internet Access Survey with disabilities (66%) have both home and phone data plans. Availability and price are cited as the primary reasons for not having home internet.** Where infrastructure does exist, reliability — ensuring, in turn, that devices are connected and working properly —remains a concern**. Nearly half of respondents with disabilities (46%) experience unreliable home internet at least weekly.** Medicaid waivers and other affordability programs help offset costs for technologies but do not help with the home internet subscriptions required to use them. **Over three-quarters of respondents with disabilities (76%) pay $51 or more for home internet monthly, but only 39% are willing to pay this much for the speed and reliability they require.**

Digital skills are often a significant barrier to individuals with disabilities seeking jobs and educational opportunities. There are also concerns about digital safety and preventing online scams and other threats among this population. Website and device accessibility is also a major factor—color, size, and layout of text, incompatibility with screen readers, and lack of interpretations for media can make websites inaccessible for individuals with visual or auditory disabilities. Other individuals with disabilities may have difficulty holding a mouse, using keyboards, or sitting at a device for long periods. Furthermore, access to the technology and hardware that addresses these barriers is often hindered by their costs.[44]

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to determine best practices for using technology to serve students with disabilities and found that the use of technology has several benefits, including increased parental engagement and accessibility for instructional activities and assessments. The use of technology, again, requires adequate infrastructure, defined as sufficient connectivity, as well as access to appropriate assistive technology devices and enough fully operational educational and assistive technology devices. Many schools embraced the need for technology in classrooms post-COVID-19 by committing to provide a device to every student or making assistive technology more readily available for teachers and related service providers to use. Respondents to AIR's survey described this technology to be "extremely helpful" in engaging families in the IEP process, providing increased accessibility to assessments, and assisting in specially designed instruction. There remains a need for this commitment in all school districts across the state to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for success among all students with disabilities[45].

Needs

Overall, having a reliable home internet connection, digital skills, and access to appropriate devices allow individuals with disabilities to obtain work opportunities, education, and healthcare and live on their own more independently. **Most respondents with disabilities (94%) cite the need for the internet as important.**

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44 Doing Digital Inclusion: Disability handbook*, Good Things Foundation*
45 Special Education in Ohio: Best Practices, Costs, and Policy Implications*, Ohio Department of Education*

In addition to the strategies mentioned previously, individuals with disabilities should have access to Medicaid waivers or private insurance support to ease the cost of high-speed internet. Assistance is currently available for in-home devices that require reliable, high-speed internet, but not for the internet itself, limiting the use of these devices. **Most respondents with disabilities (89%) would like Ohio to increase the affordability of home internet in their area.**

Students with disabilities need access to consistent technology that meets each individual's unique needs. Some school districts in Ohio offer assistive technology, but often technologies in the school and home are different, and students and caregivers must learn to use several different devices, placing the learning burden on families. Training for educators and school staff would also benefit students during the school day.

For students who receive assistive technology from the school district, there are challenges once they transition out of a supportive K-12 education system and into adult life. Ensuring access to and training on assistive tech options at all points of an individual's life is crucial.

To address these issues and pilot a solution, BroadbandOhio awarded the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities grant funds for a pilot program to provide broadband access to up to 500 residents with developmental disabilities in the county. Providing high-speed connectivity helps these residents retain their independence and receive specialized care without having to leave home. Remote supports – such as motion detectors, bed and shower sensors, tablets, and more – allow off-site providers to monitor and respond to health and safety needs using real-time video conferencing technology. Officials say virtual health consultations will greatly reduce emergency visits, enhance record-keeping, and improve the quality of patient care.

Veterans

Barriers

Ohio is home to nearly 725,000 veterans, which ranks fifth nationally, and estimates show about 10,000 men and women separate from service and take up residence in the state each year[46]. **Nearly two-thirds of veteran respondents to Ohio's Internet Access Survey (63%) have both home and phone data plans.** As with other covered populations, availability and price are the primary reasons that veterans do not have home internet. **Nearly three-quarters of veteran respondents (74%) pay $51 or more for their home internet monthly, but only 41% are willing to pay this much for the speed and reliability they require.**

Most veteran respondents (90%) would like Ohio to increase the affordability of home internet in their area. Over three-quarters of veteran respondents (76%) are not aware of the ACP, and only 10% of those aware are enrolled.

Veterans often struggle with a lack of awareness of and skills to navigate available veteran services. Most applications and benefits have migrated online and require digital skills to navigate.

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46 Annual Report, *Ohio Department of Veterans Services, 2022*

Internet access is particularly challenging for houseless or housing-unstable veterans. Supporting housing for veterans is a top priority for many veteran-serving organizations. These organizations often provide support with rent and utilities by request, but rarely, if ever, get requests to support internet bills. This may indicate that many veterans are forgoing home internet subscriptions. Due to lack of housing, some veterans only have access to smartphones, and thus cannot fully take advantage of the internet like one can with access to a computer.

Needs

Veterans would benefit from increased access to affordability programs, including additional ACP outreach in Ohio's Veterans Homes and other veteran-serving locations.

During listening sessions, residents often expressed the need for shelters and centers with access to the internet for homeless veterans. Southwest Ohio is currently developing a veteran-serving community center with a computer lab for internet access, but other regions did not share similar plans. Some existing homeless shelters do have access to devices, but it is often limited.

Veteran services organizations call for one-on-one support for Veterans Affairs applications, including assistance with the initial application and navigating requests for follow-up documents. Since veterans are not guaranteed a job when they are finished with their service, many feel without a sense of purpose when returning to civilian life. Workforce development and digital skills support for this group helps them to obtain meaningful employment after service. However, basic computer skills training workshops offered in the past received low turnout rates, so new methods need to be considered when providing services to veterans.

One of Ohio Department of Veterans Services' (ODVS) key endeavors is to educate Ohio businesses on military culture, the value of hiring veterans, and ways to identify, incentivize, and retain them through the guidance of the ODVS Veterans Workforce Team. The Workforce Team also partners with OhioMeansJobs, JobsOhio, Hiring Our Heroes, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, and other organizations across the state to support workforce opportunities for veterans. ODVS also supports educational and training programs for veterans[47].

The next steps should include further engagement with veterans and veterans-serving organizations for a better understanding of this group's needs and wants for digital opportunities to co-create initiatives to best serve them.

Justice-Involved Individuals

Barriers

In 2019, Ohio had one of the highest adult imprisonment rates among all 50 states, ranking 39th with 430 adults per 100,000 population serving sentences in state or federal prisons. Nationally and in Ohio, Black Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at more than five times the rate of white Americans. Additionally, individuals struggling with mental illness, particularly serious and persistent mental illness,

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47 Annual Report, *Ohio Department of Veterans Services, 2022*

are at increased risk of criminal justice involvement[48].

Recent initiatives have improved access to broadband and devices in state prisons, but many incarcerated individuals outside of state facilities or those who had limited access previously, struggle with digital skills upon reentry. The rapid pace of technological change is most apparent for those who have spent years isolated from it in institutions without these initiatives.

Even in state facilities with access to devices and digital skills training, these resources may only be made available to a percentage of incarcerated individuals who enroll in college degree or certificate programs, leaving the majority behind.

Apps like JPay offers correctional services — money transfer, e-mail, videos, and music — to connect incarcerated individuals to their families. While facilities may offer connectivity, these apps rely on families to have reliable connections as well, which is not always available. Additionally, apps are often expensive, and people worry about the online safety and security of their personal information.

Upon reentry, the availability of and access to community spaces with public internet can be a challenge and may be unreliable where it is available. The cost of home internet subscriptions is often significant, given the other basic needs and priorities of returning citizens.

Needs

Policymakers and other leaders can prevent justice involvement, increase community safety, and improve health and well-being by focusing policy attention on the drivers of poor criminal justice and health outcomes; income, employment, and education; trauma and family well-being; and housing and homelessness.[49]

From January 2020 to January 2021, Ohio's prison population decreased 10.3% due largely in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic dramatically altered police, jail, and court operations; required changes to prison intake; led to a review of the existing population for targeted early release; and refocused attention toward programs with earned credit awarded toward sentence reduction[50].

Outside of prevention, there is consensus among organizations that serve incarcerated individuals and among formerly incarcerated residents that there is a need for greater exposure and access to devices and online resources while individuals are still in facilities. Incarcerated individuals are at a disadvantage upon reentry without the digital skills and devices to access required appointments, transportation, and workforce resources. Digital skills training on a variety of devices in prisons is needed statewide.

Upon reentry, there is a significant need for re-education, recovery, and support for justice-involved individuals. Creating a safe learning environment, establishing trust, and helping them to build self-confidence is crucial for comfort with digital tools and online access among justice-involved individuals. Additionally, implementing a consistent training program across service-providing organizations can help scale efforts[51].

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48 Connections between criminal justice and health, *Health Policy Institute of Ohio, June 2021*
49 Connections between criminal justice and health, *Health Policy Institute of Ohio, June 2021*
50 Ohio's prison population decreased over the pandemic, *Ohio Legislative Budget Office, 2022*
51 *Central Ohio Region Community & Stakeholder Engagement Insights & Findings Report, June 2023*

These efforts can ensure that incarcerated individuals are equipped with the necessary skills to navigate life upon reentry, yet more must be done at policy and systems levels to ensure the inclusion of these individuals in society. Ohio's current administration has been supportive of such systems-level changes, including offering jobs to incarcerated individuals. Ohio launched a telecommunications tower technician training program in collaboration with Richland Correctional Institution, AT&T, and other partners, to train certain screened inmates preparing to leave their facilities in a weeks-long, 250-hour course. Following training, individuals will go through a work release program under the supervision of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, allowing them to earn an income while incarcerated and have money to help them acquire housing and other resources upon reentry[52].

Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Barriers

Racial and ethnic minorities tend to live in and around Ohio's urban centers, where affordability is a key barrier to access and devices. In a 2020 analysis by the Brookings Institution, the "average broadband adoption rate for households in Cleveland's majority-white neighborhoods is 81.2 percent," whereas "the average is just 63 percent in Black-majority neighborhoods," highlighting the broadband racial disparity in Ohio's second largest city[53].

Racial disparities were also found in a 2021 survey of Ohio's traditional public school districts. More than 500 (85%) responded, representing 1.3 million of Ohio's 1.7 million students. The survey found that districts serving large populations of white students report the highest percentages of students with internet connectivity at home (84%), while districts serving large populations of Hispanic students report the lowest rates (78%).

Often, the lack of competition among internet service providers is cited as a reason for high costs. **Thirty-six percent of Black and African American respondents[54] to Ohio's Internet Access Survey cite price, and one third cite the lack of alternate options as their biggest issues with internet access.** Where services are available, they are often unreliable or otherwise of low quality. **Thirty-six percent of Black and African American respondents experience unreliable home internet at least weekly**. Many individuals who have devices say they are old or unreliable, but they are unable to afford to upgrade them.

Another concern is access to public spaces that provide broadband, devices, digital skills training, and tech support. Many locations closed during the pandemic and have either remained closed, have been slow to reopen or have consolidated locations, so there are fewer resources available across communities. Transportation is yet another barrier to accessing these spaces, especially during the winter when public transit systems may either face delays or be shut down due to unpredictable weather conditions.

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52 Ohio touts new job program, supports for inmates re-entering society, *Dayton Daily News, May 2023*
53 How Cleveland is bridging both digital and racial divides, *Brookings Institute, 2020*
54 *Ohio's Internet Access Survey gave respondents the opportunity to select their racial or ethnic minority groups, including Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native American, Asian American or Pacific Islander, and Other non-White race or ethnicity. Where the survey is referenced, categories will be grouped as such.*

Additionally, marketing these spaces and services to these specific populations is crucial. Ohio is increasingly home to more racial and ethnic diversity who may use different communication channels and methods for outreach to connect.

Needs

Residents and local organizations often described the need for the expansion or leveraging of supportive community spaces, like libraries, recreation centers, community councils, or even public spaces like cafes, to provide internet access. However, access to these spaces depends on the accessibility of transportation. Thus, it is crucial to extend access to internet connectivity not only to public spaces but also to the homes of those in marginalized racial and ethnic communities. **Hispanic and Latino and Black and African American respondents to Ohio's Internet Access Survey both use the Internet daily at their homes.**

In Northeast Ohio, the Public Housing Authority has been aiming to promote the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to low-income people of color within housing developments. **Forty-nine percent of Black and African American respondents to Ohio's Internet Access Survey were not aware of the ACP program.** There are also organizations like Esperanza, the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio, and the Cleveland Foundation in the region that are committed to serving racial and ethnic minorities by equitably distributing funding and resources and prioritizing device and internet accessibility. Forty-nine percent of African-American respondents were not aware of the ACP program.

English Language Learners

Barriers

English language learners include Ohio's New American population. Statewide, 5% of Ohio residents are foreign-born, with greater concentrations in and around Ohio's larger urban centers. For these individuals, language barriers often exacerbate the digital divide.

Many English language learners have limited English language proficiency, which is a barrier to accessing devices and some resources, benefits, and technical support.

The majority of English language learners who responded to Ohio's Internet Access Survey (79%) prioritize having access to a device where they live, yet only 48% believe they have sufficient device access in their homes. When English language learners don't have access at home, they feel uncomfortable going to places for support that don't speak their language. As mentioned previously, during and after the pandemic, many physical locations that provided support to these communities closed and have not, or have been slow to, reopen. Without these spaces, residents don't have anywhere to go if they are digitally excluded[55].

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55 Central Ohio Region Community & Stakeholder Engagement Insights & Findings Report, June 2023

These locations are crucial for digital skills training. **English language learner respondents are least confident with adjusting privacy settings on social media and accessing government services in comparison to other tasks related to internet usage.**

In Springfield City Schools, the population of English language learners has more than quadrupled, requiring additional resources to address the languages and barriers that come with this exponential growth. Springfield City students speak Haitian, Creole, Spanish, French, German, and Portuguese. The district's website is now available in multiple languages, communications sent out by the district and teachers can be translated, and programs installed on student iPads help to translate documents[56]. These resources are available to Springfield City students but need to be more widely available for all of Ohio's English language learners.

Needs

Culturally relevant and language-appropriate resources, as well as a respectful understanding of cultural norms, are necessary for successful digital skills training within Ohio's community of New Americans. There is a demand for an increased number of social workers and service providers who speak different languages to facilitate meaningful engagement and support within these diverse communities. Finding spaces where New Americans can feel comfortable is crucial. Additional considerations are also needed for populations who may have limited documentation to apply for the ACP[57].

Recognizing the use of computers is a part of daily life, Ebenezer Healthcare Access in Dayton equips immigrants with basic digital skills to enable them to easily navigate the healthcare system and get information from trusted sources. This program has succeeded in teaching digital skills and then having immigrants teach others in the community[58].

Other Populations

While not covered by populations, Ohio recognizes the unique challenges faced by other vulnerable populations in the state.

Ohioans Experiencing Homelessness

According to a 2022 report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, there were 10,654 homeless people in Ohio on a given night. Of those, 3, 214 were people in families with children, 703 were unaccompanied homeless youth, and 633 were veterans. There were 4, 075 people who were experiencing homelessness in rural areas[59]. These Ohioans can benefit from programs like Lifeline or the Affordable Connectivity Program for a device at no cost, often a cell phone, and a no- or low-cost cell phone plan, versus a static home internet subscription. Community anchor institutions like schools and libraries can offer hotspots or free public Wi-Fi. A lack of adequate technology and high-speed internet leaves these Ohioans at a great disadvantage for accessing housing applications, utility applications, transportation schedules, social services applications, and education, among other resources.

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56 Springfield schools face influx of non-English speaking Students, *Springfield News-Sun, 2023*
57 *Central Ohio Region Community & Stakeholder Engagement Insights & Findings Report, June 2023*
58 *Southwest Ohio RDIA Data*
59 The 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*

Ohio's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

Ohio is home to two HBCUs – Central State University and Wilberforce University. Central State is Ohio's only public HBCU and is an 1890 Land Grant Institution, while Wilberforce University is the nation's oldest private HBCU owned and operated by African Americans. Both are located in Wilberforce. In a survey of members of the Central State University community that included students, educators, and government, the majority of respondents (91%) have internet access, but nearly half (49%) are unsatisfied with their internet mostly due to slow (78%) or unreliable (59%) connections. For those without internet access, high costs (40%) and the use of personal cell phone plans (40%) keep them from subscribing. Over one-third (36%) of respondents do not find the cost of internet affordable, yet many (77%) are not aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program or its benefits. Only 5% of respondents were enrolled in the ACP. The majority of respondents (71%) are also not aware of workforce development and digital skills training programs. This lack of awareness is especially high among veterans (100%), people in covered households (81%), racial and ethnic minorities (69%), and rural communities (69%)[60]. Additional outreach and engagement efforts are needed on and around campus to raise awareness of existing digital inclusion programs, services, and resources. Without affordable and reliable high-speed internet, these communities are at a disadvantage in accessing education, personal finance, employment, and healthcare services, among other critical resources.

5.2.2   Broadband Adoption

Overall, home internet subscriptions in Ohio have steadily increased since 1998[61]. **The household adoption rate for broadband of any type in Ohio is 86%, and 72% have high-speed fixed broadband; 77% of households have a cellular data plan; and 6% have satellite internet service[62].**

Subscription rates for home broadband are highest in counties with large population centers. Less populated counties, especially those in Ohio's Appalachian Region, have the lowest subscription rates. Ohio's 32 Appalachian counties have 22% of households that lack broadband subscriptions, though they represent just 17% of total households.

Most households that do not have home subscriptions are concentrated in large counties with relatively high subscription rates. Ten counties across the state have more than 30,000 households without a home subscription: Mahoning, Butler, Lorain, Stark, Lucas, Summit, Montgomery, Hamilton, Franklin, and Cuyahoga. These 10 counties account for 50% of households without subscriptions in Ohio, despite having relatively high availability.

Adoption gaps are disproportionate in low-income households and among aging individuals and those with disabilities.

Ohio's Internet Access Survey results suggest that the majority of Ohioans use the Internet daily at home, work, and school. They also regularly use the internet at family or friends' homes and local businesses.

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60 *Student Freedom Initiative Community Survey, Ohio, November 2023*
61 *NTIA Current Population Survey – Computer and Internet Use, 2021*
62 ACS 2021 5-year Estimates, S2801

5.2.3   Broadband Affordability

The link between household income and broadband adoption in Ohio is clear: 27% of state households with an annual income under $20,000 do not have home broadband, compared to 12% of households with annual incomes between $20,000 and $75,000 and 4% of those earning above $75,000 annually[63].

According to the 2021 NTIA Internet Use Survey, 22% of residents in Ohio households without any home broadband cite affordability of subscriptions as the primary reason they do not subscribe to high-speed internet[64]. Additionally, stakeholders across Ohio repeatedly cited the affordability of subscriptions as the primary obstacle to closing the adoption gap.

Approximately 95% of respondents to Ohio's Internet Access Survey cite the need for home internet as important, and approximately 66% believe that home internet is a top priority alongside rent, food, and transportation. Yet, the majority of Ohioans find it difficult to afford their internet bill.

Approximately 75% of respondents pay $51 or more for their home internet monthly, but only 45% are willing to pay this much for the speed and reliability they require. In fact, **38% of respondents experience unreliable home internet at least weekly, and nearly half cite price and the lack of alternative options as their biggest issues with their current home internet.**

The federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) has helped more than 1 million Ohioan households sign up for and maintain a home internet subscription by offering a $30 monthly subsidy. Unfortunately, the program's funding is projected to run out by the spring of 2024. This would, in turn, abruptly disrupt access to affordable internet that low-income Ohioans rely on for education, work, and healthcare.

Affordability is a necessary component to closing the digital divide in Ohio.

5.2.4   Gap Assessment

Based on the barriers and needs of all Ohioans, with specific emphasis on Ohio's covered populations, detailed above and the digital inclusion assets – programs, funding, and other resources – described throughout the plan, BroadbandOhio has identified the following gaps to closing the digital divide:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Broadband Infrastructure
- Access to Affordable Broadband
- Access to Digital Skills Training and Technical Support, including Training and Support around Privacy, Security, and Safety
- Access to Affordable Devices
- Accessibility and Inclusivity of Public Resources and Services

These gaps, as well as the goals, strategies, objectives, and key implementation activities designed to fill them, are described in detail in "6. Strategy and Objectives" on page 38 and "7. Implementation" on page 42.

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63 *US Census Data, 2021 American Community Survey One-Year Estimates*
64 *2021 NTIA Internet Use Survey*

6. Strategy and Objectives

Ohio's 2023 Broadband Strategy sets forth a four-pronged broadband vision, anchored in 11 strategic pillars, detailed in **"Pillars of Ohio's 2023 Broadband Strategy" on page 73**, and outlined below. This vision aligns with and reinforces Ohio's focus on innovation, economic development and opportunity, and economic competitiveness for all Ohioans, as well as the goal of improving outcomes in education, health, and safety, especially for those in most need.

The state envisions broadband deployment and digital participation along these 4 key priorities:

1. Bring reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to all Ohioans, in their homes and communities;
2. Promote the creation of world-class broadband networks throughout the state via the use of best-in-class technologies;
3. Enable participation in the modern economy;
4. Empower Ohioans through training, device access, and digital skills.

Ohio's key strategies for closing the digital divide center around continued support to regional and local partners. Below are Ohio's key goals, strategies, and objectives for achieving digital opportunity, which align with Ohio's Broadband Strategy and BEAD goals and objectives. All gaps, goals, strategies, and objectives apply to all covered populations unless otherwise noted.

Gap: Stakeholder Engagement

As described in "5.2 Needs and Gaps Assessment" on page 24, there remains a knowledge gap for BroadbandOhio and service providers in the digital inclusion wants and needs of covered population groups and an awareness gap for residents of available digital inclusion programs, services, and resources that may benefit them.

Goal: Continued Stakeholder Engagement

BroadbandOhio took a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to collaboration and stakeholder engagement to develop Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan and Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) plans. BroadbandOhio engaged with more than 100 agencies and organizations around the state to reach over 6,000 Ohioans. BroadbandOhio will continue to foster partnerships with organizations that serve all Ohioans with a special emphasis on those serving covered populations.

Additionally, BroadbandOhio will continue to improve its asset mapping resources for the community. The existing FINDER tool allows organizations to share digital inclusion resources on the BroadbandOhio website and Ohioans to easily locate devices, hotspots, and device donation locations. Through stakeholder outreach and engagement for the Digital Opportunity Plan, BroadbandOhio and RDIA lead organizations have collected additional digital inclusion assets and have been working to improve the FINDER tool and develop a more user-friendly tool to provide easy access to programs, services, and other digital inclusion resources for Ohioans.

Strategies:

- Continue to deploy a stakeholder outreach and engagement strategy, leveraging Regional Digital Inclusion

Alliances.
- Support sustainable, effective digital inclusion programs, services, and other resources that serve all Ohioans, with a special emphasis on the covered populations.

Objectives:
- Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.
- Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to 15 by year five.

Gap: Broadband Infrastructure

As described in "5.2 Needs and Gaps Assessment" on page 24, there lacks the necessary infrastructure required to deliver reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to all Ohioans in their homes and communities. This lack of infrastructure is a crucial gap in Ohioans' ability to access high-speed internet.

Goal: Expand Broadband Infrastructure

Ohio's stakeholder outreach and engagement strategy overlapped at points for both BEAD and Digital Opportunity Plan planning. Broadband Ohio will continue to align planned activities across DEA and BEAD to ensure an equitable deployment of resources to bring reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to all Ohioans in their homes and communities.

Strategies:
- Align planned activities across DEA and BEAD.

Objectives:
- Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030. [65]

Gap: Access to Affordable Broadband

As described in "5.2 Needs and Gaps Assessment" on page 24, there are many Ohioans who cannot afford reliable, high-speed internet even when infrastructure does exist and many who struggle to afford their internet service at its current price point. This affordability gap remains one of the key reasons all Ohioans are not online.

Goal: Increase Access to Affordable Broadband

BroadbandOhio partners with the Ohio Library Council, Management Council, and Ohio Finance Housing Agency to support affordable broadband initiatives across the state. In addition, Ohio's BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II outlines proposed activities to ensure access to affordable broadband for all Ohioans. Along with statewide initiatives, BroadbandOhio is aware of local and regional organizations advocating for policies and incentives that encourage competition in the broadband market, leading to more affordable and accessible internet options.

Strategies:
- Align planned activities across DEA and BEAD.

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65 No known existing resource breaks down high-speed internet access by covered population category.

- Support ACP outreach and enrollment and other affordability efforts statewide.

   Objectives:

- Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.[66]
- Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.

Gap: Access to Digital Skills Training and Technical Support, including Training and Support around Privacy, Security & Safety

As described in "5.2 Needs and Gaps Assessment" on page 24, many Ohioans would benefit from digital skills training and support. This knowledge and skills gap in navigating online spaces creates disparities in access to healthcare, education, job opportunities, and even entertainment and social connections. It can also lead to gaps in safety and privacy, making some Ohioans more vulnerable to scams and other online threats.

Goal: Increase Access to Digital Skills Training and Technical Support, including Training and Support around Privacy, Security & Safety

As part of stakeholder outreach and engagement efforts, BroadbandOhio, alongside Regional Digital Inclusion Alliance (RDIA) lead organizations, identified 109 organizations across the state involved in digital inclusion activities. BroadbandOhio released the Digital Inclusion Pilot Project Grant application and, alongside RDIA lead organizations, deployed the BroadbandOhio Digital Inclusion Asset Mapping Survey, both of which offered organizations the opportunity to share their work in digital inclusion directly with the state. Many of these organizations focus primarily on digital skills training and technical support, including training and support around privacy, security, and safety.

BroadbandOhio will continue to support these organizations in developing and implementing digital skills programming to increase digital skills proficiency among Ohioans and increasing the Digital Navigator workforce to provide digital skills training and technical support in libraries, community centers, and other key locations to reach all Ohioans.

To best support organizations of all sizes and capacities across the state, BroadbandOhio will leverage the work of RDIA lead organizations to support region-wide planning and technical assistance to best fill gaps in resources and create successful applications.

   Strategies:

- Support sustainable, effective digital skills training programs that serve all Ohioans, with a special emphasis on covered populations.
- Support organizations offering digital skills training and programs in accessing funding and other resources to best serve Ohioans.

   Objectives:

- Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.

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66 No known existing resource breaks down ACP enrollment by covered population category.

Gap: Access to Affordable Devices

As described in "5.2 Needs and Gaps Assessment" on page 24, many Ohioans believe they do not have enough devices to meet their household needs despite prioritizing having access to a device where they live. This gap in access to affordable devices is due to cost and a knowledge and skills gap that may come along with owning and using a device.

Goal: Increase Access to Affordable Devices

BroadbandOhio will develop a statewide device ecosystem to increase access to affordable devices, including assistive technology, for Ohioans that meet users' needs. This will involve collaboration across state agencies and with large companies to invest in digital equity projects, leveraging corporate resources and expertise to amplify the impact of public initiatives. This may include in-kind support, like hardware donations, for a device ecosystem. BroadbandOhio funded Goodwill Columbus as part of its Digital Inclusion Pilot Project Grants to create a donation, refurbishment, and distribution process to meet the region's need for high-quality, low-cost digital devices. Learnings from this project will help to inform the development of Ohio's statewide device ecosystem.

Strategies:

- Leverage partnerships across state agencies and other key partners to develop a statewide device ecosystem to ensure that low- or no-cost devices are available to community organizations to meet the needs of Ohioans statewide.

Objectives:

- Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.

Gap: Accessibility & Inclusivity of Public Resources & Services

Based on the information collected as part of "5.2 Needs and Gaps Assessment" on page 24, as more Ohioans are online, it will be crucial to ensure that resources and services are accessible and inclusive to meet their needs. Much of this work is already in progress but will need to expand to meet growing needs.

Goal: Support the Accessibility & Inclusivity of Public Resources & Services

Organizations across the state are working toward ensuring the accessibility of their online resources and services. The State of Ohio has an administrative policy that establishes minimum web accessibility requirements for information provided on public-facing State of Ohio websites. BroadbandOhio encourages all organizations across the state to adopt web accessibility policies.

Strategies:

- Develop and promote a model web accessibility policy.

Objectives:

- All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.

The number of organizations participating in each RDIA is currently unknown. BroadbandOhio will work with RDIA lead organizations to get a better understanding of membership to set a baseline.

7. Implementation

7.1   Implementation Strategy & Key Activities

Ohio has taken a decentralized approach to closing the digital divide. Statewide initiatives have primarily focused on bringing reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to all Ohioans; promoting the creation of world-class broadband networks; and enabling participation in the modern economy. The state looks to regional and local organizations to advocate, support, and implement programming and services to empower Ohioans through training, device access, and digital skills. These local organizations have a sense of community needs and desires and can direct state and federal resources to best meet the needs of Ohioans.

Many of Ohio's key activities for implementing the Digital Opportunity Plan and for closing the digital divide involve continued support to regional and local partners as they establish new and expand existing proven programs and resources. All of Ohio's key activities are described below. All strategies and key activities apply to all covered populations unless otherwise noted.

Goal: Continued Stakeholder Engagement

Strategies	Key Activities
Continue to deploy a stakeholder outreach and engagement strategy, leveraging Regional Digital Inclusion Alliances	• Continue to fund and regularly convene Regional Digital Inclusion Alliance (RDIA) lead organizations to support ongoing stakeholder outreach and engagement, data collection, plan updates, and guiding Ohio's vision for digital opportunity at the regional and local level. • Continue regional outreach efforts as digital inclusion opportunities arise. • Host an annual Digital Opportunity Summit.
Support sustainable, effective digital inclusion programs, services and other resources that support all Ohioans, with a special emphasis on the covered populations.	• Offer at least one multi-year, competitive grant opportunity for organizations working to close the digital divide. • Develop a digital inclusion asset mapping tool on the BroadbandOhio website that features at least one digital inclusion asset in each of Ohio's 88 counties that can be represented on Ohio's FINDER tool.

Goal: Expand Broadband Infrastructure

Strategies	Key Activities
Align planned activities across DEA and BEAD.	• Meet regularly within BBOH to ensure alignment across DEA and BEAD activities, outreach, and communications. • Support state activities to ensure BEAD grants are awarded by 2025.

Goal: Increase Access to Affordable Broadband

Strategies	Key Activities
Align planned activities across DEA and BEAD.	• Meet regularly within BBOH to ensure alignment across DEA and BEAD activities, outreach, and communications. • Support state activities to ensure BEAD grants are awarded by 2025.
Support ACP outreach and enrollment and other affordability efforts statewide.	• Offer at least one multi-year, competitive grant opportunity for organizations working to close the digital divide. • Leverage RDIAs to increase ACP awareness. • Convene FCC ACP Outreach grantees in Ohio for updates and best practices

Goal: Increase Access to Digital Skills Training and Technical Support, including Training and Support around Privacy, Security & Safety

Strategies	Key Activities
Support sustainable, effective digital skills training programs that serve all Ohioans, with a special emphasis on covered populations.	• Offer at least one multi-year, competitive grant opportunity for organizations working to close the digital divide.
Support organizations offering digital skills training and programs in accessing funding and other resources to best serve Ohioans.	• RDIA lead organizations will host at least one technical assistance workshop for organizations interested in applying for grant funding opportunities in their respective region. • RDIA lead organizations will develop regional digital inclusion strategies to support alignment of digital inclusion activities in their respective regions.

Goal: Increase Access to Affordable Devices

Strategies	Key Activities
Leverage partnerships across state agencies and other key partners to develop a statewide device ecosystem to ensure that low- or no-cost devices are available to community organizations to meet the needs of Ohioans statewide.	• Affect policy change at the state level to allow for regular device donation across state agencies. • Establish a process for collecting and distributing device donations to RDIAs. • Create a policy guide to support the conditions for a device ecosystem at all levels of government.

Goal: Support the Accessibility & Inclusivity of Public Resources & Services

Strategies	Key Activities
Develop and promote a model web accessibility policy.	• Work with the Department of Administrative Services and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to develop a model web accessibility policy. • Work with RDIA lead organizations to ensure all organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.

7.1.1   Digital Opportunity and Funding

The Plan's successful implementation relies on future Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program is a $1.44 billion formula grant program for states, territories, and tribal governments that completed State Digital Opportunity Plans. More information on the Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program, including a Notice of Funding Opportunity which will outline eligible uses of funds, should be available in 2024.

Successful programming, resources, and services developed or expanded with the Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program funding will require government, philanthropic, and other support to sustain beyond the life of the grant. BroadbandOhio will continue to work with partners to support digital opportunities through grants, advocacy, and other opportunities available to and through the State.

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

Ohio received nearly $800 million in federal BEAD funding to expand broadband infrastructure to unserved and underserved households across the state. Ohio's current version of the BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II outlines proposed activities to ensure access to affordable high-speed internet for all Ohioans. Key BEAD activities to support affordability include:

- **Requirement 14: Cost and Barrier Reduction.** BroadbandOhio is taking multiple steps to reduce costs and barriers to deployment for internet service providers. The burden of these costs often ultimately falls on households, making access to high-speed internet prohibitive in some communities. By providing financial support and streamlining processes, high-speed internet can be deployed at a lower cost and more quickly to communities across the state.
- **Requirement 16: Low-Cost Broadband Service Option.** BroadbandOhio requires all subgrantees receiving BEAD funds to provide high-quality, high-speed, ACP-eligible plans at $30 per month or less, inclusive of all taxes, fees, and charges, with no additional non-recurring costs or fees to the consumer. Ohio will require these plansto be offered beyond the potential discontinuation of the ACP program.
- **Requirement 20: Middle Class Affordability.** BroadbandOhio will evaluate the prospective subgrantee's commitment to providing the most affordable total price to the customer in the project area. The rates provided by applicants will be used to calculate a weighted statewide average to which each application's rates will be ranked in comparison. This scoring criterion will account for 10% of the total scoring weight of an application, thus prioritizing affordable cost options.

Gaps Addressed: Broadband Infrastructure, Access to Affordable Broadband

Capital Projects Funds

Ohio has received approval from the U.S. Department of Treasury for three key programs to increase access to high-speed internet, a crucial step to closing the digital divide. Additional programs are still pending federal approval.

Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant (ORBEG)

ORBEG was designed to bring high-speed internet to unserved areas in Ohio. As part of the first round of ORBEG, $232 million in grants were awarded to 33 recipients. The second round of ORBEG will expand the current state-funded program with CPF funds to serve additional locations with additional requirements. Applications for ORBEG round two are currently open.

Gap(s) Addressed: Broadband Infrastructure

Student Connectivity Grant

This grant continues the work that began at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic to fund the installation of broadband infrastructure near or on school district premises in partnership with an ISP, to then run internet lines to the homes of students. This "to-and-through" model will meet the needs of students in unserved and underserved communities. This program is set to begin in 2024.

Gap(s) Addressed: Access to Affordable Broadband

Line Extension Reimbursement Program

Internet service providers can receive a rolling reimbursement to cover a portion of the expenses of running fiber to unserved homes whose distance from existing infrastructure makes it difficult to serve. Reimbursements will be approved by the Broadband Expansion Program Authority on a rolling basis that provides detailed proof of having completed line extensions after July 1, 2023. This program is set to

begin in 2024.
Gap(s) Addressed: Broadband Infrastructure, Access to Affordable Broadband

State of Ohio Funds

Ohio has invested in several projects to support digital opportunities with state funds. These projects have built sustainable infrastructure solutions and piloted innovative digital inclusion strategies. Learnings from these on-going projects will help to inform future funding and project decisions.

PCs for People/Cuyahoga County Project

BroadbandOhio and Cuyahoga County invested $20 million into a partnership with local non-profit PCs for People to provide in-home, high-speed internet access to 25,000 Cuyahoga County households in many of the County's least connected communities. The cost of service for a resident will be $15 a month. Residents who qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program can have the cost of service fully covered. Additionally, PCs for People can provide residents with a free or low-cost device. Households that qualify for the ACP can receive a computer for $11.
Gap(s) Addressed: Broadband Infrastructure, Access to Affordable Broadband

Creative Housing Pilot Project

BroadbandOhio is providing high-speed internet connectivity to help hundreds of central Ohioans with developmental disabilities retain their independence and receive specialized care without leaving home. The Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities was awarded $600,000 in grants for a one-year pilot program to provide broadband access for up to 500 residents with developmental disabilities so they can access critical remote support services. The project is in partnership with Creative Housing, a Columbus-based nonprofit dedicated to providing safe, accessible, and affordable housing to individuals with disabilities in central Ohio.
Gap(s) Addressed: Access to Affordable Broadband

Butler County Student Connectivity Project

The Butler County Educational Service Center was awarded a $95,000 grant that was used to bring high-speed internet to K-12 students living in the Rochester Hills mobile home community at no cost to families. Infrastructure for the project was provided by Cincinnati-based altafiber, with BroadbandOhio providing connectivity to those homes for three years. Butler Tech and Monroe Local Schools were also enlisted to provide technical assistance and served as integral partners in the planning and implementation of the project.
Gap(s) Addressed: Broadband Infrastructure, Access to Affordable Broadband

Darke County Project

BroadbandOhio awarded the Darke County Board of Commissioners a $500,000 grant to bring fast, reliable connectivity to rural Darke County. The Board created a cooperative joint venture with Agile Network Builders, LLC, to extend Agile's hybrid fiber fixed tower sites to strategically provide the most coverage throughout the county and maintain the infrastructure related to the hybrid fiber wireless network.
Gap(s) Addressed: Broadband Infrastructure

Bascom Project
BroadbandOhio awarded Bascom Mutual Telecom Company a $3 million grant to assist with the construction of middle-mile fiber infrastructure that can be utilized as the backbone for last-mile expansion through rural areas of Seneca and Crawford Counties in Northwest Ohio.
Gap(s) Addressed: Broadband Infrastructure
Molly Caren Agricultural Connectivity Project
The Ohio Department of Development awarded $125,000 in funding to establish high-speed internet connectivity to Ohio State's College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences Molly Caren Agricultural Center in London, Ohio. The project is expected to generate valuable insights into the effectiveness of semi- and fully autonomous farming equipment that will help shape the future of agriculture.
Gap(s) Addressed: Broadband Infrastructure

7.2   Digital Inclusion Pilot Project Grant Program

As part of the State Digital Equity Planning Grant program, Ohio budgeted for Digital Inclusion Pilot Projects to offer early support to regional and local partners.

BroadbandOhio announced more than $650,000 in funding to support local efforts to advance digital opportunities in communities across the state. Organizations were eligible for up to $100,000 for projects serving at least one of the covered populations and meeting an existing, identified digital inclusion need in the area served[67]. Projects are intended to provide an innovative approach or a scalable solution to addressing the digital divide.

A total of $654,590 was awarded to help nine community-based, non-profit organizations address barriers in digital access due to factors such as cost, race, location, age, and language barriers. Awardees and projects are described below.

- **Central Community House** received $92,800 in grants for a technology access project to expand existing programming, including technology-oriented classes, workshops, and one-on-one assistance for seniors. Participants in the programs will receive devices and adaptive accessories for those with physical limitations.
- **The Ashtabula County Farm Bureau** received $23,200 in grants for a rural connectivity project. The project is a partnership between the Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, and Trumbull Counties' Farm Bureaus to bridge the digital divide in rural northeast Ohio by providing tech support and digital skills training for agri-businesses and residents.
- **Hocking Athens Perry Community Action** (HAPCAP) received $100,000 in grants to add a second digital navigator role to the office to increase capacity for technical support and device distribution to covered populations. The first digital navigator has seen success in meeting the region's growing need for digital skills and tech support. This role has been crucial to HAPCAP's partnership with PCs for People's Cleveland office to support the distribution of refurbished devices in the community.
- **The Ohio University – Office of Digital Accessibility** received $26,758 in grants to improve document accessibility on the university's website for people with disabilities. The project will remediate existing documents, provide training for key faculty and staff to create accessible content, and ensure the sustainability of accessible document practices going forward.

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67 Digital inclusion needs categories mirrored the State Digital Equity Planning Grant measurable objectives.

- **Accompanying Returning Citizens with Hope** (ARCH) received $100,000 in grants to distribute devices, provide digital literacy support, and encourage enrollment in the Grow with Google program to justice-involved individuals, returning citizens and those participating in Café Overlook's workforce development program.
- **The Spanish American Committee** received $100,000 in grants to support the Families First Program, which will provide Latino/Hispanic individuals and families with a caseworker specifically focused on supporting digital access and literacy. Case managers will help connect clients to high-speed internet, access devices, and gain digital skills.
- **Mercy Health – Toledo** received $100,000 in grants to advance the Get Your Business Rolling (GYBR) program. The project will allow the organization to expand the program to additional zip codes in the Toledo area to support a greater population of diverse female entrepreneurs. The program includes an entrepreneurial training class, strategic support, device access, and additional opportunities for growth and training through the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library upon completion.
- **National Church Residences** received $43,450 in grants to promote Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) enrollment events at senior housing communities throughout the state. Events will be staffed to support one-on-one enrollment and internet service sign-up assistance for participating residents. This initiative will be used to develop an ACP Enrollment Guide for Senior Affordable Housing that can be used across the National Church Residences network.
- **Goodwill Columbus** received $68,382 in grants to create a donation, refurbishment, and distribution process to meet the region's need for high-quality, low-cost digital devices. Residents will be able to purchase refurbished devices at Goodwill Columbus retail store locations across Franklin County. The project will also create a device bank facilitated by a digital platform to identify and distribute devices to community-based organizations.

Just nine of over 100 project applicants were funded through the grant, offering a glimpse into the enthusiasm among digital inclusion practitioners for future funding opportunities. BroadbandOhio plans to remain in contact with applicants via the Broadband Alliance and other avenues to make them aware of upcoming funding opportunities. Broadband will use the pilot project application as a model for future state grant opportunities.

Additional Opportunities

Beyond the nine funded projects, several additional innovative strategies, partnerships, and scalable solutions that did not reach the funding threshold emerged through this process. These projects are described below.

- **Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center** (ASC3) was established to implement technology resources to empower greater Cleveland residents. ASC3 addresses residents' needs by providing digital skills training and access to technology, and other tech resources, in a nurturing atmosphere conducive for clients to learn and thrive, regardless of educational and/or financial barriers.
- **Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority** (CMHA) services over 13,800 households and nearly 33,000 individuals in Franklin County. CMHA's Making Connections initiative aims to close the digital divide through projects that include: a partnership with Spectrum to provide no-cost broadband to residents of 22 subsidized housing communities; a partnership with the Columbus Metropolitan Library to provide digital literacy support to all residents; on-site computer labs at eight CMHA communities; and a partnership with PCs for People to distribute laptops and hotspots.
- **Community Action Committee of Pike County** hosts an AmeriCorps member through the American

Connection Corps program. Members train and mobilize community members in rural and emerging communities to coordinate broadband development and digital inclusion. At the Community Action Committee of Pike County, this role serves as a digital navigator, supporting individuals, and will support an outreach campaign to the community households with connectivity, securing devices, and digital skills training. Supporting connectivity and digital inclusion activities will ensure that persons with limited means, transportation, or mobility are offered the same opportunities as the broader community.

- **Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority** (CMHA) provides affordable housing for over 55,000 low-income residents living in Cuyahoga County. The agency owns and manages 10,500 public housing units. CMHA partners with DigitalC, PCs for People, Spectrum, and AT&T to support residents' access to affordable, fixed and wireless broadband technology, and also hosts digital skills training provided by community partners like ASC3, DigitalC, Olivet, Housing and Community Development, and the Cleveland Foundation. Digital skills training includes general support, as well as MyChart and internet safety and scam identification training. CMHA's Digital Inclusion team is present at 14 properties across CMHA's footprint to provide technical support to all residents.
- **Great Lakes Community Action Partnership** currently has trained staff and volunteers as Digital Navigators. The Digital Navigator provides individualized or small group assistance to community members who need affordable home internet service, affordable internet-capable devices, and/or coaching in introductory foundational digital literacy skills to become effective home internet users. Coaches develop and maintain cooperative working relationships with social service providers, educational institutions, employment agencies, and employers to assist participants in meeting their basic needs, including education, training, and employment. They recruit, screen, and regularly assess the needs of participants, implement job training and job placement activities, and provide case management and follow-up services.
- **Oak Hill Collaborative** (OHC) serves Ohio's northern Appalachian counties, including Mahoning and Trumbull counties. OHC's Digital Advantage Initiative provides critical resources for closing the digital divide in a one-stop shop in this otherwise under-resourced region. OHC offers a Makerspace/Hackerspace, technical support, free computer classes and workshops, discounted refurbished devices, ACP enrollment support, and Digital Navigator services.
- **Smart Columbus** convenes the Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition (DEC), a group of local and regional governments and organizations dedicated to closing the digital divide in Central Ohio. One essential priority for the region is Digital Skills – the expansion and increase of access to digital skills training for residents. Smart Columbus and members of the Franklin County DEC are working to provide a decentralized and scalable digital skills training model that is unified through a common curriculum and assessment and can be tailored to each organization's unique population. Through this work, two formal 10-hour courses will be created and piloted for four partner organizations (Columbus Metropolitan Library, Educational Service Center of Central Ohio, Goodwill Columbus, and Jewish Family Services) with evaluation.

7.3   Timeline

Ohio anticipates using State Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program funds, and other digital inclusion funding as it becomes available, to implement the activities described throughout the plan. The availability and timing of this funding will significantly impact the proposed timeline and activities below. Key milestones are highlighted below.

Year/Stage	Activities
2023	• Develop and finalize Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan based on stakeholder engagement efforts and public feedback • Collect initial and final reports from Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grantees for inclusion in Ohio's Digital Opportunity Plan
2024	• **Ohio Digital Opportunity Plan accepted by NTIA** • Apply for & receive State Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding • Continue developing state asset inventory & mapping tool • Q1-2: Plan Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Begin state policy update to allow for regular state device donation • Begin discussion around policy for collecting and distributing device donations to RDIAs • Begin work to develop web accessibility policy • Q3/4: Host Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Convene FCC ACP outreach grantees
2025	• RDIAs to host at least one grant TA workshop • **Release statewide competitive grant opportunity & select grantees** • Develop tracking mechanisms for measurable progress • Q1-2: Plan Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Q3/4: Host Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit
2026	• RDIAs completed regional digital inclusion strategies • State policy updated to allow for regular state device donation • **Process for collecting and distributing device donations to RDIAs established** • **Model web accessibility policy developed** • **Digital inclusion asset mapping tool developed** • Q1-2: Plan Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Q3/4: Host Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Collect annual reporting from state grantees • Assess annual grant progress

2027	• **Policy guide to support the conditions for a device ecosystem developed** • Q1-2: Plan Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Q3/4: Host Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Collect annual reporting from state grantees • Assess annual grant progress
2028	• Q1-2: Plan Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Q3/4: Host Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Collect annual reporting from state grantees • Assess annual grant progress
2029	• **RDIA participating organizations committed to adopting a web accessibility policy** • Q1-2: Plan Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Q3/4: Host Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Collect annual final reporting from state grantees • Assess annual grant progress
2030	• Evaluate impact & publish report • Q1-2: Plan Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit • Q3/4: Host Ohio Digital Opportunity Summit

8. Conclusion

Ohio's journey to closing the digital divide requires collaborative partnership and relies on empowering communities across the state to accomplish goals. As the state works to bring reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to every Ohioan, local government, nonprofits, and other organizations will be working to provide access to affordable internet, internet-enabled devices, and digital skills training and technical support. BroadbandOhio will support these entities to bring the vision of a more digitally equitable Ohio to life with funding, networking opportunities, and other resources. Together, Ohio will ensure that residents have equal opportunity to access quality education, healthcare, job opportunities, government services, and cultural resources online to support a thriving, resilient, and forward-looking Ohio that maximizes the potential of its residents.

9. Appendices

9.1 Digital Inclusion Assets

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Veterans	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Ohio 211	Ohio's 14 211 call centers serve as community support resources, particularly for Ohioans without internet access. By dialing 211, Ohio residents in all covered populations can speak with community resource specialists who match the callers' needs with thousands of available local resources. The free, confidential services assist people with ACP enrollment information and can provide more information about digital inclusion assets in the community.	https://www.211.org/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Accompanying Returning Citizens with Hope	Accompanying Returning Citizens with Hope (ARCH) exists to help returning citizens reintegrate into the community on their terms. ARCH operates several programs both pre- and post-release -- including digital skills training and support -- to make sure returning citizens are ready and able to return to the workforce, and subsequently their lives.	https://www.archreentry.com/					X			
Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority	Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA) provides affordable housing options to approximately 10,000 households throughout Summit County. AMHA's ConnectHome Akron initiative works to narrow the digital divide bringing affordable broadband access, electronic devices, technical training, and other digital skills programs to AMHA residents. AMHA also received a 2023 Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program to support ACP outreach.	https://www.akronhousing.org/homepage.html	X	X		X	X		X	X
Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center	Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center (ASC3) was established to implement technology resources to empower greater Cleveland residents. ASC3 addresses residents needs by providing digital skills training and access to technology, and other tech resources, in a nurturing atmosphere conducive for clients to learn and thrive, regardless of educational and/or financial barriers.	https://www.asc3.org/	X	X					X	
Ashtabula County Community Action Agency	Ashtabula County Community Action Agency helps residents achieve self-sufficiency and rise above issues of poverty. The Agency received a FY 2023 National Competitive Outreach Program for ACP Outreach from the FCC.	https://accaa.org/	X	X	X					
Assistive Technology of Ohio	Assistive Technology of Ohio (AT Ohio) is a federally funded nonprofit organization that is part of the College of Engineering at Ohio State University. AT Ohio allows people with disabilities to obtain devices: their computer refurbishing program allows people with disabilities to apply for a low-cost refurbished computer and their device lending library offers a large library of assistive technology devices for people with disabilities to try out, free of charge. AT Ohio also offers additional programs, webinars, and resources.	https://atohio.org/computer-refurbishing-program				X				
AT&T Connected Learning Centers	The AT&T Connected Learning Centers in Cleveland, one housed inside the Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center (ASC3) and the other at Esperanza, provide high-speed AT&T Fiber internet, Wi-Fi, Dell Technologies computers, and education content to local underserved students and community members. They also donated $50,000 to ASC3 in support of their programming.	https://about.att.com/csr/home/society/education.html	X	X					X	
Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Community Support Center	Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Community Support Center is a non-profit organization that gives food, school supplies, birthday and holiday gifts, resource referral, emergency clothing, and assistance with social services to community members who could use assistance. The organization provides free computer basics classes in which participants can learn computer operations, how to browse the internet and utilize key software packages like Microsoft Office and Google Suite.	https://bscsc.org/	X							

English Language Learners
Racial & Ethnic Minorities
Justice-Involved Individuals
Individuals w/ Disabilities
Veterans
Rural Residents
Aging Individuals
Covered Households

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Justice-Involved Individuals	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Veterans	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc.	Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc. is a non-profit community development corporation empowering residents and revitalizing blighted and underserved communities in Cleveland's Central and Kinsman neighborhoods since 1990. BBC is committed to connecting residents with relevant training, workforce development programs, and wealth-building opportunities.	https://www.bbcdevelopment.org/	X	X				X	X	
Center for Employment Opportunities	Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is a national nonprofit organization that provides immediate, effective, and comprehensive employment services exclusively to individuals who have recently returned home from incarceration. In their 2020 Fiscal Year, CEO's three locations in Ohio enrolled 383 participants and had 143 unique job placements. CEO provides participants not only with foundational digital skills training, but also opportunities to receive IT credentials.	https://www.ceoworks.org/				X				
Technology Access Project - Central Community House	Technology Access Project (TAP) is a series of classes for Franklin County residents ages 60 and over. TAP provides seniors with technology training and support, allowing them to stay informed, up to date, and connected with family and friends.	https://www.cchouse.org/programs	X	X						
Cincinnati Parent Empowerment Network	Cincinnati Parent Empowerment Network (CPEN) is a large parent-led organization dedicated to support families in accessing education and resources. CPEN currently ensures cellphone access to families, allowing them to secure work, housing, and other benefits. CPEN has used a grassroots approach to build partnerships at the local and state level, including with organizations like the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center. CPEN has received grant funding to expand its social-media-driven community resource network to include new staff members focused on digital inclusion and to launch a teen technology center.	https://www.facebook.com/CPENET513	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Cincinnati Works	Cincinnati Works is a non-profit, employment connection and support network for career employment coaching. Through their Job Readiness program, the organization offers a three-day JumpStart workshop, one-on-one employment coaching, and access to a bank of computers for searching and applying for jobs. Their other programs provide leadership opportunities, financial literacy coaching, and additional skills training to low-income and justice-involved individuals.	https://cincinnatiworks.org/	X					X	X	
City of Cleveland	The City of Cleveland has taken major steps toward creating a digitally equitable Cleveland: releasing a Request for Proposals on internet infrastructure projects to connect as many digitally disconnected households in the city as possible, hiring the city's first Digital Equity and Inclusion Manager, and developing Cleveland's Digital Equity and Inclusion plan. The City of Cleveland currently has free public Wi-Fi at its 21 recreation centers and is participating with Cuyahoga County to support ACP outreach. The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) also provides free Wi-Fi in RTA vehicles and select stations and transit centers.	https://www.clevelandohio.gov/	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
City of Columbus	The City of Columbus is working to close the digital divide by expanding the city's fiber network and deploying other digitally enabled technologies. Indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi is accessible in underserved areas of the city and in 32 of the city's recreation centers. Collaborative initiatives such as Connect Ohio assure broadband is accessible and affordable to every Ohioan, and free basic computer and broadband training classes are available to Ohio adults. The city also received a FY 2023 National Competitive Outreach Program for ACP Outreach from the FCC.	https://new.columbus.gov/Home	X	X		X	X		X	X

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Cleveland Foundation	The Cleveland Foundation launched their Digital Excellence Initiative in 2017, after which they collaborated with Cuyahoga County and T-Mobile to establish the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity Fund in 2020. It also announced a series of grants to bring PCs for People to Cleveland, helped establish the Spectrum-Cleveland City Council Neighborhood Technology Fund, and more. As a member of the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity Coalition, the foundation works with a number of other Cleveland-based organizations to distribute devices and hotspots, support digital skills training and internet service for job seekers, and provide personalized digital navigator services. The Cleveland Foundation is also the lead organization for the Northeast Ohio Regional Digital Inclusion Alliance.	https://www.clevelandfoundation.org/	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Cleveland Public Library	Cleveland Public Library has an innovative technology and learning center called TechCentral, which offers 90 accessible computers, all equipped with Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Word, and WinWay Resume Creator; free classes through their in-person *My Digital Life* series, in which participants can learn digital skills ranging from avoiding online scams to online shopping basics; TechCentral workers available for one-on-one in-person computer tutorials; and a Mobile Hotspot Checkout, in which Cleveland residents can borrow the internet just like a book.	https://cpl.org/aboutthelibrary/subjectscollections/techcentral/	X	X		X	X		X	X
Clinton County Workforce Collaborative	The Clinton County Workforce Collaborative (CCWC) is an initiative of the Clinton County Port Authority, OhioMeansJobs Clinton County, Southern Ohio Educational Service Center, and the Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce. The Workforce Collaborative addresses issues surrounding workforce development, retention, and recruitment in Clinton County and the surrounding region through its three working groups: "School/Community Connections," Education/Training," and "Barriers to Work." With assistance from the Clinton County Port Authority, the Clinton County Board of Commissioners engaged a firm to conduct a Broadband Feasability Study, which will serve as the basis for a broadband infrastructure implementation plan.	https://www.wccchamber.com/workforce-collaborative	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority	Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) services over 13,800 households and nearly 33,000 individuals in Franklin County. CMHA's Making Connections initiative aims to close the digital divide through projects that include: a partnership with Spectrum to provide no-cost broadband to residents of 22 subsidized housing communities; a partnership with the Columbus Metropolitan Library to provide digital literacy support to all residents; on-site computer labs at eight CMHA communities; and a partnership with PCs for People to distribute laptops and hotspots.	https://cmhanet.com/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Columbus Metropolitan Library	In partnership with Goodwill Columbus, the Columbus Metropolitan Library offers free open-to-the-public digital skills training at 14 neighborhood library locations. The Library offers access to online and in-person resources to support digital access and digital skills training, including Northstar Online Learning and LinkedIn Learning for Library, among others. The Library also offers Digital Navigator hours to help eligible customers apply for discounted computers and internet services and to provide technical support.	https://www.columbuslibrary.org/	X	X		X	X	X	X	X

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Veterans	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Cuyahoga County	Cuyahoga County received $250,000 through the FCC ACP National Competitive Outreach Program grant to support outreach and signups for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Ensuring access to affordable internet is a key component of the county's digital inclusion strategy, which also includes access to affordable, high-speed internet provided by PCs for People in more than 15,000 households spanning across multiple Cleveland neighborhoods and inner-ring suburbs. Included in this coverage are multi-dwelling units like housing authority complexes and privately-owned apartments.	https://cuyahogacounty.us/innovation/county-initiatives/bridging-the-digital-divide	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Cuyahoga County Public Library	Cuyahoga County Public Library's Digital Navigators service offers one-on-one assistance to help residents connect to the internet, get a device, set up a telehealth appointment and more. Residents can call the library to make an appointment with Digital Navigators at a CCPL branch or visit a CCPL branch during scheduled hours. The library also received a FY 2023 ACP Navigator Pilot Program grant for ACP Outreach from the FCC. The ACP Navigator Pilot Program provides selected applicants access to the National Verifier to help low-income households complete and submit their ACP application.	https://cuyahogalibrary.org/	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority	Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) provides affordable housing for over 55,000 low-income residents living in Cuyahoga County. The agency owns and manages 10,500 public housing units. CMHA partners with DigitalC, PCs for People, Spectrum, and AT&T to support residents' access to affordable, fixed and wireless broadband technology, and hosts digital skills training provided by community partners like ASC3, DigitalC, Olivet, Housing and Community Development, and the Cleveland Foundation. Digital skills training includes general support, as well as MyChart and internet safety and scam identification training. CMHA's Digital Inclusion team is present at 14 properties across CMHA's footprint to provide technical support to all residents.	https://www.cmha.net/	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
DigitalC	DigitalC is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to digitally empower 23,500 households with affordable internet through community outreach, collaborative partnerships and cultural engagement. To advance their mission, DigitalC provides affordable and quality internet service to Cleveland residents. Alongside this, they include important technical support and digital skills courses as a way to tackle digital red-lining and help residents thrive in a very technologically heavy world.	https://www.digitalc.org/	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Easterseals	Easterseals is a national non-profit dedicated to serving children and adults living with autism and other disabilities or special needs and their families. There are four Easterseals affiliates located in Ohio: Easterseals Central and Southeast Ohio, Easterseals of Mahoning, Trumbull & Columbiana, Easterseals Redwood, and Goodwill Easterseal Miami Valley. Easterseals Redwood has been awarded grants from the Dow Jones Foundation and bi3 for digital learning and online connectivity initiatives.	https://www.easterseals.com/	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Eastgate Regional Council of Governments	Eastgate Regional Council of Governments is a voluntary association of local governments in Northeast Ohio, Ashtabula County, Mahoning County, Trumbull County, and all cities, villages, and townships in the counties are members. The Eastgate Council conducted a Regional Broadband Feasibility Study to evaluate Broadband Internet Service throughout Ashtabula, Trumbull, and Mahoning Counties and facilitated a plan through its Broadband Lake-to-River Backbone Fiber Expansion Implementation Plan. Eastgate has been a partner in the digital inclusion space, hosting events and supporting efforts in the Youngstown area and beyond.	https://www.easterseals.com/	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Veterans	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Columbus Metropolitan School District - Empower CMSD	Empower CMSD is Cleveland Metropolitan School District's district-wide program that focuses on the digital aspect of equity and inclusion for students and family. The program leverages partnerships in both the public and private sectors to offer devices for every student, connections for every family that needs internet access, and tech support with PCs for People; broadband internet access through the "Stay Connected" program with Digital C and Spectrum; free software with Microsoft; and other tech benefits and services, including ID badges that let parents monitor their children's travel on district school buses. ID badges also double as Cleveland Public Library Cards.	https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/empowerCMSD	X							
Esperanza	Esperanza is dedicated to the promotion and advancement of Hispanic/Latinx communities in Northeast Ohio. The non-profit organization has provided more than $1.7 million in scholarships to more than 1,000 students since 1983 and facilitates over 244 mentor/mentee relationships during the school year to promote community leadership and motivate academic achievement. Esperanza also houses an AT&T Connected Learning Center, which further provides internet access and education tools to local students and community members.	https://esperanzainc.org/	X						X	X
Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation	Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation (FRDC) is a nonprofit community development corporation located in Northeast Ohio that develops affordable and market rate housing and promotes economic development through commercial, retail, and institutional initiatives. FDRC offers a workforce development program and a neighborhood technology center, both of which focus on strengthening digital skills.	https://fairfaxrenaissance.org/	X						X	
Famicos Foundation	The Famicos Foundation works to improve the quality of life in greater Cleveland through neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, and integrated social services. The Foundation participates in the Greater Cleveland Digital Equity Coalition and the network of Greater Cleveland Digital Ambassadors and Navigators. The Foundation also received a FY 2023 National Competitive Outreach Program Grant for ACP outreach from the FCC.	https://famicos.org/	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Families First Program - Spanish American Committee	The Families First Program provides ladders of opportunity that help low-income individuals and families break the cycle of poverty and become self-sufficient. The Program takes a comprehensive, culturally competent approach to support families who are struggling to meet their basic needs, including technology assistance and utility assistance.	https://spanishamerican.org/programs/families-first	X						X	X
Fatima Family Center Community Computer Lab	Fatima Family Center offers recreational and educational programs for all ages and supportive services designed to meet the needs of individuals and families residing in surrounding communities. The Fatima Family Center, partnered with the Cleveland Foundation and Spectrum, offers a Community Computer Lab, where residents of Cleveland's Hough neighborhood and individuals participating in their programs can utilize computers, access the internet, and attend introductory computer classes.	https://www.ccdocle.org/programs/computer-lab	X	X				X	x	
findhelp	findhelp is a user-friendly platform that connects people in need and the programs that service them with dignity and ease. The tool simplifies the application process to access resources.	https://www.findhelp.org/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

						English Language Learners	
					Racial & Ethnic Minorities		
				Justice-Involved Individuals			
			Individuals w/ Disabilities				
		Rural Residents	Veterans				
	Aging Individuals						
Covered Households							

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Veterans	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Future Forward Ohio	Future Forward Ohio encompasses the Ohio Department of Education's strategic priorities for helping students recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Three key coordinating strategies are guiding the Department's work, including Overcoming Obstacles to Learning. Overcoming Obstacles to Learning means addressing barriers that prevent students from engaging in learning, such as attendance, mental health, and high-speed internet access.	https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Future-Forward-Ohio	X		X	X		X	X	X
Get your Business Rolling - Mercy Health Toledo	Get your Business Rolling (GYBR) is a free, eight-week entrepreneurial training program for budding entrepreneurs and businesses in historically disadvantaged areas. Participants receive guidance and education and a free laptop computer to help them start their business.		X							
Goodwill Akron	Goodwill Akron participates in the Dell Reconnect program, offering residents a free and convenient way to responsibly recycle their used electronics. Goodwill employees then determine if an item can be resold or recycled. If still useable, Goodwill then refurbishes the item and sells it through their store to support employment and affordable device access in the community.	https://goodwillakron.org/	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Goodwill Columbus	Goodwill Columbus has served the Central Ohio community by providing jobs and services that empower individuals. Goodwill Columbus offers one-on-one career coaching, career certifications and digital skills training to the public at no-cost in each of the five Goodwill Columbus job training centers and within several Columbus Metropolitan Library locations. Goodwill Columbus workforce development services are focused on preparing individuals for in-demand jobs in the healthcare, IT, hospitality, retail, and logistics sectors. in 2022, 326 people were served in Digital Literacy Basics through Goodwill Columbus and Columbus Metropolitan Library programming.	goodwillcolumbus.org/jobtraining	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Good Will Columbus - Achieve More & Prosper	Achieve More & Prosper (AMP) is a partnership among Goodwill Columbus, the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services, and the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio. AMP offers free specialized assistance and coaching to Central Ohioans ages 18-24 looking to make a positive change in their life. Through AMP, qualified individuals can receive comprehensive support, including education and job placement and training in several in-demand fields like IT.	goodwillcolumbus.org/AMP	X							
Goodwill Industries of Lorain County	Goodwill Industries of Lorain County participates in the Dell Reconnect program, offering residents a free and convenient way to responsibly recycle their used electronics. Goodwill employees then determine if an item can be resold or recycled. If still useable, Goodwill then refurbishes the item and sells it through their store to support employment and affordable device access in the community.	https://gwlco.dellreconnect.com/	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Goodwill of South Central Ohio	Goodwill of South Central Ohio participates in the Dell Reconnect program, offering residents a free and convenient way to responsibly recycle their used electronics. Goodwill employees then determine if an item can be resold or recycled. If still useable, Goodwill then refurbishes the item and sells it through their store to support employment and affordable device access in the community.	https://gwisco.org/dell-reconnect/	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Great Lakes Community Action Partnership	Great Lakes Community Action Partnership currently has trained staff and volunteer(s) as Digital Navigators. Digital Navigators provide individualized or small group assistance to community members who need affordable home internet service, affordable internet-capable devices, and/or coaching in introductory foundational digital literacy skills to become effective home internet users.	https://www.glcap.org/programs/financial-wellness-workforce-development/financial-opportunity-center/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Veterans	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Habitat for Humanity of Findlay/Hancock County	Habitat for Humanity Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) services are designed to engage, educate, and empower individuals and families to build a better future through self-sufficiency. The FOC assists individuals and families in applying for the ACP program and offers free access to individualized digital skills coaching, among other resources.	https://habitatfindlay.org/financial-opportunity-center-foc/	X		X					
High School Tech Internship Pilot Program	The High School Tech Internship v3.0 pilot program is a competitive opportunity for Ohio employers to receive reimbursement for establishing a recruitment pipeline by hosting high school interns in tech-related roles.	https://workforce.ohio.gov/initiatives/initiatives/hstechinternshippilot	X		X				X	X
Hocking Athens Perry Community Action (HAPCAP)	Hocking Athens Perry Community Action (HAPCAP) is a private, non-profit, community-based organization serving Southeast Ohio. HAPCAP, in partnership with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, houses a Digital Navigator which provides one-on-one technology assistance for a variety of needs, including assistance in setting up a new device, navigating 'My Chart' & telehealth appointments, uploading and downloading files, and utilizing online school reporting systems.	https://hapcap.org/digital-navigator/	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP)	The Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP) helps Ohioans who are low income or partially or totally unemployed, participate in a training program to receive a credential at no cost. IMAP training providers cover all tuition, fees, and additional costs to help individuals learn new skills and earn a credential that can lead to a good job.	https://workforce.ohio.gov/initiatives/initiatives/imap	X					X	X	
Interact for Health	Interact for Health is a non-profit organization that supports and invests in health-promoting initiatives in the 20-county area surrounding Cincinnati. The foundation has funded multiple school-based health centers through its grant programs, including several locations across Cincinnati. Many of these school-based health centers offer telehealth to students and community members within their districts.	https://www.interactforhealth.org/	X		X				X	
JumpStart	JumpStart Inc. is a venture development organization in Northern Ohio that provides capital, services, and connections to help tech startups, small businesses, corporate partners, and research institutions. Since 2010, JumpStart has engaged more than 6,500 companies, creating $9,207 jobs and $622 million in wages to support 6,190 households.	https://www.jumpstartinc.org/	X							
Lorain County Community Action Agency (LCCAA)	Lorain County Community Action Agency (LCCAA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving and empowering Lorain County residents in need. The LCCAA provides free Tech Connect computer classes to adults living at or below 200% of the federal poverty line, in which participants learn the basics of Microsoft Office, internet surfing, resume writing, and online job searching over 8 sessions. Since 2012, hundreds of students have taken advantage of the class and gone on to further education and greater self-confidence.	https://www.lccaa.net/cms/files/File/Program%20Forms/Tech%20Connect%20Brochure%202020%20UPDATED%20200%20PERCENT.pdf	X	X						
Lorain Metropolitan Housing Authority	Lorain Metropolitan Housing Authority (LMHA) is committed to providing safe, decent, affordable housing for the residents of Lorain County. Potential residents may utilize one of the four computer kiosks at the LMHA's main office to apply for housing. Many LMHA sites have computer labs with free WiFi available to their residents; locations that do not have computer labs have computers available to residents at their management office.	http://www.lmha.org/resident-services/	X	X		X	X			
Meals on Wheels Southwest OH & Northern KY	Meals on Wheels of Southwest OH & Northern KY delivers essential services that promote the independence of seniors so they may remain in the comfort of their own homes. The nonprofit offers a Digital Connect program, in which seniors that qualify are provided with free one-on-one tech support. Participants learn how to utilize Zoom, email, social apps, shopping, banking, and all the Meals on Wheels online programs. Qualifying participants can also receive a free tablet.	https://www.muchmorethanameal.org/digital-connect	X	X		X	X			

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Medina County Career Center	Medina County Career Center (MCCC), in partnership with six public school districts, offers advanced career-technical majors for both high school and adult students. MCCC offers a variety of programs and resources to Medina County residents, including an Introduction to Excel and the Basics of Computerized Accounting. The Career Center also provides many online training options, where participants can learn how to create web pages, navigate Microsoft Office, and email employers and coworkers.	https://mcjvs.axstudent.com/#/category/XZ	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Metro West Computer Lab	The Metro West Computer Lab, located in Cleveland, is a free resource to all community members. Digital Navigators are available to answer questions regarding all digital literacy needs during office hours and connect residents to discounted devices, affordable internet services, and free trainings.	https://metrowestcle.org/digital-connectivity/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission	The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission's (MVRPC) Institute for Livable and Equitable Communities provides funding to organizations to support digital inclusion initiatives in the Miami Valley region. Eligible uses of funding include broadband access, device access, digital skill building, digital navigators, and technical support.	https://www.mvrpc.org/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners	The Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners provides one-on-one support and digital skills workshops for residents involved in their Workforce and Reentry programs. The Board also provides funding to housing authorities, K-12 schools, libraries, and nonprofits to support digital inclusion activities across the county.	https://thejobcenter.org/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Montgomery County Educational Service Center	The Montgomery County Educational Service Center (MCESC) provides digital skills courses and technical support to educators across southwest Ohio. Previously, MCESC had supported device donation and wifi access for students across member districts over the pandemic.	https://www.mcesc.org/	X							
National Church Residences	National Church Residences (NCR) Digital Engagement Strategy includes providing residents digital skills courses and supporting access to affordable, high-speed internet. Past programming has included providing devices and accessories to residences as well.	https://www.nationalchurchresidences.org/	X	X		X				
National Center for Urban Solutions	The National Center for Urban Solutions (NCUS) provides certified job training, workplace readiness, and career coaching to assist job seekers to obtain, retain, or upgrade employment. Training includes resume development, computer basics, and other digital skills topics. NCUS is an Ohio to Work partner organization.	https://ncusolutions.org/workforce-development/	X							
Northstar Digital Literacy Program	Offered through all of Ohio's public library systems, Northstar Digital Literacy defines the basic skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online and provides online, self-guided modules to assess individuals' ability to perform tasks based on these skills. Standards and modules encompass essential computer skills, essential software skills, and using technology in daily life.	See your local public library website	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission	The Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission's (NOCAC) Digital Navigation Program assists clients to gain skills and resources to succeed in a technology-driven world. NOCAC digital navigators work with clients to improve digital skills, access affordable home internet plans, and access affordable devices.	https://nocac.org/financial-empowerment/financial-empowerment-continuum/	X		X					

Ohio Department of Development
BroadbandOhio

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Justice-Involved Individuals	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Veterans	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Oak Hill Collaborative	Oak Hill Collaborative (OHC) serves Ohio's northern Appalachian counties, including Mahoning and Trumbull counties. OHC's Digital Advantage Initiative provides critical resources for closing the digital divide in a one-stop shop in this otherwise under-resourced region. OHC offers a Makerspace/Hackerspace, technical support, free computer classes and workshops, discounted refurbished devices, ACP enrollment support, and Digital Navigator services.	https://oakhillcollaborative.org/	X		X			X		
OCHIN	OCHIN is a nonprofit leader in equitable health care innovation and a trusted partner to a growing national partner network, supporting access to care for systemically underserved communities. As Statewide Telehealth Administrator, OCHIN will help administrators in 10 districts successfully implement telehealth programs in their school buildings. OCHIN will also work to develop an Ohio-based behavioral health provider network to ensure access to providers for districts in areas with workforce shortages or other barriers. The partnership with OCHIN was announced in February 2023 and remains in progress.	https://ochin.org/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ODODD Internet Assistance Project	To meet Ohio's Technology First priorities, ODODD is empowering people with developmental disabilities and their families to explore the use of technology. The Internet Assistance Project provides funding to eligible county boards of developmental disabilities to support the boards in providing internet assistance to people with developmental disabilities.	https://dodd.ohio.gov/about-us/resources/tech-first/Internet+Assistance+Project	X	X	X	X		X		
ODRC Behavioral Health & Medical Operations	ODRC has successfully implemented telemedicine, an interactive video technology that provides specialty medical consults to Ohio prisons. This technology, the use of which improves communication and continuity of care while decreasing transportation costs, links ODRC institutions across the state and Medical Operations with the Franklin Medical Center and The Ohio State University Medical Center. ODRC is currently working toward modernizing the telehealth platform with OSU.	https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/4-medical-services		X				X		
ODRC Medicaid Pre-Release Enrollment Program (MPREP)	ODRC, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Medicaid, has developed the Medicaid Pre-Release Enrollment Program (MPREP) to eligible incarcerated individuals in Medicaid before their release from prison. Individuals eligible for pre-release care coordination are assigned a Care Manager by their Managed Care Organization (MCO). The MCO Care Manager will request to schedule a video or teleconference with the member 7-14 days before release to develop a transition plan (i.e., schedule doctor's appointments in the community, provide access to transportation, connect the member to other community services, etc.).	https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/4-medical-services	X			X		X		
ODRC Office of Reentry	The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) is dedicated to the mission of reducing recidivism among those they touch and the vision of reducing crime in Ohio. The Office of Reentry strives to connect individuals with communities, programs, and services to facilitate successful reintegration and has largely transitioned to electronic, web-based resources that require connectivity, devices, and digital skills to navigate.	https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/2-reentry-services/reentry-services						X		
ODRC Workforce Development	The Office of Workforce Development, under the purview of the Ohio Central School System (OCSS) within the Office of Holistic Services of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), collaborates with various state agencies and private sector businesses to offer training and education credentials in transferrable job skills that provide work opportunities to restored citizens, as well as employment opportunities for incarcerated adults.	https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/3-education-and-training/workforce-development						X		

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Ohio Connectivity Champions	Powered by the Management Council, Ohio Connectivity Champions work to remove barriers to internet access for families. Efforts include ensuring Ohioans have home internet access for online learning, telehealth, job seeking and applying, and skills development; helping school districts with deployment and development of connectivity programs; and coordinating with stakeholders, including the Ohio Department of Education, libraries, digital equity coalitions, and Ohio's Information Technology Centers.	https://www.ohio-k12.help/connectivity-champions/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ohio Department of Administrative Services	Ohio's Website Accessibility policy establishes minimum website accessibility requirements for information provided on public-facing State of Ohio websites.	https://das.ohio.gov/technology-and-strategy/policies/it-09					X			X
Ohio Department of Aging	Ohio's 2023-2026 State Plan on Aging prioritizes strengthening community conditions, including access to technology and broadband, to support healthy aging among Ohioans. Broadband access, affordability, and digital skills training are also listed as key strategies to improve social connectedness among older adults.	https://aging.ohio.gov/about-us/reports-and-data/ohios-state-plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (ODODD) Technology First Initiative	Ohio's Technology First Taskforce is an initiative to ensure that people with developmental disabilities have increased opportunities to live, work, and thrive in their home and communities through state-of-the-art planning, innovative technology and supports that focus on their talents, interests, and skills. The main priority of the Technology First initiative is to increase the use of innovative technology solutions within service delivery and operations for people with developmental disabilities.	https://dodd.ohio.gov/about-us/resources/tech-first/tech-first	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) Ohio Central School System	The Ohio Central School System (OCSS), housed within the Ohio Department of Corrections (ODRC), supports incarcerated adults with education, tech trade certifications, apprenticeships, and employability.	https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/3-education-and-training/overview/education-and-training	X					X		
Ohio Educational Technology Agencies	Ohio's eight Educational Technology Agencies (Ed Techs) provide services that optimize the use of classroom technologies to improve student and school staff performance. Ohio Ed Tech services are particularly targeted to help Ohio educators meet and exceed state academic and technology performance standards, state report card requirements, and state professional development goals. Ohio Ed Tech agencies are CET PBS, NWOET (Northwest Ohio Educational Technology), SOITA (Southwestern Ohio Instructional Technology Association), PBS Western Reserve, WGTE Public Media, WOSU Classroom, WOUB Learning Lab, and ideastream public media.	https://sites.google.com/a/soita.org/ohio-ed-techs/home	X							
Ohio Housing Finance Agency	Each year, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency awards tax credits to developers, scored according to a federally required Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), to build high-quality affordable housing. The 2022-2023 QAP requires developers seeking tax credits to install broadband infrastructure in their developments. Residents must have access to broadband services in their units.	https://ohiohome.org/news/blog/september-2021/broadband.aspx	X							
Ohio State Health Improvement Plan	Ohio's State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) is a tool to strengthen state and local efforts to improve health, well-being, and economic vitality in Ohio. With the long-term goal of ensuring Ohioans achieve their full health potential, the SHIP takes a comprehensive approach to achieving equity and addressing the many factors that shape our health, including housing, poverty, education, and trauma.	https://odh.ohio.gov/about-us/sha-ship/state-health-improvement-plan	X	X		X			X	
Ohio's Broadband & 5G Workforce Strategy	Ohio's Broadband & 5G Workforce strategy outlines a plan for industry career awareness and creating more training and education programs in the state.	https://broadband.ohio.gov/explore-broadband/strengthening-ohios-broadband-5g-workforce	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Ohio's Public Libraries	Ohio's 251 independent local public library systems offer fast, free public internet access and digital skills training through the Northstar Digital Literacy program. Additionally, Ohio's public libraries often offer device lending programs, in-person digital skills training, and technical support.	https://library.ohio.gov/using-the-library/find-an-ohio-library/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OhioMeansJobs	OhioMeansJobs helps Ohioans find jobs, learn career skills, meet the requirements of government benefits and more on their webpage and at Job Centers across Ohio. OhioMeansJobs offer resources to help specific groups with their job and career needs, including older adults, restored citizens, and military service members	https://ohiomeansjobs.ohio.gov/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Olivet Housing & Community Development Corporation	Olivet Housing and Community Development Corporation (OHCDC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of disadvantaged individuals and groups by providing programming and investment into enhancing their social and economic condition. OHCDC's Neighborhood Collaboration for Competitive Employment Status (NeCCESS) Initiative provides free and low-cost community access to education and job skills training in current and emerging fields.	https://www.olivetcdc.org/necess	X	X					X	X
Options Plus Social Service Pantry	Options Plus Social Service Pantry offers access to internet hotspots or laptops with internet access at their office to all community members they serve. The pantry also provides digital skills and safety courses.	https://www.optionspluspantry.com	X	X	X		X		X	
PCs for People	PCs for People is a national nonprofit social enterprise working to get low-cost quality computers and internet into the homes of individuals, families, and nonprofits with low income. By recycling and then refurbishing computers, PCs for People provides a valuable service to businesses, families, and the planet by keeping computers out of landfills and refurbishing them to advance digital inclusion. PCs for People in Ohio also provides digital skills training and technical support.	https://www.pcsforpeople.org/	X							
PNC Fairfax Connection	PNC Fairfax Connection offers services, programming, cultural programs, career opportunities and more throughout the greater Cleveland area. They provide in-person digital skills training sessions and "Tech Time," where individuals can ask a staff member questions on any device or software programs used at PNC Fairfax Connection.	https://www.pncfairfaxconnection.com/	X						X	
Relink	Relink.org is a free, user-friendly online database of community resources providing connections to reentry, addiction recovery, housing, employment, food, human trafficking, and many other resources throughout all 88 Ohio counties. The database features over 13,000 organizations listed on the database providing services for those in need.		X		X		X	X	X	
RET3	RET3 is a nonprofit organization dedicated to refurbishing, reusing, and recycling computer and electronic equipment while educating and training recipients and the transitional workforce to repair, upgrade, and use computers. RET3 helps to close the digital divide and creates a more productive and technologically adept workforce in northeast Ohio.	https://ret3.org/	X							
Salvation Army, Cincinnati	The Salvation Army in Cincinnati offers public Wi-Fi, computer access, and technical support at all its locations. They also currently offer an after-school digital skills program at their computer lab for youth.	https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org/greater-cincinnati/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Scranton Road Ministries Community Development Corporation	Scranton Road Ministries Community Development Corporation (SRMCDC) is a non-profit organization focused on representing and investing in Cleveland's youth and families and promoting community-based economic development. SRMCDC offers several programs dedicated to revitalizing Cleveland, including a Legal Clinic, an Academic Enrichment Program (AEP), Afterschool Enrichment Program (ASEP), and Youth Jobs Partnership (YJP) Initiative.	https://scrantonroadministries.org/programs	X						X	X

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Southeast Ohio Broadband Cooperative	The Southeast Ohio Broadband Cooperative was formed in April 2020 in response to the pressing need for broadband access and the significant lack of service in rural communities. The Cooperative offers discounts for specific covered populations, service to community anchor institutions, and access to devices and digital skills classes.	https://www.seobc.us/	X	X	X		X		X	
St. Mary Development Corporation	St. Mary Development is a faith-based non-profit building affordable communities for older adults in Southwest Ohio. St. Mary's Service Coordinators introduce training opportunities on the latest technologies to improve residents' lives: iPad classes from the local library, an app that reads news stories aloud, or a voice-activated device to remind a resident to take their medications. They also offer educational programs on topics like personal finance, physical health, and emotional well-being.	https://www.stmarydevelopment.org/technology	X	X		X	X		X	
Step Forward	Step Forward provides several professional development programs to Northeast Ohioans, including Microsoft Office Software Training, Customer Service/Computer Based Training, and a Digital Connection workshop. In Digital Connection workshops, participants receive a refurbished computer and learn skills to assist them in installing and setting up their personal computers in their own home. Instruction includes proper internet usage, anti-virus software, and how to combat malware.	https://www.stepforwardtoday.org/professional-development	X	X					X	
Talbert House	Talbert House is empowering children, adults, and families to live healthy, safe, and productive lives in the Greater Cincinnati area. The agency's network of services focuses on prevention, assessment, treatment, and reintegration. The agency offers refurbished devices and training programs to support workforce development and youth employment in the region.	https://www.talberthouse.org/help/	X					X		
Tech Corps	Tech Corps offers free summer technology programs in Central and Northeast Ohio for students in elementary, middle, and high school. Students can delve into interactive STEM-related activities, such as App/Web Development, Coding, Robotics, Digital Animation, and 3D Printing. Tech Corps has served more than 23,000 students through 995 programs in the past 12 years.	https://techcorps.org/	X						X	
TechCred	The TechCred program helps Ohioans learn new skills and helps employers build a stronger workforce with the skills needed in today's technology-infused economy. Eligible credentials must be industry-recognized, technology-focused, short term, and responsible. Technology-focused credentials prioritize the development of digital skills and include those related to software development or utilization, cyber security, broadband and 5G technology, and other emerging fields.	https://techcred.ohio.gov/home	X							
The Centers	The Centers El Barrio Workforce Development Program offers Northstar Digital Skills Training and certificates, Google Information Technology Support Professional track in English and Spanish, and workforce training as part of Ohio's pre-apprenticeship program to some of Cleveland's most under-served.	https://thecentersohio.org/services/training-and-job-search/	X	X					X	X
The GRIT Project	The GRIT Project (GRIT) is a collaborative approach to building a high-demand workforce and stimulating economic growth. The coalition leverages local, state, and federal dollars by together organizations like OhioMeansJobs (OMJ), common pleas and drug courts, K-12 school systems, community colleges & universities, economic development agencies (JobsOhio/APEG), Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services (ODJFS), drug treatment providers, businesses, and other non-profit agencies. GRIT offers remote workspaces, remote work workshops, and workforce training opportunities to GRIT program users.	https://www.gritohio.org/	X		X			X	X	

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The MetroHealth System	MetroHealth's Institute for H.O.P.E. convened DigitalC, Dollar Bank, AT&T, and other community partners to connect up to 1,000households in Cleveland to affordable, reliable home internet and to provide these households with devices to connect. MetroHealth worked with DigitalC to place two internet antennas, expanding coverage to nearby neighborhoods. For about $20 per month, residents in the Greater Clark Fulton neighborhood can receive access to this internet, and with a grant from Dollar Bank, qualifying low-income residents are eligible for further subsidies to reduce this price to $10/month. MetroHealth also utilizes the Unite Us platform to connect patients with broadband resources, among other social services.	https://www.metrohealth.org/institute-for-hope	X	X		X	X		X	X
Thea Bowman Center	The Thea Bowman Center, located in the Mt. Pleasant community of southeast Cleveland, offers several programs promoting health and well-being to its residents. The Thea Bowman Center is a Northstar Digital Literacy Technology Training Center, where students can learn the functions of a computer, computer programs, internet, email, and safely surfing the web.	https://www.theabowmancenter.org/copy-of-g-e-d			X					
Towards Employment	Towards Employment is a leading community-based workforce development organization based in Cleveland that provides free training programs and resources to help connect people to careers, including reentry services, family support, and financial planning. Towards Employment's ACCESS to Manufacturing Careers training program supplies participants with industry knowledge, technical skills, and career-readiness skills.	https://www.towardsemployment.org/	X				X			
United Way of Greater Cincinnati	The United Way of Greater Cincinnati has an extensive network of public and private partners, as well as non-traditional partners like faith-based organizations and other grassroots groups, in the region, and expertise in convening stakeholders to improve outcomes across the organization's key impact areas. As a newcomer to the digital inclusion space, the United Way is working to deploy its resources in support of digital inclusion, building a coalition and establishing itself as a key voice in these efforts. The United Way currently offers digital skills programs for community members and was a recipient of an FY 2023 National Competitive Outreach Program Grant for ACP outreach from the FCC.	https://www.uwgc.org/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center	University Hospitals is working to address the digital divide by screening patients in limited primary care settings for broadband access. Using the Unite Us platform, providers can connect patients with broadband resources, among other social services. University Hospitals also received a FY 2023 National Competitive Outreach Program Grant for ACP outreach from the FCC.	https://www.uhhospitals.org/	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
University of Cincinnati School of Information Technology	The University's School of Information Technology offers digital skills workshops and refurbished laptops to residents of the local community at no or low cost. Workshop topics include privacy and security, applying for jobs online, and getting onto virtual meetings, among others.	https://cech.uc.edu/schools/it.html	X				X			
University Settlement Magic Johnson Community Empowerment Center	University Settlement's Magic Johnson Community Empowerment Center (MJCEC), located in Slavic Village, provides access to resources and programming that educate, empower, and strengthen individuals through the innovative use of technology. The MJCEC regularly hosts classes aimed at helping community members of all ages to learn about the various uses of technology and finding ways to use technology to improve their lives personally, academically, and professionally. In addition to holding classes on-site, classes and tech support were provided at four local senior high-rise apartments so residents could learn how to better utilize technology in their everyday life.	https://www.universitysettlement.net/community-programs	X	X		X			X	X

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Uptown Consortium, Inc.	Uptown Consortium, Inc.'s (UCI) Avondale Digital Inclusion Project is the result of partnership with the University of Cincinnati and the Avondale Development Corporation to identify barriers to digital access in Avondale and develop strategies to address to issues. UCI now offers free digital skills workshops and one-on-one support to all residents of Avondale.		X	X					X	
Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio	The Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio serves 10,000 African Americans annually through free career pathway training programs, financial planning, immediate job placement opportunities, and workshops. Programs and services such as Employment Connections (EC), Solid Opportunities for Advancement and Retention (SOAR), Comprehensive Case Management & Employment Services (CCMES), the Financial Empowerment Center (FEC), and Urban Champions train participants for in-demand jobs skills, including digital skills. The League also received a FY 2023 National Competitive Outreach Program Grant for ACP outreach from the FCC.	https://www.ulgso.org/	X						X	
VANTAGE Workforce Solutions	VANTAGE Aging is a non-profit organization located in Central, Southwest, and Northeast Ohio that is dedicated to promoting a positive perspective on aging by providing programs to support the needs of older adults wishing to live independently with dignity. In collaboration with the Ohio Department of Aging, VANTAGE Workforce Solutions is addressing the digital divide through their Shrinking the Digital Divide for Older Ohioans pilot project. The program provides digital devices and personalized, one-on-one coaching sessions from trained digital navigators.	https://vantageaging.org/programs-and-services/workforce-solutions/	X	X						
Verizon Community Forward Learning Centers	JumpStart, partnered with Verizon brought state-of-the art technology and STEM programming to local Cleveland communities by opening two Verizon Community Forward Learning Centers. The Center provides programs covering every level of technology literacy, so people of all ages can learn new digital skills.	https://communityforwardcle.com/	X	X					X	
Warren County Board of Commissioners	In March 2023, Warren County's Board of Commisioners and altafiber announced a new partnership to bring high-speed internet access to approximately 52,000 addresses over the next 3-4 years. Upon completion of the project, 100% of Warren County's single-family residences will have access to high-speed internet. altafiber's Smart City organization, UniCity, will also provide the county with up to $200,000 of funding to construct public Wi-Fi improvements, such as providing Wi-Fi in public parks or on public transit.	N/A	X		X					

Asset Name	Description	Link to Asset's website (when available)	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Veterans	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Wilberforce University	Wilberforce University was awarded a $2,066,822 grant from the NTIA as a part of the Connecting Minority Communities (CMC) Pilot Program. The project activities will expand broadband internet access on campus; create hybrid classrooms by upgrading the equipment and devices available for student and teacher use; create new IT positions to support technological upgrades; provide Chromebooks to students; and open the campus library to members of the community where they can utilize campus broadband services.	https://wilberforce.edu/	X		X	X			X	X
Young Adult Resource Center (Cleveland)	Young Adult Resource Center is a drop-in center for 14–24-year-olds in Downtown Cleveland who need employment and career planning assistance. The YRC has a computer lab with internet access and provides workshops for resume writing, interviewing, professional etiquette, and time management.	https://www.facebook.com/yrccleveland/	X						X	
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) is a nonprofit workforce development organization based in Cleveland that prepares teens and young adults to become economically self-sufficient contributors to building Northeast Ohio's educated, skilled, and inclusive workforce. Through Y.O.U., employment and school programs, nearly 5,000 teens and young adults are annually prepared for career pathways.	https://www.youcle.org/	X		X	X			X	X
YWCA Dayton	YWCA Dayton supports women and children through direct service programming, community outreach and education, and advocacy and public policy support. Funded by YWCA USA via grant funding from Google, YWCA Dayton's Strive program empowers women who have experienced homelessness or domestic violence by building on digital and workforce skills.	https://www.ywcadayton.org/women-build-new-skills-with-ywca-dayton-strive/	X						X	X

9.2   Internet Service Providers Participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) for Home Internet[1]

Company Name	Phone	Type of Service	$0 with ACP	Discounted Device	Company URL
altafiber*	866-565-2210	Home Internet			https://www.cincinnatibell.com
Amplex Internet	419-837-5015	Home Internet			https://www.amplex.net
Armstrong Telecommunications, Inc.	800-734-1146	Home Internet			https://armstrongonewire.com
Armstrong Utilities Inc.	800-734-1146	Home Internet			https://armstrongonewire.com
AT&T	866-986-0963	Home Internet	Yes		https://www.att.com/ebb
Ayersville Telephone Company*	419-395-2222	Home Internet			https://www.ayersvillecomm.com
Bascom Mutual Telephone Company	419-937-2222	Home Internet			https://www.bascomtelephone.com
Belmont County Gig and Logan County Gig, Ohio Gig Holdings	513-375-9993	Home Internet			https://www.littlemiamigig.com
Brightspeed	833-692-7773	Home Internet			https://www.brightspeed.com
Buckeye Cablevision, Inc.	419-724-9800	Home Internet	Yes		https://www.buckeyebroadband.com
Cathect Communications, Inc	866-961-9941	Home Internet		Yes	https://www.cathectc.com
CityLink	330-335-2888	Home Internet			Https://www.wadsworthcitylink.com/
Clear Wireless, LLC	888-341-3471	Home Internet		Yes	https://clearwireless.com
Cogeco US Finance, LLC d/b/a Breezeline	888-536-9600	Home Internet	Yes		https://www.breezeline.com/
Comcast Xfinity	1800XFINITY	Home Internet	Yes		http://www.internetessentials.com/EBB
Consolidated Communications, Inc.	1-844-968-7224	Home Internet			https://www.consolidated.com
Consolidated Fiber, Inc.	800-421-5863	Home Internet			https://www.consolidated.coop/fiber/
Cox Communication	866-439-1289	Home Internet	Yes	Yes	https://www.cox.com/residential/internet/ebb.html
Crystal Broadband Networks, Inc.	877-319-0328	Home Internet			https://www.crystalbn.com
Culture Wireless	404-254-6236	Home Internet		Yes	https://culturewireless.com
DigitalC	216-777-3859	Home Internet			https://www.empowercle.org
EARTHLINK, LLC	888-327-8454	Home Internet			https://www.earthlink.net/internet/#/
ECOMOBILE, INC.	855-825-8855	Home Internet		Yes	https://ecomobile.com
Erie County Cablevision, Inc,	419-724-9800	Home Internet			https://www.buckeyebroadband.com/
FairlawnGig	330-668-3300	Home Internet			https://www.fairlawngig.net
Figgers Communication Inc.	800-223-5435	Home Internet		Yes	https://www.figgers.com/
Frontier Communications Corporation	877-847-6091	Home Internet			https://www.getfrontierfiber.com/ebb-offer
GMN Wireless Broadband	740-472-2003	Home Internet			Https://www.gmn4u.com
GR8 CONNECT CORP.	888-288-8817	Home Internet	Yes	Yes	https://www.gr8connect.net

1 Companies in OH, Universal Service Administrative Co., retrieved on 9/25/2023

Company Name	Phone	Type of Service	$0 with ACP	Discounted Device	Company URL
GreatWave Communications*	440-593-7140	Home Internet			https://www.greatwavecom.com
Hughes Network Systems, LLC	844-737-2700	Home Internet			https://www.hughesnet.com
IgLou Internet Services	502-966-3848	Home Internet			www.iglou.com
IJ Wireless	833-652-7527	Home Internet		Yes	Https://www.ijwireless.us
Imagine Networks	877-677-0001	Home Internet			https://inxfiber.com/
Integrated Path Communications LLC	888-224-6958	Home Internet	Yes		https://www.ipc-llc.com/
iZone Broadband LLC	740-625-1392	Home Internet			https://www.izonebroadband.com
JB-Nets Broadband Services	740-446-2975	Home Internet			Https://www.jbnets.com
Lingo	866-405-4646	Home Internet			https://www.lingo.com
Massillon Cable TV, Inc.	330-833-4134	Home Internet			https://www.mctvohio.com
Maxsip Telecom Corporation	866-629-7471	Home Internet		Yes	https://www.maxsiptel.com
Mediacom LLC	855-330-6918	Home Internet	Yes		https://mediacomcable.com/
Medina Fiber	330-366-2008	Home Internet	Yes		https://medina.litcommunities.net/
Mercury Broadband	800-354-4915	Home Internet			https://www.mercurybroadband.com
MetaLINK Technologies, Inc.	888-999-8002	Home Internet			https://www.metalink.net
Metro by T-Mobile	888-863-8768	Home Internet	Yes		https://www.metrobytmobile.com/benefits/affordableconnectivityprogram
MetroNet	877-407-3224	Home Internet			https://www.metroinc.com
Middle Point Home Telephone Company*	800-831-6099	Home Internet			https://www.hcinet.net
Midwest Energy Cooperative	800-492-5989	Home Internet			https://www.teammidwest.com
Nelsonville TV Cable Inc.	740-753-2686	Home Internet			http://www.nelsonvilletv.com
North Coast Wireless Communications LLC	877-647-5622	Home Internet			https://www.ncwcom.com
Ohio Transparent Telecom, Inc.	833-464-4688	Home Internet			Https://ohiott.com/
Optimum	866-203-4983	Home Internet			https://www.optimum.com/affordable-connectivity-program
PCs for People	651-354-2552	Home Internet	Yes	Yes	https://www.pcsforpeople.org
Point Broadband Fiber Holding, LLC	844-407-6468	Home Internet			https://point-broadband.com/
RAA Data Services, Inc.	330-271-9693	Home Internet			http://www.raainternet.com
Southern Ohio Communication Services, Inc.	740-947-2409	Home Internet			https://www.socs.cc
Spectrum (Charter Communications Operating, LLC)	866-980-3107	Home Internet	Yes		https://www.spectrum.net/support/internet/emergency-broadband-benefit
Spot On Networks, LLC	877-768-6687	Home Internet			Https://www.spotonnetworks.com
Springs Net	937-767-3711	Home Internet		Yes	https://www.yellow-springs.net/
Starry, Inc	888-231-9403	Home Internet	Yes		https://www.starry.com

Company Name	Phone	Type of Service	$0 with ACP	Discounted Device	Company URL
SWA Connect, LLC	866-350-0222	Home Internet		Yes	https://swaconnect.com
Sycamore Telephone Company*	419-927-6012	Home Internet			Https://syctelco.com
TDS Telecommunications Corporation	888-225-5837	Home Internet			https://www.tdstelecom.com
Telephone Service Company*	800-831-6099	Home Internet			https://www.hcinet.net
Telispire, Affinity Cellular, Club Cellular, Flex Cellular	855-893-2888	Home Internet	Yes	Yes	https://acp.affinitycellular.com/
The Arthur Telephone Company*	419-393-2233	Home Internet			Https://artelco.net/index.php
The Benton Ridge Telephone Company*	800-589-3837	Home Internet		Yes	https://www.watchcomm.net
The Chillicothe Telephone Company*	866-436-7163	Home Internet			https://www.horizonconnects.com
TM Telecomm Corp	305-471-8467	Home Internet		Yes	https://www.tmtelcomm.com
TOAST.net Internet Service	419-292-2200	Home Internet			https://www.toast.net/
U2 CONNECT NOW	844-679-0909	Home Internet			https://www.U2CONNECTNOW.COM
Verizon Wireless	800-922-0204	Home Internet			https://www.verizon.com
Viasat	855-463-9333	Home Internet			https://www.viasat.com/acp
VOLT MOBILE INC.	888-200-8923	Home Internet	Yes	Yes	https://www.govoltmobile.com
W.A.T.C.H. TV Company	800-589-3837	Home Internet		Yes	https://www.watchcomm.net
Wabash Communications	419-942-1111	Home Internet			https://www.wabash.com
Wabash*	419-942-1111	Home Internet			https://www.wabash.com
Windspeed Broadband, LLC	800-282-4650	Home Internet			https://www.windspeedbroadband.com
Windstream Communications, LLC*	866-445-8084	Home Internet			https://windstream.com/covid-relief
WOW! Internet Cable and Phone	888-530-2711	Home Internet			https://wowway.com/ebb
Zito West Holding, LLC	800-365-6988	Home Internet			zitomedia.net

Ohio Department of Development
BroadbandOhio

9.3   Community-Owned Broadband Networks

Government Entity	Network Name	Webpage	Serves Local Businesses	Serves Residents Currently	Resident Service Forthcoming
Gahanna	GahannaNet	https://www.gahanna.gov/gahanna-net/	X		
Dublin	DubLink	https://www.econdev.dublinohiousa.gov/dublink-broadband	X		X (public-private agreement with AltaFiber)
New Albany	New Albany Net		X		
Miami Valley Communications Council (MVCC)	GATEway Public Fiber Network	https://www.mvcc.net/mvcc-gateway-fiber-network-updates/	X		
Fairlawn	FairlawnGig	https://www.fairlawngig.net/	X	X	
Hudson	Hudson Velocity	https://www.hudsonvelocity.com/	X	X	
Wadsworth	Wadsworth CityLink	https://www.wadsworthcitylink.com/	X	X	
Columbus			X		
Hilliard	HiFiO	https://hilliardohio.gov/economic-development-hifio/	X	X	
Upper Arlington			X		
33 Corridor COG		https://www.hq33.biz/fiber	X		
Grove City			X		
Marysville, Union County, Marysville Schools (COG)		https://www.hq33.biz/fiber	X		X (public-private agreement with NKTelco)
MVECA (ITC) (Miami Valley Educational Computer Association) - Serves Clark, Clinton, Greene, Highland, Fayette, Madison, Montgomery, and Ross		https://www.mveca.org/	Serves schools and governments		
SWOCA -COG (ITC) (Southwest Ohio Computer Association) – serves Hamilton, Clermont, Butler, Warren, Preble, and Clinton		https://www.swoca.net/	Serves schools, government, and libraries		
Medina Port Authority	Medina County Fiber Network	https://www.medinacountyfibernetwork.com/	X		X (public-private agreement with Lit Communities)
Westerville	WēConnect Fiber Network	https://weconnectdatacenter.com/connectivity/	X		

Vision and Pillars of the 2023 Ohio Broadband Strategy

BroadbandOhio

Bring reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to every Ohioan, in their homes and communities

A1. Invest in last mile broadband infrastructure deployment

Bring reliable, affordable high-speed internet to all Ohioans via a competitive grant process

A2. Expand middle mile network to facilitate last mile deployment

Extend the reach and accessibility of middle mile networks, including Ohio's OARnet network, to help facilitate last mile deployment, increase competition, and improve affordability

A3. Remove barriers to deployment & maximize asset reuse

Reduce cost barriers / streamline permitting processes (e.g., railroad crossing) and leverage existing state and local assets to support infrastructure deployment

Promote the creation of world-class broadband networks throughout the state, via the use of best-in-class technologies

B1. Keep pace with changing technology and demand

Ensure Ohio's broadband infrastructure always meets the highest standards of reliability and scalability through efficient upgrades and by upholding standards in grants and permitting processes

B2. Connect community anchor institutions to serve as digital hubs

Empower CAIs as local hubs for connectivity, digital inclusion and innovation through access to at least Gigabit symmetrical service

Enable participation in the modern economy

C1. Expand telehealth access and usage via targeted programming

Expand telehealth access and usage through targeted initiatives, including further linking Ohio's health systems to schools and expanding current programing to additional health priorities

C2. Expand access to remote education opportunities

Ensure all students and teachers have access to reliable internet & internet-capable devices to access digital learning at home & school

C3. Support Ohio's farmers to improve productivity by enabling precision agriculture uptake

Enhance agricultural productivity by enabling precision agriculture uptake through identification of use cases, strategic partnerships, and expanded broadband access

C4. Enable safe and easy movement of people and goods via foundational investments to enable intelligent transportation systems

Ensure robust highway broadband access to support the deployment of smart corridors across Ohio in partnership with the Department of Transportation

Empower Ohioans through training, device access and digital skills

D1. Support workforce development initiatives that connect Ohioans to broadband deployment and digital jobs

Partner with universities & workforce development orgs to build the broadband network, upskill workers for digital jobs, and enable remote work opportunities

D2. Accelerate adoption, usage, and economic empowerment via Regional Digital Inclusion Alliances

Partner with RDIAs as they engage local communities in driving Digital Opportunity via funding for programs that promote broadband adoption, devices access, and digital skills training

Ohio **Department of Development**
BroadbandOhio

9.5 ACP Enrollment by County

County Name	Total Subscribers	County Name	Total Subscribers	County Name	Total Subscribers	County Name	Total Subscribers
Adams County	2,966	Geauga County	2,629	Miami County	7,547	Vinton County	1,073
Allen County	11,615	Greene County	11,189	Monroe County	539	Warren County	9,394
Ashland County	2,083	Guernsey County	3,882	Montgomery County	63,421	Washington County	2,832
Ashtabula County	10,286	Hamilton County	79,166	Morgan County	1,033	Wayne County	4,667
Athens County	4,579	Hancock County	5,357	Morrow County	1,915	Williams County	2,576
Auglaize County	1,938	Hardin County	2,572	Muskingum County	10,374	Wood County	8,020
Belmont County	3,200	Harrison County	959	Noble County	751	Wyandot County	1,352
Brown County	3,758	Henry County	1,460	Ottawa County	2,374		
Butler County	30,339	Highland County	4,263	Paulding County	879		
Carroll County	1,563	Hocking County	2,507	Perry County	3,005		
Champaign County	2,662	Holmes County	1,012	Pickaway County	4,383		
Clark County	15,692	Huron County	5,146	Pike County	3,325		
Clermont County	11,875	Jackson County	3,712	Portage County	10,534		
Clinton County	3,834	Jefferson County	4,078	Preble County	2,769		
Columbiana County	6,651	Knox County	4,068	Putnam County	833		
Coshocton County	3,376	Lake County	14,320	Richland County	14,426		
Crawford County	5,173	Lawrence County	6,002	Ross County	7,852		
Cuyahoga County	134,029	Licking County	14,257	Sandusky County	5,099		
Darke County	3,606	Logan County	3,544	Scioto County	10,527		
Defiance County	2,641	Lorain County	26,099	Seneca County	4,643		
Delaware County	5,819	Lucas County	39,432	Shelby County	3,535		
Erie County	5,770	Madison County	2,592	Stark County	31,440		
Fairfield County	10,524	Mahoning County	23,322	Summit County	52,465		
Fayette County	3,297	Marion County	7,900	Trumbull County	23,116		
Franklin County	110,302	Medina County	5,817	Tuscarawas County	7,396		
Fulton County	2,066	Meigs County	1,406	Union County	2,271		
Gallia County	1,667	Mercer County	1,708	Van Wert County	2,063		

9.6   Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes

Outcome Area	Existing Efforts	Digital Opportunity Measurable Objective	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Economic & workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes	Ohio's Broadband & 5G Workforce Strategy	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	TechCred	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Individual Microcredential Assistance Program	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Outcome Area	Existing Efforts	Digital Opportunity Measurable Objective	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Economic & workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes	Individual Microcredential Assistance Program	Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	High School Tech Internship Pilot program	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ohio Central School System and Workforce Development	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.							X	
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).							X	
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.							X	
	Ohio Means Jobs	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Outcome Area	Existing Efforts	Digital Opportunity Measurable Objective	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Economic & workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes	Ohio Means Jobs	Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational outcomes	Ohio Connectivity Champions	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.	X		X		X	X	X	X
	Future Forward Ohio	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X		X		X	X	X	X

Outcome Area	Existing Efforts	Digital Opportunity Measurable Objective	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Educational outcomes	Future Forward Ohio	Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.	X		X		X	X	X	X
	Ohio Educational Technology Agencies	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.	X		X		X	X	X	X
	Ohio Central School System	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.							X	
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).							X	
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.							X	
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.							X	

Outcome Area	Existing Efforts	Digital Opportunity Measurable Objective	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Health outcomes	Ohio State Health Improvement Plan	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	School-Based Telehealth Projects	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X		X		X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X		X		X	X	X	X
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.	X		X		X	X	X	X
	Other Statewide Telehealth Resources	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.						X		
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).						X		
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.						X		
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.						X		

Department of Development
BroadbandOhio

Outcome Area	Existing Efforts	Digital Opportunity Measurable Objective	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Health outcomes	Other Statewide Telehealth Resources	Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.							X	
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.							X	
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.							X	
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.							X	
Civic engagement	Ohio Secretary of State	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Delivery of other essential services	Ohio Department of Administrative Services	All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ohio Department of Aging	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.		X						
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).		X						
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.		X						
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.		X						
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.		X						
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.		X						

Outcome Area	Existing Efforts	Digital Opportunity Measurable Objective	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Delivery of other essential services	Ohio Department of Aging	Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.		X						
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.		X						
	Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.					X			
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).					X			
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.					X			
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.					X			
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.					X			
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.					X			
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.					X			
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.					X			
	Ohio Housing Finance Agency	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Outcome Area	Existing Efforts	Digital Opportunity Measurable Objective	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Rural Residents	Veterans	Individuals w/ Disabilities	Justice-Involved Individuals	Racial & Ethnic Minorities	English Language Learners
Delivery of other essential services	Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services	Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to at least 100/20 Mbps reliable internet from 83% to 100% by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of ACP-eligible Ohioans with access to a $30/month plan from 41% to 100%, regardless of the status of ACP funding availability, by 2030.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the percentage of Ohioans with access to enough devices to meet household needs from 66% to 83% by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ohio Public Library Information Network	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state from nine (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase statewide ACP enrollment from 54% to 60%.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Increase the number of digital inclusion grants awarded by the state to organizations or agencies that provide digital skills training and technical support from six (Digital Inclusion Pilot Project grants) to nine by year five.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		All organizations participating in an RDIA commit to adopting a web accessibility policy.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Northstar Digital Literacy Program	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	FINDER Tool	Increase the number of Ohioans engaged by digital opportunity outreach efforts from a baseline of 6,000 by 10% annually.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X