

Fulfilling Oklahoma's Digital Promise

Digital Equity Plan



OKLAHOMA
Broadband Office



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Oklahoma Broadband Office

Digital Equity Plan

1 Executive Summary

In cities and counties across Oklahoma, people are connecting to and using the internet in a variety of ways to engage in the digital world. From the high school student accessing an advanced online course to the job seeker completing an online training program in pursuit of a promotion to the senior citizen with limited mobility having a telehealth appointment, the application and use of the internet to positively benefit Oklahomans is evident. Having the devices and skills to safely navigate affordable, high-speed internet for all Oklahomans unlocks benefits for individuals and communities in every part of the state.

Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet is not uniform across the state of Oklahoma. Rural, urban, and tribal communities do not have equitable access to digital resources such as telehealth, online education and workforce development resources, or even ag-tech advancements. In alignment with the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program which sets a goal of 100% internet infrastructure availability, this Digital Equity Plan offers a roadmap for how to bridge gaps in utilization and capitalize on state, regional, and local partnerships to fulfill the mission of the Oklahoma Broadband Office (OBO) to bring affordable, reliable high-speed internet to communities across the state by June 30, 2028.

Specifically, the Digital Equity Plan addresses internet adoption and use to ensure that Oklahomans are able to use affordable, reliable high-speed internet safely and effectively. By focusing on key goals, strategies, and objectives to ensure accessibility, affordability, internet safety, digital skills-building, and device access, the OBO will achieve its goals of digital equity.

This Digital Equity Plan describes the strategies, objectives, and actions that the OBO will take to fulfill Oklahoma's Digital Promise: that Oklahomans can access and use affordable internet to advance health care, education, business, agriculture, public safety, and community development. These are aligned with the three goals of this plan:

- **Affordability.** All Oklahomans, regardless of income, can subscribe to the internet and participate in online programs and resources with high-quality devices.
- **Access.** All Oklahomans have the ability to access online resources and navigate digital opportunities safely.
- **Advancement.** All Oklahomans will have increased ability to access online resources and training in ways that advance their health, education, and economic opportunities.

These goals provide the framework by which Oklahoma will pursue digital equity for all in partnership with tribal nations, community anchor institutions, government agencies, nonprofits, and others.



2 Introduction and Vision for Digital Equity

The OBO understands the impact that being digitally connected has on individuals and communities across the state. Ensuring that all Oklahomans can access, afford, and use the internet in ways that improve their economic, health, and social well-being is key to ensuring thriving communities. High-speed internet is no longer a luxury for some but essential for all, as individuals, businesses, local and state governments, and communities use connectivity to access information, resources, and services. As technology evolves, the requirements for engaging with that technology also evolve. Groups already experiencing inequity fall further behind due to compounding changes, while those who can adapt are presented with new technology that helps pull them further ahead. By addressing this “digital divide,” Oklahomans will have the information, technology, and skills to remain competitive and to participate in society to the fullest.

To best meet the digital needs of Oklahomans, the Oklahoma Legislature, in partnership with Governor Kevin Stitt, created the Oklahoma Broadband Office (OBO) in 2022 with an **ambitious and important goal of bringing reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to Oklahomans**. The office, with oversight from the Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board (OBGB) and advice from Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council (OBEC), is “putting the right people, policies and procedures in place to ensure [the] mission is met in an open, fair, and efficient manner.”¹ This Digital Equity Plan is developed in alignment with state statute and the goals of the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity and describes Oklahoma’s coordinated efforts to assess and reduce digital inequity across the state.

A key aspect to the vision of the OBO’s digital equity plan is the collaboration with the state’s 39 tribes, as most unserved and underserved locations identified in the state are on tribal land (approximately 81% of unserved and 80% of underserved). Many of the same concerns and barriers identified in stakeholder engagement activities were also raised during the OBO’s tribal consultations. Both groups of participants expressed the desire for digital skills training, access to digital navigators at their local community anchor institutions, improved infrastructure, and more affordable service.

The digital equity plan focuses on increasing access, adoption, and use of high-speed internet for all Oklahomans. The barriers, assets, and data discussed are disaggregated by covered population. Covered populations include:

- Individuals who live in covered households (household in which the income of which for the most recently completed year is not more than 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level);
- Aging individuals (60 and above);
- Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility;
- Veterans;
- Individuals with disabilities;

¹ Oklahoma Broadband Office. <https://oklahoma.gov/broadband/office/newsroom/the-oklahoman--thousands-in-oklahoma-don-t-have-internet--projec.html#:~:text=The%20Oklahoma%20Broadband%20Office%20was,but%20we%20will%20meet%20it>.

- Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners, and have low levels of literacy;
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group;
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

This plan addresses those barriers and acts as a roadmap for digital equity in Oklahoma. The programs, assets, strategies, and actions described support the work of the OBO, its partners, and stakeholders across the state who are working together to ***fulfill Oklahoma's digital promise.***

2.1 Vision

Vision

Oklahomans will have access to the information, resources, and skills needed to participate in society to the fullest and to remain competitive in a digital marketplace.

Oklahoma's Digital Promise (Mission)

Oklahoma will close the digital divide by encouraging and facilitating partnerships across sectors, offering targeted grants to communities and organizations who address digital equity gaps, and by supporting communities' digital equity planning and programming.

2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes

Broadband intersects and supports much of the work across local, regional, and statewide efforts to improve the quality of life for Oklahomans, whether regarding health, education, workforce training, or civic engagement.

The OBO's first annual report and the Oklahoma Broadband Plan, released in 2022, emphasized the importance of broadband as a cornerstone for individuals and communities and identifies seven key areas where broadband is required to function fully in society. These areas included:

- Education
- Work and workforce development
- Health care
- Emergency services
- Economic development needs
- Social services
- Interpersonal connectivity

This plan also describes the OBO's current and future funding opportunities and efforts to ensure affordable, high-speed internet is available throughout the state.

Digital equity work intersects with many of the initiatives and strategic priorities of agencies and partners in Oklahoma. This work also aligns with ongoing collaboration between tribal nations and the state of Oklahoma. The sections below highlight existing and planned efforts of the OBO partners and collaborators in the state.

"Lack of high-speed internet access was highlighted during the pandemic in many ways, including students who were forced to distance-learn. Also, without high-speed internet access, much important information and news fails to reach individuals and households ... specifically during severe weather events and the aftermath of natural disasters."

- Oklahoma senior during focus group

A. Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes

Several economic and workforce development agencies and organizations are working across Oklahoma to develop the skilled workforce needed to attract and retain jobs in communities across the state. Most recently, Governor Kevin Stitt signed Senate Bill 621, a bill that created the Oklahoma Workforce Commission and tasked it with coordination and funding efforts for programs that will train a skilled workforce.

The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development houses Oklahoma Works, “an initiative designed to increase the wealth of all Oklahomans by facilitating the quality employment necessary for workers to increase wealth and improve the availability of highly skilled talent for business and industry.”² The Launch Oklahoma initiative has set an ambitious goal to have 70% of the state’s workforce (25-64 years old) have education or training beyond high school by the year 2025. Two of the main objectives of the initiative are (1) integrating and using workforce and economic development data to inform policy, track progress, and measure success; and (2) building partnerships between local industry and education at the regional level. These align with key goals and programs of the State Digital Equity Plan, which focuses on partnerships and technology as a key driver of upskilling, career advancement, and economic opportunity for Oklahomans.

"[It's important to think about connecting the last acre. Many small family farms are using direct sales to make money which relies on technology.]"

- Stillwater listening tour participant

Additionally, the state’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act plan identifies key sectors to target for employment growth, including Aerospace and Defense, Agribusiness and Bioscience, Renewable and Traditional Energy, Transportation and Logistics, Automotive, and Manufacturing. Accessing and succeeding in these jobs requires increased levels of digital skills.

The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education is focused on developing a “world-class workforce” by providing skills and training services to education institutions across the state, including technology centers.³ Oklahoma has 29 technology centers on 60 campuses that

“serve high school and adult learners with specialized career training in more than 90 instructional areas.” In their strategic plan, they outline key education attainment goals, including expanding enrollment across the system by 25% to increase learning opportunities for career and technology training. They also set goals around partnership, looking to enhance education/industry partnerships and find new student work-based learning opportunities.

These workforce and economic development goals and strategies at the state and local level align with many of the strategies and objectives of this Digital Equity Plan. Increased access and usage of technology will allow more students and job seekers to participate in education and

² Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development. <https://oklahomaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Launch-OK-Strategic-Recommendations-2017.pdf>

³ Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. <https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/careertech/about/reports/strategic-plan/strategic-plan.pdf>

upskilling programs to earn post-secondary credentials, supporting efforts to reach these learning and workforce goals and create a more skilled Oklahoma workforce.

B. Education Outcomes

When the pandemic started in 2020, schools made the transition to virtual learning. For many teachers, students, and families, this represented the first time they were receiving or teaching educational content through an online platform. Lessons from the pandemic demonstrate the critical role of reliable connectivity for educational attainment. Students that lacked a reliable, affordable connection or a high-quality device lost important educational time during the school year, which continues to negatively impact performance. Even as schools have transitioned back to the classroom, many are capitalizing on lessons learned during the pandemic and innovating curriculum and lesson design, allowing students to take advantage of greater educational opportunities offered by increased access to the internet.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education created *Ready Together Oklahoma*, an action plan for supporting students through the pandemic and beyond.⁴ This plan focuses on key areas of student learning and school innovation and proposes several models of educational support that are aligned with addressing the digital equity needs of students and teachers.

The action plan describes how schools and public libraries, two key anchor institutions in all communities, can develop partnerships to benefit student learning. This partnership can allow students to access a reliable internet connection outside of the school building or school day, with many libraries offering access to public computers, 24-7 Wi-Fi, online tutoring, and device checkout programs. Additionally, libraries provide access to online learning platforms that students can access at the library or on their own devices. This aligns with the digital equity plan's mission to augment the capacity and impact public libraries can have, including with school-aged children.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE), which oversees the state system of higher education, released *Blueprint 2030: Innovating and Elevating Oklahoma Higher Education for Tomorrow's Workforce* in February 2023. With the overarching goal to support Oklahoma in meeting state workforce development needs, the strategic plan highlights several strategies for higher education. These strategies include “aligning higher education programs with workforce demand, with a goal to produce 100,000 degrees and other credentials in STEM and critical occupations by 2030” and “strengthen online education offerings and use digital tools to improve student success and augment the traditional learning experience”.

Upskill Oklahoma, an initiative of OSRHE, focuses on micro-credentials “with a goal of helping students digitally showcase their knowledge and skills”. These skills-focused credentials are aligned with regional and employer workforce needs and allow students to build skills through short-term programs and connect with employers looking to hire. Students receive digital badges, which document their credential completion.

⁴ Oklahoma Department of Education. <https://readytogether.sde.ok.gov/>

Increased access and use of high-speed internet expands educational opportunities for Oklahomans. The strategies in this Digital Equity Plan align with state goals around digital skill-building, upskilling, and increased connection to information resources.

C. Health Outcomes

The Oklahoma State Department of Health's (OSDH) vision is to lead Oklahomans to prosperity through health. Broadband is a critical part of improving health outcomes for Oklahoma residents, as telehealth and other health-related initiatives increasingly utilize broadband connectivity to reach residents.

OSDH, as a part of community health service and in partnership with local county departments of health, provides Mobile Wellness Units, which bring public health services to all parts of Oklahoma. Each of Oklahoma's nine Public Health Districts received a unit, allowing underserved communities to connect to public health resources and services. The vans are equipped with a satellite dish for connectivity. Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma Complete Health, and other organizations have implemented similar mobile services.

There are also significant efforts to expand telehealth across Oklahoma, especially in rural areas. Southwestern Oklahoma State University received a million-dollar grant to provide telehealth equipment in western Oklahoma over a three-year span. Additionally, Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Department of Libraries partnered to implement five soundproof telehealth booths in public libraries across Oklahoma. These provide community members (and at least one school), without a private space or transportation to facilities that are often far from their home, with the ability to access health services nearby. Booths are equipped with diagnostic equipment as well as antimicrobial lighting, filters, and surfaces to reduce the chances of cross contamination. Accessibility features include ADA compliance, motion sensor doors, improved lighting, and larger screens.

Besides physical equipment that makes telehealth possible, programmatic expansion is also on the rise. The University of Oklahoma's Health Sciences Center has implemented novel telehealth programs that focus on bridging the gap between rural citizens and specialist providers. Funding at rural hospitals is often tenuous, so programs like tele-stroke and tele-NICU allow rural hospitals to take advantage of specialists who they would normally not be able to afford. Because the treatment plan for both of those specialties is time sensitive, citizens receive markedly better care and demonstrate better outcomes as they no longer waste time and money on transportation. An additional benefit is that the rural hospitals keep the patient in-house, which keeps the funding within the community.

Schools have also begun to see the value in providing telehealth services to students. Not only does it provide fewer disruptions to student learning, but it also makes preventative and chronic care more manageable as parents who work are often not able to take students to appointments during the day. People who were once forced to make choices between schooling and health care can now see the benefits of both. The University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma City Public Schools have partnered on a pilot program to provide telehealth services to six different schools with plans to expand to more schools.

Partnerships between the Department of Corrections and the University of Oklahoma have piloted programs for incarcerated populations. Prison telehealth programs can result in a better continuum of care and an increased quality of life. Incarcerated individuals who would normally require transportation with guards can now regularly visit their provider and provide input on their care plans. In addition to increased access to care, prison telehealth programs are cost-effective and can mitigate emergencies that require major financial and health care resources. According to a 2023 study by JAMA Network Open, the estimated mean total cost savings for telehealth compared to in-person visits ranged from \$147.4 to \$186.1 per visit. When it comes to the incarcerated, that number is significantly higher due to the multiple support staff (guards, nurses, administrators, etc.) who are also impacted.

Besides equipment and specific programs that utilize virtual options, there has been a significant increase in the number of telehealth providers as well as in the quality of telehealth platforms/portals. This has created better opportunities for access by improving accessibility and general appeal. When it comes to interoperability between equipment and platforms, there is still much room for improvement, but that issue will likely sort itself out as the industry matures.

Increasing access to health care, especially in rural communities, is a key goal of this Digital Equity Plan and aligns with the work of OSDH and providers across the state to improve access to care and health outcomes.

D. Civic and Social Engagement

Broadband is essential for individuals to stay connected to their communities and provides limitless opportunity to access information, communicate, and participate in both virtual and in-person community-based activities. Individuals who lack access to the internet are disconnected from a vital source of civic and social connection to the world around them. This Digital Equity Plan allows for individuals to gain access to the connection and skills necessary to stay informed and engaged participants in our society.

Libraries, as a primary community anchor institution (CAI) in many communities, play a critical role in providing educational resources and connection to information and resources. In the *Library Services & Technology Act Five-Year Plan*, the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL) identifies key goals around increasing information access in all forms, including digital. Ensuring that Oklahomans have the digital skills needed to access these information resources will support continuing education efforts and enhance the efforts of ODL. Libraries are key community anchor institutions, offering health care services, genealogy research, digital literacy training, free access to computers, and technical assistance. Libraries provide Digital Navigator programs, hotspot lending programs, computer labs, and makerspaces, making them the go-to community resource for many who are seeking safe and free digital resources.

Many local, municipal, and tribal governments, along with state agencies, have transitioned many of their resources and processes online. One major example of this would be the recently implemented online voter portal which allows Oklahomans to register online to vote, look up election information, and register for absentee voting. Municipalities implemented online platforms for citizens to stay connected, including live streaming of local meetings and the ability to provide comment and feedback to elected officials and on local policies, and many have continued these practices to the present. When it comes to the tribes, nobody feels the lack of connectivity like they do. They lost a significant number of elders to the pandemic, and with that

came the loss of languages and traditions. For them, connectivity means preserving their way of life for younger generations through access to elders who may not be healthy enough to visit in person. Cohesive efforts to expand tribal infrastructure and digitize history have taken the forefront.

Social engagement is another leading factor in broadband expansion. Large scale social media is a major way in which citizens remain informed and engage with society, but it also helps connect families, friends, and loved ones who live far away. On a smaller scale, things like neighborhood engagement, local group meetups, and business outreach have gravitated to online platforms. Even groups that meet in-person often utilize social media for the organizational aspects of the meeting. One service that was highlighted during focus groups was the importance of online dating. According to multiple surveys by Pew, 30% of Americans have used online dating at one point, with almost 10% using it in the last year.

Utilizing online platforms and digital processes allows citizens to be informed, to engage with society, and to participate in the governance of their communities.

E. Delivery of Other Essential Services

Increased connectivity and access to affordable, reliable broadband play an important role in the delivery of essential services across state agencies. The OBO will continue to collaborate with state and local agencies and partners to identify connectivity needs and deliver programs and services that are aligned with this plan and support constituents. This includes using online state assets to increase access to programs, reduce inefficiencies, and save resources through digital platforms.

Oklahoma Human Services provides a range of services for Oklahomans in need, including access to many state and federal resource programs, including food benefits, temporary cash assistance, childcare assistance, and Sooner Care, the state's Medicaid program. Many of these services and resources are accessible online through their website.

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services offers what is likely the most expansive and exhaustive list of resources for people with disabilities, which can be found online at their website. This list is widely used across the state and sees significant traffic with tens of thousands of viewers per month. In addition to the resource list, they offer information and services for independent living, job seeking, and even a system for self-referral for resources. Having connectivity is required to access this list and many of the other resources linked on this website.

Connectivity is critical for disaster and emergency management. One salient example of this is how local fire departments manage a database of storm shelters in their area so that they know where to search and who to contact. It is crucial that fire departments maintain connectivity to maintain and access those lists, but it is equally important that citizens have it to register, receive communications, and follow news updates. The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, in their State of Oklahoma Emergency Operations Plan, discusses communications requirements and procedures for times of disaster. Having connectivity in times of emergency is critical to share out action items and alerts to residents.

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections, in partnership with Securus Technologies, deployed more than 20,000 tablets to inmates across the state. Tablets allow inmates to communicate with loved ones and access approved education, employment, and entertainment resources.

Additionally, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation is “responsible for establishing a registry for Broadband Vendors and Telecommunication Providers in Oklahoma. This registration will notify [the company] of upcoming ODOT constructions projects (for the next eight years) in areas [they] may have or are going to install broadband services.”⁵

Aligning The Digital Equity Plan with State Goals

Governor Kevin Stitt’s vision for Oklahoma prioritizes policies and programs that put Oklahoma on a path to becoming a Top 10 State. These priorities include driving hope for all Oklahomans, protecting Oklahoma and our way of life, making Oklahoma the most business-friendly state in the nation, and delivering taxpayers more for their money. Expanding access, adoption, and use of affordable, high-speed internet supports this vision. From attracting businesses and broadening talent pipelines to delivering efficiencies in government services from online platforms and increasing statewide health, education, and workforce outcomes, broadband is a key driver for prosperity in the state. The goals and programs of this Digital Equity Plan align and complement existing and ongoing efforts to increase opportunities for Oklahomans.

The OBO's legislative mandate in House Bill 3363, enacted in May 2022, set the goal of bringing reliable, affordable, high-speed internet to 95% of the state population by June 30, 2028. With the announcement of state allocations from BEAD and project planning underway, the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan updates this goal to 100% complete state coverage by June 30, 2028. This Digital Equity Plan aligns with and complements the goals, objectives and programs of the BEAD program and will serve to increase the number of Oklahomans able to afford and use new and existing broadband infrastructure. Alignment with other state and local partners will allow increased resources to address all aspects of the digital divide. Removing barriers to accessing and using affordable high-speed internet will increase adoption rates and allow more Oklahomans to participate in the digital marketplace.

2.3 Strategy and Objectives

In pursuit of this mission to fulfill Oklahoma’s Digital Promise, the OBO will implement the following objectives and strategies to ensure all Oklahomans can access and safely use affordable, reliable high-speed internet in ways that allow them to engage fully with the digital world.

Fulfilling Oklahoma’s Digital Promise – Affordability

Goal: All Oklahomans, regardless of income, can subscribe to the internet and participate in online programs and resources with high-quality devices.

⁵ Oklahoma Department of Transportation. <https://okbroadband.org/#/forms/vendor/landing>

Objective: Ensure all Oklahomans have access to affordable high-speed internet.

- Strategy 1: Increase enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program and other low-cost internet service programs.

Objective: Ensure all Oklahomans have access to internet-enabled devices.

- Strategy 1: Identify and promote free and reduced cost device distribution programs, such as computer refurbishment programs and library lending programs.
- Strategy 2: Support and promote access to quality technical support options.
- Strategy 3: Identify and partner with other federal and state device programs, such as Lifeline.

Fulfilling Oklahoma’s Digital Promise – Access

Goal: All Oklahomans have the ability to access online resources and navigate digital opportunities safely.

Objective: Ensure Oklahoma residents and community anchor institutions have access to reliable high-speed internet.

- Strategy 1: Ensure all CAIs can connect to affordable, high-quality internet.
- Strategy 2: Ensure tribal communities have equitable access to broadband services.
- Strategy 3: Increase ability of multifamily dwelling units (MDUs) to implement free, reliable high-speed internet and/or Wi-Fi for their residents.

Objective: Ensure Oklahomans can access and use digital resources safely.

- Strategy 1: Incorporate digital literacy and internet safety training into existing education, training, and community outreach programs.
- Strategy 2: Create an online resource to allow all Oklahomans to find and connect to available programs and support.
- Strategy 3: Develop internet safety training materials to ensure Oklahomans can stay safe online.
- Strategy 4: Promote safe online banking, especially in communities with low access to physical bank locations.

Objective: Increase accessibility of state digital resources for covered populations.

- Strategy 1: Support state agencies with required accessibility audits, reporting, and best practices to ensure accessibility across all government websites.

Fulfilling Oklahoma’s Digital Promise – Advancement

Goal: All Oklahomans will have increased ability to access online resources and training in ways that advance their health, education, and economic opportunities.

Objective: Ensure Oklahomans can participate in online opportunities to advance health, education, and economic goals.

- Strategy 1: Increase access to telehealth programs across the state.
- Strategy 2: Ensure local, regional, and state planning processes include digital equity components.
- Strategy 3: Increase number of digital navigator programs in rural libraries.
- Strategy 4: Identify potential areas of coordination and partnership across state agencies.

Objective: Ensure Oklahoma is able to meet workforce and economic development goals so all citizens can thrive in a digital world.

- Strategy 1: Collaborate with partner agencies and organizations to leverage technology to support rural economic and community development.
- Strategy 2: Increase access to workforce training programs for covered populations.
- Strategy 3: Encourage CAIs to create technology focused five-year plans that can be leveraged for future funding opportunities.

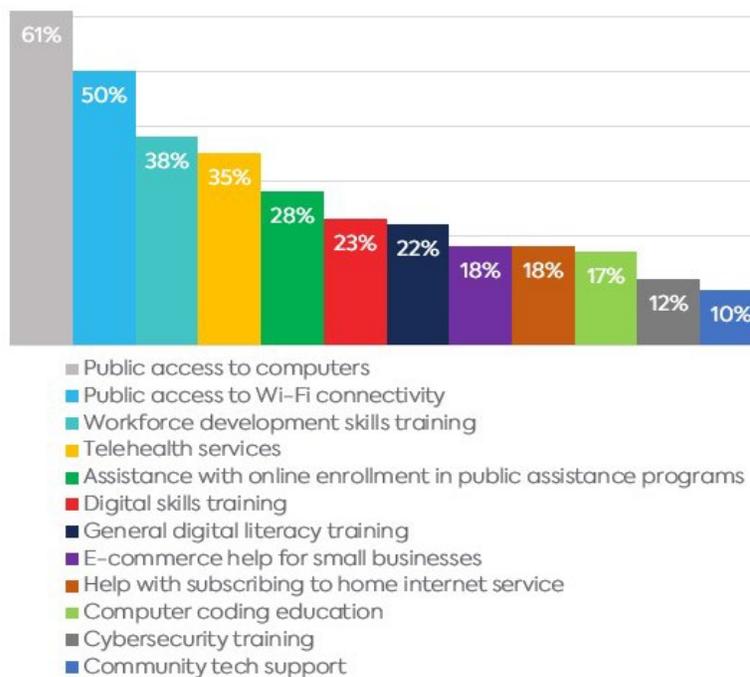
3 Current State of Digital Equity: Barriers and Assets

3.1 Digital Equity Assets in Oklahoma

The OBO conducted extensive outreach and utilized the advisory supports and data collection activities described in Section 4 of this Digital Equity Plan to inventory digital inclusion assets and digital equity plans and programs in the state. Many organizations, local governments, tribal nations, education and workforce entities, and other community-based organizations engage in digital equity work daily. This work takes many forms. It is the librarian helping a senior set up an email account, the community clinic worker teaching a patient how to use their online health portal, or a community college offering digital literacy and upskilling classes. The OBO catalogued these programs and assets to understand where they are and which covered populations they serve. This analysis identified both bright spots to highlight and learn from and gap areas to focus on and support.

During the OBO’s listening tour, participants responded to the prompt, “To the best of your knowledge, which of the following digital inclusion opportunities are offered in your community?” Respondents identified a variety of digital inclusion assets and programs within their communities. Statewide, public access to computers (61%), public access to Wi-Fi connectivity (50%), workforce development and skills training (38%), and telehealth service (35%) were the most identified digital inclusion opportunities. Community technical support (10%), cybersecurity training (12%), and computer coding education (17%) were the least known and available resources statewide. Figure 1 shows the full responses to the prompt.

Figure 1: Digital Inclusion Opportunities Available



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office "Let's Get Digital: Oklahoma Broadband Tour", 2023

3.1.1 Digital Equity Assets by Covered Population

Organizations and communities across Oklahoma leverage available resources to provide digital inclusion programs, opportunities, and resources to residents. These local, regional, and statewide assets comprise an important ecosystem of digital opportunity in the state. Many of these programs provide specific programming for covered populations.

"[Our] digital navigator has assisted over 100 citizens applying and receiving ACP benefits. [We have] 10 chrome books for in-house use, along with 6 adult computers and 2 AWE children's computers. We offer telehealth services [and] reemployment services thru Oklahoma Works."

- Rural library

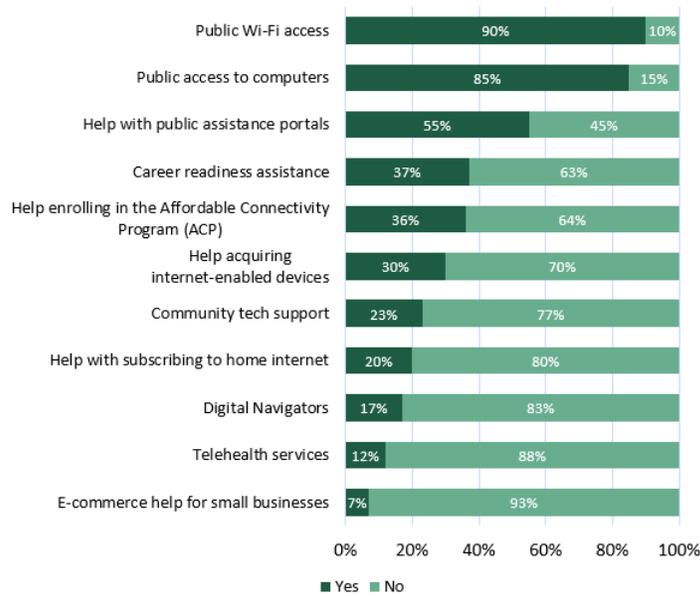
The OBO developed and administered an organizational survey, allowing education institutions, CAIs, local governments, nonprofit and faith-based organizations, health care organizations, and others to submit information about their digital inclusion work and programming. Additionally, the OBO collected data from listening tour stops, stakeholder meetings, and the Digital Equity Coalition to build a robust list of assets. As the OBO continues its outreach and engagement work through the planning and implementation of this Digital Equity Plan, the office will continue to catalog assets to track digital equity work and ensure Oklahomans can access these programs.

Libraries were the most frequent respondent to the organizational survey. Nonprofits, regional governments, and higher education institutions also provided input during the digital inclusion asset collection process.

The table in Appendix B provides a detailed list of digital inclusion assets in the state, including organization, type of program offered, and covered populations reached.

Identifying digital inclusion programs and services across the state allows the OBO to understand local needs, scale and support successful programs, and address gaps in services and geographies across the state. Figure 2 shows digital inclusion services offered by organizations. Statewide, public Wi-Fi access (90% of respondents) and public access to computers (85% of respondents) are the most available digital inclusion services for covered populations. Telehealth services (12% of respondents) and e-commerce help for small businesses (7% of respondents) are the least offered by Oklahoma organizations.

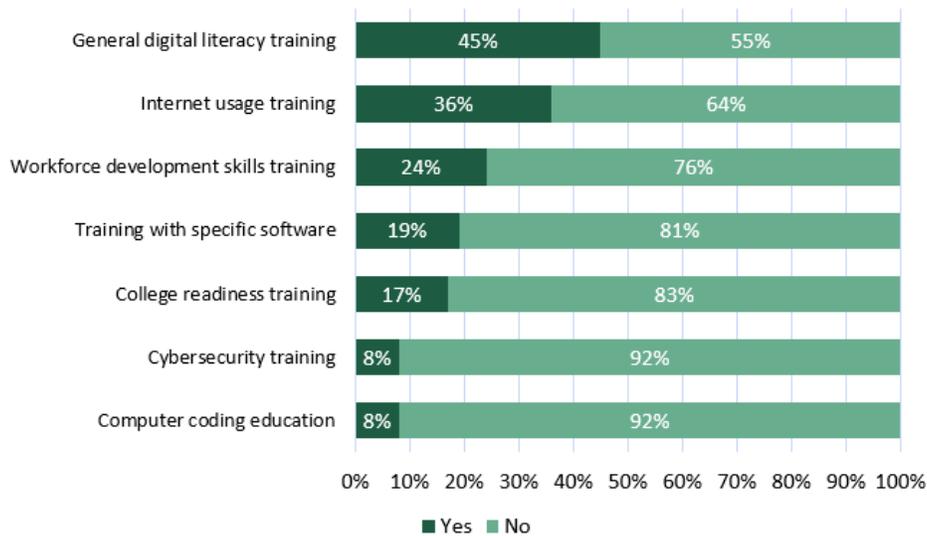
Figure 2: Digital Inclusion Services Offered by Organizations in Oklahoma



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office community organization survey, 2023

Many entities offer specific types of digital skills training to community members and covered populations. Figure 3 shows the types of digital skills trainings offered. The most common types of digital skills trainings are general digital literacy training (45% of respondents) and internet usage training (36% of respondents). This aligned with qualitative responses on the organizational survey, where many organizations described offering basic digital literacy training or specific support to individuals based on their needs. Cybersecurity training (8% of respondents) and computer coding education (8% of respondents) are the least offered digital training offered by respondents.

Figure 3: Digital Skills Trainings Offered by Organizations in Oklahoma



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office community organization survey, 2023

Several of these digital inclusion assets are described in further detail as part of the exploration of existing digital equity programs in Section 3.1.3.

3.1.2 Existing Digital Equity Plans

Communities understand their connectivity challenges and have been mobilizing to create solutions to increase access and use of the internet. The OBO has collected assets from local communities, including local, municipal, and regional digital equity plans, data, and other artifacts that demonstrate local needs. The OBO hosted a 19-stop listening tour (described in Section 4) to hear directly from communities about these local plans and solutions. The OBO held formal tribal consultations with all Oklahoma tribes to understand the barriers and opportunities for digital equity for tribal communities. The OBO also created a community organization survey to collect information directly from nonprofits, faith-based organizations, anchor institutions, and local governments about their programs, data, and plans to close the digital divide in their communities. These data collection and stakeholder engagement processes provided insight to local and regional digital equity efforts.

This section describes digital equity plans in the state. While many municipalities are actively engaged in expanding broadband access, adoption, and use, few have formal documents that describe current and future plans. Analysis of available local and regional planning documents, along with ongoing digital equity efforts, have been included throughout this Digital Equity Plan. The OBO recognizes the importance of local and regional digital equity planning and coordination efforts and has included strategies and actions in Section 5 to support the digital equity planning efforts of local communities and community anchor institutions.

Comanche County

Comanche County developed a Technology Action Plan, which was released in January 2023. The plan assessed broadband access, adoption, and use in the county based on a county survey and discussions with a local broadband team. The plan includes action items about ensuring affordable broadband access, sharing informational materials about ACP and other affordability programs, encouraging partnerships between workforce and technology centers for workforce development, and increasing digital literacy skills training opportunities.

City of Tulsa

The City of Tulsa, in partnership with Governor Kevin Stitt, Mayor G.T. Bynum, and officials from Tulsa Public Schools and Impact Tulsa, formed an internet access task force to identify the digital needs of residents. The task force published an internet access plan in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan states that 15% of Tulsa County families have no internet access at home through any means. The task force identified three funding programs to help bridge the access gap including: providing high-speed, reliable Wi-Fi to all Tulsa Housing Authority complexes; providing high-speed internet for up to 20,000 public school families that currently lack an internet subscription; and funding for the internet access navigators program through Tulsa Responds and local nonprofits. Future work of the Tulsa Internet Task force – including research, community outreach and planning – will be included in state planning deliverables.⁶

⁶ City of Tulsa. <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/press-room/officials-announce-internet-access-plan-for-tulsa-upcoming-programs-aimed-to-help-tulsans-impacted-by-covid-19/>

3.1.3 Existing Digital Equity Programs

Several digital equity programs, including those serving covered populations, exist within Oklahoma communities. These programs provide critical support to Oklahomans in communities across the state, helping them access, afford, and use the internet and online applications. During the “Let’s Get Digital: Oklahoma Broadband Tour”, organizations talked about this work of connecting people, including loaning hotspots during the pandemic so students could complete classes online, supporting library patrons filling out a job application, and helping seniors navigate online portals to get access to transportation.

"When someone finally gets online using a hotspot and they can finally pay bills, apply for a job, do schoolwork, they can see the importance of internet connection compared to when they were not connected."

- Librarian

A selection of these programs is highlighted below.

[Affordable Connectivity Program](#)

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a key resource to closing the digital divide in Oklahoma, specifically for low-income households who would otherwise be unable to afford a monthly internet subscription.⁷ The ACP is an FCC benefit program offering a discount of up to \$30 per month for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a device from participating providers. Qualifying households can go to [getinternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov) to enroll or print a mail-in application.

Oklahoma was awarded \$1.8 million dollars in early 2023 as a part of the Federal Communications Commission ACP Outreach program.⁸ The OBO received \$500,000 to create an ACP awareness campaign that includes media outreach and in-person signup events. Six additional awards were made to the following tribal governments and CAIs:

- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma - \$592,341
- Delaware County Community Partnership, Inc. - \$67,209
- Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma - \$420,446
- Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma - \$292,529
- The ARC Foundation: Strengthening Communities - \$316,376
- Cheyenne and Arapaho Housing Authority - \$241,200

[Oklahoma Broadband Office Digital Equity Coalition](#)

The Digital Equity Coalition, formed by the OBO, provides insights and recommendations around barriers accessing and using affordable, reliable high-speed internet. They are also the main working group tasked with carrying out the goals and objective in this Digital Equity Plan.

⁷ Federal Communications Commission. <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>

⁸ FCC Announces \$66m in Affordable Broadband Outreach Grants. <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-announces-66m-affordable-broadband-outreach-grants-o>

Representatives from research institutions, nonprofit organizations representing covered populations, state agencies, and tribal governments serve on the coalition. A list of organizations participating in the Digital Equity Coalition can be found in Section 4.1.

[Goodwill Industries of Oklahoma](#)

The vision of Goodwill Industries of Tulsa states, “With your help, we can create a community where all people have the training and opportunities they need to be successful in the workplace, regardless of the barriers to employment they must overcome.”⁹ Through the TulsaWORKS Career Academy, participants can enroll in career readiness training, workplace computer skills classes, and even complete digital readiness training. Digital readiness training covers basic skills for operating computers and working on the internet. Workplace computer skills classes are a step-up, specifically designed for students who are pursuing careers that require computer proficiency. The classes are part of the ongoing curriculum offered free-of-charge to the public through TulsaWORKS Career Academy.

In 2023, Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma received a \$10,000 grant from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund for the creation of a new Digital Literacy Lab.¹⁰ The lab is expected to open in late 2023 and features 25 laptop computers, a printer, training curriculum, and staff. Services will include one-on-one training on topics such as computer basics, cell phone basics, job placement, and more. Access to the lab and training programs will be free.

[OSU’s Rural Library Hotspot Lending Program](#)

Oklahoma State University’s Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources partners with public libraries in some of the most rural parts of the state to, in their words, “Loan out the internet!”¹¹ This work enhances broadband access by loaning out hotspot devices to library patrons. The program has enabled employees to work remotely, residents to surf the web at home, and provided students with additional learning resources. The program currently serves more than 20 libraries with hopes to add four to seven new libraries each year as the program grows. Each participating library receives multiple hotspot devices with unlimited data for a year. Interested libraries can apply to participate through the OSU Hotspot Lending website.

[Lawton Public Library: Digital Inclusion Resources](#)

The Lawton Public Library offers a variety of free resources to the public, including a telehealth booth and digital literacy classes. Digital literacy workshops cover topics ranging from internet basics to email basics to cybersecurity. Classes are free and open to the public. One-on-one assistance is available. The library also fulfills a critical health care role in the community, offering a free telehealth booth. The small space provides library patrons with a quiet, private space to conduct online/virtual visits with a medical provider. Like most libraries in the state, the Lawton Public Library offers public computers, free Wi-Fi, and digital assistance to patrons. The library is a foundational community anchor institution, providing a multitude of services and resources to the public.

⁹ Goodwill Industries of Oklahoma. <https://www.goodwilltulsa.org/gwt/TulsaWorks3.asp>

¹⁰ City Sentinel. “Kirkpatrick Family Funds Supports New Digital Literacy Lab. https://www.city-sentinel.com/community/kirkpatrick-family-funds-supports-new-digital-literacy-lab-with-grant-to-goodwill-industries/article_01d80bb2-11c1-11ee-94b0-dbcfd50d55b5.html

¹¹ Oklahoma State University, Division of Agriculture Sciences and Natural Resources. <https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/rural-library-hotspot-lending-program/>

[Tulsa City-County Library, American Electric Power Foundation Digital Literacy Lab](#)

The AEP Digital Literacy Lab at the Tulsa City-County Library is a creator-focused working space for library patrons.¹² The Digital Literacy Lab provides a space for library-goers to develop new apps and software skills, try out new equipment, digitize family history, and much more. Orientation is offered twice monthly to familiarize community members with the Lab. The library offers special programs and classes throughout the year in the Lab for all age groups.

[Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City](#)

The Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City provides programs and support focused on economic mobility for the poor and people of color. This work includes workforce and career development for individuals who are unemployed, underemployed, seeking a career change, and previously or currently justice involved. The After Prison Work Initiative addresses challenges faced by individuals with barriers to employment, including need for basic computer skills.¹³ In 2023, staff completed a train-the-trainer program in basic digital literacy skills to support efforts to expand digital literacy training.

[Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology](#)

The OBO has supported workforce initiatives to support the buildout of broadband infrastructure through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program, other grant programs, and privately funding projects. Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OSUIT) received \$365,068 from the American Rescue Plan Act to provide job training to increase the pipeline of fiber technicians, especially in rural areas. OSUIT also received \$754,970 from the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program grant to expand efforts to connect and train minority populations, with a focus on training fiber optic technicians.¹⁴ This will expand existing efforts to develop industry-specific training programs for the Muscogee and Cherokee Nations. OSUIT focuses recruitment on covered populations, including formerly incarcerated individuals.

[Northeast Oklahoma Accelerate Program](#)

Heartland Forward, through its Connecting the Heartland Initiative, partnered with the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society to “creat[e] a new planning and capacity-building program to help northeast Oklahoma communities plan for and use infrastructure funding for community-driven high-speed internet expansion.”¹⁵ Applications opened in September 2023 for the Oklahoma Accelerate program. Local governments in northeast Oklahoma communities will receive support and training as they prepare to participate in federal funding opportunities available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

¹² Tulsa City-County Library. <https://www.tulsalibrary.org/programs-and-services/aep-foundation-digital-literacy-lab>

¹³ Urban League of Greater Oklahoma: After Prison Work Initiative program page. <https://urbanleagueok.org/programs/after-prison-work-initiative-apwi/>

¹⁴ Biden Administration Awards OSUIT \$750k Grant. <https://osuit.edu/news/biden-administration-awards-osuit-grant.php>

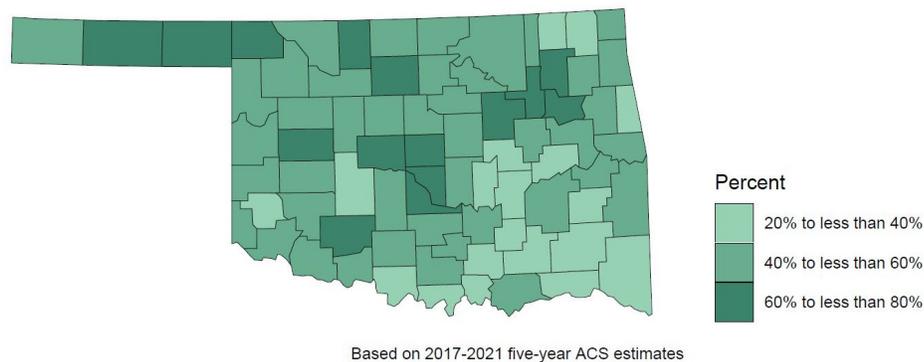
¹⁵ Connecting the Heartland. <https://connectingtheheartland.com/heartland-forward-and-the-benton-institute-for-broadband-society-open-applications-for-northeast-oklahoma-accelerator-program-to-prepare-communities-for-internet-infrastructure-investment/#:~:text=The%20Oklahoma%20Accelerator%20is%20designed,week%20of%20October%2023%2C%202023.>

3.1.4 Broadband Adoption in Oklahoma

Many Oklahomans have adopted and are subscribing to and using high-speed internet. The United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) collects data about home internet subscriptions and the internet-enabled computing devices in the household. These data exist at multiple levels of aggregation, including at the county level and the state level, and can be broken down by household income. Figure 4 below illustrates ACS 2017-2021 five-year estimates of whether households have adopted fixed home internet at the county level; these numbers exclude households with a cellular data plan but no other type of internet subscription, households with dial-up internet but no other internet service, and households that rely on satellite internet service.

At the state level, while 84.2% of households subscribe to internet services of some kind, only 61.2% of households subscribe to fixed home internet (broadband such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL).

Figure 4: Fixed Home Internet Adoption Rates by County



Source: Five-Year Estimates, American Community Survey, 2017-2021.

At the county level, there are large differences between counties. The highest rate of any county is 75% in Cleveland County, which is southeast of Oklahoma City. In fact, the five counties with the highest adoption rates (Cleveland, Canadian, Wagoner, Tulsa, and Oklahoma) either include urban areas or are adjacent to urban areas. Meanwhile, the five counties with the lowest adoption rates are in rural areas and predominantly on tribal lands.

Data from a residential technology survey administered by the OBO show higher rates of internet adoption. From that sample, 91.3% of Oklahomans subscribe to home internet service of some kind. A smaller percentage of respondents (86.9%) indicated that they subscribe to fixed home internet.

“It (the internet) is a great way to catch up on family. Grandparents use it for Facebook and communicate with me and family.”

– Focus group participant

Of those respondents who subscribe to home internet service, 94.1% reported that their advertised download speeds were higher than 25 Mbps – the Federal Communications Commission’s current definition of broadband. The average reported download speed was 276 Mbps.

Oklahomans who subscribe to home internet service, including those who belong to covered populations, use their internet service for many different purposes.

The United States Census Bureau's 2021 Current Population Survey included a computer and internet use supplement which showed that many Oklahoma households use the internet to telework, participate in virtual health care meetings, and videoconference for work and to stay connected with their community. Figure 5 shows the full results for specific covered populations.

Figure 5: Internet Use Among Covered Populations in Oklahoma

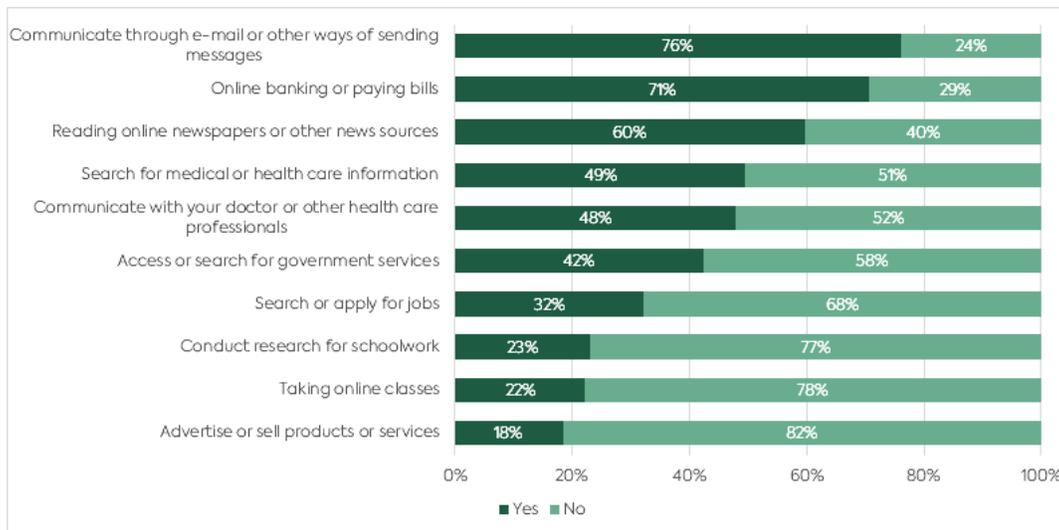
	Aging Individuals	Veterans	Racial or Ethnic Minorities	Total
Use Internet for Video Conferencing	43.7%	53.8%	50.4%	55.3%
Use Internet for Teleworking	29.4%	33.3%	26.6%	37.9%
Use Internet for Job Classes and Online Training	9.5%	20.5%	24.8%	21.2%
Use Internet for Online Banking	60.1%	64.1%	68.8%	71.7%
Use Internet for Accessing Medical Records	44.7%	50%	40.1%	48.5%
Use Internet for Telemedicine Appointments	37.4%	36.6%	32.1%	36.6%

Source: Current Population Survey, Computer and Internet Use Supplement, November 2021

In addition, the residential technology survey showed that adults in Oklahoma use the internet for a variety of different activities. Communicating through email or other messaging applications was the top activity, with 76% of respondents using the internet in this way. More than one-half of respondents use their internet connection for online banking or paying bills

(71%) and reading online newspapers or other news sources (60%). Figure 6 displays the full results of internet usage.

Figure 6: Residential Internet Use by Activity Type



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

When asked in focus groups about how community members access the internet, some answers included:

- “Many households rely on free Wi-Fi locations such as libraries, schools, businesses and restaurants.”
- “Library, fast food restaurants, Walmart, and friends/relatives who have service.”
- “People often use public spaces and stores; may be helpful if these places do more advertising to people that they are providing resources.”
- “In-home internet service is only available through a wired modem connection and is available mostly to members living in town. For rural areas, this service is not available.”

3.1.5 Broadband Affordability in Oklahoma

Broadband affordability serves as an important determinant for home internet adoption. While many households may have access to broadband, some Oklahomans still struggle to pay for the service each month. According to data derived from a series of listening tours across the state, 59.2% of respondents believed that high costs were a barrier to households subscribing to home internet.

Based on responses from the residential technology survey, residents pay an average of \$61.60 for their internet service.

Several government programs exist to make home internet more affordable and reduce the gap between access and adoption rates. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, provides a monthly \$30 discount towards internet subscriptions and a one-time \$100 discount towards an internet-enabled device for all eligible households. For residents living on tribal lands, that monthly discount increases to \$75 per month. Household eligibility is determined either by household income (must be below 200% of

federal poverty guidelines) or through participation in other federal or tribal assistance programs (such as SNAP, Medicaid, or Federal Housing Assistance).

The other major federal program that helps low-income households afford home internet service and phone connections is Lifeline. The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) manages this program, which lowers the monthly cost of telephone or internet service for eligible households by \$9.25. Residents living on tribal lands receive an enhanced benefit of \$34.25 per month, as well as up to a \$100 reduction for first-time connection charges.

Identifying the population eligible for the ACP program is challenging; while the ACS provides information on household incomes and estimates of the percentage of households below different poverty levels, it does not provide information on the number of households enrolled in other assistance programs. Based on eligibility estimates produced by Education Superhighway and the number of total households from the 2021 iteration of the ACS, roughly 46.4% of households in Oklahoma are eligible for the ACP.¹⁶ Of those eligible, 45.3% of households have enrolled in the program.

Figure 7 below depicts the percentage of eligible households that subscribe to the ACP, using eligibility numbers from Education Superhighway and enrollment numbers from USAC’s ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker (with data as of August 28, 2023).¹⁷ **Overall, Oklahoma ranks ninth in the country in ACP participation.**

Figure 7: ACP Participation by State

Rank	State / Territory	Enrolled	Eligible	Percent
1	Puerto Rico	627,398	962,129	65.2%
2	District of Columbia	57,958	104,893	55.3%
3	Louisiana	498,859	904,157	55.2%
4	Ohio	1,050,943	1,984,218	53.0%
5	Kentucky	420,155	846,290	49.6%
6	North Carolina	836,462	1,741,427	48.0%
7	Nevada	235,847	493,948	47.7%
8	New York	1,513,533	3,276,799	46.2%
9	Oklahoma	315,823	697,600	45.3%

¹⁶ Education Superhighway. <https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/no-home-left-offline/acp-data/>

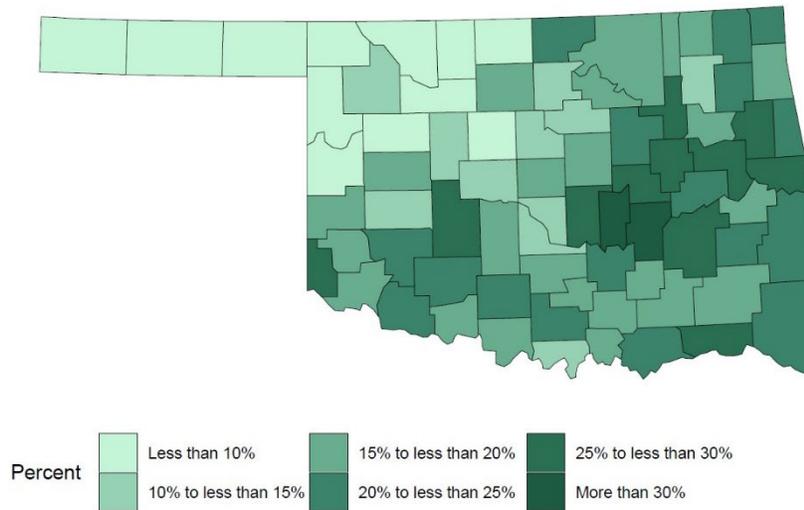
¹⁷ Universal Services Administrative Company.

<https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/#enrollment-by-state>

Rank	State / Territory	Enrolled	Eligible	Percent
10	Michigan	753,076	1,690,382	44.6%

Unfortunately, eligibility data cannot be discerned at the county level from these data sources. To visualize ACP participation, Figure 8 below shows the percentage of total households in each county that have enrolled in the program as of June 2023. Data on ACP enrollment comes from USAC’s ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker, while data on the number of households in each county comes from 2017-2021 five-year ACS estimates. Seminole County has the highest ACP participation percentage (33%), followed by Hughes County (31.8%), Okmulgee County (28.1%), and Pottawatomie County (28.1%).

Figure 8: Households Participating in the ACP by County

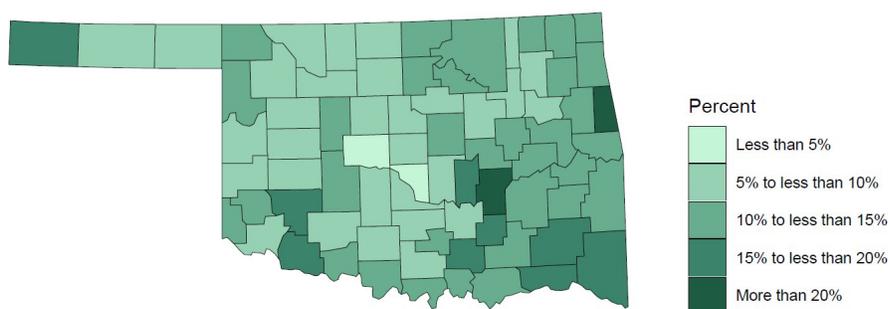


Based on USAC’s ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker and 2017-2022 five-year ACS estimates

Device Ownership

Device ownership is another key indicator of broadband adoption and affordability. Figure 9 below illustrates the percentage of households in every county that do not own any internet-enabled devices. These numbers derive from the 2017-2021 five-year estimates from the ACS. Statewide, 8% of households do not own a computer.

Figure 9: Households without a Computing Device by County



Based on 2017-2021 five-year ACS estimates

“Every computer was a family computer or a public computer until I got to college. I never had access to personal computers.”

- Oklahoma student in focus group

Like the adoption map, urban and urban-adjacent counties have the highest rates of device ownership. In Canadian County, only 4.1% of households lack a computing device; meanwhile, in Cleveland County, only 4.3% of households do not own an internet-enabled device. Alternatively, several counties in Oklahoma have large populations (more than 15%) that lack household access to devices. Of note, many counties with the greatest need for computing devices also have the lowest internet adoption rates in the state; these include Hughes County, Pushmataha County, Adair County, Johnston County, and Choctaw County.

3.2 Barriers to Adoption and Affordability in Oklahoma

Many Oklahomans face a barrier, and often multiple barriers, which prevent them from accessing and using the internet safely. Oklahoma has taken multiple steps to identify the challenges facing households that prevent them from subscribing to home internet service and learning how to use the technologies necessary to succeed in education and the workplace. Through data collection efforts, the OBO identified the reasons many Oklahomans are not online; these insights formed the strategies and actions discussed in Section 5.

Adoption rates vary by county and community across Oklahoma. Many households have a physical internet connection available but are not adopting the internet. Figure 10 shows Oklahoma counties with the lowest fixed home internet adoption rate.

Figure 10: Fixed Home Internet Adoption Rate by County

Rank	County	Fixed Home Internet Adoption Rate
68	Choctaw County	31.0%
69	Latimer County	30.6%

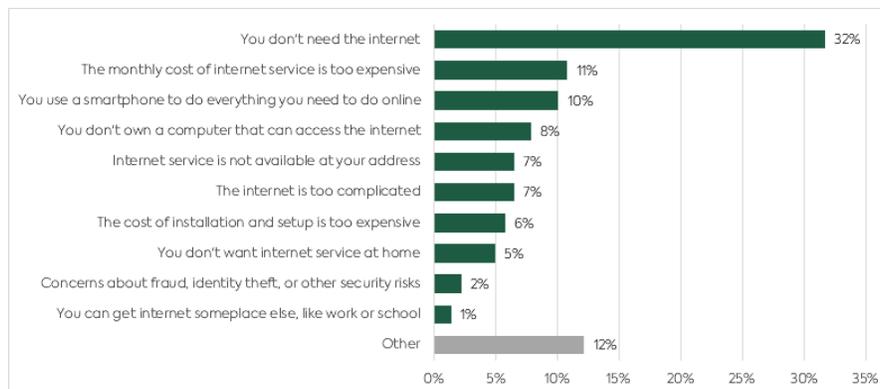
Rank	County	Fixed Home Internet Adoption Rate
70	Adair County	30.3%
71	Johnston County	28.1%
72	McIntosh County	28.1%
73	Love County	27.9%
74	Pushmataha County	27.7%
75	Hughes County	27.3%
76	Nowata County	27.3%
77	Atoka County	22.3%

Source: Based on 2017-2021 five-year ACS estimates

Understanding the barriers preventing covered populations from adopting the internet is necessary to build a Digital Equity Plan and programs that can remove these barriers and support more households getting online. The OBO conducted a residential survey to understand barriers and challenges Oklahomans face when accessing and using the internet. This survey is further discussed in Section 4, with the methodology described in Appendix C.

Figure 11 below illustrates the main reasons why residential survey respondents do not subscribe to home internet service.

Figure 11: Barriers to Home Internet Adoption

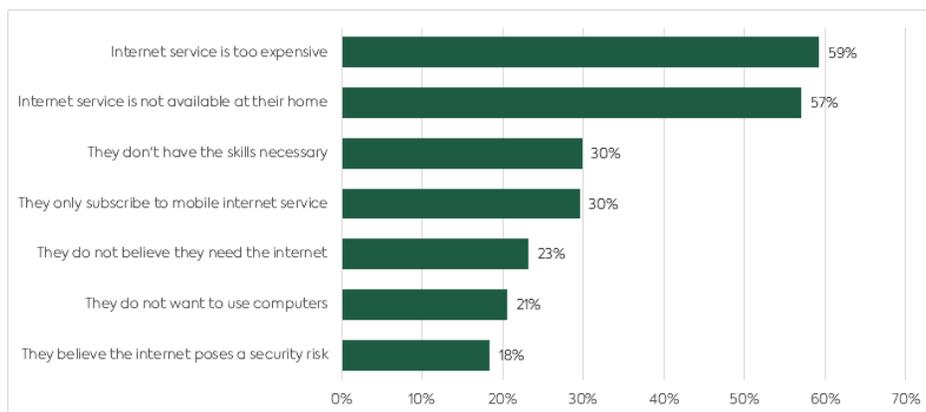


Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

The most cited rationale was that respondents did not feel that they needed the internet, followed by the monthly cost of internet service. The large percentage of respondents who claim not to need the internet could be reflective of their digital skills – without proper digital skills to navigate the broadband world, it would be difficult to recognize the advantages that having internet affords people.

In addition to the residential survey data and analysis that provided insight into barriers to broadband adoption described above, the OBO polled participants at the “Let’s Get Digital: Oklahoma Broadband Tour” about the barriers they and their communities face. Figure 12 illustrates these perceived barriers.

Figure 12: Perceived Barriers to Home Internet Adoption



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office "Let's Get Digital: Oklahoma Broadband Tour", 2023

Overall, listening tour attendees cited the affordability of internet service (59%) and the availability of internet service (57%) as the two largest barriers facing members of their communities.

Thirty percent of listening tour attendees cited lacking digital skills as another key barrier for their communities. An ISP in Lawton noted that they often perform activities outside the scope of a traditional internet service provider, “making house calls for customers that don’t know how to do basic functions on their computer.” In Sulphur, lack of digital skills was cited multiple times in the discussion.

“For my job, I used to telework. Paying for my internet bill meant other bills could not get paid because we could not afford everything.”

– OK resident at listening tour stop

For Oklahoma households, including covered populations, one of the most discussed barriers to having a home internet subscription is the cost of monthly service. For many, the monthly service cost is too high, leaving Oklahomans to rely on public Wi-Fi, cellular data plans, or other publicly available connectivity resources.

In focus groups, affordability also emerged as a key barrier for covered populations. While many participants could identify programs or places to access low-cost or free internet, many noted that they were less available in rural areas and not well-promoted within communities.

3.2.1 Covered Population Needs Assessment

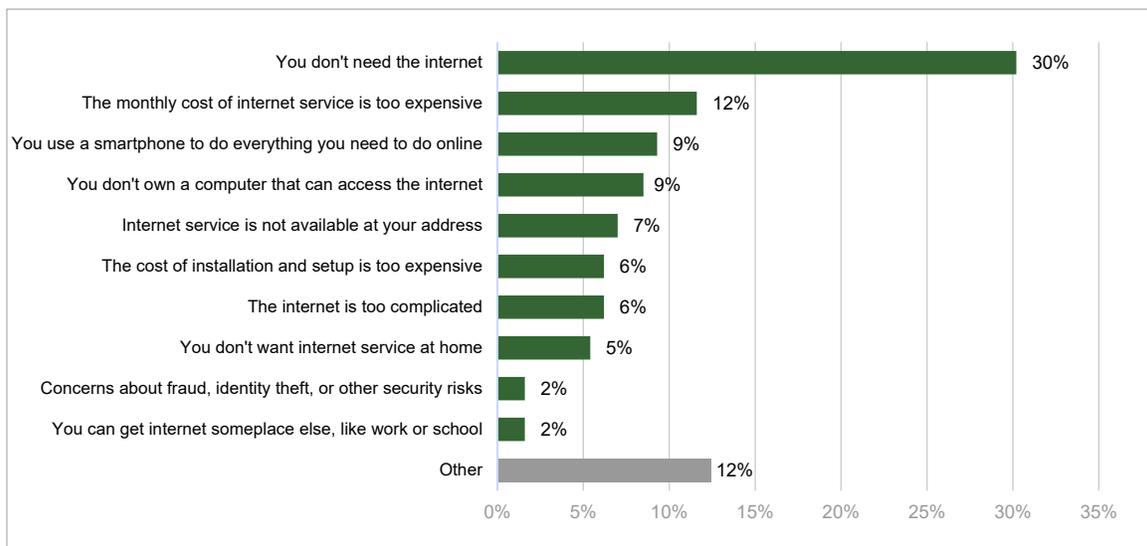
Understanding the specific barriers covered populations face in affording, accessing, and using the internet is critical to developing strategies, plans, and programs that address these barriers.

Stakeholder engagement efforts, including listening tours, focus groups, and a residential survey, elucidated these barriers and how they affect covered populations and communities in the state. For many Oklahomans, a combination of barriers is affecting their ability to be online and navigate the internet safely. The qualitative and quantitative data collected and disaggregated illustrate the challenges covered populations face adopting and using the internet. The section below explores these barriers.

Broadband adoption rates among individuals who identify as members of a covered population tend to be slightly lower than the statewide average. More than 1 in 10 survey respondents who are members of covered populations (10.8%) do not subscribe to home internet service.

Figure 13 shows barriers to adoption for all covered populations.

Figure 13: Barriers to Adoption for Covered Populations



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

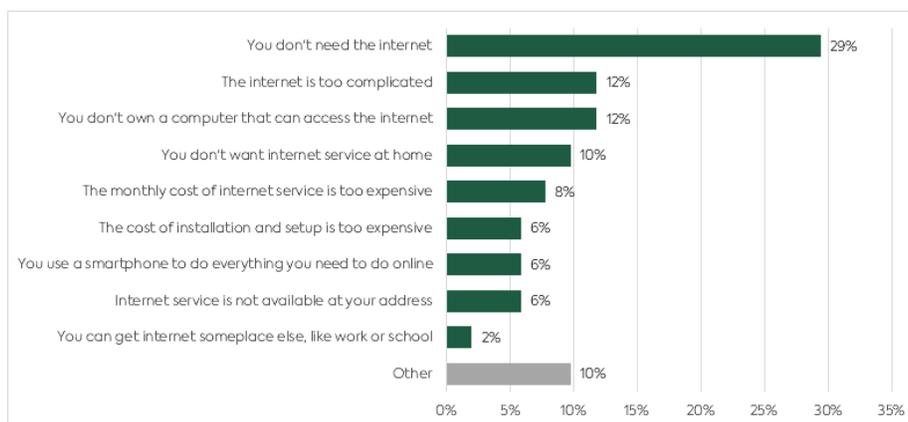
These data are further explored below.

Aging Individuals (60+)

The primary barrier to internet subscription identified for aging individuals is the belief that they did not need the internet (29%). Another 12% of respondents cited not having a computer that can access the internet, and another 12% said that the internet was too complicated.

Figure 14 below shows why aging individuals without home internet service do not subscribe.

Figure 14: Barriers to Internet Subscription for Aging Individuals (60+)



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

Looking deeper into the survey results reveals additional challenges that this population faces.

While 91% of aging individuals have a computer at home, respondents without one were twice as likely to say that they did not own one because computers are too complicated (compared to all respondents without a computer).

Moreover, while over 90% of aging individuals subscribe to home internet service of some kind, those without it were nearly twice as likely to say they didn't because the internet was too complicated (compared to all respondents without home internet).

These results suggest that aging individuals struggle with navigating the internet – likely because they survived without the internet for much of their lives – and could benefit from digital skills training.

These results align with data collected in the Aging Populations Focus Group. Participants there identified challenges with accessing and using the internet, including a need for increased education, an understanding of where resources are in the community and how to access them, and affordability of high-quality devices and internet service. Some of the comments included:

- “Some still use older systems and iPhones. These choices can impact quality. Updated operating systems with better memory can help. iPads and newer iPhones may help.”
- “Still a level of resistance to using web-based services by persons over 65. Bill pay, tax filings and online grocery shopping and how to maximize savings is still needed. Using health care websites for appointments and communication with physicians is vital to better care.”

The focus group identified internet safety as a key challenge for aging populations. One participant stated, “I worry about my identity.” Another participant identified this as a risk since fraudulent activities are always evolving and recommended coupling fraud awareness with ongoing education from trusted sources for aging populations. Ensuring aging individuals feel safe navigating online applications and platforms is critical to reducing barriers and increasing adoption rates.

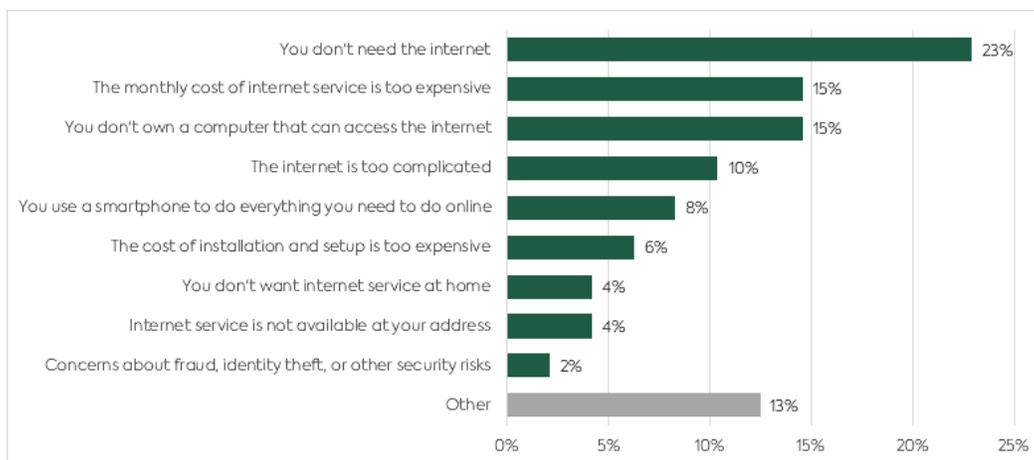
“I am looking to retire. I will be on a fixed income with other large expenses like prescriptions so internet at \$75 a month can be very pricy.”
– OK senior at listening tour stop

Low-Income Households (At or Below 150% of Federal Poverty Threshold)

For low-income households, the primary barrier facing this population was feeling like they did not need the internet (23%). Following that, the next most mentioned barriers related to affordability – 15% cited not having a computer that could access the internet, and another 15% said that the monthly cost of internet service was too expensive.

Figure 15 below shows why respondents from low-income households that lack home internet service do not subscribe.

Figure 15: Barriers to Internet Subscription for Low-Income Households



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

Compared to all respondents without home internet, respondents from low-income households were more likely to say they did not subscribe because of cost and nearly twice as likely to say that they didn't subscribe because they didn't have a computer that could access the internet.

Disaggregating further, compared to all respondents without a computer, individuals from low-income households were nearly twice as likely to say they didn't own one because computers are too expensive.

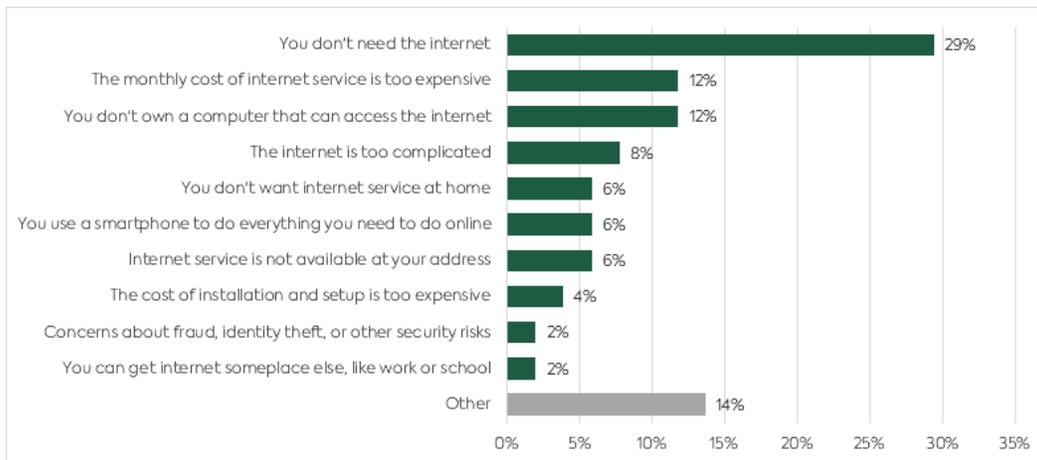
In addition to affordability concerns, respondents from low-income households with home internet had slower internet service than others surveyed; over 16% subscribed to speeds slower than 25 Mbps – the FCC definition of broadband. Among all respondents with home internet, only 6% subscribed to such slow speeds.

Racial or Ethnic Minorities

The most cited barrier for racial and ethnic minorities was feeling like they did not need the internet (29%). Following that, 12% of respondents said that the monthly cost of internet was too expensive, and another 12% did not own a computer that could access the internet.

Figure 16 below shows why racial or ethnic minorities without home internet service do not subscribe.

Figure 16: Barriers to Internet Subscription for Racial or Ethnic Minorities



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

While the survey did not probe why individuals said that they did not need the internet, the next most cited barriers revolve around affordability. In addition to the numbers highlighted above, among racial or ethnic minorities that do not own a computer, 18% said the main reason was that computers are too expensive (compared to 14% of all respondents without computers) and 21% used a cell phone instead of a computer for everything (compared to 18% of all respondents without computers).

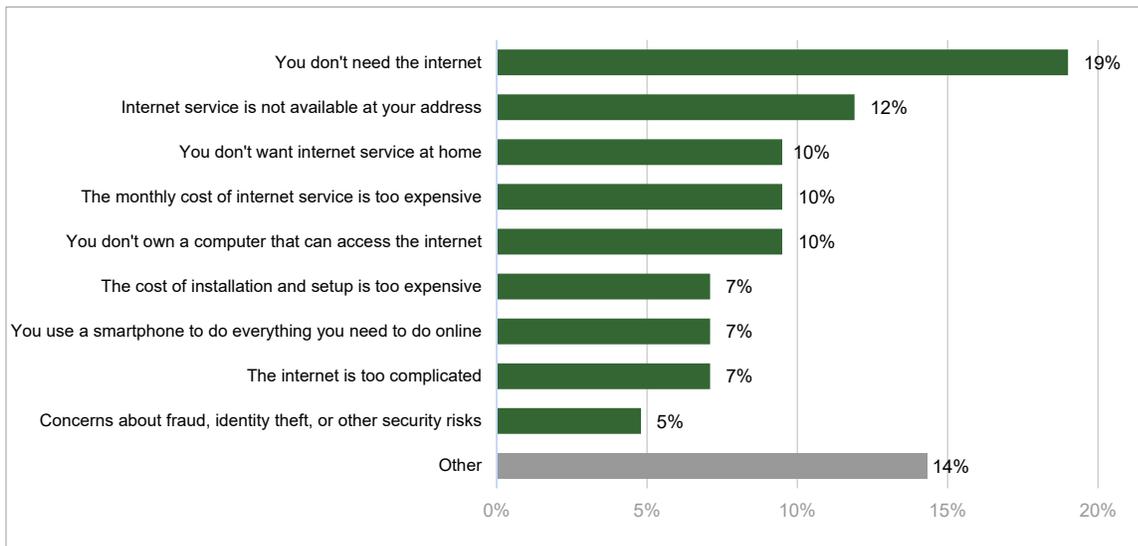
Focus groups reinforced the survey findings. While these respondents saw the need for the internet, 25% referred to immediate family members who did not see the need. Almost 13% did not own a computer that could access the internet. Despite all 100% of respondents listing cost as a primary barrier, none of them knew about any programs that offer cheaper internet service or devices.

The ACP program, which offers discounted internet and free or cheaper devices to those who enroll, could be a potential solution to these affordability concerns. Compared to all survey respondents, racial or ethnic minorities were less likely to be familiar with the program and less likely to participate.

Individuals who Reside in a Rural Area

A belief that they do not need home internet service is the top barrier among rural households, cited by nearly 1 in 5 of those who do not subscribe to home internet service (Figure 17). This barrier is followed by a lack of available internet service (cited by 12% of rural non-adopters), while 1 in 10 say they don't want home internet service, the monthly cost is too expensive, and they lack a home computer. These challenges suggest that many rural Oklahomans have not determined that home internet service is beneficial enough to pay the installation and monthly costs.

Figure 17: Barriers to Internet Subscription for Residents in Rural Areas



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

Rural residents participated in several of the covered population focus groups. When talking about their barriers, they spoke of challenges accessing and affording internet, especially to engage online with telehealth. These comments included:

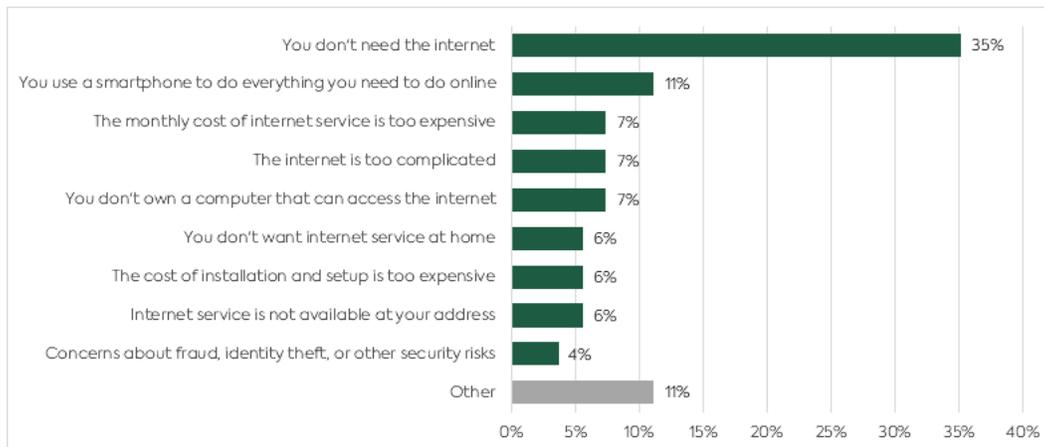
- “Internet needs to be sufficient enough for individuals to access important telehealth options. It is important to those in rural areas that would not have access to specialty care otherwise.”
- “Home access give us more access to medical care, telemedicine helps with emergency situations, especially rural areas.”
- “I worked in a public library for years and know that many community members need help finding and applying for jobs, navigating benefits (VA, Social Security), managing utilities, registering for school.”

Persons with Disabilities

For persons with disabilities, the most cited barrier was feeling like they did not need the internet (35%). Beyond that, another 11% of respondents did not subscribe because they use a smartphone to do everything they need to do online.

Figure 18 below details the primary barriers to home internet adoption facing persons with disabilities.

Figure 18: Barriers to Internet Subscription for Persons with Disabilities



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

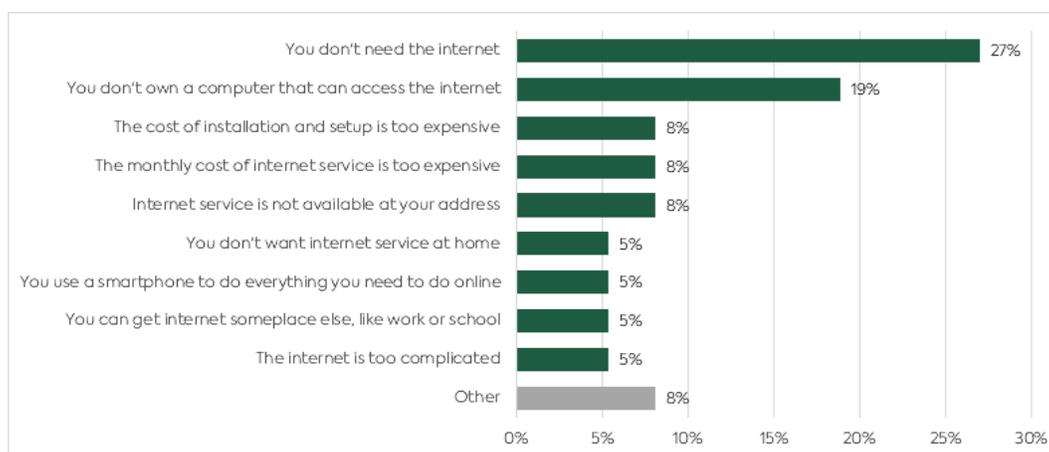
Unlike some of the other covered populations, the use of technology and the internet by persons with disabilities is heavily gated by accessibility. Websites and resources that do not meet standards may be physically impossible to access, which would make the internet less appealing in general. Not only would it seem more complicated, but there would be fewer available websites to access. Additionally, assistive technologies are highly specialized and do not always leverage interoperability to the same extent as comparable devices used by people without disabilities. For example, applications that may exist for iPhone may not be available on other operating systems. To transition from one device to another would involve finding, installing, and learning new software.

Veterans

For this group of Oklahomans, the top barrier to subscribing was feeling like they did not need the internet (27%). The second most cited reason was that they did not own a computer that could access the internet (19%).

Figure 19 below illustrates why veterans without home internet service do not subscribe.

Figure 19: Barriers to Internet Subscription for Veterans



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

While rates of computer ownership among veterans are on par with the survey average, veterans were more than twice as likely to cite not having a computer as the main barrier to subscribing (compared to all respondents without home internet).

Additionally, veterans pay comparatively more for their home internet than other covered populations. The average cost of internet among those surveyed was \$61.60; veterans pay an average of \$73.54 for their internet.

Promoting the ACP program to this covered population could help offset the price they pay. While 55% of all survey respondents were familiar with the ACP, only 37% of veterans had heard of it. Moreover, while 41% of respondents who had heard of the ACP participated, only 22% of veterans did. Not all veterans would qualify for the program, but any that receive the Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit would be eligible.¹⁸ Another solution would be to help promote free or low-cost device distribution programs to increase access.

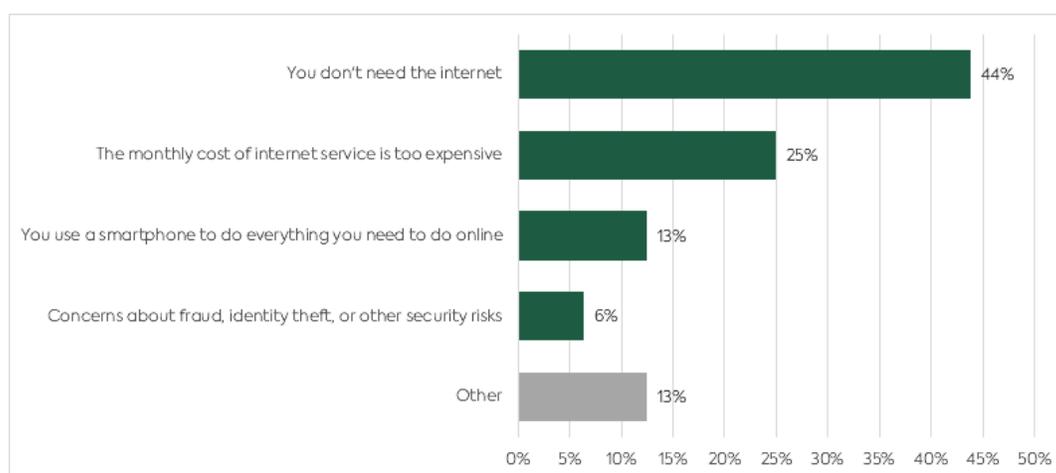
In the Veterans focus group, participants identified reliability as the biggest barrier to using the internet. Many cited affordability as another issue, but all participants concurred that broadband is a necessity they were willing to pay for. Several participants also talked about accessing military resources online, including using ID.me to verify military status and access resources. As a group, participants were less interested in telehealth, with a veteran remarking, “I live close enough to Tulsa that getting to a doctor is not an issue, as it may be for Veterans in more rural areas or those that lack transportation.”

Persons with Language Barriers

The most cited reason for not subscribing for persons with language barriers was feeling like they did not need the internet (44%). Beyond that, an additional 25% of respondents emphasized that the monthly cost of internet service was too expensive.

Figure 20 below shows the main reasons why people with language barriers do not subscribe to home internet service.

Figure 20: Barriers to Internet Subscription for Persons with Language Barriers



Source: Oklahoma Broadband Office residential technology survey, 2023

¹⁸ Federal Communications Commission. <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/do-i-qualify/>

Compared to all survey respondents without home internet, persons with language barriers were more than twice as likely to cite the cost of internet as the main barrier to subscribing. This finding coincides with the language barrier focus group in which 100% of respondents cited the cost of internet as the main barrier.

Again, promotion of the ACP program could be a solution to these affordability concerns. Individuals with language barriers were not less familiar with the program than other respondents, but they were much less likely to participate. Out of all survey respondents familiar with the program, 41% participated; for persons with language barriers, only 24% participated.

Individuals with language barriers were also more likely to subscribe to home internet technologies associated with higher latency (and therefore slower speeds for many activities). Compared to all respondents with home internet service, individuals with language barriers were four times more likely to have dial-up internet and nearly twice as likely to have DSL or satellite internet.

In a Spanish-language focus group, participants shared about some of the barriers they face accessing and using high-speed internet. For accessing the internet, participants described various options, including:

- "I use the one provided by my apartment. It has its bad days and good days."
- "If the public Wi-Fi is being slow, I use my personal hot spot."
- "I never use public Wi-Fi. I use my data plan. If I really need to use my laptop, I will use the ethernet cord."

Affordability was a key concern, with participants citing "the cost of going up in the tier of faster internet," "cost and if the option of fiber optic is available," and "financial barriers, having to pay rent," as barriers to having an internet subscription at home.

Participants also cited barriers for their community in navigating the internet and finding relevant content. These barriers included:

- "My family needs help in translating the web pages from English to Spanish at times."
- "Language. My parents only know Spanish, so having a representative that speaks Spanish would be beneficial."
- "Support on where to find resources for the Latinx community and help searching for services in health, involvement, and social events."

When asked if they knew of any low-cost or affordable internet subscription programs, all the participants said no. This indicates increased outreach about the ACP and other low-cost programs is needed to increase enrollment.

In an East Tulsa focus group conducted by the City of Tulsa and Partner Tulsa, participants reported barriers to digital skill development, including "financial demands (need to work several jobs and not having financial means to pay for training), family care needs, lack of information for developing digital skills, and skill development to opportunities not offered in native language."¹⁹

¹⁹ City of Tulsa and Partner Tulsa Report. *Engaging Tulsa's Immigrant Communities in Tulsa's Digital Tech and STEM workforce*. September 2023.

Incarcerated Persons

According to the National Institute of Corrections, Oklahoma has 93 jails in 77 counties. As of December 31, 2020, there were 22,462 prisoners under the jurisdiction of Oklahoma correctional authorities.²⁰ This includes state prisons, private prisons, and local jails. State operated facilities had a staff of 4,902 and a budget of \$634,500,000. Additionally, 23,027 offenders were under probation and 2,237 were under parole.

While the residential survey did not reach incarcerated individuals specifically, the OBO did meet with organizations and community leaders who work with and represent currently and formerly incarcerated individuals. These conversations provided insight into the general and technology-specific challenges that inmates face upon re-entry. Many of the barriers to re-entry formerly incarcerated individuals face, including employment, housing, and transportation, could be supported through increased access and adoption of high-speed internet.

During the Digital Equity Coalition call, community leaders cited workforce development and access to health care as leading barriers faced by recently released inmates. For example, many job applications and job interviews are online only. Not only do many recently released inmates leave the justice system with little money to afford a computer, tablet, or internet subscription, oftentimes recently released inmates are not familiar with the specific technology required to complete online forms and processes. The combination of the affordability and digital skills gap places an added barrier for recently released inmates transitioning back into society. This cycle often leads to mental health struggles. As noted on the call, access to affordable and reliable health care, specifically resources for mental health, is an integral part of reducing recidivism.

Indigenous and Native American Persons

“Cost is always a barrier, but almost half of tribe live in rural areas where the only service can be obtained through a costly satellite connection. This issue also prevents some members the opportunity of working from home since no signal is available.”

— Focus group participant

Tribal communities have historically been one of the most underserved communities, which is reflected in the map of unserved and underserved locations. The OBO engaged with all 39 tribes with invitations for formal consultations and conducted these consultations throughout the planning process. During these tribal consultations, issues related to the mitigation of that lack of service took the forefront. Due to the lack of availability and investment in broadband infrastructure, tribal communities have often been relegated to using inferior technologies that may have poorer speeds, higher latency, higher upkeep costs, and/or inconsistent availability. The lack of infrastructure has also limited the number of providers in these regions. With fewer providers and a lack of competition to drive prices down, the tribes have been forced into paying higher costs for worse service.

This lack of adoption and use of internet services directly impacts tribal communities and their access to resources. In one of the focus groups, a participant noted that the “majority of our tribal elders do not have internet services and have to request help from other resources that are not usually available due to location in rural areas or low income [areas].”

²⁰ National Institute of Corrections: <https://nicic.gov/resources/nic-library/state-statistics/2020/oklahoma-2020>

Another issue that was repeatedly mentioned during tribal consultations was the lack of grant writing experience that impacted their ability strategize and apply for tribal specific grant funding. Often being led by elders, the tribes experienced a significant amount of turnover during COVID, which negatively impacted administrative work. Larger tribes with more consistent income were able to mitigate this to an extent, but the smaller, poorer tribes were left in a position where they could not take advantage of the large windfalls of federal funds.

Section 5 of this Digital Equity Plan includes technical assistance and support for tribal communities to develop their own digital equity plans.

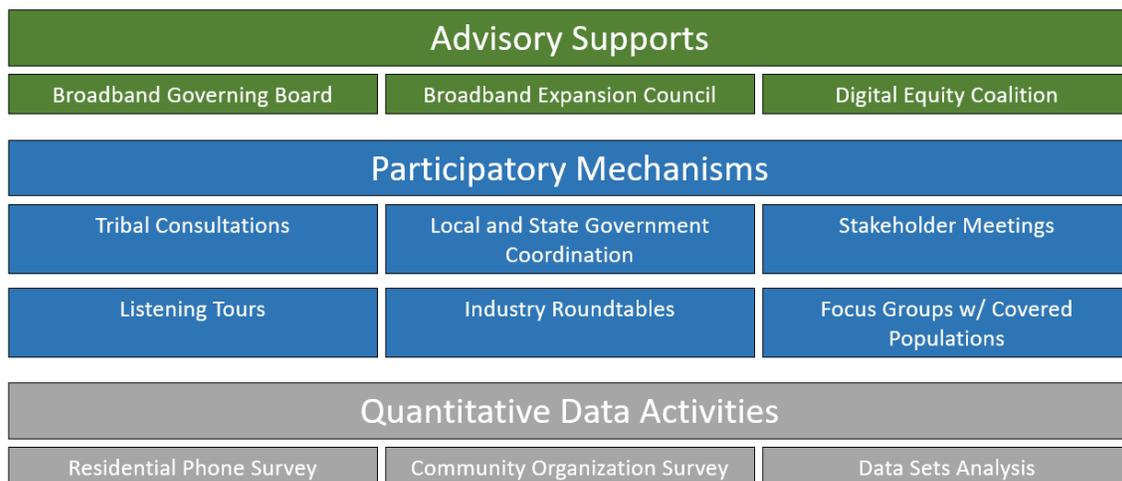
4 Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy

The OBO developed and implemented an inclusive engagement model that provided opportunities for residents, organizations, and leaders across the state to provide insight into planning priorities. Leveraging existing structures, such as the OBGB and the OBEC, and expanding outreach through coordination with state agencies, local and regional governments, community anchor institutions, and community-serving organizations providing services to covered populations, the OBO gleaned a holistic understanding of broadband challenges, assets, and priorities across Oklahoma.

The stakeholder engagement model outlined below demonstrates the breadth of engagement across Oklahoma and the variety of mechanisms for outreach and engagement. Stakeholders in established advisory entities provided ongoing feedback and insights into broadband challenges and opportunities. Meaningful outreach and multiple participatory mechanisms allowed for comprehensive engagement and qualitative data collection from key groups, including covered populations. Quantitative data collection activities provided deeper understanding of the barriers and assets in the state.

Figure 21: Oklahoma Broadband Office Stakeholder Engagement Model



This model ensured the OBO received meaningful engagement across covered and underrepresented populations throughout the Digital Equity Plan development process and that organizations, governments, residents, and other stakeholders had multiple opportunities to provide input.

Stakeholders & Advisory Supports

Having access to a reliable, affordable broadband connection is critical for Oklahoma residents and is a requirement for many governmental and private-sector activities. The OBO engaged in extensive outreach to identify and interact with critical stakeholders with whom engagement on

digital equity priorities is essential to a holistic understanding of connectivity challenges and opportunities in the state. These stakeholder groups were engaged across the varied participatory mechanisms and data collection activities. The table below documents public engagement involvement by stakeholder type.

Figure 22: Participatory Mechanisms for Oklahoma Stakeholders

Oklahoma Stakeholder Groups	Listening Tours	Focus Groups	Residential Survey	Organization Survey	DE Coalition	ISP Roundtable	Tribal Consultation	Local Coordination Workshops	Media Outreach
State Agencies									
Federal Agencies									
County and Municipal Governments									
Tribal Governments									
Regional Associations of Governments									
Nonprofits and Community-Based Organizations									
Organizations providing digital inclusion									
Civil Rights Organizations									
Labor Organizations and Unions									
Workforce Development Organizations									
Economic Development Organizations									
Chambers of Commerce									
Internet Service Providers									
Public Utility Commissions									
Broadband Coalitions									
Consumer Advocacy Organizations									
Faith-Based Organizations									
Neighborhood Associations									
Community Anchor Institutions									
Public Education									
Libraries									
Healthcare Entities									
Public Safety									
Higher Education									
Public Housing Authorities									
Individuals & Organizations that represent:									
Individuals with disabilities									
Individuals in households under 150% of FPL									
Individuals who are 60 years of age or older									
Individuals with language barriers									
People of color									
Immigrants									
Veterans									
Incarcerated individuals									

The OBO engaged in extensive dialogue with stakeholder groups and entities across the state, including organizations representing covered populations. The OBO also specifically focused on unserved and underserved communities during these engagement efforts to better understand the places and people who will be most affected by this Digital Equity Plan. These engagement activities are described in further detail in the following sections. Appendix D contains a full list of stakeholder meetings.

The OBO engaged with three formal sets of advisory supports during the planning process for the Digital Equity Plan. These groups are described below.

The Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board (OBGB) oversees the work of the OBO and sets broadband expansion policy. Membership includes the Lieutenant Governor, State Treasurer, three appointees of the Governor, and two appointees each from the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate.

Current members of the board are:

- Katy Boren, CEO, Oklahoma City Innovation District Inc. – Oklahoma City
- Mike Erhart, Managing Partner, Erhart & Associates LLC – Oklahoma City
- Dwight Hughes, Superintendent/CEO, Autry Technology Center - Enid
- Fob Jones, Attorney, Fob F. Jones Law – Sulphur
- Jim Meek, District 9 Director, The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Inc. – Okmulgee
- Amanda Mullins, Managing Attorney, Amanda Mullins PLLC – Chickasha
- Matt Pinnell, Lieutenant Governor – Oklahoma City
- Todd Russ, State Treasurer – Cordell
- Russ Teubner, CEO, HostBridge Technology LLC – Stillwater

The Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council (OBEC) advises the OBO and provides recommendations for policies that can improve, expand, and reduce the cost of high-speed internet in the state. The 14-member council includes the Executive Director of the Broadband Office along with appointees by the Governor, Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate, and Oklahoma Corporation Commission. One member, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate, shall be an Oklahoma resident and tribal leader of a tribe recognized in the state.

Current members of the council are:

- Mark Argenbright, Director, Public Utility Division & Consumer Services, Oklahoma Corporation Commission - Oklahoma City
- Darlene Brugnoli, Vice President Governmental Affairs, Verizon
- Jason Constable, Director, Regulatory Affairs, AT&T Corp. - Oklahoma City
- Representative of a wireless telecommunications provider with operations in Oklahoma and 24 other states
- Sachin Gupta, Director of Government Business and Economic Development, Centranet LLC - Stillwater
- Mike Hilliary, Chief Administrative Officer, Hilliary Communications - Lawton
- Ernie Martens, Mayor, City of Sallisaw - Sallisaw
- Stacie Pace, Associate Director, Canopy Healthtech - Owasso
- Mike Sanders, Executive Director - Kingfisher
- Josh Snow, President, Trace Fiber Networks LLC - Ada
- Robbie Squires, Director of Government & Regulatory Affairs, Cox Oklahoma Telecom LLC - Yukon
- Billy Frank Staggs, President, Chickasaw Holding Co. - Sulphur
- Daniel Webster, CEO, Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative - Vinita
- Jerry Whisenhunt, General Manager, Pine Telephone Co. Inc. - Broken Bow
- Dr. Brian Whitacre, Professor of Agricultural Economics, Oklahoma State University, Department of Agriculture Economics - Stillwater

The Oklahoma Digital Equity Coalition provides insight on barriers to accessing and using affordable, reliable high-speed internet for covered populations. Organizations serving on this

coalition represent nonprofits, libraries, local and state government, health care, and other entities providing digital equity services to covered populations throughout the state.

Members of the coalition include:

- Urban League of Greater OKC
- Oklahoma Department of Libraries
- Southern Prairie Library System
- Oklahoma Complete Health
- Heartland Forward
- YWCA
- Hinton Public Library
- Oklahoma State University
- Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education
- Bristow Public Library
- OU Health
- City of Tulsa
- Rise Broadband

Local Coordination

The model the OBO developed to engage with stakeholders during the planning and implementation phases of the BEAD and Digital Equity Act programs aligned with and supported all aspects of local coordination. While a full description of outreach activities occurs in this section, highlights from the strategies to address each of these criteria include:

- **Full geographic coverage** – The OBO engaged with stakeholders and received feedback from communities representing the full geography of the state. A key strategy to ensure geographic representation was the “Let’s Get Digital: Oklahoma Broadband Tour”, when the office visited 19 communities across the state. The OBO is conducting a second set of listening sessions in 10 communities to continue to discuss barriers and solutions to broadband affordability, access, and advancement.
- **Meaningful engagement and outreach to diverse stakeholder groups** – The OBO developed and engaged with a diverse group of organizations, governments, and leaders representing covered populations. These groups include local and regional governments, community- and faith-based organizations, education institutions, agriculture organizations, businesses and chambers of commerce, tribal nations, state agencies, public safety entities, health care providers and organizations, and organizations serving covered populations. Through focus groups, a statewide listening tour, survey collection, and interviews, the OBO learned about barriers to access, adoption, and use for diverse stakeholders. Additionally, the OBO hosted consultations with tribal governments in the state.
- **Utilization of multiple awareness and participatory mechanisms** – The OBO leveraged digital and non-digital means of communication for education and outreach purposes. These mechanisms included:
 - Statewide listening tour
 - Focus groups

- Roundtables
- Tribal consultations
- Site visits
- Organizational and residential surveys
- Email updates
- Board meeting updates
- Press releases
- Social media
- TV, radio, and print interviews
- Partnerships with organizations across the state

All these efforts ensured that stakeholders could engage with the planning process and were informed of the OBO’s work. The OBO posted regular updates about engagement activities on the website, including registration links to listening tour stops and the survey link for the organization survey. The OBO provided monthly updates about digital equity planning work at OBGB and OBEC meetings and shared upcoming opportunities to get involved.

- **Clear policies to ensure transparency** – The OBO operated transparently throughout the planning process, utilizing its website, email distribution lists, and monthly updates to the OBGB and OBEC to provide updates to stakeholders and promote opportunities to engage in the process. The OBO maintained and updated the outreach page on its website with information about listening tour stops, roundtables, and local coordination events. Listening tour stops were open to the public and media and were promoted through social media, as well as statewide and local press releases. The public comment process for this Digital Equity Plan will be shared with stakeholders across the state, with comments addressed and incorporated into the plan as appropriate.
- **Outreach and engagement of unserved and underserved communities** – The OBO prioritized outreach and made substantial efforts to engage with unserved and underserved communities. Entities representing these populations serve on the Digital Equity Coalition. They also supported outreach and engagement efforts to share engagement opportunities with covered populations throughout the state. The OBO conducted focus groups with underrepresented populations and ensured representative sampling of these populations in the residential survey. The residential survey was conducted in English, Mandarin, and Spanish to ensure participation from Oklahomans with a language barrier. The OBO also specifically focused on unserved and underserved communities during these engagement efforts to better understand the places and people who will be most affected by the BEAD program. Additionally, the OBO hosted consultations with tribal governments in the state.

Outreach and Engagement Activities

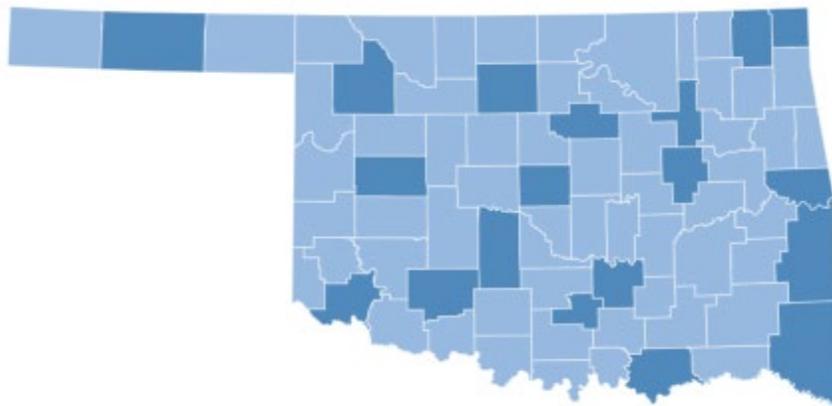
The OBO engaged with stakeholders by utilizing multiple awareness and participatory mechanisms. Through these mechanisms, the OBO ensured the public was aware of ongoing planning efforts and could provide feedback to the OBO on connectivity challenges and opportunities.

This variety of engagement activities, with a combination of digital and in-person opportunities, provided stakeholders clear ways to share their connectivity priorities. Several of these mechanisms are described in more detail below.

Statewide Listening Tour

The OBO traveled over 6,000 miles across Oklahoma on the “Let’s Get Digital: Oklahoma Broadband Tour”, hosting 19 listening sessions.

Figure 23: Map of “Let’s Get Digital: Oklahoma Broadband Tour” Stops by County



Meetings, held in libraries, university campuses, veterans’ halls, and other local venues, allowed the OBO to hear from communities about regional needs and priorities. The OBO visited the following communities:

- Weatherford (May 8, 2023)
- Stillwater (May 12, 2023)
- Vinita (May 15, 2023)
- Poteau (May 16, 2023)
- Broken Bow (May 18, 2023)
- Oklahoma City (May 22, 2023)
- Durant (May 23, 2023)
- Tulsa (May 24, 2023)
- Chickasha (May 26, 2023)
- Altus (June 2, 2023)
- Enid (June 5, 2023)
- Sallisaw (June 6, 2023)
- Miami (June 7, 2023)
- Sulphur (June 8, 2023)
- Lawton (June 9, 2023)
- Ada (June 13, 2023)
- Okmulgee (June 20, 2023)

- Goodwell (June 22, 2023)
- Woodward (July 18, 2023)

Understanding local context, including assets and success stories from the region, as well as pain points and needs, provided the understanding necessary to craft this Digital Equity Plan. The tour incorporated interactive polling to collect quantitative data for analysis, aggregation, and comparison across the regions. Through guided discussion, participants elucidated key barriers, regional assets, and top priorities for the state. Several Broadband Governing Board members promoted and attended these events, often as co-facilitators.

These listening sessions were held at different times throughout the day, with many occurring during evening hours to allow residents to attend after work. Food was provided at each event.

Outreach to local and regional governments, nonprofits, and CAIs ensured diverse participation and reach to covered populations. The OBO developed a communications plan to promote these meetings, with regular social media content and graphics, a statewide press release, and rolling regional press releases in advance of each meeting. An outreach toolkit, with sample social media, email/newsletter language, and flyers, allowed organizations to promote these events within their networks. The OBO staff participated in multiple regional and statewide media interviews to promote the listening tour and to ensure that residents were aware of the meetings.

Overall, 299 Oklahomans participated in one of the listening tour stops. Covered population representation at the tour was as follows:

Aging individuals	40.4%
Incarcerated Individuals	12.7%
Veterans	32.4%
People with disabilities	31.8%
Individuals with a language barrier	28.4%
Racial and ethnic minorities	33.8%
Individuals who reside in a rural area	56.2%
Low-income individuals	42.1%

Critical stakeholders to digital equity program implementation, including nonprofits, education institutions, local governments, and CAIs, attended these regional events to share their perspectives on connectivity challenges, opportunities, and current and planned partnerships. Representation by organization type on the tour was:

Representing an internet service provider	24.7%
Representing a government agency	19.4%
Attending as a resident interested in home internet news and service options	15.4%
Representing a for-profit business	12.0%
Representing a nonprofit organization	8.4%
Other	5.7%
Representing a college, university, or other institution of higher (post-secondary) learning	5.7%
Representing a library	2.7%
Representing a tribal government	2.7%
Representing a hospital, doctor’s office, or other health care provider	2.0%
Representing a K-12 school or school system	1.7%

Organizations represented at the listening tour events covered a variety of service areas within the state, with most organizations providing service or having geographic coverage in multiple counties in Oklahoma.

Multiple counties within the region	48.7%
One county	30.0%
Statewide	14.8%
National	6.5%

The OBO, as a new state agency, leveraged this listening tour to educate communities about the work of the office, make introductions to key leadership and staff, and build relationships with local networks to support the OBO during the planning and implementation phases of the Digital Equity Plan.

Participants, when asked to describe the internet in their region in three words, reported a variety of experiences. Top responses included:

Non-existent	Slow	Inconsistent	Improving
Fast	Lacking	Dependent on location	Unreliable
Limited	Expensive	Available	Fiber
Costly	Spotty	Lacking	Good

The variety of responses was consistent from location to location, with participants further describing “challenges with terrain being hilly and tree covered” (Sallisaw public meeting), “when the weather is bad, you never know if you are going to have internet or not” (Altus public meeting), and access to broadband being about “the haves and the have nots,” (Stillwater public meeting).

The OBO analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data collected at each listening tour stop, allowing for identification of key barriers and challenges for Oklahomans, as discussed in Section 3.

Residential Survey

The OBO conducted a residential survey with 1802 Oklahomans, sampling a cross-section of Oklahoma residents across the state. The survey was administered as a computer-assisted telephone questionnaire in summer 2023. The survey was administered in three languages: English, Spanish, and Chinese. The survey included representation from all covered populations except incarcerated people. Participation in the survey by covered population included:

Aging individuals	33.1%
Low-income households	23.4%
Individuals with a language barrier	8.3%
Racial or ethnic minorities	25.9%
Individuals with disabilities	29%
Veterans	16.7%
Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	31.1%

Section 3 discusses findings for each covered population.

Organization Survey

The OBO administered an organization survey to develop a broadband soft asset inventory with available digital inclusion resources in communities across the state. The survey was open to any

Oklahoma entity providing digital inclusion services, including community and faith-based organizations, local and regional governments, libraries, universities and school systems, private industry, and more. This survey was deployed in May 2023 and remains open. Respondents who indicated that their programs and offerings could be named publicly will be featured on a digital inclusion resources map, allowing residents to visit the map and find local resources.

Libraries were the largest entity type to respond to the survey. The chart below shows response by institution type.

Library	75%
College or University	3%
Nonprofit	4%
Local Government	3%
Regional Government	2%
No response	12%

Organizations completing the survey shared the types of services offered, including:

- Public Wi-Fi access
- College readiness training
- Workforce development skills training
- Help with subscribing to home internet
- Career readiness assistance
- Help with public assistance portals
- Training with specific software
- Public access to computers
- Computer coding education
- Community tech support
- Help enrolling in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Computer refurbishing services
- Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices
- E-commerce help for small businesses
- General digital literacy training
- Telehealth services
- Internet usage training
- Cybersecurity training
- Assistance from Digital Navigators

Organizations also indicated which covered populations they served. Any entity or organization providing these services are encouraged to share that information with the OBO by completing the [survey](#). This information will support ongoing planning and information efforts.

Tribal Consultations

From April through August 2023, the OBO engaged all 39 tribal nations with communications and invitations to attend tribal consultations. In-person, individual tribal consultations, and statewide tribal consultations were held, which gleaned important insights into the unique perspectives, needs, and challenges of Oklahoma’s tribal nations. Key takeaways from these consultations include:

- Within the tribes, there is a Digital Divide between some who have tribal-owned ISPs and those who do not, and some who have made connections with workforce education resources and those who have not (OSU IT and Career Tech were named as available resources at several listening tour stops). Many tribes desire more fiber technicians and installers.
- Of the tribes that do not have tribal-owned ISPs, they wish to work cooperatively and in collaboration with existing ISPs in their territories.
- The cost of laying fiber is very expensive. (This is something we have heard from ISPs across the state at most listening tour stops).
- Several of the tribes do not have sufficient grant writing experience in-house, which led to their first attempts at securing TBCP funding being denied.
- Several tribes desire to use BEAD funding to connect non-tribal households.
- Some tribes expressed concern for ongoing equipment and maintenance of infrastructure into the future.

Digital equity needs expressed include:

- Home computer assistance;
- Digital navigators in libraries, tribal community centers, or CAIs to provide digital skills training and/or tech mobiles that could visit smaller communities to train people;
- Telehealth resources; and
- Remote work opportunities.

Industry Roundtables

Internet service providers and other companies in broadband-related industries are important constituents in the work of ensuring affordable internet access for all. The OBO hosted an industry roundtable on June 15, 2023, to engage with ISPs on key aspects of BEAD and DE planning. Thirty representatives joined the call, with a provider type breakdown of:

Telephone company	20%
Electric cooperative	12%
Investor-owned utility	16%
Private business	48%
Other	4%

Most providers had between 1,000 and 10,000 customers and served at least two to five contiguous counties. In terms of technology, end-to-end fiber was the most represented, with

fixed wireless being the second most represented, and cable being the third. The roundtable engaged on various BEAD policy decision points, providing feedback to the OBO on workforce priorities, low-cost options, and ways to ensure universal coverage through implementation of the BEAD program.

The OBO intends to continue this engagement with regular roundtable discussions open to all ISPs.

Local Coordination Workshops

The OBO hosted two local coordination meetings during the planning process. The OBO, in partnership with NTIA, hosted an “Internet for All: Oklahoma Local and Tribal Nation Coordination Workshop” in Oklahoma City on January 19, 2023. The event brought together key participants in Oklahoma from federal, state, tribal, and local governments, industry, and other important stakeholders to discuss coordination on broadband efforts as the state prepares to receive significant broadband funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

The OBO hosted a follow-up event in Tulsa on May 24, 2023, to provide updates on workforce priorities, tribal nation engagement, and funding programs. At this event, the OBO hosted two roundtable panels: workforce and tribal coordination. A key takeaway from the workforce panel highlighted the opportunity available for Oklahomans to receive training as fiber technicians. These are critical jobs that will be needed for broadband infrastructure deployment and ongoing maintenance of networks and can provide upskilling opportunities for Oklahomans looking to transition into the sector. The panel also discussed opportunities to strengthen placement pipelines to ensure highly trained individuals get hired upon completion of their training programs.

Focus Groups

The OBO conducted focus groups with covered populations and underrepresented populations, along with organizations serving these populations, to build a deeper understanding of the challenges these populations face accessing and using the internet and of the programs and solutions that would be most beneficial. Focus group facilitators asked a structured set of questions, including questions related to broadband access, satisfaction with current service, device access and use, barriers to internet adoption, affordability of internet service and awareness of Affordable Connectivity Program, ways to find technical assistance and support navigating online applications, and internet safety. These results are referenced throughout Section 3, specifically in the needs assessment for covered populations.

The OBO partnered with AARP to conduct a focus group with aging populations in September 2023. Representation from covered populations included:

Members of a racial or ethnic minority group	40%
Aging individuals	90%
Rural residents	10%

The OBO performed a focus group with LGBTQIA+ populations in September 2023. Representation from covered and underrepresented populations included:

Members of a racial or ethnic minority group	20%
Rural residents	60%
Low-income	20%
LGBTQI+ individuals	100%

The OBO partnered with the University of Oklahoma’s Office of Student Life to conduct focus groups with Spanish language speakers in September 2023. This focus group was conducted in Spanish. Representation from covered populations included:

Members of a racial or ethnic minority group	100%
People with language barriers	100%
Rural residents	25%
Low-income households	25%

The OBO conducted a focus group with Veterans in May 2023. Representation from covered populations included:

Veterans	100%
Aging individuals	100%

Ongoing Engagement & Partnerships

The OBO plans to continue stakeholder engagement and outreach through many of these established advisory groups, communications channels, and an additional listening tour. This will ensure ongoing awareness of and participation in the OBO’s work from stakeholder groups, local governments, tribal nations, and communities.

The OBO will visit communities across Oklahoma in the fall of 2023 to continue discussions around barriers to accessing, affording, and using the internet. Stops on the fall listening tour include:

- Hobart (October 3, 2023)
- Muskogee (October 5, 2023)
- Krebs (October 11, 2023)
- Burns Flat (October 12, 2023)
- Atoka (October 17, 2023)
- Oklahoma City (October 19, 2023)
- Okarche (October 24, 2023)
- Duncan (October 25, 2023)
- Watonga (October 26, 2023)

- Ponca City (November 9, 2023)

Many of the stakeholders engaged will be active partners in the implementation of the Digital Equity Plan. The implementation section describes their role in this process.

Additionally, as relationships with and between the tribes continue to evolve, it is vitally important that communication channels remain robust and open. In no other community is the digital divide more apparent, nor is bridging that divide more important. With almost half of Oklahoma being ruled tribal lands, it would be impossible to provide universal coverage without proper coordination. Tribal consultations will remain a priority throughout the life of the OBO.

5 Implementation

5.1 Implementation Strategy & Key Activities

Throughout the extensive engagement and planning process, the OBO garnered deep understanding of barriers to accessing, adopting, and using affordable, reliable high-speed internet. Oklahomans shared not only the barriers and the challenges they faced getting online but what increased connection would mean for them and their communities. Having a reliable, affordable high-speed internet connection is a force multiplier across communities; increasing connectivity supports education outcomes, health care access, agriculture productivity and sustainability, small business growth, and so many other individual and community-level outcomes that benefit Oklahoma.

"Connectivity benefits communities in ways we don't even realize. Workforce development, education attainment, economic development, telework, health care. As we inch forward as society and become more technical, it is ethical to make sure everyone has equal footing technically."

- Community advocate

The barriers and challenges highlighted in Section 3, are what the OBO seeks to address in the implementation of the Digital Equity Plan. **By building and expanding programs, partnerships, and outreach in every region across the state, the OBO will accomplish its mission and vision to fulfill Oklahoma's digital promise.**

During the listening tour, participants ranked their top priorities for a more connected Oklahoma. These priorities, shown in the table below, along with the other analysis in this plan, informed the objectives, strategies, actions, and measures of success discussed in this section.

Priority #1	Improved high-speed infrastructure
Priority #2	Increased speed/reliability of internet connections
Priority #3	Making internet service more affordable
Priority #4	Upskilling and workforce development
Priority #5	Improved access to public computing centers and public Wi-Fi

Each goal in this Digital Equity Plan supports the OBO’s vision that **Oklahomans will have access to the information, resources, and skills needed to participate in society to the fullest and to remain competitive in a digital marketplace.**

Fulfilling Oklahoma’s Digital Promise – Affordability

Oklahomans identified affordability as a key barrier to being online. Having an affordable high-speed internet connection and an affordable high-quality device are prerequisites for accessing and using many of the modern applications and functions of the internet.

Goal: All Oklahomans, regardless of income, can subscribe to the internet and participate in online programs and resources with high-quality devices.

Objective: Ensure all Oklahomans have access to affordable high-speed internet.

- **Strategy 1: Increase enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and other low-cost internet service programs.**
 - Action: Disseminate ACP outreach materials through community anchor institution networks and other partners to drive program awareness and accessibility.
 - Action: Utilize existing and planned digital navigators at public computing centers and libraries to help covered populations enroll in the ACP.
 - Action: Partner with the Oklahoma State Department of Education to provide ACP resources to students utilizing free and reduced cost lunches or other ACP-qualifying programs.

What success looks like:

- Increase ACP enrollment by 10%.
- Train all digital navigators in CAIs in ACP enrollment.
- Increase the number of partners working with the OBO on internet and device affordability.

Objective: Ensure all Oklahomans have access to internet-enabled devices.

- **Strategy 1: Identify and support free and reduced cost device distribution programs, such as computer refurbishment programs and library lending programs.**
 - Action: Expand tablet program in Oklahoma correctional facilities.
 - Action: Engage with local CAIs, technology centers, and nonprofits who participate in or are interested in participating in device refurbishment and distribution programs.
 - Provide technical assistance and best practices to these partners.
 - Explore development of grant program to increase access to devices.
 - Action: Partner with K-12 and higher education institutions to enable 1:1 device programs.
- **Strategy 2: Support and promote access to quality technical support options.**

- Action: Encourage technology centers and education institutions to implement technical support programs that are freely accessible to covered populations.
- **Strategy 3: Identify and partner with other federal and state device programs such as Lifeline.**
 - Action: Partner with Lifeline providers to help promote ACP adoption alongside the Lifeline Program.
 - Action: Train digital navigators on Lifeline enrollment processes and outreach.

What success looks like:

- Increase the number of device access programs in the state.
- Increase the number of technical support programs available in communities.

Fulfilling Oklahoma’s Digital Promise – Access

With the expansion of online content and the transition of many governmental and private sector services and resources to online platforms, having the ability to access and safely engage with the digital world is essential. Increasing access to the internet unlocks a set of resources and possibilities, from online banking to staying engaged with your child’s school and education journey to decreasing social isolation by increasing the ability to connect with family and friends. Staying safe while being online is a critical component of this access, ensuring that Oklahomans have the ability and skills to engage with online opportunities while protecting themselves from online threats.

Goal: All Oklahomans have the ability to access online resources and navigate digital opportunities safely.

Objective: Ensure Oklahoma residents and community anchor institutions have access to reliable high-speed internet.

- **Strategy 1: Ensure all community anchor institutions can connect to affordable, high-quality internet.**
 - Action: Add community anchor institutions to the Oklahoma broadband map to identify funding gaps.
 - Action: Implement a grant funding program specific to CAIs for digital inclusion advancement and expansion.
 - Action: Conduct an annual audit of CAIs technology capabilities.
 - Action: Evaluate a statewide solution for E-Rate filing assistance.
- **Strategy 2: Ensure tribal communities have equitable access to broadband services.**
 - Action: Encourage internet service providers to provide digital equity resources to tribal communities within their service areas/build-out areas.
 - Action: Provide technical support to tribal communities in creating their own digital equity plans.
 - Action: Encourage tribes to implement tribal digital navigators and provide support as needed.
- **Strategy 3: Increase ability of multifamily dwelling units (MDUs) to implement free, reliable high-speed internet and/or Wi-Fi for their residents.**

- Action: Partner with Education Superhighway to encourage multifamily dwelling units (MDUs) to increase access to high-speed internet.
- Action: Reach out to cities to promote links to city internet.
- Action: Identify and fund pilot MDU locations through a grant program throughout the life cycle of the funding program.
- Action: Leverage existing partnerships with rural development and economic development organizations to help promote and fund installation of Wi-Fi infrastructure in MDUs.
- Action: Evaluate best practices for implementing free apartment Wi-Fi and distribute resources to support implementation.

What success looks like:

- All CAIs are visible on the state broadband map.
- The OBO develops and implements a CAI-specific grant program.
- Tribal communities develop digital equity plans.
- Tribal members have access to digital navigators in their areas.
- Grant programs are implemented to expand internet access in MDUs.

Objective: Ensure Oklahomans can access and use digital resources safely.

- **Strategy 1: Incorporate digital literacy and internet safety training into existing education, training, and community outreach programs.**
 - Action: Develop technology training programs for rural communities.
 - Action: Identify virtual training resources that can be incorporated into workforce training programs for covered populations.
 - Action: Provide grant funding for CAIs and community support organizations to offer digital literacy training to seniors and other covered populations.
- **Strategy 2: Create an online resource to allow all Oklahomans to find and connect to available programs and support.**
 - Action: Continue to collect resources and develop an interactive public map with digital equity programs for covered populations in the state.
- **Strategy 3: Develop internet safety training materials to ensure Oklahomans can stay safe online.**
 - Action: Partner with the Oklahoma Information Sharing and Analysis Center to create an internet safety best practices outreach toolkit for public distribution.
 - Action: Encourage public computing centers to implement policies and procedures that are compliant with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA).
- **Strategy 4: Promote safe online banking, especially in communities with low access to physical locations.**
 - Action: Partner with American Bankers Association and related organizations to create trainings and best practices for safe online banking.

What success looks like:

- Increase the number of digital literacy training courses offered in the state.
- Digital equity map published and used by residents.
- Online publishing of internet safety toolkit.
- All public computing centers maintain CIPA compliance.
- Increase utilization of safe online banking.

Objective: Increase accessibility of state digital resources for covered populations.

- **Strategy 1: Support state agencies with required accessibility audits, reporting, and best practices to ensure accessibility across all government websites.**
 - Action: Encourage state agencies to develop multilingual materials in multiple formats to increase access to state data and resources.
 - Action: Partner with NewView to annually assess accessibility of state agency websites and provide recommendations for improvement.
 - Action: Help distribute the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services' Disability Resource Guide to CAIs to ensure accessibility of resources.

What success looks like:

- Increase accessibility of state agency websites.
- Annual report from NewView of accessibility recommendations for state agency websites.

Fulfilling Oklahoma's Digital Promise – Advancement

Ensuring Oklahomans have the access to, and the skills needed to use, affordable, reliable high-speed internet will allow every resident to fully participate in the online world. Having increased participation in digital spaces and marketplaces advances community and state-level goals and ensures Oklahomans can thrive in digital ecosystems.

Goal: All Oklahomans will have increased ability to access online resources and training in ways that advance their health, education, and economic opportunities.

Objective: Ensure Oklahomans can participate in online opportunities to advance health, education, and economic goals.

- **Strategy 1: Increase access to telehealth programs across the state.**
 - Action: Partner with the Corporation Commission to create a telehealth onboarding package that includes information about broadband funding.
 - Action: Add telehealth layer to the OBO broadband map.
 - Action: Create a telehealth subcommittee within the Digital Equity Coalition.
 - Action: Expand telehealth programs in more locations, including libraries, correctional facilities, schools, and rural health clinics.
- **Strategy 2: Ensure local, regional, and state planning processes include digital equity planning components.**
 - Action: Provide technical support and model documents for local and regional digital equity planning.
 - Action: Encourage economic development and workforce strategic plans to include digital equity components.
- **Strategy 3: Increase number of digital navigator programs in rural libraries.**
 - Action: Develop a grant program to provide rural libraries with a digital navigator.

- Action: Develop and provide training and resources to existing digital navigator programs in the state.
- **Strategy 4: Identify potential areas of coordination and partnership across state agencies.**
 - Action: Share annual report of the OBO activities with state agencies.
 - Action: Identify potential state agencies to serve as additional members of the Digital Equity Coalition.
 - Action: Explore programmatic and data collection activities that support increased connectivity and other statewide goals in workforce, education, health, civic and social engagement, and essential services.

What success looks like:

- Increase the number of digital navigators by 10% each year of the grant program.
- Develop and publish digital equity planning resources for local communities.
- Increase the number of telehealth resources that are available in the state.
- Evaluate existing telehealth programs and provide a report describing best practices.

Objective: Ensure Oklahoma is able to meet workforce and economic development goals so all citizens can thrive in a digital world.

- **Strategy 1: Collaborate with partner agencies and organizations to leverage technology to support rural economic and community development.**
 - Action: Partner with Oklahoma Taskforce for Workforce Development to establish partnerships and assist with workforce development plan.
 - Action: Encourage work-from-home job placement in rural communities.
 - Action: Partner with economic development agencies to support CAIs expanding their digital footprint and outreach.
- **Strategy 2: Increase access to workforce training programs for covered populations.**
 - Action: Utilize public-private partnerships to develop workforce programs targeted at the point of need.
 - Action: Partner with Technology Centers across the state to build technology-specific workforce curriculum.
 - Action: Partner with Oklahoma CareerTech, libraries, and other workforce development organizations to implement digital literacy programs in correctional facilities.
- **Strategy 3: Encourage CAIs to create technology focused five-year plans that can be leveraged for future funding opportunities.**
 - Action: Develop and provide templates and general guidance on creating technology plans and identifying potential funding opportunities.
 - Action: Identify resources to help CAIs inventory their current technology hardware and programs.

What success looks like:

- Ensure workforce development plans have digital skills and technology jobs components.
- Increase the number of public-private partnerships for workforce development.
- Increase the number of CAIs with an understanding of their current resources and plans for upgrades.

5.2 Partnerships

The digital divide is a result of many intersecting systemic and technological inequities, and it would be beyond the scope of this plan to solve them all. However, through robust partnerships that encapsulate those most in need, this Plan can make significant strides in closing that divide. The implementation of this Plan requires a collective ecosystem of governmental entities, nonprofit and faith-based organizations, tribal entities, CAIs, and dedicated individuals all working together to fulfill the digital equity vision and mission described in this Digital Equity Plan. These partnerships are critical to the success of this work; no one agency or organization can do this work alone. The work across sectors and organizations will complement and enhance collective efforts to close the digital divide.

The OBO, while playing a central leadership role in these efforts, will partner with stakeholder groups engaged in these planning efforts to ensure successful implementation. In many cases, this Digital Equity Plan supports and expands work happening at the community and state-level to address barriers to digital connectivity. In others, the OBO strategizes innovative ways to bring digital programs, services, and resources to underserved communities and populations in the state, relying on new partners and partnerships.

There are several active and passive roles for community partners. Key partners who have been involved in the digital equity planning process are described in Section 4. All organizations looking to be involved are encouraged to reach out to the OBO directly via email or phone.

5.3 Progress Monitoring

The OBO serves as convenor and resource on digital connectivity, broadband infrastructure expansion, and affordability for state agencies, local, regional, and municipal governments, tribal nations, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders described throughout this Digital Equity Plan. The OBO will continue to monitor and engage in efforts to increase digital equity and opportunity in the state. The OBO also will conduct regular outreach, engagement, and data collection activities to ensure fidelity during the implementation of the Digital Equity Plan. These actions include:

- Regular convenings of the Digital Equity Coalition and related sub-committees
- Outreach and education efforts to local, municipal, regional, and tribal entities, CAIs, and community-based organizations
- Best practices reports aligned with identified strategies and objectives
- Survey and data collection efforts to track internet adoption and use
- Regular reporting from subgrantees
- Bi-annual Internet for All convenings to allow stakeholders to gather and share best practices and receive updates on BEAD and DEA implementation

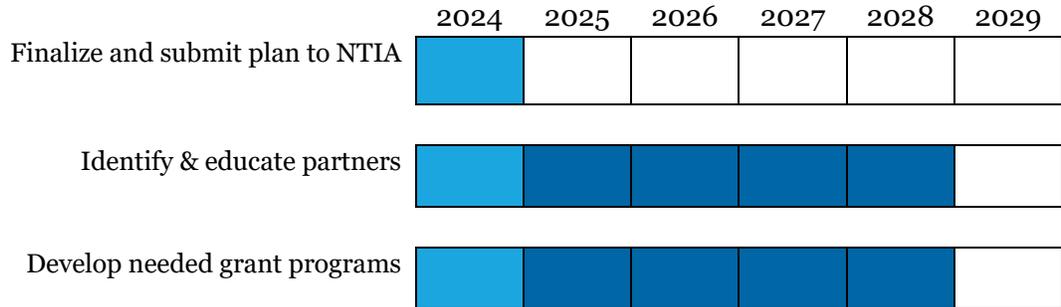
5.4 Timeline

The OBO will implement the strategies and actions described above throughout the five-year life cycle of the Digital Equity Plan.

Timeline key

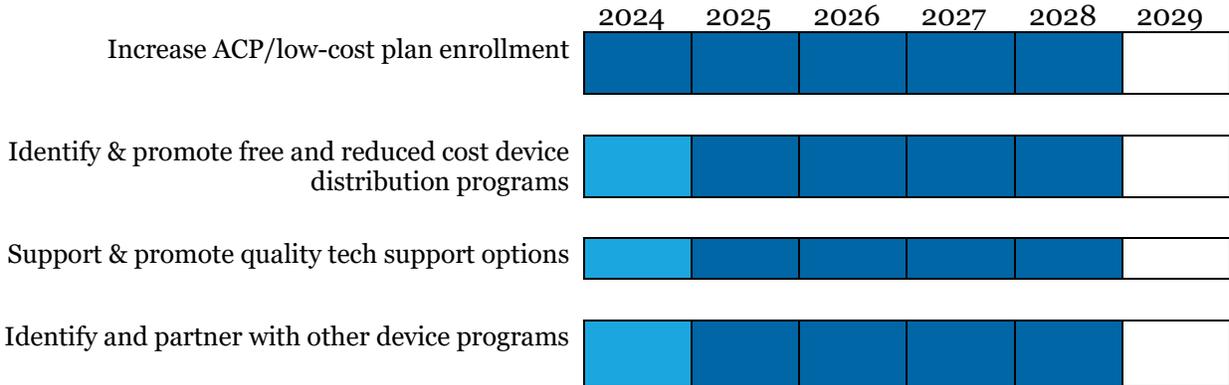


Digital Equity Plan Processes

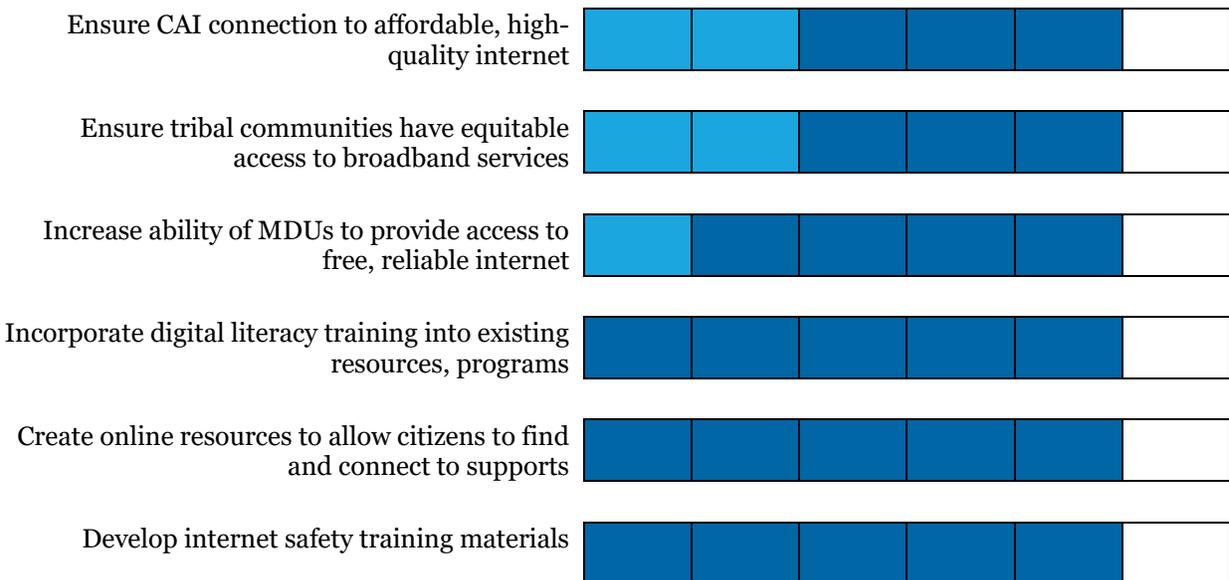


Strategy Implementation

GOAL ONE: AFFORDABILITY

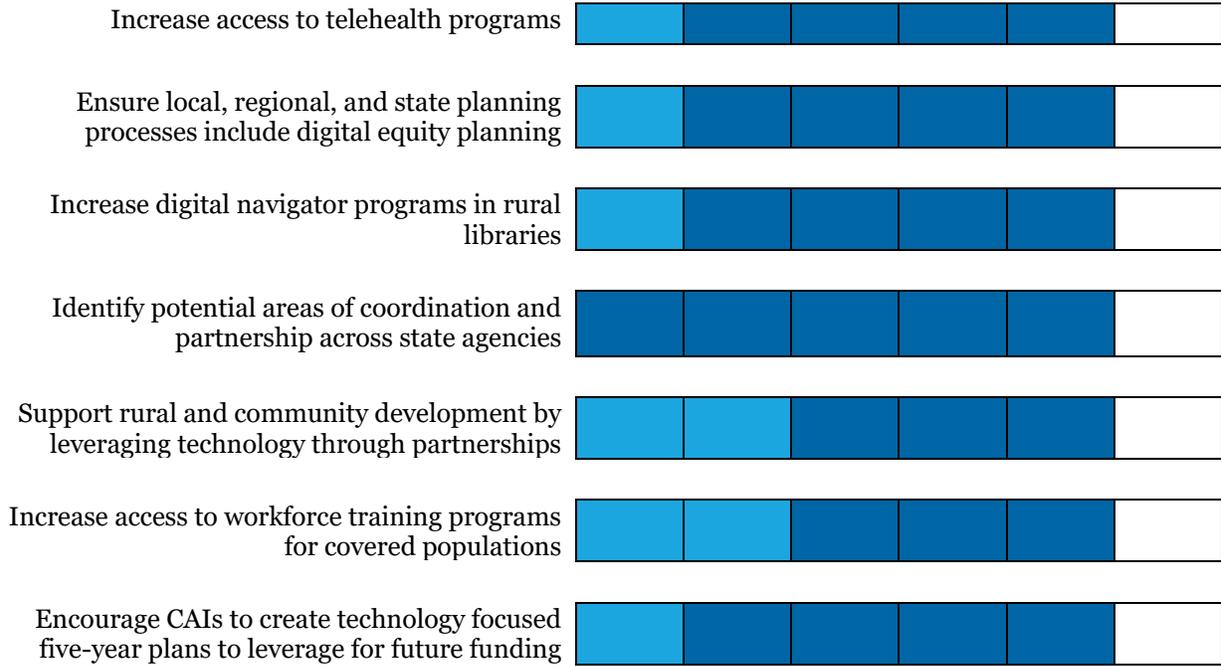


GOAL TWO: ACCESS

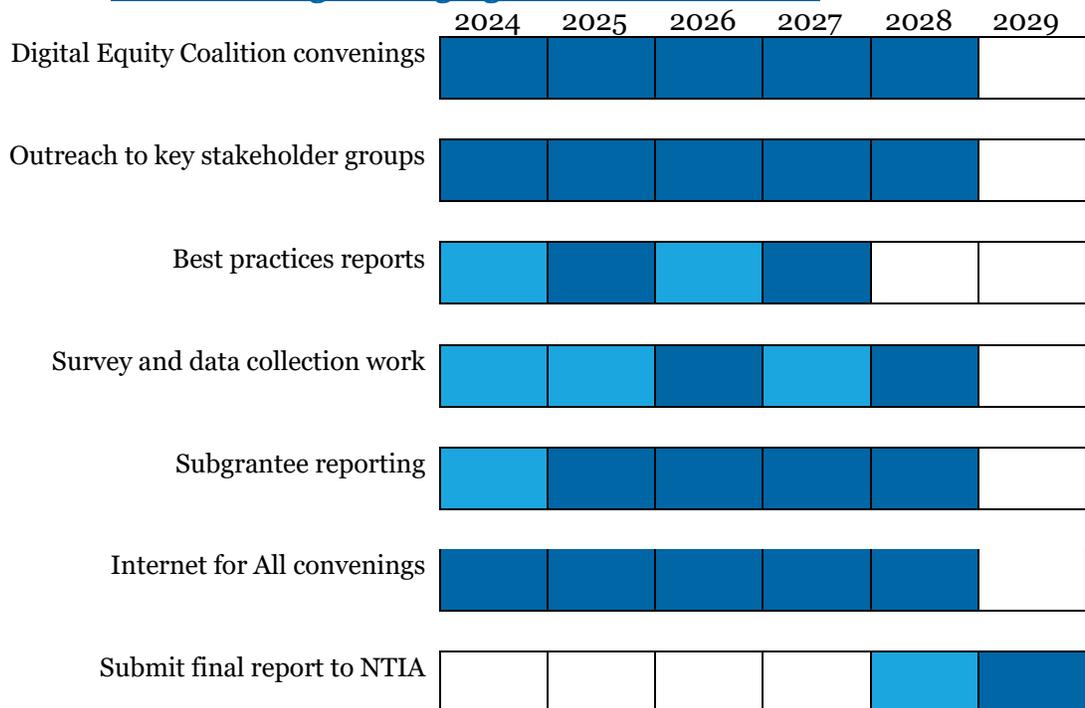




GOAL THREE: ADVANCEMENT



Monitoring & Engagement Activities



6 Conclusion

Accessing and using the internet is no longer a luxury for Oklahomans; in today's world, it is an essential component of being connected to information, resources, opportunities, and community. Through the digital equity planning process, the OBO has built a deep understanding of the challenges and barriers that many Oklahoma communities face getting online, especially individuals in covered populations. The OBO has also learned about the resiliency and creativity that exists in these same communities, where governmental, nonprofit, and private sector entities have all partnered together in innovative ways to begin the work of closing the Digital Divide.

Over the next five years, the OBO and its partners will leverage the data analysis, outreach and engagement, and planning work to implement innovative and efficient programs and solutions aligned with the three goals of this plan. These actions will support:

- **Affordability.** All Oklahomans, regardless of income, can subscribe to the internet and participate in online programs and resources with high-quality devices.
- **Access.** All Oklahomans have the ability to access online resources and navigate digital opportunities safely.
- **Advancement.** All Oklahomans will have increased ability to access online resources and training in ways that advance their health, education, and economic opportunities.

The goals, objectives, strategies, and actions in this Digital Equity Plan represent the next steps in ensuring every Oklahoman can access and use the internet. The partnerships, programs, and resources described in this plan will increase access, adoption, and use of affordable, reliable high-speed internet.

Through this work, the state will achieve its vision that **Oklahomans will have access to the information, resources, and skills needed to participate in society to the fullest and to remain competitive in a digital marketplace** and fulfill its digital promise.

7 Appendices

Appendix A: Oklahoma Digital Equity Plan: Crosswalk with Digital Equity Act NOFO

Digital Equity Act NOFO Requirements	OK Digital Equity Plan Sections	Page Number
STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS		
Identification of barriers to digital equity faced by Covered Populations in the State	Section 3.2 Barriers to Adoption and Affordability in Oklahoma	26
Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting, among each Covered Population located in that State: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The availability of, and affordability of access to, fixed and wireless broadband technology; b. The online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services; c. Digital literacy; d. Awareness of, and the use of, measures to secure the online privacy of, and cybersecurity with respect to, an individual; and e. The availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices. 	Section 2.3 Strategies and Objectives	11
An assessment of how the measurable objectives identified will impact and interact with the State’s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes; b. Educational outcomes; c. Health outcomes; d. Civic and social engagement; and e. Delivery of other essential services 	Section 2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes	5
Description of how the State plans to collaborate with key stakeholders in the State (CAIs, local government, LEAs, tribal nations, nonprofits, organizations representing covered populations, civil rights orgs, workforce development organizations, adult literacy organizations, public housing) to achieve measurable objectives identified above	Section 4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy Section 5.1 Implementation Strategy & Key Activities	39 53
A list of organizations with which the Administering Entity for the State collaborated in developing the Plan	Section 4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy Section 7 Appendix	39 77
ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS		
A stated vision for digital equity	Section 2.1 Vision	5
A digital equity needs assessment, including a comprehensive assessment of the baseline from which the State is working and the State’s identification of the barriers to digital equity faced generally and by each of the covered populations in the State	Section 3.2 Barriers to Adoption and Affordability in Oklahoma	26
An asset inventory, including current resources, programs, and strategies that promote digital equity for each of the covered populations, whether publicly or privately funded, as well as	Section 3.1 Digital Equity Assets in Oklahoma	14

existing digital equity plans and programs already in place among municipal, regional, and tribal governments	Section 3.1.2 Existing Digital Equity Plans	18
To the extent not addressed in connection with item 4 of Section IV.C.1.b.i, a coordination and outreach strategy, including opportunities for public comment by, collaboration with, and ongoing engagement with representatives of each category of covered populations within the State and with the full range of stakeholders within the State	Section 4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy	39
A description of how municipal, regional, and/or tribal digital equity plans will be incorporated into the State Digital Equity Plan	Section 3.1.2 Existing Digital Equity Plans	18
An implementation strategy that is holistic and addresses the barriers to participation in the digital world, including affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and digital navigation. The strategy should (a) establish measurable goals, objectives, and proposed core activities to address the needs of covered populations, (b) set out measures ensuring the plan's sustainability and effectiveness across State communities, and (c) adopt mechanisms to ensure that the plan is regularly evaluated and updated	Section 5.1 Implementation Strategy & Key Activities	53
An explanation of how the implementation strategy addresses gaps in existing state, local, and private efforts to address the barriers identified pursuant to Section IV.C.1.b.i, item 1, of this NOFO	Section 5.1 Implementation Strategy & Key Activities	53
A description of how the State intends to accomplish the implementation strategy described above by engaging or partnering with: a. Workforce agencies such as state workforce agencies and state/local workforce boards and workforce organizations; b. labor organizations and community-based organizations; and c. Institutions of higher learning, including but not limited to four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, education and training providers, and educational service agencies.	Section 5.1 Implementation Strategy & Key Activities Section 5.2 Partnerships Section 5.3 Progress Monitoring	53 59 59
A timeline for implementation of the plan	Section 5.4 Timeline	59
A description of how the State will coordinate its use of State Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding and its use of any funds it receives in connection with the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, other federal or private digital equity funding.	Section 2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes	5

Appendix B: Section 3.1.1 Digital Inclusion Assets by Covered Populations

This table describes the digital inclusion assets by organization in Oklahoma, as collected from the organization survey. This table will be updated as more organizations respond to the survey.

Organization	Location	Type	Digital Inclusion Services	Covered Populations Served							
				Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Adults	Veterans	Racial and Ethnic Minorities	Indigenous Persons or Native Americans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with Language Barrier	Rural Residents
OSUIT	Okmulgee	Higher Ed	ACP enrollment, Help with public assistance portals, Career readiness assistance, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Workforce development skills training, College readiness training, Digital literacy training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anadarko Community Library	Anadarko	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Muskogee Bridges Out of Poverty	Muskogee	Nonprofit	Internet usage training, Workforce development skills training, Help with public assistance portals	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Yale Public Library	Yale	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Southern Oklahoma Library System	Ardmore	Library	Career readiness assistance, Public access to computers, Help subscribing to home internet, Internet usage training, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portals, Digital literacy training, Computer coding education, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Workforce development skills training, E-commerce help for small businesses, Telehealth services, ACP enrollment, College readiness training, Digital navigators	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Geary Public Library	Geary	Library	Help with public assistance portals, ACP enrollment, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, Career readiness assistance	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Will Rogers Library	Claremore	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Public access to computers, Digital literacy training, College readiness training, Internet usage training								
Tuttle Public Library	Tuttle	Library	Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portals, Public access to computers, Internet usage training, Training with specific software	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Sapulpa Public Library	Sapulpa	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portal	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lawton Public Library	Lawton	Library	Digital navigators, Help subscribing to home internet, Career readiness assistance, College readiness training, Internet usage training, ACP enrollment, Cybersecurity Training, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portals, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Training with specific software, Telehealth services, Community tech support, Digital literacy training, Workforce development skills training, E-commerce help for small businesses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mabel C. Fry Public Library	Yukon	Library	Digital navigators, Community tech support, Public access to computers, Internet usage training, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portals, Digital literacy training, Training with specific software	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Miami Public Library	Miami	Library	Help with public assistance portals, Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Elk City Carnegie Library	Elk City	Library	Public access to computers, Career readiness assistance, Help with public assistance portals, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ardmore Public Library	Ardmore	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers, Internet usage training, ACP enrollment, Digital navigators, Digital literacy training, Help with public assistance portals	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Plains Library System	Clinton	Library	Training with specific software, Help subscribing to home internet, Public Wi-Fi access, Career readiness assistance, Internet usage training, Help with public assistance portals, Public access to computers, ACP enrollment, Digital literacy training, Community tech support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
El Reno Carnegie Library	El Reno	Library	Help with public assistance portals, College readiness training, Career readiness assistance, Internet usage training, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Delaware County Library	Jay	Library	Help subscribing to home internet, Public access to computers, ACP enrollment, Community tech support, Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Help with public assistance portals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fairview City Library	Fairview	Library	Digital literacy training, Community tech support, Internet usage training, Public access to computers, ACP enrollment, Digital navigators, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portal	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Madill City County Library	Madill	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Healdton Community Library	Healdton	Library	Help subscribing to home internet, Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers, ACP enrollment, Career readiness assistance, Help acquiring internet-enabled devices	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Guthrie Public Library	Guthrie	Library	Career readiness assistance, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, Community tech support	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guymon Public Library and Arts Center	Guymon	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers, Career readiness assistance, Internet usage training, Workforce development skills training, Cybersecurity Training, Digital literacy training	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stillwater Public Library	Stillwater	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portals, Internet usage training, Public access to computers, Community tech support, Help subscribing to home internet, Training with specific software, Cybersecurity training, Digital literacy training, Workforce development skills training, ACP enrollment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eastern OK Library System	Muskogee	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Digital navigators, E-commerce help for small businesses, College readiness training, Career readiness assistance, Public access to computers, Digital literacy training, Computer coding education, ACP enrollment, Help with public assistance portals, Workforce development skills training, Internet usage training	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Antlers Public Library	Antlers	Library	Career readiness assistance, E-commerce help for small businesses, ACP enrollment, Help with public assistance portals, Workforce development skills training, Public access to computers, Internet usage training, Telehealth services, Public Wi-Fi access	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Catoosa Public Library	Catoosa	Library	Help with public assistance portals, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wilson Public Library	Wilson	Library	Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, ACP enrollment, Career readiness assistance, Public Wi-Fi access, Digital navigators, Help with public assistance portals, Public access to computers, Digital literacy training, Workforce development skills training, College readiness training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Southern Prairie Library System	Altus	Library	Internet usage training, Career readiness assistance, Digital literacy training, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, Training with specific software, Workforce development skills training, Help with public assistance portals	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Donald W. Reynolds Community Center & Library	Durant	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Career readiness assistance, Workforce development skills training, Digital literacy training, Community tech support, Training with specific software, Public access to computers, E-commerce help for small businesses, Help with public assistance portals, Help subscribing to home internet, Internet usage training, College readiness training, Digital navigators, ACP enrollment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City	Nonprofit	Help subscribing to home internet, Workforce development skills training, E-commerce help for small businesses, Internet usage training, Career readiness assistance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heavener Public Library	Heavener	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers, Digital literacy training, Help with public assistance portals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Mustang Public Library	Mustang	Library	Digital literacy training, Public access to computers, Public access to Wi-Fi	✓			✓				✓
Wewoka Public Library	Wewoka	Library	Public access to computers, Public access to Wi-Fi	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
Pawhuska Public Library	Pawhuska	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Benson Media Center Okemah Public Library	Okemah	Library	Help with public assistance portals, Telehealth services, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Workforce development skills training, Public access to computers, Help subscribing to home internet, Community tech support, Internet usage training, Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access, Digital navigators, Career readiness assistance, ACP enrollment	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chouteau Public Library	Chouteau	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blackwell Public Library	Blackwell	Library	Internet usage training, Community tech support, Help subscribing to home internet, Public Wi-Fi access, Digital literacy training, Public access to computers, Help with public assistance portals, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lindsay Community Library	Lindsay	Library	Community tech support, Digital literacy training, Public access to computers, Workforce development skills training, Help with public assistance portals, Public Wi-Fi access, Internet usage training, Career readiness assistance, ACP enrollment	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bartlesville Public Library	Bartlesville	Library	Help with public assistance portals, Public Wi-Fi access, Digital literacy training, Public access to computers, Career readiness assistance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chickasha Public Library	Chickasha	Library	Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Waynoka Public Library	Waynoka	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓					✓		✓
Mabel C. Fry Public Library	Yukon	Library	Public access to computers, Community tech support, Help with public assistance portals, Help subscribing to home internet, Public Wi-Fi access, ACP enrollment	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elk City Carnegie Library	Elk City	Library	Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portals, Internet usage training	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Locust Grove Public Library	Locust Grove	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fairview City Library	Fairview	Library	Internet usage training, Help with public assistance portals, Career readiness assistance, Community tech support, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, ACP enrollment, Digital literacy training	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Beyond the Pages	Mooreland	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓			✓				✓
Chandler Public Library	Chandler	Library	Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alva Public Library	Alva	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Telehealth services, Public access to computers, ACP enrollment, Computer coding education, Internet usage training, Workforce development skills training, Digital navigators, Digital literacy training, Help subscribing to home internet, Training with specific software, Help with public assistance portals, Career readiness assistance, Community tech support	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Norman Smith Memorial Hinton Public Library	Hinton	Library	ACP enrollment, Community tech support, Digital literacy training, Public access to computers, Career readiness assistance, Internet usage training, Digital navigators, Public Wi-Fi access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Miami Public Library	Miami	Library	Digital literacy training, Cybersecurity training, College readiness training, Help with public assistance portals, Workforce development skills training, Training with specific software, Internet usage training, Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers, Career readiness assistance, Help acquiring internet-enabled devices	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sayre Public Library	Sayre	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Geary Public Library	Geary	Library	ACP enrollment, Public access to computers, Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Watonga Public Library	Watonga	Library	Public access to computers, Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access, ACP enrollment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grandfield Public Library	Grandfield	Library	Help subscribing to home internet, Telehealth services, Internet usage training, Digital navigators, Help with public assistance portals, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, ACP enrollment, Community tech support	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
SE Oklahoma Library System--Arkoma Public Library	Arkoma	Library	College readiness training, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portals, Computer coding education	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Tulsa City-County Library	Tulsa	Library	Training with specific software, Public Wi-Fi access, Workforce development skills training, College readiness training, cybersecurity, ACP enrollment, Career readiness assistance, Help with public assistance portals, Telehealth services, Digital literacy training, Help subscribing to home internet, Internet usage training, Public access to computers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chelsea Public Library	Chelsea	Library	Help with public assistance portals, College readiness training, Digital literacy training, Public access to computers, Career readiness assistance, Public Wi-Fi access, Workforce development skills training	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hydro Public Library	Hydro	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Public access to computers	✓		✓				✓	✓
Stillwater Public Library	Stillwater	Library	Career readiness assistance, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Help with public assistance portals, ACP enrollment, Help subscribing to home internet, Public access to computers, Internet usage training, Computer coding education, Public Wi-Fi access, Digital literacy training, Training with specific software	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Apache Public Library	Apache	Library	Public Wi-Fi access	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Buffalo Public Library	Buffalo	Library	Public access to computers, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Public Wi-Fi access, Community tech support	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kingfisher Memorial Library	Kingfisher	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Digital literacy training, Career readiness assistance, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Public access to computers, Internet usage training	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Ingersoll (Inola) Public Library	Inola	Library	Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with public assistance portals, Career readiness assistance, Public access to computers	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Metropolitan Library System	Oklahoma City	Library	Public access to computers, Internet usage training, Digital literacy training, Public Wi-Fi access, Help acquiring internet-enabled devices	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tryon Public Library	Tryon	Library	Public Wi-Fi access, Career readiness assistance, Community tech support, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices, Public access to computers	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Gleason Memorial Library	Ringling	Library	Public access to computers, Digital literacy training, Help with public assistance portals, Internet usage training, Public Wi-Fi access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hominy Public Library	Hominy	Library	Community tech support, Help with public assistance portals, Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access, Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Mannford Public Library	Mannford	Library	Public access to computers, Public Wi-Fi access	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Pioneer Library System	Norman	Library	Career readiness assistance, Help with public assistance portals, Public access to computers, Internet usage training, Public Wi-Fi access, Digital literacy training, Training with specific software, Community tech support, College readiness training, Workforce development skills training, Cybersecurity training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

OSU-Tulsa Library	Tulsa	Higher Ed	Help with acquiring internet-enabled devices College readiness training, Help with public assistance portals, Workforce development skills training, Public Wi-Fi access, Career readiness assistance			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Appendix C: Section 3.2.1 Covered Populations Needs Assessment – Residential Survey Methodology

To explore the internet access and adoption challenges that Oklahomans face, particularly covered populations in the state, the OBO partnered with several nonprofits and government agencies to conduct a survey of adults across the state. These surveys were designed to gather insights into households' computer ownership, home internet adoption, barriers to adoption, and how they use their internet service. Additionally, the survey collected demographic data from participants to identify differences among covered populations in the state.

The survey was administered as a computer-assisted telephone survey in three languages – English, Spanish, and Mandarin. From July 10 to August 18, 2023, this effort collected information from 1,802 adults across the state, with a cooperation rate of 34%. These respondents represent seven of the eight covered populations as defined by Section I.C. of the Digital Equity Act's Notice of Funding Opportunity: individuals living in covered households (i.e., those with annual household incomes below 150% of the federal poverty rate); individuals age 60 or older; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals with a language barrier (including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy); members of racial or ethnic minority groups; and individuals living in rural parts of the state. Inmates are considered a vulnerable population due to the constraints of being incarcerated, precluding the survey from interviewing incarcerated individuals. Of the 1,802 adults surveyed, 1,404 identify as members of at least one of these covered populations.

Appendix D: Section 4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy

The table below describes the full set of stakeholder meetings conducted during the planning for the Digital Equity Plan.

Stakeholder Meeting	Date	Covered Population							
		Individuals who live in covered households	Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a language barrier	Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council Meeting	12/15/2022	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	12/20/2022	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	1/17/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council Meeting	1/18/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Internet for All: Oklahoma Local and Tribal National Coordination Workshop	1/19/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	2/15/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council Meeting	2/22/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	3/22/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council Meeting	3/22/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	3/31/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wichita and Affiliated Tribes	4/15/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council Meeting	4/19/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BEAD Success Summit	4/19/2023								
Southwest Tribal Meeting	4/19/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	4/28/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Autry Tech Center ELC	4/28/2023								
70th Annual Pioneer Coop Meeting	5/1/2023								
State Legislature Office Visits	5/1/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wichita and Affiliated Tribes	5/4/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kiowa Tribe	5/4/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Weatherford	5/8/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	5/9/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ConnectX	5/10/2023								
Osage Nation	5/10/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Stillwater	5/12/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sac and Fox Nation	5/12/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma	5/12/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Vinita	5/15/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Poteau	5/16/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Turnpike Authority Panel	5/16/2023								
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council	5/17/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kiamichi Tech Center	5/18/2023								
Let's Get Digital Broken Bow	5/18/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pine Telephone Company	5/18/2023								
Southwest Tribal Meeting	5/19/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital OKC	5/22/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Arkansas Broadband Office	5/22/2023								
Let's Get Digital Durant	5/23/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Choctaw Nation	5/23/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Tulsa	5/24/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Internet For All Tulsa	5/24/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tribal Consultation State-Wide Consultation	5/25/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Chickasha	5/26/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cox Communications	5/31/2023								
Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.	6/1/2023								
Let's Get Digital Altus	6/2/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Greater Oklahoma City Urban League	6/2/2023							X	

Let's Get Digital Enid	6/5/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Telephone Association	6/6/2023								
Let's Get Digital Sallisaw	6/6/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Muscogee Nation	6/6/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Miami	6/7/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative	6/7/2023								
Let's Get Digital Sulphur	6/8/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Lawton	6/9/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Southwest Tribal Meeting	6/9/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chickasaw Nation	6/12/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Ada	6/13/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
AT&T	6/14/2023								
Bixby Telephone Company/BTC Broadband	6/15/2023								
Internet Service Provider Roundtable	6/15/2023								
Lake Region Technology & Communications	6/16/2023								
Chip Carter and Kurt Primuth	6/20/2023								
Let's Get Digital Okmulgee	6/20/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council	6/21/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tracon Global	6/21/2023								
TechFreedom and Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs	6/22/2023								
City of Miami	6/22/2023								X
Let's Get Digital Goodwell	6/22/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Let's Get Digital Woodward	6/23/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Seneca Cayuga Nation	6/23/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Telecompetitor	6/26/2023								
Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma	6/26/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
The Oklahoman	6/27/2023								
KOCO-TV, Channel 5	6/27/2023								
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	6/27/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives	6/28/2023								
Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City	6/29/2023	X		X			X	X	
Best Buy	7/3/2023								
Chickasaw Telephone Company	7/5/2023								
Pott's Family Foundation	7/5/2023	X						X	X
U.S. Representative Stephanie Bice	7/6/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OK Federal Delegation	7/6/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Infrastructure Association	7/10/2023								
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	7/11/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Department of Libraries	7/12/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OSU Libraries	7/13/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OU Health	7/17/2023								
Redlands Community College	7/18/2023								
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council	7/19/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Farm Bureau	7/20/2023								
Oklahoma State University's Institute of Technology	7/21/2023								
American Indian Chamber of Commerce Panel Discussion	7/24/2023							X	
The Gathering (American Indian Chamber of Commerce)	7/24/2023							X	
The Gathering Business Summit (American Indian Business Chamber of Commerce)	7/25/2023							X	
Corporation Commission	7/27/2023								
Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development	7/28/2023								
City of Okemah	8/3/2023								X
Oklahoma Complete Health	8/3/2023								
Chisholm Broadband	8/7/2023								
Oklahoma Pro temp's COS	8/7/2023								

360 Communications	8/8/2023								
NGA Broadband Advisors	8/8/2023								
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	8/8/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cherokee Nation	8/8/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OneNet	8/9/2023								
United Keetoowah Tribe	8/10/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
KGOU Capitol Insider	8/11/2023								
Dell	8/11/2023								
Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma	8/12/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Iowa Tribe	8/12/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council	8/16/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OBO Digital Equity Coalition	8/17/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
USDA Rural Development	8/18/2023								
Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes	8/22/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
US Department of Education	8/23/2023								
Quapaw Nation	8/23/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
City of Tulsa	8/24/2023								
Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Meeting	8/24/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OSUIT Site Visits	8/24/2023								
coreNoc	8/29/2023								
District 3 Convention Meeting	8/31/2023								
Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition	8/31/2023								
Okeene Kiwanis Club	9/1/2023								
OKSDE	9/1/2023								
Lightspeed Systems	9/5/2023								
State Auditor Cindy Byrd	9/7/2023								
CareerTech	9/8/2023								
Oklahoma Department of Libraries	9/8/2023								
Trans-Tel Central	9/8/2023								
"The Hot Seat" Interview	9/9/2023								
Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition	9/11/2023								
Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board	9/12/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

American Indian Chamber of Commerce	9/13/2023							X	
Education Superhighway	9/14/2023	X							
Office of U.S. Representative Kevin Hern	9/18/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NTIA (Department of Commerce)	9/20/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S. Department of Treasury	9/20/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S. Representative Kevin Hern	9/20/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S. Representative Josh Brecheen	9/20/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S. Representative Frank Lucas	9/20/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S. Representative Tom Cole	9/20/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S. Representative Stephanie Bice	9/20/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Southwest Tribal Meeting	9/21/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Benton Institute	9/22/2023								
Heartland Forward	9/25/2023								X
Bethany Kiwanis Club	9/26/2023								
Oklahoma Department of Libraries	9/26/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Connected Oklahoma	9/27/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kiowa Tribe/City of Pharr	9/27/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OK Digital Promise Tour: Hobart	10/3/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Thick Descriptions	10/3/2023								
Qualtrics	10/4/2023								
OK Digital Promise Tour: Muskogee	10/5/2023	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Watonga Kiwanis Club	10/5/2023								