District of Columbia
State Broadband and Digital Equity Office

District of Columbia
State Digital Equity Plan
Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program

April 2024

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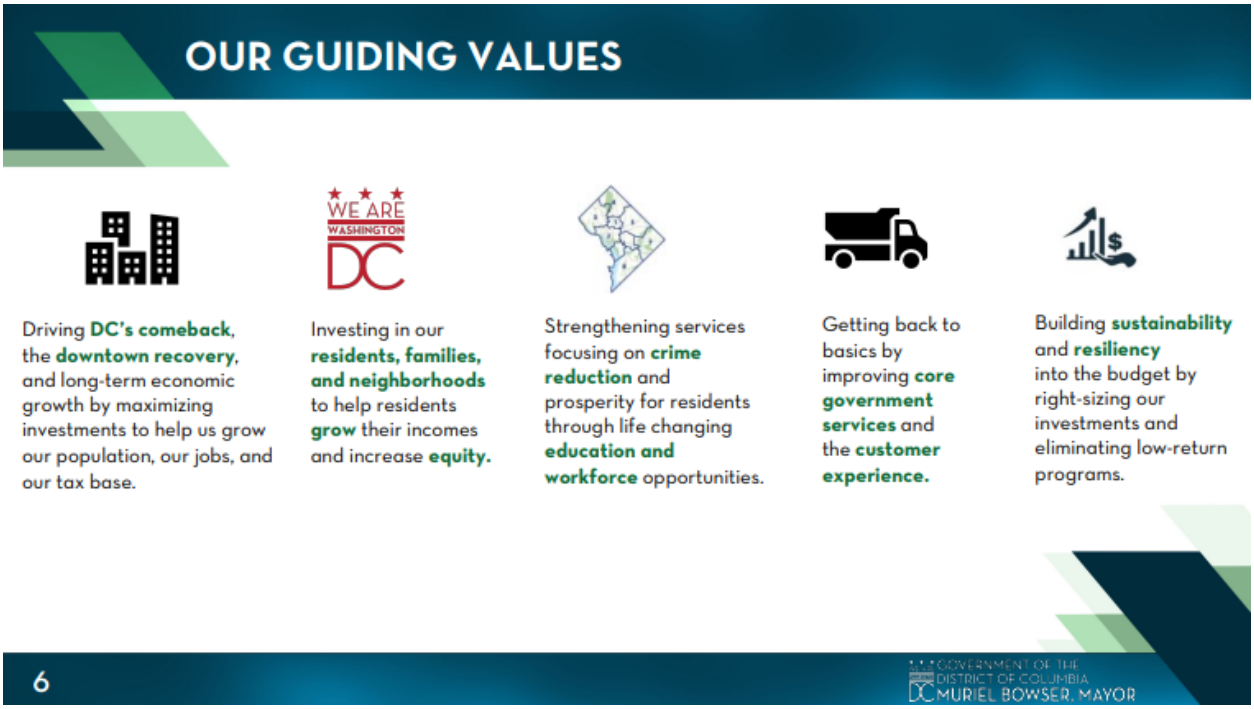
Table of Contents

1 Executive Summary

The guiding values of the District of Columbia's (DC or District) leadership[1] are based on growth, equity, education, workforce opportunities, access to government services, and sustainability (Figure 1). Each of these values—and many of the actions that can be taken to achieve them—can be enhanced by equitable access to high-speed internet, and a population equipped with the digital skills to productively use computers and the internet.

Figure 1. District of Columbia, Guiding Values presented in the Mayoral FY2024 #Fairshot Budget Overview, presentation to the DC Council, March 22, 2023.



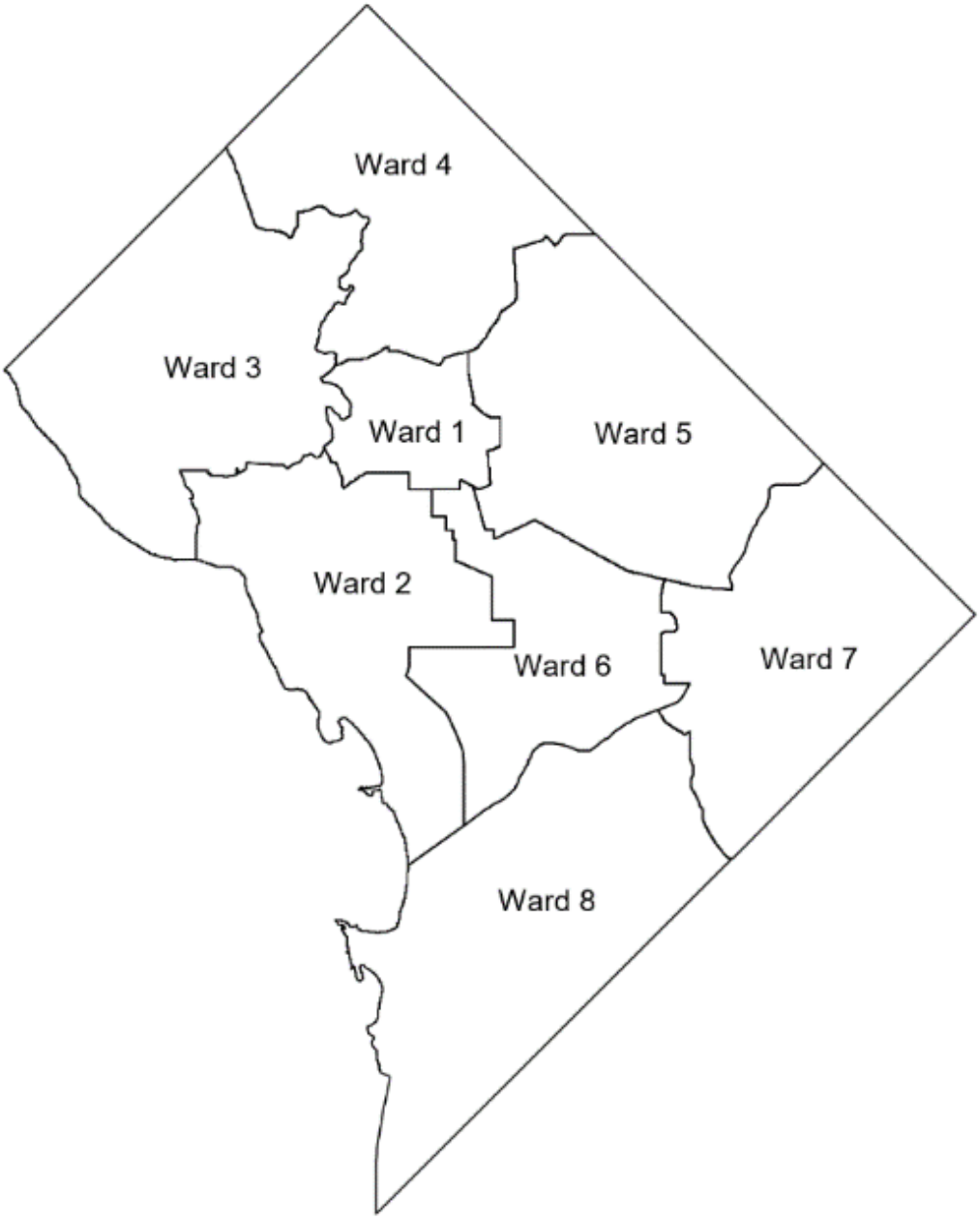
The DC State Broadband and Digital Equity Office (DC SBDEO or Office) has a vision for the District in which every resident and every business, in every corner of DC, can live, work, and thrive in the digital age – without bias or barriers. Through the leadership of the Office of the Chief Technology Officer and now through the State Broadband and Digital Equity Office, the latter of which was founded in 2022, the District continues doing the work to achieve that vision, including:

[1] https://mayor.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/mayormb/page_content/attachments/FY2024%20BUDGET %20PLAN_Presentation%20to%20Council_a.pdf

- Deploying high-speed, fiber-based internet services to health, education, and social service Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs)[2] via DCNet, which was initially constructed with seed funding from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).[3]
- Providing DCNet E-Rate services[4] subsidized internet services to schools and libraries since 2011.
- Deploying over 700 public Wi-Fi hotspots throughout DC.
- Deploying high-speed Wi-Fi at two public housing locations, Potomac Gardens and Hopkins Apartments, under a pilot program with the DC Housing Authority, and at five family homeless shelters in partnership with the Department of Human Services.
- Administering multiple digital equity programs through the Connect DC program.[5]
- Creating the Tech Together DC program, a values-led partnership among the DC government, the non-profit community, academia, and industries working together to bridge the digital divide through access, training, and opportunity.

[2] Schools, libraries, medical facilities, and others likely to subscribe to enterprise-grade internet service.
[3] The Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) is a grant program administered by National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to help bridge the technological divide, create jobs, and improve education, health care, and public safety in communities.
[4] E-Rate, a program of the Federal Communications Commission, provides discounts for telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries.
[5] A digital inclusion initiative of the DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer.

Figure 2. Map of DC wards.



To continue driving forward toward the vision, DC has a robust asset base that spans infrastructure and digital equity programs that it plans to leverage. DC has over 70 broadband and digital inclusion assets across broadband infrastructure networks and access points, as well as digital equity programs. These assets are already working towards closing the digital divide.

Nevertheless, there is still much more work to be done to achieve DC SBDEO's ambitious vision.

Among all DC residents, there are sizable gaps in digital literacy and skills, adoption, and device access:[6]

- **Digital literacy and skills gaps:** Approximately 15 percent of 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey respondents—which could translate to approximately 100,000 DC residents—do not feel confident in their skills for completing basic online activities using computers e.g., connecting to the internet from a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone, connecting with family and friends, or looking up information of any kind.[7] Even more survey respondents do not feel confident about safeguarding their privacy while navigating the internet or avoiding cybersecurity pitfalls, with 16 percent of survey respondents indicating they do not feel confident about adjusting their privacy settings on social media, and 17 percent reporting they do not confident about recognizing and avoiding scams.[8]

  A significant barrier to improved digital literacy rates may be that DC's digital learning programs lack sufficient capacity and are not accessible enough to meet the population's needs.[9] Among survey respondents with low incomes, 20 percent do not feel confident about their ability to find or apply for jobs, and 15 precent do not feel confident about their ability to use computers to pay bills or access online banking/financial services.[10]
- **Broadband adoption gaps:** According to the 2021 American Community Survey, approximately 88,000 DC residents in about 39,000 households (23 percent) do not have broadband subscriptions.[11] Survey results show that high prices for high-speed internet services that do not fit into a monthly budget are a significant obstacle to raising the number of households with broadband subscriptions.

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[6] "Device access" refers to computers and laptops.
[7] 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[8] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, "Not very confident" and "Not at all confident" answers applied to the following questions: "If you were asked to complete the following tasks using home internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them?"(1) "Adjust privacy settings on social media" (n=251); (2) "Recognize and avoid scams" (n =250).
[9] Tech Together DC 2021 analysis of digital skills training capacity by Ward.
[10] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, low income is defined as having an annual income below $20,000. In the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO, individuals living in a covered household is defined as having an income 150% of the FPL. In 2024, FPL for an individual is $15,060 ($1,255 / month), and for a married couple is $20,440 ($1,703 / month). 150% of the FPL is 22,590. The definition of low income in the DC SBDEO survey approximates the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO definition but does not match it exactly. The NOFO definition is being used for the operationalization of the plan.
[11] Assumes a household size of 2.25 people.

As a percentage of the total population, DC has more racial and ethnic minorities, as well as people with income below 150 percent of the federal poverty line, than the US does overall.[12] Many of these covered populations are concentrated in Wards 5, 7, and 8.[13,14] Every covered population in DC, except veterans, has lower broadband adoption rates than those outside these populations.[15]

- **Device access gaps:**[16] Only 83 percent of DC residents have access to an internet-connected device such as a desktop or laptop. In some areas of the District, this number is as low as 61 percent.[17] Survey respondents who are low income and Black or African American respondents are less likely than peers to indicate having enough access to internet-connected devices in their household.[18] Only 24 percent of low-income respondents and 32 percent of Black or African American respondents report having enough access to devices in their household, while 34 percent of all survey respondents say that they have enough access to such devices.[19]

DC has one of the country's highest rates of adoption – 50 percent – of the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), but much work remains to get all eligible recipients enrolled in ACP.

- **ACP enrollment**: Approximately 105,000 DC households qualify for the federal ACP,[20] but only about 53,000 (50 percent of those eligible) are currently enrolled.[21] The program is not widely known, which creates a barrier to higher enrollment.
- **Affordability**: For 11.9 percent of DC households – about 37,000 – a $30-per-month plan exceeds the affordability threshold set by the National Governor's Association.[22]

DC is actively and strategically engaging stakeholders to ensure that it hears their needs, perspectives, and aspirations. DC is enacting a transparent, inclusive plan for stakeholder engagement designed for full geographic coverage, meaningful engagement and outreach to diverse groups, and the use of multiple mechanisms for

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[12] Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau.
[13] DC does not have any residents who reside in a rural area, nor does it have any federally recognized tribes.
[14] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
[15] US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (link)
[16] Throughout this plan, device access refers to a computer or laptop access.
[17] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (link).
[18] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, low income is defined as having an annual income below $20,000. In the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO, individuals living in a covered household is defined as having an income 150% of the FPL. In 2024, FPL for an individual is $15,060 ($1,255 / month), and for a married couple is $20,440 ($1,703 / month). 150% of the FPL is 22,590. The definition of low income in the DC SBDEO survey approximates the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO definition but does not match it exactly. The NOFO definition is being used for the operationalization of the plan.
[19] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey. "Strongly agree" answers to the question" Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements - I feel that I have enough access to computers, laptops or tablets at home to meet my household's needs."
[20] The Affordable Connectivity Program administered by the Federal Communications Commission provides discounts to ensure that eligible households can afford the broadband they need. It is the largest broadband affordability program in the nation's history.
[21] https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/no-home-left-offline/acp-data/#dashboard.
[22] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates; https://www.nga.org/publications/broadband-affordability-resources/.

awareness and participation, with specific outreach to and direct engagement of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups and/or communities. The feedback gathered in this effort is critical to ensuring that the SBDEO's planning can meet the needs of the residents it seeks to serve.

Implementation. To progress towards achieving its vision, the DC SBDEO developed an implementation plan that includes four core activities:

1. **DC SBDEO-led programming.** The SBDEO is developing and leading select programs to foster digital equity. This effort involves continuing and potentially expanding ongoing SBDEO programs (e.g., Tech 101 workshops, ACP outreach, and digital navigators) and creating new programs (e.g., DC Digital Navigators). Some of these initiatives may involve collaborating with other DC government agencies and CAIs (e.g., workforce agencies, health-focused agencies, and universities).
2. **DC digital equity grant program.** DC has many digital equity programs that are making an impact, as well as clear opportunities for innovation in creating new programming. A DC digital equity grant program can help scale existing programs and establish new programming to drive digital equity for residents who need it most. Such a program could be a vehicle for co-investment in new and existing programs that demonstrate results in digital learning, adoption, and improving online privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and inclusivity. Along with community engagement and feedback, measurable impact and outcomes, sustainable program design and management, and matching funds, core assessment criteria will be used to ensure that digital equity funds are invested in effective and sustainable ways.
3. **Public-private partnerships.** The digital divide cannot be closed without engaging a range of stakeholders. Such engagement may include collaboration between public-private and philanthropic organizations to execute sustainable, potentially transformative efforts that foster digital equity (e.g., a DC tech hub, omni-channel tech support, a break/fix ecosystem, and device-loan and distribution programs).
4. **Ongoing stakeholder engagement**. Feedback from stakeholders is critical to designing, executing, refining, and improving an effective digital equity program. Such feedback must first be gathered from the residents whom the SBDEO seeks to enable, especially covered populations. Resident groups, non-profits, community organizations, government agencies, internet service providers (ISPs), private businesses, and academic institutions that focus on digital equity should also be engaged and may become partners in this important work.

This work cannot be executed and sustained without partnership and co-investment by a coalition of organizations from the public, private, and non-profit sectors. In the words of DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, "Every district agency is responsible for helping us build a more equitable DC." In this document, the DC State Broadband and Digital Equity Office aspires to meet Mayor Bowser's charge and to make a difference for the residents of the District of Columbia.

Note that throughout the document linked text in blue provides access to supporting materials.

2 Introduction and Vision for Digital Equity

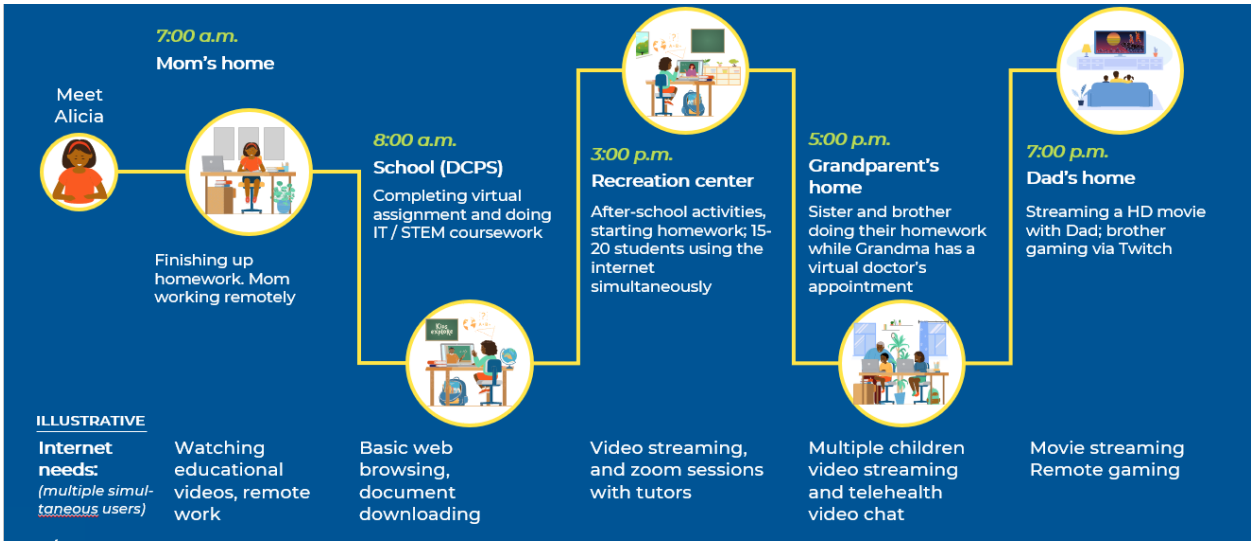
This section defines the District's overall vision, strategy, and objectives for digital equity. In addition, the following sections outline how existing plans align with this state digital equity plan as well as ways in which measurable digital equity objectives can interact with other outcomes.

2.1 Vision

The DC State Broadband and Digital Equity Office (SBDEO) is working toward a vision for DC in which every resident, every business, in every corner of DC can live, work, and thrive in the digital age – without bias or barriers.

To realize this vision, the DC SBDEO works to ensure that every DC resident and business has access to affordable, high-speed internet in their homes, and in their local Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs). It also works to ensure that every DC resident has the skills to effectively use internet access devices, and to be both productive and safe online. The Office works to enable residents to gain this connectivity and these skills, both in their daily life journeys, and in their journeys over time. This includes journeys of younger residents like "Alicia," who uses the internet throughout the day at the homes of her parents, grandparents, school and at an after-school recreation center (Figure 3).

Figure 3. "Alicia's" typical daily journey online.

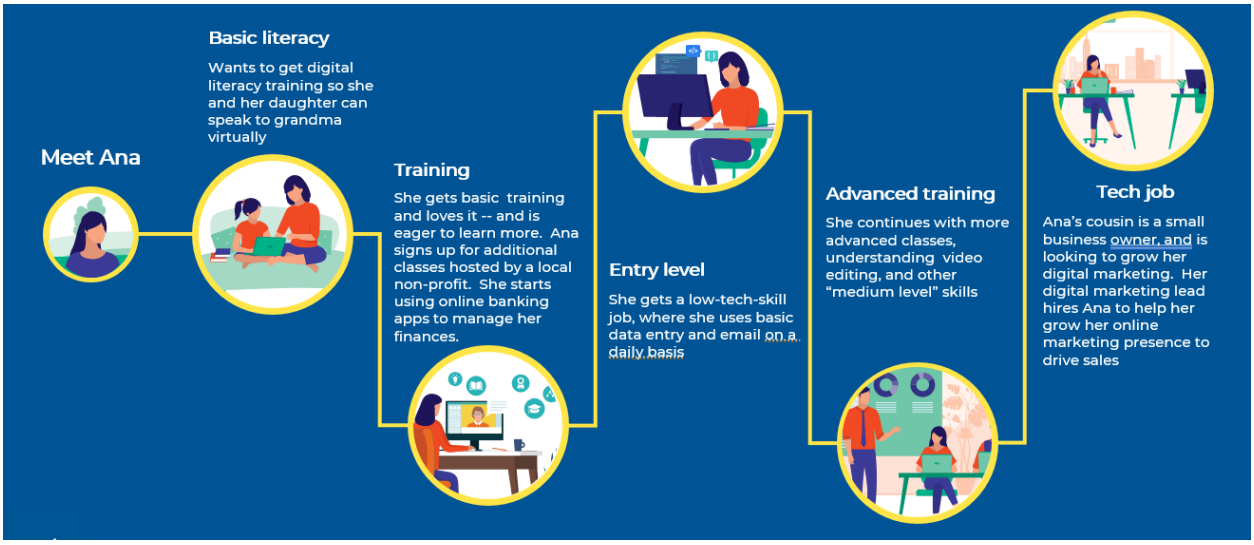


Another archetypal resident is "Darryl," who is getting a new device and needs assistance to set it up, to grow his skills, and to access public services. Later, Darryl needs support troubleshooting and replacing a device that has malfunctioned (Figure 4).

Figure 4. "Darryl's" journey with devices and tech support, over time.

Another archetypal resident is "Ana," who starts out learning basic digital literacy skills so she can help her daughter with her schoolwork. Ana discovers a passion for technology, so she gets training that begins with entry level skills, and takes her through to advanced training, enabling her to get a job in the high-tech sector (Figure 5).

Figure 5. "Ana's" journey, from basic digital literacy to a career in technology.



The DC SBDEO seeks to enable and serve all residents on all their digital journeys, enabling them to thrive in the digital age and unlock the benefits of participation in the digital ecosystem. Support for residents on their journeys, and the "unlocks" and impacts to critical life outcomes are a component of what success looks like for DC as it drives toward digital equity.

2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes

This section discusses how stated objectives for digital equity will impact and interact with DC's broader efforts and goals. Table 1 details the plans and reports released by other DC state agencies that have overlapping digital equity priorities. For each plan, the digital equity-specific goal is provided, along with the agency's overall goal. The agencies' missions involve economic and workforce development, education, health, civic and social engagement, and delivery of other essential services – all of which are enabled by high-speed internet access. DC does not have any federally recognized tribes.

Table 1. Details of other District priorities related to broadband.

Agency	Plan/report name (and link)	Broadband-related, broadband-enabled, and digital equity priorities
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED)	2023-2027 Economic Development Strategy	**Vision:** • To be a city where every neighborhood offers its residents, of all races and genders, the chance to achieve their full potential. • An urban center that is a destination of choice for innovators, job creators, and visitors. • A place where people choose to live, work, visit, and thrive. **Overall goals enhanced by digital equity:** • **Build vibrant neighborhoods** that have all the ingredients for residents to thrive by making strategic investments in assets and amenities (such as broadband, grocery/dining, affordable housing, transit, green space/recreation). • **Build education to workforce pathways** through quality education, employment and skills training that will allow all residents – particularly low-income residents – to access quality jobs. • **Expand access to family and wellbeing supports** such as childcare, mental health, safety, and homeless prevention services that enable residents to fully participate in the District's vibrant economy. **Digital equity specific goal**: Eliminate key amenity gaps across all neighborhoods and increase access to opportunity for residents: By 2028, ensure that all DC residents have equitable access to affordable, high-speed, and reliable internet service, and are empowered with the devices, tech support, and digital literacy and skills to use it effectively.
Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD)	DSLBD Performance Initiatives	**Overall goal:** Extend economic development to District neighborhoods through commercial revitalization initiatives and programs. **Digital equity specific goal**: Initiative 3.3: Enhance training class curriculum to incorporate current business internet trends. DSLBD created a training session that teaches businesses how to market their products through online social networking sites. The class

Agency	Plan/report name (and link)	Broadband-related, broadband-enabled, and digital equity priorities
		also highlights the need for business email addresses and websites. Initiative 3.4: Extend services to provide distance learning opportunities.
Office of the Mayor	FY24 Budget	**Overall goal:** Strengthening services focusing on crime reduction and prosperity for residents through life changing education and workforce opportunities. **Digital equity specific goal**: Appropriates $34 million over 6 years to DC Public Schools to improve information technology systems within schools, including improved bandwidth and connectivity, complete refresh of smart board technology systems in classrooms [in FY 24], and upgrading school data interfaces for families.
Office of Racial Equity	Racial Equity Action Plan	**Overall goal:** To put racial equity at the forefront of the post- Covid recovery, to rebuild in ways that give everyone a fair shot to flourish in DC. **Digital equity specific goal**: Identify "racial equity indicators" that measure progress toward a more racially equitable DC. These indicators include, but are not limited to, broadband access (measured by the percentage of homes with a broadband internet subscription).
Office of the Mayor	Fiscal Year 2024 Budget	**Overall goal:** Investing in our residents, families, and neighborhoods to help residents grow their incomes and increase equity. **Digital equity specific goal**: Various plans designed to support seniors, including $340,500 to distribute tablet devices to them and technical support in DC senior centers and public libraries.
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development	Innovation Districts	**Overall goal:** Drive DC's comeback, the downtown recovery, and long-term economic growth by maximizing investments to help us grow our population, our jobs, and our tax base. **Digital equity specific goal**: The District is making a $5 million investment to create two

Agency	Plan/report name (and link)	Broadband-related, broadband-enabled, and digital equity priorities
		innovation districts. The Southwest Mobility Innovation District continues to demonstrate how innovative mobility solutions make DC more equitable, sustainable, safe, and prosperous. The Penn West Equity and Innovation District is on its way to becoming the world's destination for uniting digital technology with public policy, equity, and social impact.
DC Department of Employment Services	Grant to Improve Unemployment Insurance System and Equity Access to DC Workers	**Overall goal:** Addressing equity and improving the District's unemployment insurance system, enhance language access for all claimants, and better assist District workers in their ability to support themselves and their families. **Digital equity specific goal**: One focus of this $2.28 million grant will be to reach communities that experience barriers to online access by bridging the digital divide.
Office of Work Opportunity (Department of Human Services)	Job Clubs	**Overall goal:** Offer intensive and interactive instructional experiences and activities related to employment. **Digital equity specific goal**: Services provided include access to the internet to remove digital accessibility as a barrier.
DC Homeland Security	Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Initiative 2.6.3	**Overall goal:** Promote job readiness through intensive and interactive instructional experiences and activities related to employment. **Digital equity specific goal**: Strengthen communication capabilities by deploying a wireless broadband public safety network throughout the National Capital Region.[23]
Public Service Commission District of Columbia	Lifeline Program	**Overall goal:** Ensure the safety, reliability, and sustainability of the District's utility distribution systems. **Digital equity specific goal**: Make telephone and broadband services more affordable for consumers in covered households (low-income consumers).

[23] This relates to the goal to provide access to essential services.

Agency	Plan/report name (and link)	Broadband-related, broadband-enabled, and digital equity priorities
Office of Deputy Mayor for Health & Human Services	Age-Friendly DC 2028 Strategic Plan	**Overall goal:** To keep older residents connected to their community, friends, and family. **Digital equity specific goal**: 1) Identify & promote technology training opportunities available to DC seniors. 2) Assist in the obtainment of full- and part-time work opportunities by enabling technical assistance (training).

These plans were incorporated into the DC State Digital Equity Plan in three ways:

1. The digital equity-focused activities described above were reviewed and incorporated into the DC asset inventory if the programs still exist and continue to serve the community.
2. The needs and gaps identified by the programs were reviewed during the DC SBDEO's needs assessment and incorporated where those needs and gaps persist.
3. The programs' goals and objectives were reviewed by the DC SBDEO and informed the prioritized objectives.

2.2.2 Impact and interaction of measurable objectives and digital equity with the District's broader development efforts

Based on the programs reviewed and presented in Table 1 and the broader development efforts in DC, an assessment was performed on how the measurable objectives impact and interact with the following:

1. **Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes:** The DC 2023 – 2027 Economic Development Strategy emphasizes the need for residents to have access to high-speed, reliable internet and to the devices, tech support, and digital literacy and skills that will empower them to use it. The strategy set a key performance indicator (KPI) for monitoring and measuring the share of households that have adopted broadband services and the gaps in broadband access that need to be closed, primarily in Wards 5, 7, and 8. The resulting observations directly align with the findings presented in this DC State Digital Equity Plan and with the measurable objectives included in 1A (infrastructure) and 1D (adoption). Objectives 2A (digital literacy) and 3B (digital skills for learning and employment) relate to the Office of Work Opportunity's efforts to offer intensive, interactive instructional experiences and activities related to employment and services that enable digital access. The SBDEO may also expand current digital equity programming – including

workforce development programs like the DC Infrastructure Academy – to better prepare residents for technology careers.[24]

This connects to the following DC goals and objectives for digital equity (as outlined in Section 2.3):

- Goal 1, Objective 1A – Infrastructure to achieve universal (100 percent) availability of 100/20 Mbps in DC households. This accomplishment will help residents find work, apply for jobs, develop the skills necessary for work, and ultimately contribute to workforce development in DC.
- Goal 1, Objective 1D – Increased adoption among covered populations. Fulfilling this objective would also make workforce development more equitable, as covered populations who are disadvantaged in the workforce will have a better chance of accessing work. Additionally, having reliable internet access will give covered populations more opportunities to develop the digital skills needed in the workforce, thereby narrowing the employment gap between covered and non-covered populations in DC.
- Objective 2A – Technology distribution. Achieving this objective involves effectively communicating the value of a connected device to all DC residents and ensuring that all have access to a device. Expansive device access is vital for workforce development in DC, as devices are required to develop digital skills and to use the internet to apply to jobs, as described above. Additionally, several jobs require devices—particularly as work-from-home positions proliferate—so having device access gives residents more flexibility and opportunity in their job choices.
- Objective 3B – Digital skills for learning and employment. Digital skills will enable DC residents to use technology to improve their learning and to access the tools and jobs of the digital economy. Better learning and skills development will help to develop a high-quality, highly skilled workforce in DC.

All covered populations will be affected by this effort, as all covered populations are part of the workforce. These populations (individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, and members of a racial or ethnic minority group) currently face disadvantages in the labor market, including inequitable access to education, training, and resources, as well as greater discrimination in employment. Internet and device access will be vitally important to bridging the resource gap and addressing other disadvantages these groups face in the workplace. Providing more equitable opportunities for covered populations in the workforce will lead to a healthier, better workforce in DC overall.

[24] DC Initial Proposal Volume II, Tech Together DC [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/_files/ugd/19da12_2856013ccc324d5a9852ed5c0709a0c5.pdf].

2. **Education outcomes:** The Office of the Mayor allocates millions in funding to improve technology systems in District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). The DCPS's Empowered Learners Initiative (ELi), a comprehensive three-year commitment endorsed by Mayor Bowser in the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) budget, has already made strides toward closing the digital divide and empowering every learner through technology. The ELi has worked to ensure that students in the third through twelfth grades have equitable access to technology through a one-to-one student-to-device ratio, and that DCPS educators are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to help students use technology for learning.[25] This work aligns with the support the OCTO provided to DCPS in 2020 to set up the technical infrastructure needed for a safe return to school for teachers and students.[26]

This goal relates to the following DC goals and objectives for digital equity (as outlined in Section 2.3):

- Goal 4, Objective 4A – Digital literacy: Enabling all residents to be proficient and safe online and to increase their confidence in navigating information and communication technologies. Given the integration of digital skills and technology use within education at all levels, digital literacy is vital for educational attainment and achievement. Although schools and libraries provide internet access and some device access, a dearth of digital skills among both learners and educators prevents them from fully and optimally using their tools. Digital skills allow learners and educators to navigate software and apps that are used in school and enable them to access and use a wider range of online resources for learning and teaching.

This goal affects covered households in particular, as low-income students are less likely to be able to afford devices and are more likely to rely on rental devices that provide temporary access. This lack of affordability has widened the gap in digital skills, as having consistent access to devices enables students to constantly develop their digital skills by navigating websites, apps, and online resources. The gap in digital skills also translates to a gap in educational outcomes between students who are low income and those who are not, given the increasingly digitized education system in DC Moreover, the inability to afford devices affects members of covered populations who are not enrolled in formal education, as lack digital literacy hinders them from successfully completing training and certifications that may improve their employability. Strong digital literacy also enables residents to learn informally—for example, by recognizing and using reliable news sources, connecting to and learning from social media, and gaining access to a plethora of digital resources, such as YouTube videos.

[25] Empowered Learners Initiative (ELi), DC Public Schools, [https://dcps.dc.gov/page/empowered-learners-initiative-eli-0].
[26] DC Tech Plan | FY23-FY25, Our Accomplishments, OCTO.

3. **Health outcomes:** To improve health outcomes, the DC government invests in telehealth programming and helps older residents to use it. The Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF) awarded grants to local organizations to support new telehealth services for residents of Wards 7 and 8, homeless shelters, and public housing developments.[27] The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services also plans to identify technology that will help DC seniors gain access to healthcare and to provide technical assistance to older residents who may need devices to access healthcare services.

This goal relates to the following DC goals and objectives for digital equity (as outlined in Section 2.3):

- Goal 4, Objective 4B – Healthcare: Increasing the use of telehealth to provide more access to care and wider healthcare options. This objective relates directly to improving health outcomes. It affects the covered population of aging individuals especially, as these residents often require help in accessing healthcare, particularly telehealth. Equipping aging individuals to access telehealth services is especially important to residents with physical limitations who struggle to access in-person healthcare. Individuals within covered households will also benefit, as telehealth may prove to be a more accessible, cheaper alternative to some of the healthcare services they require. Moreover, they will have more flexibility in scheduling appointments outside their working hours. Ultimately, healthcare affects every resident in DC, and having more reliable healthcare options—particularly via telehealth options—will benefit all, not least by shrinking the gap in healthcare access that is affecting covered populations.

4. **Civic and social engagement:** DC's Economic Development Strategy envisions neighborhoods where all residents can reach their full potential and live, work, socialize, and thrive. DC's efforts to encourage full civic and social engagement among residents aim to apply their feedback and invest in improving wellbeing, connection, and the use of digital tools and apps for better quality of life.

This goal relates to the following DC goals and objectives for digital equity (as outlined in Section 2.3):

- Goal 3, Objective 3C – Improving wellbeing: Tracking residents' feedback and working toward improved well-being, social connection, and use of digital tools and apps for quality of life (such as eHealth and social media). This objective pertains directly to civic and social engagement, as being connected and able to use digital tools enables residents to participate in social experiences. For example, using social media allows people to connect with friends and family, meet new people, plan social experiences, and ultimately improve their social wellbeing and

[27] Telehealth Innovation Program, Department of Health Care Finance – DHCF.

engagement. Furthermore, digital tools such as social media encourage civic participation; apps like X (Twitter), for example, share information about current and local affairs and events, and they encourage interest in civic and social matters. This goal affects the covered population of aging individuals, in particular. Engagement and coordination with local organizations has shown that a key barrier to social wellbeing within DC's elderly community has been limited device access and the inability to use social media apps where family, friends, and the broader community are increasingly connected. Given that the current social environment is highly digitized, it is vital that all residents feel connected to the local community in DC and society in general. This limited access and skills also impact covered populations, as low-income individuals are less likely to have consistent access to devices and internet service, which hinders them from engaging in the conversations and social networking that take place on social media.

5. **Delivering essential services:** The Department of Employment Services (DOES) seeks to improve the unemployment insurance system to reach communities facing barriers to online access, including accessibility and language barriers. The DOES's goals relate directly to the efforts described in this State Digital Equity Plan and to creating user-centric digital experiences. The SBDEO may acquire special-purpose community engagement resources—like mobile technology venues—to bring training and outreach directly to the populations most in need. In addition, the SBDEO hopes to improve the online delivery of government services—particularly by simplifying the online interface with DC government and making it more accessible to residents who are affected by the digital divide.[28]

This goal pertains to the following DC goals and objectives for digital equity (as outlined in Section 2.3):

- Goal 3, Objective 3C – Improving wellbeing. Residents' wellbeing can be tracked by using their feedback and working to improve their well-being, connectedness, and use of digital tools and apps (such as eHealth and social media) for better quality of life. This aim will assist in the delivery of essential services by enabling residents to use digital tools and apps to access services that boost their quality of life, such as health-based and resident services.
- Goal 4, Objective 4C – Delivering essential services. Sign-ups for key social services increase with easier access via the internet. Such services include key social services (such as SNAP, TANF, cash assistance, and medical benefits). This objective affects the covered populations of individuals with disabilities and individuals with language barriers in particular, as these groups are key targets of the SBDEO's efforts to improve the unemployment insurance system. Individuals from covered households are also more likely to benefit from improved access to

[28] Initial Proposal Volume II, Tech Together DC.

social services such as SNAP and TANF. These services are specifically designed to benefit covered populations in DC.

2.2.3 Coordination of use of funds

All broadband-related funding received by DC will be coordinated by and flow through the SBDEO. As such, the SBDEO plans to direct the use of funds for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program toward realizing DC's vision for broadband deployment and digital equity.

The DC State Digital Equity Plan and DC's Five-Year Action Plan were drafted simultaneously and by the same team to ensure that their stated vision, strategy, objectives, activities, and timelines align. The stakeholder engagement processes for both were likewise undertaken concurrently. The SDBEO plans to use the same selection process for the SDEP Digital Equity Grant Program and the non-deployment competitive grant program described in the BEAD Initial Proposal (Requirement 9: Use of funds for non-deployment activities). But DC plans to award grants to different applicants to avoid duplication of awards. Funds will be deployed in coordination with the DC digital equity grant program detailed in this plan to avoid duplicative efforts.

2.3 Strategy and Objectives

To chart a path toward achieving the vision, the DC SBDEO has four goals and multiple measurable objectives that will guide its actions and investments. Each of these goals targets all DC residents, with emphasis on covered populations.[29, 30] DC residents represent the following covered populations (based on the NTIA's definition of covered populations)[31]:

- Individuals who live in covered households (i.e., a household, the income of which for the most recently completed year is not more than 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level, as determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census).
- Aging individuals (60 and above).
- Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a federal correctional facility (justice-impacted individuals).[32]

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[29] DC does not have any federally recognized Indian tribes or any individuals that primarily reside in a rural area.
[30] NTIA's definition from the Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO: Covered populations are individuals who live in covered households, including aging individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier (including those who are English learners and have low levels of literacy), members of racial or ethnic minority groups, and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area. Also included are incarcerated individuals (other than those incarcerated in a federal correctional facility). DC does not have any individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.
[31] Digital Equity Act: State Capacity Grant Program, Planning Grants, and Competitive Grant FAQs, NTIA.
[32] For the purposes of the DC State Digital Equity Plan, the definition of incarcerated individuals will be expanded to include all justice-impacted individuals, including juveniles, and returning citizens. This will be noted in parentheses.

- Veterans.
- Individuals with disabilities.
- 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.

DC does not have any individuals that reside in a primarily rural area.

DC's goals for digital equity include:

	Goal	Relevant requirement addressed from the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (pages 20-22).
1	**Make high-quality, affordable, high-speed internet accessible to all residents of DC in their homes and local community anchor institutions** and drive equitable adoption of internet service.	The **availability of, and affordability of access** to, fixed and wireless broadband technology.
2	**Provide sustainable, low-cost, or no-cost devices and IT-support and enabling applications to the residents who need it most.**	The **availability and affordability of consumer devices** and technical support for those devices.
3	**Create navigable pathways for DC residents across the spectrum of digital literacy and digital skills.** These pathways and programs will be accessible to all and will focus on elements including online privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and inclusivity.	• The **online accessibility and inclusivity** of public resources and services; • **Digital literacy**; • Awareness of, and the use of, measures to secure the **online privacy of, and cybersecurity** with respect to, an individual.
4	**Leverage increased access to broadband, devices, and digital skills in strategic partnerships and initiatives with DC agencies** to affect economic development and workforce goals as well as health outcomes.	The **online accessibility and inclusivity** of public resources and services.

The measurable objectives that DC will use to gauge progress toward these goals are summarized in Table 2. For each measurable objective, specific implementation strategies are detailed.

Table 2. Goals, objectives, and strategies for broadband deployment and digital equity.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
1. Make high-quality, affordable, high-speed internet accessible to all residents of dc in their homes and local community anchor institutions and drive equitable adoption of internet service. Relevant NOFO requirement: the availability of, and affordable access to, fixed and wireless broadband technology.	**1A. Infrastructure:** achieve universal (100%) availability of 100/20 Mbps in DC households.	*# of unserved broadband serviceable locations (BSLs)*[33]	104 BSLs[34] unserved	90 BSLs unserved	0 unserved
		# of underserved BSLs	5 BSLs[35] underserved	3 BSLs underserved	0 underserved
		# of unserved units	590 unserved units[36]	300 unserved units	0 unserved
		# of underserved units	32 underserved units[37]	15 underserved units	0 underserved
			1A Strategies: • Execute a competitive grant program to expand broadband access with service provider subsidies to incentivize investment in under-/unserved areas of the District. • Where required, subsidize deployment of Wi-Fi infrastructure in MDUs, assuring that multiple ISPs can have access so that residents have options.		

[33] Locations where mass-market broadband service can be installed.
[34] FCC Broadband DATA Maps released on November 28th, 2023. The FCC Broadband DATA Maps are publicly available at: https://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData.
[35] Ibid.
[36] FCC National Broadband map, data as of Dec 31, 2022. The FCC Broadband DATA Maps are publicly available at: https://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData.
[37] Ibid.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
			• Community Internet Program: Allow internet service providers (ISP) free access to the roofs of DC-owned buildings ISPs to provide high-speed connections (200 Mbps upload / 200 Mbps download or higher) at reduced or no cost to households eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). These antennas will serve as neighborhood hubs that will feed internet to residential properties – all at no cost to DC. Objective 1A and the respective strategies benefit all DC residents, but especially those who live in covered households as the unserved and underserved BSLs are concentrated in Wards 5, 7, and 8.[38]		
	1B. Increase internet access among community anchor institutions (CAIs)[39].	*# of Community Anchor Institutions without access to at least 1gigabit symmetrical service*	~1,066 CAIs[40]	900 CAIs	0
			1B Strategies • Expand the footprint of DCNet to reach DC CAIs that serve Wards 5, 7 and 8, which are the areas of DC with the greatest broadband needs and gaps. Objective 1B and the associated strategy specifically target individuals in covered households, as Wards 5, 7, and 8 have a disproportionate number of households with income below 150% of the FPL.		

[38] Community Internet Program, Tech Together DC.
[39] Schools, libraries, medical facilities, et. al., likely to subscribe to enterprise-grade internet service. [https://help.bdc.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/13471550784411-How-to-Identify-a-Community-Anchor-Institution-as-a-Broadband-Serviceable-Location].
[40] FCC Broadband DATA Maps on October 10, 2023 [https://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData].

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
	1C. Adoption: get to 95 percent equitable adoption of high-speed internet.	*% adoption District-wide*[41]	77%[42]	85%	95%
			1C Strategies • Execute targeted adoption drives with trusted community partners that focus on each priority population. • Conduct a digital equity grant program to co-invest in top programs that demonstrate results in digital learning, adoption and improving online privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and inclusivity. • (potential) Expand funding for DC Navigators in DC, in partnership with local stakeholders. • Mobilize community organizations to increase broadband adoption. • Expand the Tech Together DC partnership between the DC government, non-profit community, academia, and industry to continue to make progress in closing the digital divide through access, training, and opportunity. While Objective 1C and the associated strategies improve the quality of internet service for all DC residents, residents included among covered populations (e.g., individuals who live in covered households) can be expected to benefit most from adoption drives and increased access to digital navigators.		
	1D. Increase adoption among covered populations.[43]	*% adoption rate among racial and ethnic minorities*	Black: 64% Hispanic: 74%	80% 90%	95% 95%

[41] 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[42] Ibid.
[43] DC does not have any residents who primarily reside in a rural area.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
			Asian: 78%[44]	85%	95%
		% adoption among households below 150% of the federal poverty level (FPL)	58%[45]	85%	95%
		% adoption for aging individuals	64%[46]	74%	95%
		% adoption for individuals with disabilities	54%[47]	75%	95%
		% adoption for individuals with language barrier	56%[48]	75%	95%
		% adoption for veterans	71%[49]	85%	95%
			1D Strategies • Execute targeted adoption drives with trusted community partners that focus on each priority population. • Conduct a digital equity grant program to co-invest in top programs that demonstrate results in digital learning, adoption and improving online privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and inclusivity.		

[44] 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
			• (potential) Expand funding for DC Navigators in DC, in partnership with local stakeholders. • Mobilize community organizations to increase broadband adoption. • Expand the Tech Together DC partnership between the DC government, non-profit community, academia, and industry to continue to make progress in closing the digital divide through access, training, and opportunity. Objective 1D and the associated strategies target individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, incarcerated individuals (justice-impacted individuals), veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, and individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.		
	1E. Increase adoption in high priority wards (5, 7, 8).	*% Adoption in Ward 5*	73%[50]	84%	95%
		% adoption in Ward 7	63%[51]	79%	95%
		% adoption in Ward 8	61%[52]	78%	95%
			1E Strategies Execute targeted adoption drives with trusted community partners that focus on each priority population. • Conduct a digital equity grant program to co-invest in top programs that demonstrate results in digital learning and adoption. • (potential) Expand funding for DC Navigators in DC, in partnership with local stakeholders.		

[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
			• Mobilize community organizations to increase broadband adoption. • Expand the Tech Together DC partnership between the DC government, non-profit community, academia, and industry to continue to make progress in closing the digital divide through access, training, and opportunity. Objective 1E and the associated strategies target individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, and individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.		
	1F. Affordability: ensure that all DC residents have access to an affordable high-speed internet plan.	*% BSLs with access to at least 1 affordable internet plan (less than $30/month) for reliable broadband*	61%	76%	100%
			1F Strategies • In addition to ACP drives, identify key areas of the District where CAI connectivity is needed to support residents facing deep affordability challenges, and determine custom approaches to support the community with broadband access. While Objective 1F and the associated strategies improve the quality of internet service for all DC residents, residents who are included among covered populations (e.g., individuals who live in covered households) can be expected to benefit most from lower connectivity costs and increased access to high-speed internet plans.		

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
	1G. Increase uptake of Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)[53].	*% ACP-eligible DC residents who are enrolled*	49%[54]	65%	80%
			1G Strategies: • Execute targeted adoption drives, and an ACP knowledge campaign, with trusted community partners that focus on each priority population. Objective 1G and the associated strategies target individuals who meet the criteria of the ACP, including individuals who live in covered households and veterans.		
2. Provide sustainable, low-cost, or no-cost devices and it support and enabling applications to the residents who need it most. **Relevant NOFO requirement: the availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices.**	**2A. Technology distribution**: effectively communicate the value of a connected device to all DC residents and ensure all have access to a device. [55]	*% device access (i.e., desktop or laptop)*	83%[56]	90%	100%

[53] The Affordable Connectivity Program administered by the Federal Communications Commission provides discounts to ensure that eligible households can afford the broadband they need. It is the largest broadband affordability program in the nation's history.
[54] https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/no-home-left-offline/acp-data/#dashboard.
[55] To be measured via survey.
[56] 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
			2A Strategies: • (potential) Expand funding for DC Navigators in DC, in partnership with local stakeholders. • Continue or grow device distribution programs with DC Public Library, DACL and device loaner programs. • Partner with pledge partner companies and non-profits (e.g., PCs for People) to scale up device distribution efforts. While Objective 2A and the associated strategies improve access to devices for all DC residents, residents included among covered populations (e.g., individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals) can be expected to benefit most from device lending programs.		
	2B. Increase device access among covered populations.[57]	*% device access among racial and ethnic minorities*	Black: 77% Hispanic: 85% Asian: 86%[58]	85% 90% 90%	95% 95% 95%
		% device access among households below 150% of the federal poverty level (FPL)	70%[59]	85%	95%
		% device access for aging individuals	74%[60]	85%	95%

[57] To be measured via survey.
[58] 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
		% device access for individuals with disabilities	64%[61]	80%	95%
		% device access for individuals with language barrier	72%[62]	85%	95%
		% device access for veterans	78%[63]	85%	95%
			2B Strategies • Execute targeted device provision drives with trusted community partners that focus on each priority population. • Partner with pledge partner companies and non-profits (e.g., PCs for People) to scale up device distribution efforts. • Conduct a digital equity grant program to co-invest in top programs that demonstrate results in device distribution and device loaner programs. Objective 2B and the associated strategies target individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, and individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.		
	2C. Omni-channel tech support and break / fix ecosystem: stand up a responsive, omni-channel customer service center that	*# of DC residents who receive free tech support through the public library annually*	To be determined based on the number of appointments with digital navigators at the DC Public Library program	To be updated after working with the DC Public Library	25,000

[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
	serves as a one-stop shop for all residents. Establish a mature ecosystem in DC for affordable tech repair and refurbishing services.				
			2C Strategies: • Partner with local private companies to pilot an expanded Digital Navigators program, which has an on-the-ground presence to support break-fix in targeted areas of DC (areas most in need). • In partnership with pledge partners, create a cohort of DC Digital Navigators, which includes select locations where there will be drop-off and in-person break-fix support. • Collaborate with government agencies and local vendors to stand up a subsidized customer service center for all residents. While Objective 2C and the associated strategies improve the repair and refurbishing services for all DC residents, residents included among covered populations (e.g., individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, individuals with a language barrier) can be expected to benefit most from increased access to omnichannel customer service centers.		
	2D. Resident satisfaction: ensure that residents feel more confident in using connected devices and	*% of DC residents who express feeling "very confident" in their ability to connect to the internet from a*	70%[64]	T75%	80%

[64] DC SBDEO Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
	get the troubleshooting support they need.	*computer, laptop, tablet or cellphone*			
			2D Strategies: • (potential) Expand funding for DC Navigators in DC, in partnership with local stakeholders. • Assess resident satisfaction through a periodic survey. • Support trusted partners to develop and scale digital literacy and skills programming in high-priority areas across the district. While Objective 2D and the associated strategies improve digital skills training for all DC residents, residents included among covered populations (e.g., individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, individuals with a language barrier, individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group) can be expected to benefit most from increased access to digital navigators.		
3.create navigable pathways for dc residents across the spectrum of digital literacy and digital skills. These pathways and programs will be accessible to all, and will focus on elements including online privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and inclusivity.	**3A. Digital literacy:** enable all residents to be proficient and safe online and increase their confidence in navigating information and communication technologies.	*DC residents ages 16 to 65 lacking digital literacy*	~65,000 – 75,000[65]	45,000 – 50,000	<20,000

[65] https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018161.pdf.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
Relevant NOFO requirement: online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services; digital literacy; awareness and use of measures to secure the online privacy of, and cybersecurity with respect to, an individual.					
			3A Strategies: • (potential) Expand funding for DC Navigators, in partnership with local stakeholders. • Partner with digital equity practitioners in the District to create an online tool that maps all available programming, skills developed, and how to access them. • Conduct a digital equity grant program to co-invest in top programs that demonstrate results in digital learning, adoption and improving online privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and inclusivity. Objective 3A and the associated strategies target individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, incarcerated individuals		

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
			(justice-impacted individuals), veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, and individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.		
	3B. Digital skills for learning and employment: enable DC to use technology to improve learning, and the ability to access the tools and jobs of the digital economy.	*% of DC residents who are "very confident" in their ability to find or apply for a new job online*	61%[66]	1.1x improvement (10%)	1.2x improvement (20%)
			3B Strategies: • Partner with the private sector to expand workforce development programs focused on digital skills, and link them to the feeder core digital literacy programs from which talent can be pulled and developed. While Objective 3B and the associated strategies improve digital skills learning opportunities for all DC residents, residents belonging to covered populations (e.g., individuals who live in covered households, incarcerated individuals (justice-impacted individuals) can be expected to benefit most from participating in digital skills learning programs.		
	3C. Improving wellbeing: track resident feedback and work toward increases in well-being,	*% of DC residents "very confident" in their ability to access*	57%[67]	1.1x improvement (10%)	1.2x improvement (20%)

[66] 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[67] 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
	connectedness, and use of digital tools and apps for quality of life (e.g., eHealth, social connections).	*or apply for government services*			
			3C Strategies: • Conduct a digital equity grant program to co-invest in top programs that demonstrate results in increasing well-being and health access. • Assess resident satisfaction and perspectives on well-being through a periodic survey. • Continue to host Tech 101 workshops, which provide free technology training to residents who want to build the types of basic skills needed to be successful in a digitally connected world. The goal is to help residents navigate the digital landscape and make technology relevant in their daily lives. These classes help establish a solid technology foundation for residents who may be interested in more advanced digital literacy classes in the future. • DC Tech Locator: Allow residents to find public computer access, free Wi-Fi, and technology training locations in DC. While Objective 3C and the associated strategies aim to improve the connectedness and well-being of all DC residents, residents belonging to covered populations (e.g., aging individuals) will likely benefit most from participating in digital equity programs.		
4. Leverage increased access to broadband, devices, and digital	**4A. Education:** All students are prepared for 21st century	*% students* with access to a personal	10%[68]	1.1x improvement (10%)	1.2x improvement (20%)

[68] District of Columbia Public Schools, Digital Promise.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
skills in strategic partnerships and initiatives with dc agencies to accomplish economic-development and workforce goals as well as better health outcomes. **Relevant NOFO requirement: online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services.**	economy and academic success, including access to a device and broadband at home	school-provided device (1:1)			
			4A Strategies • Develop a centralized asset map detailing all broadband-related resources, state-sponsored programs, and digital skills training available to students and families, which improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services. • Partner with the DC Public Schools and other related entities to promote digital skills competencies among K-12 students. Objective 4A and the associated strategies target all DC students, including students who live in covered households or who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.		
	4B. Healthcare: The use of telehealth increases, resulting in overall higher access to care and wider healthcare options	*% population that uses telehealth* *% of DC residents "very confident" in being able to participate in a*	59%[69]	1.1x improvement (10%)	1.2x improvement (20%)

[69] 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey.

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
		telehealth appointment			
			4B Strategies • Provide support to partner organizations and grantees to develop digital literacy programs that provide information and educate residents on tools designed for digital health, which improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services. • Provide in-home and public use devices and broadband service to enable access to telehealth appointments and other healthcare related services. While Objective 4B and the associated strategies aim to increase access to healthcare for all DC residents, residents belonging to covered populations (e.g., aging individuals, individuals with one or more disabilities) will likely benefit most from higher adoption of telehealth services.		
	4C. Delivery of **essential services:** Sign-ups for key social services (e.g., SNAP, TANF/Cash Assistance and Medical Benefits) go up due to ease of access via internet	*# of monthly visitors to District Direct*	To be determined by working with the DC Department of Health and Human Services to track the number of log ins into the Direct District public benefits app	1.1x improvement (10%)	1.2x improvement (20%)
		% participation rate for SNAP in DC	84%[70]	1.1x improvement (10%)	1.2x improvement (20%)

[70] SNAP Participation Rates by State, All Eligible People (FY 2020).

Goal	Objective	Key performance indicator (kpi)	Baseline	2025 target (short-term goal)	2028 target (long-term goal)
		based on all eligible people			
			4C Strategies • Analyze webservices available throughout the District and create a resource bank of offerings available from the District for enrollment into assistance programs relating to workforce, education, healthcare access, and general civic engagement, which improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services. • Partner with the Workforce Investment Council to promote the use of their existing 'My Journey DC' online platform to promote the awareness and utilization of supportive services, which improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services. While Objective 4C and the associated strategies promote the online delivery of key social services to all DC residents, residents belonging to covered populations (e.g., individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier) will likely benefit most from increased online accessibility to public resources and services.		

3 Current State of Digital Equity: Barriers and Assets

3.1 Asset Inventory

The following sections describe the District's existing digital equity assets, including digital inclusion assets by covered population, existing digital equity plans, existing digital equity programs, broadband adoption assets, and broadband affordability assets.

In reviewing the assets categorized in the following sections, the DC SBDEO recognizes that many digital equity practitioners and partners work throughout communities in DC. But there is still work to be done to ensure that all communities – especially Wards 5, 7, and 8 – have access to sufficient resources and support to achieve digital equity. Many of the assets categorized in this plan under broadband adoption are sponsored by DC government agencies. As this State Digital Equity Plan is implemented, community partnerships with trusted community organizations are

necessary to encourage DC residents to use the resources provided by new and continued programming. Engaging local and community-based organizations may require funding and capacity to implement new programming that fills the gaps in existing assets in DC.

Note that blue hyperlinked text serves as sources for assets and provides supporting materials with further information on either the asset or the organization that owns the asset.

3.1.1 Digital Inclusion Assets by Covered Population

Assets described in the below table include:

1. Civic and volunteer organizations that provide volunteer and advocacy assistance for digital equity programs.
2. Technical assistance to support digital inclusion.
3. Workforce development training and employment services.
4. Open access middle-mile networks.
5. Public Wi-Fi, networks, and access points.

Table 3. Digital equity assets in DC that can be leveraged in the deployment of federal BEAD and Digital Equity Act funding.

Asset type	Organization name(s)[71]	Asset name with link to asset[72]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
1. Civic and volunteer organizations that provide volunteer and advocacy assistance for digital equity programs	Multicultural Media, Telecom & Internet Council	MMTC Letters	Focuses on equal access broadband connectivity, adoption, and affordability, as well as education and jobs, digital skills training, and business opportunities.	All
	United Way of the National Capital Area	Analyzing Digital Equity in Cities Around the U.S.	The United Way of the National Capital Area seeks to improve the lives of underserved individuals in the national capital area by focusing community resources on creating measurable and lasting impacts. Its report shows digital equity scores across the U.S., including DC	All
2. Technical assistance to support digital inclusion	DC Public Library	Computer classes	Adult Learning Department at DC Public Library has computer classes available (e.g., Microsoft Office software, Google suite, basic design with Canva)	Adult residents

[71] Organization who owns or manages the described asset.
[72] Links provide either further information on asset or direct to organization providing access depending on what is available online.

Asset type	Organization name(s)[71]	Asset name with link to asset[72]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
	The Wilderness Technology Alliance (WildTech)	DC Senior iPad Program	The DC Senior iPad Program is administered by WildTech through a grant from the District of Columbia Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) to provide free iPads, training, programming, and support to seniors who lack computers.	Aging individuals
3. Workforce development training and employment services	Community College Prep Academy Adult Public Charter School	Community College Prep Academy Adult Public Charter School Classes	The Academy offers classes in administrative tech, data analytics and IT.	Adult residents in need of post-secondary education and training
	Multicultural Media, Telecom & Internet Council	Jumpstart Your Tech Career Guide	A guide to success at landing the right job in the tech sector, specifically including broadband, information technology, and communication. Focuses on mission of equal access within the industry.	All
	Clearly Innovative	Adult and Youth Tech Education Programs	Clearly Innovation Education hosts workshops and classes for entrepreneurs, and tech innovators, and for youth. Classes for adults range from essential knowledge and tools needed to launch and grow a successful business, to immersive coding courses and hackathons. The youth program for elementary, middle, and high school students teaches what it takes to become a designer,	All

Asset type	Organization name(s)[71]	Asset name with link to asset[72]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
			developer, or entrepreneur by solving community issues through technical and entrepreneurial skills. The programs expose students to all facets of technology including lean startup principles, user experience, software development and product management.	
	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School	Career Training Programs[73]	Carlos Rosario Charter School's Career Training Programs serve the diverse immigrant population of DC across 12 programs with embedded digital literacy skills development, including five distinct workforce programs in healthcare, IT, hospitality, education, small business, and construction.	Age 16 or older
	Connected DMV	NEXTversity	NEXTversity offers personalized assistance such as financial literacy and budgeting, technology needs, and family supports to help students thrive.	Under-represented population
	Connected DMV	Quantum Academy	K-12 work-based and experiential learning opportunities related to quantum computing and communication, as well as stackable quantum basics courses.	All but with a focus on K-12

[73] Asset added based on public comment submission.

Asset type	Organization name(s)[71]	Asset name with link to asset[72]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
	Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD)	Initiative 3.3: Enhance class curriculum to incorporate current business internet trends (FY10)	This training session teaches businesses how to market their products through online social networking sites. The class focuses on providing low-cost alternatives to marketing and client relationship management. The class also highlights the need for business email addresses and websites.	Small businesses
	Department of Employment Services (DOES)	Economic and Workforce Development Goals (2015)	Through the District's American Job Center, residents can use resources such as career planning and counseling, resume assistance, direct job placement, on-the-job-training, and computer training. Residents can also access more advanced technical training, including Microsoft, A+, and Cisco certifications.	All
	Office on Returning Citizen Affairs / DC-BETA / Connect.DC	Tech skills for returning citizens (2015)	Under the DC-BETA project, the District's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (ORCA) worked with Byte Back and Connect.DC to provide District residents returning from incarceration with technology skills that would help them secure employment and increase their chances of successfully integrating back into their communities.	Incarcerated individuals (justice-impacted individuals)
	University of the District of Columbia	Health Data Management Training	This program aims to solve US public health data infrastructure	Racial or ethnic minorities

Asset type	Organization name(s)[71]	Asset name with link to asset[72]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
	and Howard University		issues by training a new tech-savvy cohort specifically in health data management. The goal is to improve health communications for the District's predominantly Black communities, which were most affected by COVID, and which often suffer from poor public health responses.	
	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development / Microsoft / Department of Employment Services (DOES)	Strategic Digital Alliance	DOES will identify candidates with gaps in digital literacy. and close them by exposing these residents to digital basics through Microsoft's Digital Literacy Curriculum. DOES and Microsoft will also provide residents with training on Microsoft productivity software. Microsoft will also provide significant partner support and engagement as well as $100,000 for business-development to 10 local Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs).	Individuals with gaps in digital literacy
	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development / Microsoft / DC Public Schools	Strategic Digital Alliance	For educators, the District will work with Microsoft to implement and host the Microsoft Innovative Educator (MIE) Program, a two-day seminar focused on integrating technology into classroom teaching and learning scenarios. Participants will also gain exposure to the	Educators and students

Asset type	Organization name(s)[71]	Asset name with link to asset[72]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
			growing career opportunities in STEM fields as part of the alliance.	
4. Open access middle-mile networks	DC-NET	DC-CAN	Interested last-mile service providers can partner with the District government to bring affordable broadband to residents and businesses in the District.	CAIs
5. Public Wi-Fi, networks, and access points	DC-NET	DC-NET Public Wi-Fi	DC residents and visitors can enjoy free Wi-Fi access via outdoor hotspots throughout the District at key community anchor locations, including DC public schools and public charter schools, public libraries, parks and recreation centers, senior centers, community pools, community health clinics, social service sites, public housing campuses, public safety sites, and District government administration buildings.	All
	DC-NET	DC Wi-Fi hotspot map	DC provides a map of free Wi-Fi access points.	All
	DC Public Library	Internet and Wireless Use Policy (2013)	The District of Columbia Library offers library computers for customer Internet access and wireless Internet access for customers using their personal devices, including a limited number of public computers with Internet access especially for children.	All

Asset type	Organization name(s)[71]	Asset name with link to asset[72]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
	DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer	Community Internet Program	The Community Internet Program (CIP) allows any ISP free access to the roofs of DC-owned buildings, operated by the Department of General Services, to install service antennas if the ISP commits to providing resident connectivity with high-speed connections (200 Mbps upload / 200 Mbps download or higher) at reduced or no cost to households eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program.	Income less than 150% of FPL

3.1.2 Existing Digital Equity Plans

The plans detailed in Table 4 are publicly available agency, municipality, or regional government plans that have been published that specifically focus on digital equity and broadband deployment in DC.

Table 4. Digital equity plans and programs instituted by municipalities in DC.

Organization name(s)	Plan/report name (and link)	Description
Office of the Mayor, Innovation & Technology Inclusion Council	2023 Pathways to Inclusion - Tech Equity in the District of Columbia *published in 2023*	This 2023 report by DMPED and the Washington DC Economic Partnership (WDCEP) seeks to provide an update by 1) documenting the progress that has been made and 2) identifying next steps for making the District a leader in diversity, equity and inclusion in tech. This includes capturing the current state and assets of DC's tech ecosystem; identifying key challenges to diversity, equity and inclusion; proposing opportunities and recommendations to address these challenges; and providing metrics for measurement of progress. This report relied on data analyses, a sentiment survey of tech professionals, and stakeholder engagement, including 18 interviews and focus groups with a total of 42 stakeholders– from employers and not-for-profits to educational institutions and government.
DC Digital Equity Coalition (DCDEC)	**DC Digital Equity Coalition's 5-Year Digital Equity Plan**[74] *published in 2023*	The DC Digital Equity Coalition's comprehensive 5-Year Digital Equity Plan is designed to bridge the digital divide and foster equitable access to technology and the internet across the District of Columbia. In an era where digital connectivity is paramount for education, employment, healthcare, and civic engagement, our coalition commits to addressing disparities and ensuring every resident has the opportunity to thrive in the digital age. The plan outlines proposed initiatives and strategies to achieve a more inclusive digital landscape. Building on past efforts and

[74] Asset added based on public comment submission.

Organization name(s)	Plan/report name (and link)	Description
		focuses on expanding access, promoting digital literacy, and providing support to underserved communities.
Connect.DC	Building the Bridge: A Report on the State of the Digital Divide in the District of Columbia *published in 2015*	This report, funded by the State Broadband Initiative grant, describes the state of the digital divide in the District of Columbia and shows the breadth of digital inclusion initiatives in the city. It also identifies five strategies for increasing broadband adoption and use. The strategies include: • Increase public education and awareness efforts. • Expand digital literacy and advanced training programs. • Increase technology use by generating local content. • Increase public technology resources for residents and community organizations. • Expand access to affordable home internet and computer hardware. While this plan was published in 2015, many of the trends in DC have not changed, and many of the needs and gaps mentioned in this plan are still relevant.
Connect.DC	Connected Communities Initiative Community Technology Plan Benning Ridge Marshall Heights (Ward 7) published in 2015	The Connected Communities Initiative (CCI) aims to increase Internet access and use by residents in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods in the District of Columbia. This plan aims to leverage the five strategies for increasing broadband adoption and use described in the "Building the Bridge report." These strategies include: • Engage community stakeholders about their barriers to technology. • Develop community technology plans for each digital footprint with actionable digital inclusion strategies. • Make technology relevant to the lives of residents and create interactive projects that demonstrate tangible ways to use it.

Organization name(s)	Plan/report name (and link)	Description
		• Increase home broadband access and technology use in each neighborhood. While this plan was published in 2015, much of the data trends and needs of Ward 7 have not changed, as Ward 7 is one of the most disadvantaged in DC. NTIA has noted[75] that the plan describes "best practices" in digital equity programming, which DC has engaged in for almost a decade.
Connect.DC	Connected Communities Initiative Community Technology Plan Barry Farm Hillsdale Historic Anacostia (Ward 8) published in 2015	The Connected Communities Initiative (CCI) aims to increase Internet access and use by residents in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods in the District of Columbia. This plan aims to leverage the five strategies for increasing broadband adoption and use described in the "Building the Bridge report." These strategies include: • Engage community stakeholders about their barriers to technology. • Develop community technology plans for each digital footprint with actionable digital inclusion strategies. • Make technology relevant to the lives of residents and create interactive projects that demonstrate tangible ways to use it. • Increase home broadband access and technology use in each neighborhood. Although this plan was published in 2015, the NTIA still uses it as an example of external best practices, as it offers strategies with action items, timelines, and goals for each.[76] It demonstrates the best-practice digital equity programming that DC has engaged in for almost a decade.

[75] State Digital Equity Plan External Best Practices, NTIA.
[76] State Digital Equity Plan External Best Practices, NTIA.

3.1.3 Existing Digital Equity Programs

Table 5 focuses on broadband expansion and digital equity efforts in DC. This highlights the importance of governments and community anchor institutions in the promotion of digital equity for covered populations across DC.

Table 5. Existing digital equity programs across DC that have been instituted by municipalities, regions, and local organizations.

Organization name(s)	Asset name with link to asset	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
Digital Equity in DC Education	Digital Equity in DC Education	A District-wide coalition of parents advocating for reliable technology access for all students in DC public schools.	K-12 students
DC Digital Equity Coalition	Guiding Principles to Ensure Equitable Distribution of Resources	The coalition is committed to working with the DC Government to ensure that everyone in the District has access to the internet, appropriate technology devices, and digital literacy training necessary to thrive in today's world. The coalition has developed guiding principles to guide the District of Columbia Government Office of the Chief Technology Officer in developing and implementing its Digital Equity Plan.	All
Byte Back	Byte Back Volunteers	Volunteers play a critical role in bringing to life Byte Back's mission of closing the digital divide. Positions include career assistance, workshop presenters, tutors, success coaches, and board members.	Income less 150% of FPL

Organization name(s)	Asset name with link to asset	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
Office of the City Administrator	Office of Racial Equity creation	Focuses on developing an infrastructure to ensure policy decisions and District programs are evaluated through a racial equity lens.	Racial or ethnic minorities
Comcast Cable	The Lift Zones Program[77]	Comcast, together with nonprofit partners and city leaders, has created more than 1,250 Lift Zones in community centers nationwide, including 42 Lift Zones in the District. DC Lift Zones are located at Housing Up shelters, the DC Dream Center, the Sasha Bruce Youthwork Clay Terrace Family Success Center, and the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative. Comcast also opened a Lift Zone at Southeast at Iona Senior Services, which supports more than 4,000 older adults in the DC area. Along with free Internet connectivity, Lift Zones offer hundreds of hours of free educational and digital skills content.	All

[77] Asset added based on public comment submission [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].

Organization name(s)	Asset name with link to asset	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
Comcast Cable	Project UP[78]	Project UP is Comcast's comprehensive initiative to advance digital equity and build a future of unlimited possibilities. Backed by a $1 billion commitment to reach tens of millions of people, Project UP encompasses programs and community partnerships across Comcast, NBCUniversal, and Sky that connect people to the Internet, advance economic mobility, and open doors for the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, storytellers, and creators.	All

[78] Asset added based on public comment submission [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].

3.1.4 Broadband Adoption

Table 6 below includes DC assets for broadband adoption. Assets described in the below table include:

1. Computer refurbishing programs.
2. Digital navigator programs.
3. P-Adult school system one-to-one computer programs.
4. Loaner computer/hotspot programs.
5. Percentage of residents who have adopted broadband.
6. Programs that conduct awareness and outreach activities of digital inclusion programming and resources (e.g., technical support, etc.).
7. Programs that provide digital literacy and digital skills training.
8. Programs that provide subsidized or low-cost devices.
9. Public computing labs.

Table 6. Broadband adoption assets in DC that can be leveraged in the deployment of federal BEAD and Digital Equity Act funding.

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
1. Computer refurbishing programs	DC Department of Energy & Environment	eCYCLE DC	Properly recycles electronics and conserves resources, ensures appropriate handling of toxic materials, provides a more sustainable source of precious metals, and protects human health and the environment.	All
	Compudopt	Compudopt, Washington DC	Uses donated computers to provide technology access and education to under-resourced youth and their communities.	Income less than 150% of FPL
	DC Department of Public Works	Recycling Electronics at RFK Stadium	Recycles unwanted computers, televisions, VCRs, stereos, copiers, and fax machines.	All
	Wilderness Technology Alliance (WildTech)	Access To Technology[81]	WildTech is the Washington DC region's leading computer refurbishing organization. It receives thousands of donated computers from generous corporations and government agencies, refurbishes them, and provides them to needy individuals, non-profits, and schools.	Income less than 150% of FPL; Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs)
2. Digital navigator programs	Byte Back	Byte Back's 360 Digital Navigators	A community-to-community approach to closing the digital divide. This program teaches the fundamentals of adult learning science, effective teaching strategies, and how to work with someone new to the digital world.	Adults with knowledge of digital navigation

[79] Organization who owns or manages the described asset.
[80] Links provide either further information on asset or direct to organization providing access depending on what is available online.
[81] Asset added based on public comment submission [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
	DC Serve Your City	Laptop Training Program	Serve Your City (SYC) provides life-changing experience and opportunities for at-risk DC students. Through the Laptop Training Program, students learn how to provide tech support to families and others who have received devices. Students also develop critical technological skills.	Youth who represent ethnic or racial minorities
	DC Serve Your City	Serve Your City/Ward 6 Mutual Aid[82]	Comcast partnered with SYC/W6MA to launch a digital navigator program that trains trusted community leaders to serve as digital navigators and provides direct outreach to Wards 7 and 8 residents about affordable Internet options and digital skilling opportunities.	Residents in Wards 7 and 8
	DC Public Library	Digital Navigators at DC Public Library	Helps with basic technology problems and troubleshooting. Support includes computers, laptops, tablets, phones, email, and internet, filling out applications and forms, PDFs, and printing, and more. Support is available at four locations in the DC area.	All
3. P-Adult school system (pre-school to age 20) one-to-one computer programs	DC Public Schools	Empowering Learners Initiative (ELI) (2019)	Over the next 3 years, DCPS will ensure students in grades 3-12 have equitable access to technology through a 1:1 student-to-device ratio, and that DCPS educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to support students in leveraging technology for learning.	Students in grades 3-12

[82] Asset added based on public comment submission [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School	Hybrid Instruction Model[83]	Through Carlos Rosario Charter School's Hybrid Instructional Model (2020 to present), all 2100 ELL students receive a laptop loaner that is data enabled, if needed, to ensure equitable access to their learning materials and to eradicate attendance barriers that are common in adult education.	Individuals aged 16 or older that live in the DC with focus on English language learners, immigrants, and individuals within covered households (low-income individuals).
4. Loaner computer and hotspot programs	T-Mobile	Project 10 Million	An initiative aimed at delivering internet connectivity to millions of underserved student households at no cost. Partnering with school districts across the country, the program offers free high-speed data, free mobile hotspots, and access to at-cost laptops and tablets. School districts can apply on behalf of their students to participate.	Income less than 150% of FPL
	University of the District of Columbia	Success Laptop Loaner Program	The Office of Student Success provides a laptop loaner program for new and continuing University of the District of Columbia students, allowing for use throughout the semester.	University of the District of Columbia (UDC) students
5. Percentage of residents who have adopted broadband	The University of Chicago; Data Science Institute	Internet Equity Initiative	A national heat map depicting broadband access and internet speeds. The map combines data from the U.S. Census, FCC Form 477 (reports on local broadband deployment), and data from Ookla (a network testing company). Data is available for all	All

[83] Asset added based on public comment submission [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
			census tracts by hovering over the map, and major cities can be zoomed-in on (e.g., Washington).	
	Purdue Center for Regional Development	Digital Distress Metric and Digital Divide Index	These metrics developed by the Purdue Center for Regional Development use various data points to offer views – by census tract and county -- of digital distress and the digital divide. These can be used by the District to track digital equity and inclusion progress over time.	All
6. Programs that conduct awareness and outreach activities on digital inclusion programming and resources	Tech Together DC	Tech Together DC Partnership	Tech Together asks organizations to join a community of partners that believe in, and are committed to, creating opportunity for everyone by reducing the barriers to technology and internet access. It is a values-led partnership among the DC government, non-profit community, academia, and industry to bridge the digital divide through access, training, and opportunity.	Individuals with income less than 150% of FPL, aging individuals (60+), veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with low English literacy, racial and ethnic minorities
	Information Technology Industry Council	5G Policy Principles and 5G Essentials for Global Policymakers	These provide recommendations for rollout of 5G. This includes combining government funding and private sector investment to incentivize expansion of 5G to rural and hard-to-serve areas that would otherwise be underserved.	All
	Organization of Chinese Americans, Inc	Organization of Chinese Americans website	Dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The organization received an Affordable Connectivity Program	Racial and ethnic minority groups (Asian and Pacific Islander)

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
			(ACP) outreach grant, and now links website users to the ACP.	
	Byte Back	Digital Navigators Program	Byte Back received an ACP outreach grant for the Digital Navigators Program, which helps thousands of DC community members apply for the ACP. The program provided customized support to more than 400 scholars and their families in DC in 2022.	Individuals with income less than 150% of FPL aging individuals (60+), veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with low English literacy, racial and ethnic minorities
	The National Council of Negro Women	NCNW	The National Council of Negro Women's (NCNW) mission is to lead, empower and advocate for women of African descent, their families, and communities. The NCNW priorities are to promote education; encourage entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and economic stability; educate women about health and promote healthcare access; promote civic engagement and advocate for sound public policy and social justice. The organization received an ACP outreach grant, getting $740,000 to advocate awareness of, and participation in, the ACP.	Racial or ethnic minority group
	UnidosUS	UnidosUS	UnidosUS serves the Hispanic community through research, policy analysis, and state and national advocacy efforts. It received an ACP outreach grant to advocate awareness of, and participation in, the ACP.	Racial and ethnic minorities (Hispanic/Latinx)

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
	Federal City Council	Catalyst Magazine	Catalyst writes about the gap in access to digital services, raising awareness for further broadband adoption efforts.	All
	Connected DMV	Connectivity for All	This program aims to help households gain access to reliable internet service, a computing device, as well as critical digital literacy and technical skills. The first phase of this collaborative effort is to aggressively engage communities throughout the DMV to raise awareness and encourage widespread adoption of the FCC's new connectivity financial assistance programs, the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) and Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF).	Income less than 150% of FPL
	Wilderness Technology Alliance (WildTech)	Technical Support[84]	WildTech has a state-of-the-art computer help desk system for supporting new computer users (who received their devices) and disadvantaged populations.	Clients who receive WildTech's refurbished computers, the District government
7. Programs that provide digital literacy and digital skills training	Assistive Technology Program for DC	DC Assistive Technology Demonstration Center	The DC Assistive Technology Resource Center (DCATRC) showcases assistive technology (AT) devices and services that increase independence and functional capability of persons with disabilities.	Individuals with disabilities
	Assistive Technology Program for DC	Get Connected	Get Connected is a program designed for older adults and persons with varying abilities, to teach useful technology features that can	Aging individuals

[84] Asset added based on public comment submission [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
			make it easier to use smartphones, tablets, laptops, or computers.	
	Capital Clubhouse Inc.	In House Education	Capital Clubhouse is a non-profit organization that serves people whose lives have been disrupted by mental illness. Capital Clubhouse colleagues work to help members achieve their education goals. This includes the Clubhouse Education Program, providing one-on-one tutoring by community volunteers and other members. Tutoring topics include digital literacy, typing, and financial literacy as of July 2023. Programs also include work-ordered day programs where members work side-by-side to learn new workplace skills and general life skills. This includes accessing resources to reach digital equity, such as using the internet, and learning to use computers or tablets.	Individuals impacted by mental illness
	DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer	Tech 101 Workshops	Tech 101 workshops are digital skill workshops that are free for DC residents and hosted across the District.	All
	DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer	Connect Potomac Gardens	Along with providing free in-home internet, DC hosts digital literacy programs for Potomac Gardens residents on-site, including computer safety and privacy, social media 101 and others.	Residents at Potomac Gardens
	DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer	Connect Hopkins Apartments	DC hosts digital literacy programs for residents on-site including computer safety and privacy, social media 101 and others.	Residents at Hopkins Apartments
	Ma'y's Center	Ma'y's Center Senior Wellness Centers	The center hosts tech skill training sessions.	Aging individuals (60+)

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
	Department of Aging and Community Living	Around Town DC Technology Workshops	The program offers technology workshops on topics such as Microsoft Word, smartphone photography, and Google Apps.	Aging individuals (60+)
	Department of Aging and Community Living	Hayes Senior Wellness Center	The cent'r's computer lab hosts tech classes to provide help with any devices and answer digital-related questions.	Aging individuals (60+)
	Department of Aging and Community Living	Washington Seniors Wellness Center	The center hosts tech sessions and computer trainings.	Aging individuals (60+)
	DC Public Library	Computer classes	The Adult Learning Department at DC Public Library offers computer classes (e.g., Microsoft Office software, Google suite, basic design with Canva)	Adults
	The Family Place Public Charter School	Digital Storytelling Project	The goal of this 2022 project was to develop the students" language skills and digital literacy skills in an authentic way. Students were motivated to think of a personal narrative that they would like to share with others. Then, they built a video by incorporating music, photos, videos, and a recording of their own narrative that they wrote and read.	English as a Second Language (ESL) students
	Howard University	Digital Technology Credential	Howard University has developed a digital technology credential for students, which will ensure that all undergraduate students, regardless of their major, will have the digital skills needed to compete and thrive in today's workforce.	Howard University undergraduate students, including racial and ethnic minorities and individuals within a covered household (low-income individuals).

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
	DC Office of United Communications	OUC Training Academy	The academy provides enhanced education and training offerings to transform existing experience and skillsets to deliver Next Generation 911 and 311, which is a digital internet protocol designed to replace the analog public safety infrastructure in place for decades.	All
	ServiceNow	RiseUp	A global program aimed at providing the right talent to use the ServiceNow platform to address a global shortage of people with digital transformation IT skills. The program offers opportunities to fill that gap for anyone looking to be part of the digital workforce.	All
	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human services, Age Friendly DC	Age Friendly DC 2028	Age-Friendly 2028 will work to compile a list summarizing tech training opportunities available to DC seniors, and to create and distribute a guide for age-friendly communications reflecting all forms of media.	Aging individuals (60+)
	Comcast Cable	IE Learning Center	Comcast offers free training through the IE Learning Center: Internet Essentials – Free Internet from Xfinity, which features hundreds of modules on Internet basics, online safety, digital skills for everyday life, and advanced skill-building.	All
	Wilderness Technology Alliance (WildTech)	Computer Training	WildTech provides "Introduction to Computers" training for free to recipients of our refurbished computers. It also provides free refurbished computers with free training in a group-setting at Washington DC area homeless shelters.	Income less 150% of FPL, Aging individuals (60+), Racial and ethnic minorities

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School	ESL & Computer Literacy	Carlos Rosario Charter School offers classes on Computer Basics 1 &2, IC3, and IT Fundamentals. These are digital literacy classes for students at all levels of technological skill level, from beginners to advanced or those seeking network professional certification. Students receive a laptop loaner (data enabled if needed) while they participate in the programming.	Age 16 or older and live in the DC with focus on English language learners, immigrants, and individuals within a covered household (low-income individuals).
	Easterseals DC MD VA	Digital Literacy Programs	The Comcast NBCUniversal Foundation awarded in 2023 a $1.3 million two-year grant to Easterseals to expand digital literacy training for young adults with disabilities enrolled in Easterseals employment programs, including Easterseals DC MD VA. Students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities ages 16 to will be trained on how to navigate the Internet, communicate through email, create PowerPoint presentations, prepare resumes, use assistive technology, and more.	Young adults with disabilities
8. Programs that provide subsidized or low-cost devices	Assistive Technology Program for DC	DC Assistive Technology Device Loan Program	The DC Assistive Technology Device Loan Program was established for individuals and service providers to borrow assistive technology (AT) devices easily and at no charge.	Individuals with disabilities
	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development – DMPED	FY2024 budget to support seniors	The DC FY2024 budget includes $340,500 to distribute tablet devices to seniors for improving wellness activities, telehealth, and socialization.	Aging individuals (60+)

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
	Byte Back / Wilderness Technology Alliance	Low-cost devices	The Wilderness Technology Alliance (WTA) has been selected as part of a 10-city project led by AT&T and Digitunity (a national nonprofit with a mission of device ownership for all) to provide more than 2,000 refurbished computers and technology support over the next two years to students and families in Washington, DC	Income less than 150% of FPL
	FCC	National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program	The FCC's National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP), also known as iCanConnect, provides equipment needed to make telecommunications, advanced communications, and the Internet accessible to individuals within a covered household (low income) who are deaf and blind, or have both significant vision loss and significant hearing loss.	Individuals with disabilities
	DC Public Library	Device distribution program	DCPL has distributed over 8,000 ChromeBooks to residents, in partnership with Department of Human Services, the Mayor's Office of Returning Citizen Affairs (MORCA), and the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL).	Aging individuals (60+), incarcerated individuals (justice-impacted individuals)
	DACL / Wild Tech	DACL Senior iPad Program	DACL provided 500 iPads to seniors throughout the District early in the COVID-19 pandemic. The seniors also received free tech support and digital literacy training.	Aging individuals (60+)
	Serve Your City / Ward 6 Mutual Aid	Laptops and Internet Service	This program has delivered over 1,000 backpacks filled with laptops, internet hotspots, masks, other supplies, and some fun	Racial and ethnic minorities, aging individuals (60+)

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
			activities. It also gave laptops to elderly residents in need of devices to access health care and other services.	
9. Public computing labs	DC Library	Public Computers & Printing	All 26 DC library locations have computers available for customer use. Customers can sign up for unlimited 70-minute sessions per day or multiple 15-minute express sessions throughout the day. Access is first-come first-served at all locations.	All
	Department of Parks and Recreation	King Greenleaf Recreation Center	King-Greenleaf Recreation Center is located in the Ward 6 Southwest Community and has a computer lab.	All
	DC-BETA / DC Public Library	Digital Inclusion Sites	Digital Inclusion Centers include computer labs, access to high-speed broadband internet service, a comprehensive training curriculum, and staff. Individuals who successfully complete the introductory digital literacy training course will receive a refurbished desktop computer and one year of free broadband service.	All
	Broadband USA	Public Computer Access	The Tech Locator can be used to find public computer access and tech training in DC. Users can search by address, Ward, ZIP code or location name and for internet, Wi-Fi, or trainings.	All
	District of Columbia Office on Aging / Connect.DC	Computer access for seniors (2015)	The District of Columbia Office on Aging (DCOA) partnered with Connect.DC (digital inclusion initiative) to install computers at six senior wellness centers and offer free computer access and basic digital literacy	Aging individuals (60+)

Asset type	Organization name(s)[79]	Asset name with link to asset[80]	Description	Target population served, including details on covered population served
			training to District seniors aged 60 and over as well as disabled residents of all ages.	

3.1.5 Broadband Affordability

Table 7 below includes DC assets for broadband affordability. Assets described in the below table include:

1. Discount or subsidized broadband service and equipment programs.
2. Steps taken to increase enrollment in the ACP.

Table 7. Broadband affordability assets in DC that can be leveraged in the deployment of federal BEAD and Digital Equity Act funding.

Asset type	Organization name(s)[85]	Asset name with link to asset[86]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
1. Discount or subsidized broadband service and equipment programs	DC-Net	DC-Net Community Anchor Services	DC-Net offers fully dedicated, what-you-sign-up-for-is-what-you-get internet – all the time. DC-Net encourages partnerships with non-profits and is an E-rate provider.	All
	DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer	Community Internet Program	The Community Internet Program (CIP) allows any internet service provider (ISP) free access to the roofs of DC-owned buildings, operated by the Department of General Services, to install service antennas if the ISP commits to providing resident connectivity with high-speed connections (200 Mbps upload / 200 Mbps download or higher) at reduced or no cost to households eligible for the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).	All
	Mediacom	ACP Program	Mediacom participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program, giving eligible customers discounts of up to $30 per month toward home	Income less than 150% of FPL; veterans

[85] Organization that owns or manages the described asset.
[86] Links provide either further information on asset or direct to organization providing access depending on what is available online.

Asset type	Organization name(s)[85]	Asset name with link to asset[86]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
			high-speed internet and equipment. For some of its internet plans, that means free service.	
	Xfinity (Comcast)	ACP Program; Internet Essentials	Xfinity participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program, giving eligible customers discounts of up to $30 per month for home or mobile high-speed internet service and equipment. For some of its internet plans that means free service.[87]	Income less than 150% of FPL; veterans
	Department of Human Services / OCTO	DC HOPE Network (2021)	Brings free in-unit internet service to residents at five temporary housing and family homeless shelters across DC.	Income less than 150% of FPL
	DC Department of Housing and Community Development	Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF)	A $50 million fund to provide financial assistance to eligible homeowners struggling to make housing related payments, including internet payments.	Income less than 150% of FPL
	Mayor's Office of Community Affairs	Internet for All initiative	Provides $3.3 million for free internet access for up to 25,000 disconnected low-income students and families in DC Public Schools and public charter schools.	Income less than 150% of FPL
	DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer	Connect Potomac Gardens	Potomac Gardens residents receive free Wi-Fi in their apartments and common areas.	Residents at Potomac Gardens
	DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer	Connect Hopkins Apartments	Hopkins Apartments residents will receive free Wi-Fi in their apartments and common areas.	Residents at Hopkins Apartments
	Verizon	ACP Program	Verizon participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program, giving eligible customers discounts of up to $30 per month for home high-	Income less than 150% FPL; Veterans

[87] https://www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service/acp.

Asset type	Organization name(s)[85]	Asset name with link to asset[86]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
			speed internet and equipment. For some of its internet plans, that means free service.[88]	
	Astound Broadband, Powered by RCN	ACP Program	Astound participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program, giving eligible customers discounts of up to $30 per month for home high-speed internet and equipment. For some of its internet plans, that means free service.[89]	Income less than 150% FPL; Veterans
	Starry	ACP Program	Starry participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program, giving eligible customers discounts of up to $30 per month for home high-speed internet and equipment. Both Starry Select (100 Mbps) and Starry Connect (30 Mbps) would be free under the ACP.[90]	Income less than 150% FPL; Veterans
	T-Mobile	ACP Program	T-Mobile participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program, giving eligible customers discounts of up to $30 per month for home high-speed internet service through its Metro subsidiary. For some of Metro's internet plans that means free service. T-Mobile also offers eligible customers free wireless service through Assurance Wireless.[91]	Income less than 150% FPL; Veterans
2. Steps taken to increase enrollment in ACP	Black Churches 4 Digital Equity	Black Churches 4 Digital Equity	Black Churches 4 Digital Equity is building a collaborative movement across the nation to make sure that communities with the least access get digital equity. The coalition works to educate	Racial and ethnic minorities

[88] https://www.verizon.com/home/internet/acp/.
[89] https://www.astound.com/acp/.
[90] https://starry.com/acp-connect.
[91] https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/affordable-connectivity-program.

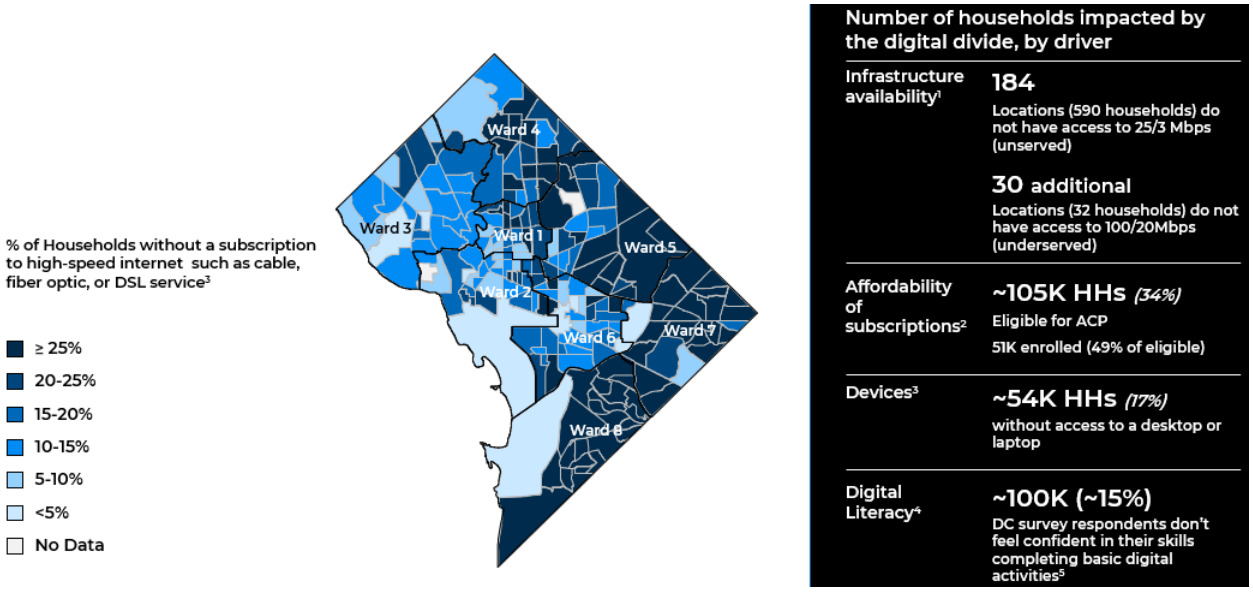
Asset type	Organization name(s)[85]	Asset name with link to asset[86]	Description	Target population served including details on covered population served
			members about broadband internet assistance programs, encourage unconnected households to get online, to train and organize leaders as advocates to get their communities connected, and to advance digital equity through the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). This group hosts annual events in DC.	
	Tech Together	Internet Access Initiatives	Helps people who formerly used the DC government's Internet for All program, to transition to the Affordable Connectivity Program and other reduced cost broadband programs available in the District.	Income less than 150% of FPL
	Organization of Chinese Americans, Inc	Organization of Chinese Americans website	Organization dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Received ACP outreach grant and links website users to the ACP.	Racial and ethnic minorities (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders)
	The National Council of Negro Women	NCNW	The National Council of Negro Women's (NCNW) mission is to lead, empower and advocate for women of African descent, their families, and communities. The NCNW priorities are to promote education; encourage entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and economic stability; educate women about health and promote healthcare access; promote civic engagement and advocate for sound public policy and social justice. The organization received an ACP outreach grant of $740,000 to raise awareness of, and participation in, the ACP.	Racial and ethnic minorities (African Americans)

3.2 Needs Assessment

In the District of Columbia, about 88,000 residents in approximately 39,000 households (13 percent) do not have a subscription to high-speed internet at home. (See Figure 6 for more details.)[92] This gap in adoption may be driven by a lack of:

- **Available infrastructure:** 184 broadband serviceable locations (590 households) do not have access to 25/3 Mbps service (unserved); 30 additional broadband serviceable locations (32 households) do not have access to 100/20Mbps service (underserved).
- **Affordability of subscriptions**: Some 105,000 households (34 percent) are eligible for ACP, with about 51,000 enrolled.
- **Device access:** About 54,000 households (17 percent) are without access to a desktop or laptop.
- **Digital literacy skills:** About 15 percent of survey respondents do not feel confident about using computers to complete basic online activities.

Figure 6. Households impacted by digital divide in DC, by 2020 Census tract and Ward.[93]



In this section, we further detail the baseline from which DC is working to address gaps in broadband adoption, affordability, device access and digital literacy, as well as the information that residents have communicated about their underlying needs and the

[92] American Community Survey 5-Year data, 2021 [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[93] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].

barriers they face to becoming fully digitally enabled. Later in this section, we provide details on each of these topics as they specifically pertain to DC's covered populations: individuals who live in covered households, aging individuals, incarcerated individuals (justice impacted individuals), veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, and ethnic or racial minorities.[94] DC does not have residents who live in rural areas.[95]

3.2.1 Broadband Adoption

This section describes the current state of DC's broadband adoption, device access, and digital literacy rates, as well as the feedback gathered from residents on the barriers they face. This section also includes a discussion about the areas (e.g., education, employment, healthcare, small businesses) where multi-sector strategies for increasing broadband adoption could be effective in DC, as well as the metrics for assessing outcomes.

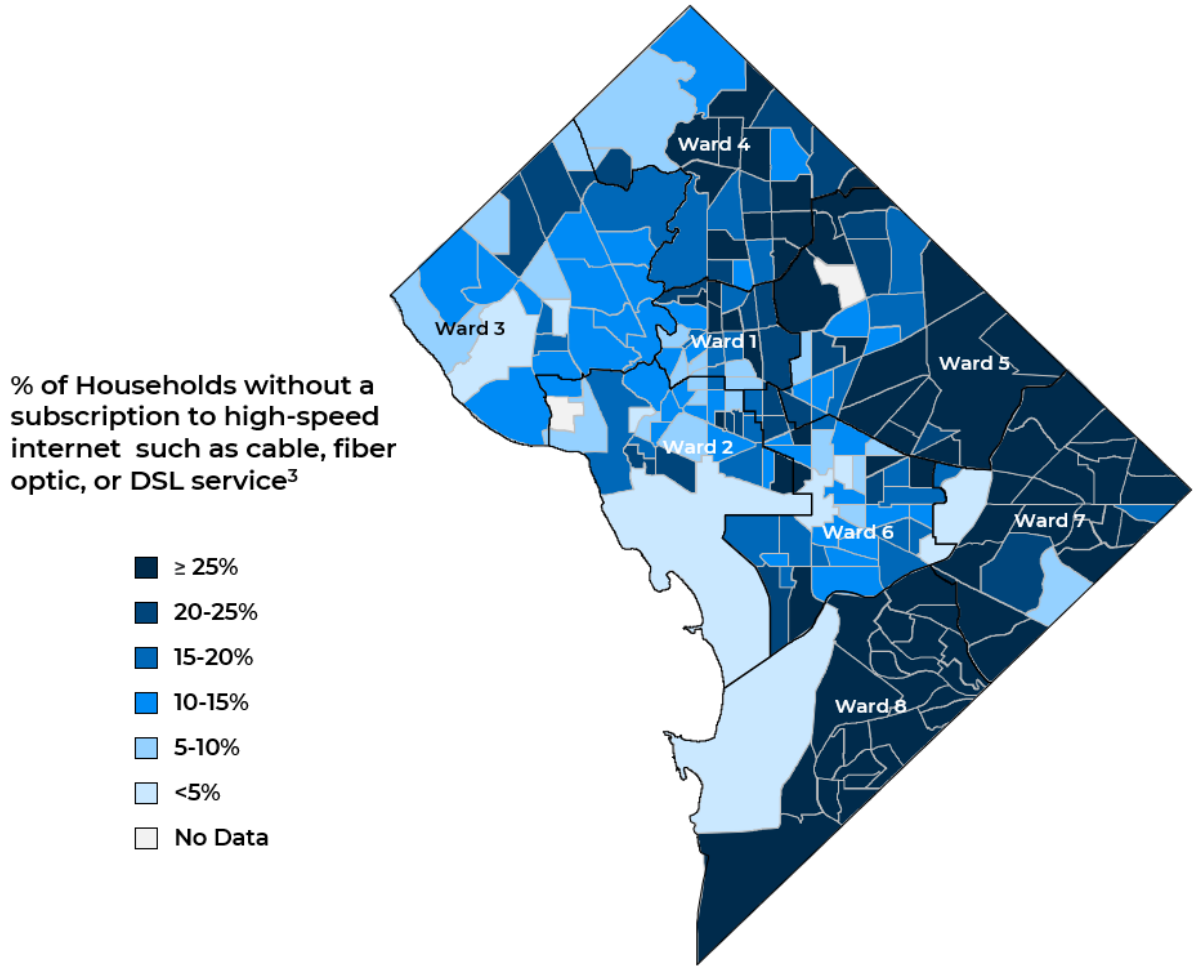
3.2.1.1 Increased household broadband subscription

Current state of broadband subscription in DC

According to the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS), approximately 88,000 DC residents in about 39,000 households (23 percent) do not have broadband subscriptions.[96] The gaps in adoption are largest in Wards 5, 7, and 8. Wards 4 and 5 are both below the DC average (77 percent broadband subscription), with the ACS data showing 74 percent and 73 percent broadband subscription rates, respectively. Wards 7 and 8 have the two lowest broadband subscription rates in the District, with 63 percent and 61 percent of residents having a broadband subscription, respectively (Figure 7). Figure 7 demonstrates how broadband adoption rates vary geographically across the District, highlighting again how Wards 5, 7, and 8 have lower adoption rates than the District average. Ward 3 has the highest adoption rate in DC, at 86 percent.

[94] Covered population as defined by the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity, NTIA.
[95] Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, U.S. Census Bureau.
[96] Assumes a household size of 2.25 people [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].

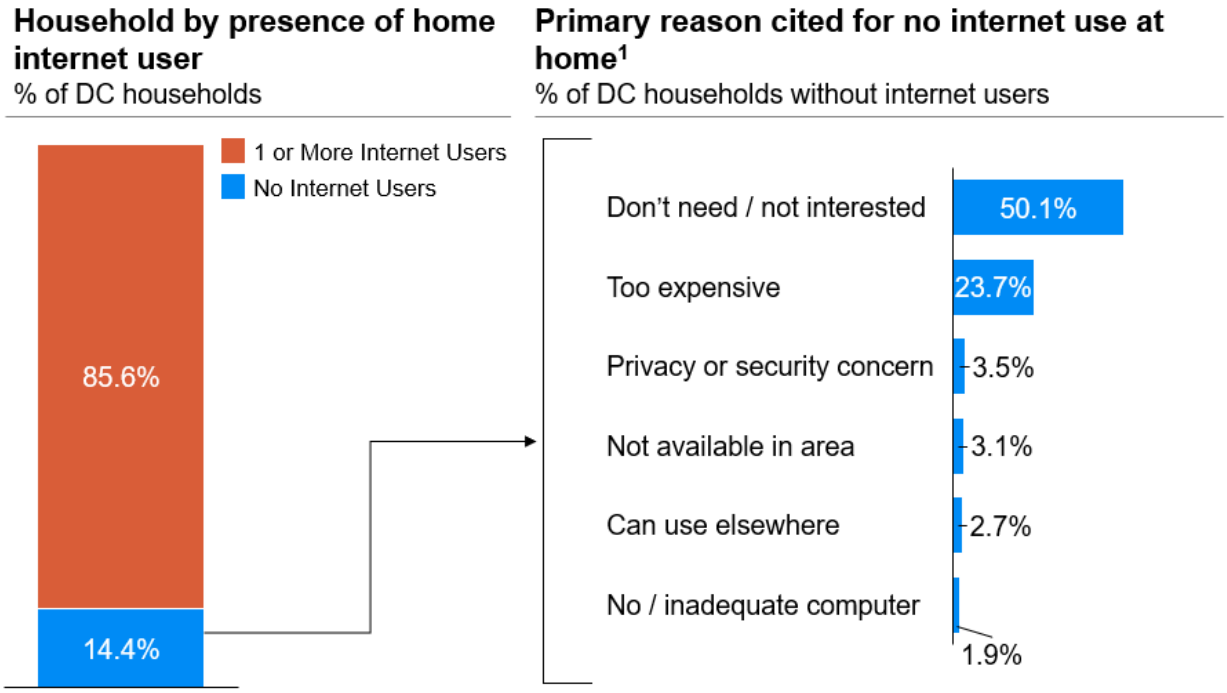
Figure 7. Households impacted by digital divide in DC, by 2020 Census tract and Ward.[97]



In Figure 8, survey responses from the NTIA Internet Use Survey shows that many DC residents do not use home internet service because they believe they do not need it, or because they are not interested.[98] 14 percent of DC households do not have a home internet user. From this population, 50 percent stated that they did not need internet service or were not interested in the internet, as their primary reason for not using the internet at home. Another 24 percent cited internet usage as too expensive, as their primary reason for not getting it.

[97] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[98] For the November 2021 CPS, which included the NTIA Internet Use Survey, the Census Bureau gathered information on nearly 100,000 people living in over 43,000 households across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. [https://www.ntia.gov/other-publication/2022/digital-nation-data-explorer#sel=internetUser&disp=map].

Figure 8. Use of the internet at home in DC.[99]



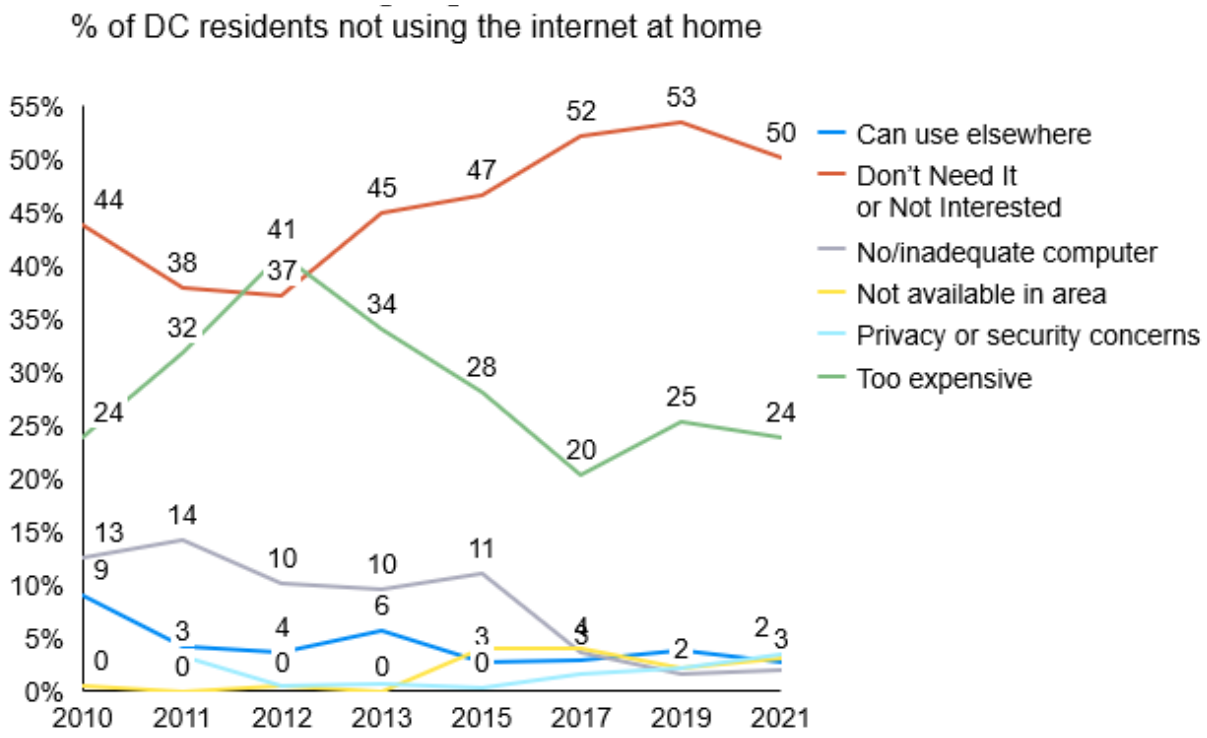
Internet use in DC over time

As shown in Figure 9, the 2021 NTIA Internet Use Survey shows that the DC residents' reasons for not using the internet at home have changed over time. "Don't need it or not interested" and "Too expensive" have consistently been the two most-often cited reasons. Following the pandemic, users selecting "Don't need it or not interested" dropped 3 points. "No/inadequate computer" has fallen from 13 percent of respondents in 2010 to 2 percent in 2021, and "Can use elsewhere" has similarly fallen from 9 percent in 2010 to 3 percent in 2021 (Figure 9).

Many DC residents may not currently have an advanced use case for having highspeed broadband at home. In these cases, helping residents to develop their knowledge and skills could expand their internet use and show them the benefits of participation in the digital ecosystem. This could help to close the adoption gap in DC.

[99] NTIA Internet Use Survey, 2021 [https://www.ntia.gov/other-publication/2022/digital-nation-data-explorer#sel=internetUser&disp=map].

Figure 9. Trends in reasons why DC households do not use the internet at home.[100]

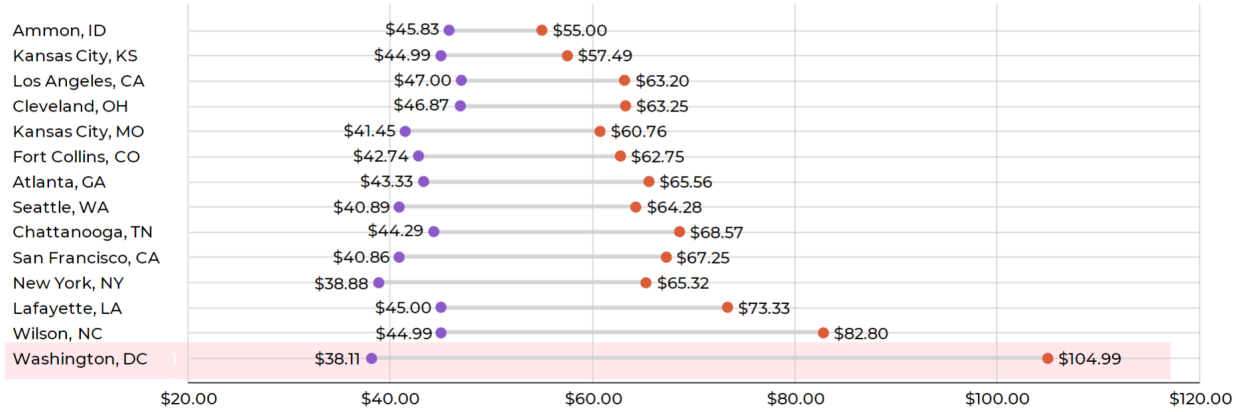


Broadband subscription-related needs and barriers

In DC, prices for high-speed internet subscriptions at home may be a significant barrier to increasing household broadband subscriptions. The "Cost of Connectivity 2020" study by New America summarized research on internet affordability across the US. In an assessment of US cities with plans costing $50 and under, this study showed that, in 2020, DC had the highest standard non-promotional pricing at $104.99 per month.[101] DC ranked slightly below average among its peers on average promotional pricing, at $38.11 per month (Figure 10 has a range for various cities).

[100] Ibid.
[101] Cost of Connectivity 2020, New America [https://www.newamerica.org/oti/reports/cost-connectivity-2020/].

Figure 10. The Cost of Connectivity 2020: U.S. Cities with Plans $50 and under.[102]



In addition, lack of digital literacy and gaps in digital skills have exacerbated residents' fears about online safety and privacy, making them reluctant to obtain home access to high-speed internet.[103]

Meetings with DC-area digital equity and inclusion practitioners and the Tech Together DC community have underscored the fact that there is a population within DC that struggles to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information. Residents have expressed concerns about keeping their personal information private and feel vulnerable to internet scams and computer viruses.[104] These concerns may be a potential barrier not only to adoption of home internet service, but also to residents taking full advantage of the benefits inherent to accessing telehealth and other essential services, as well as full participation in the digital economy.

In BEAD and Digital Equity stakeholder engagement events, the following themes emerged from resident's comments related to possible barriers to **adoption**:

- **High cost as a barrier to internet adoption.** Residents cited high internet service costs as a barrier to adoption. For example, one resident stated, "The biggest challenge is being subscribed to an internet service and the affordability of the subscription. 'I can't afford it,' is a common sentiment. "[105] Individuals who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups reported reliance on their mobile phones due to the expense of home internet. Relying solely on smartphones for internet connection is not enough for device access due to limited data plans and

[102] https://www.newamerica.org/oti/reports/cost-connectivity-2020/.
[103] Cost of Connectivity 2020, New America [https://www.newamerica.org/oti/reports/cost-connectivity-2020/]. Insights from community engagement session [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[104] Insights from community engagement session. [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[105] OCTO Listening Session, November 2023 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].

the smaller screens can make it hard to complete device-enabled tasks like remote work, completing a resume, and accessing essential services.[106]

- **Challenges to adoption due to digital skill gaps.** Stakeholders also reported barriers to adoption driven by gaps in digital literacy and digital skills. Residents who are part of racial or ethnic minority groups expressed distrust of the internet and concerns about cyber-attacks. Aging individuals reported a lack of knowledge on the need of connecting to Wi-Fi and lack of understanding of internet-related terminology. For example, one participant highlighted, "I don't know anything about new technology, and I don't know anything about programs that help access internet."[107]

3.2.1.2 Improved households, businesses, and CAIs with access to internet-capable devices

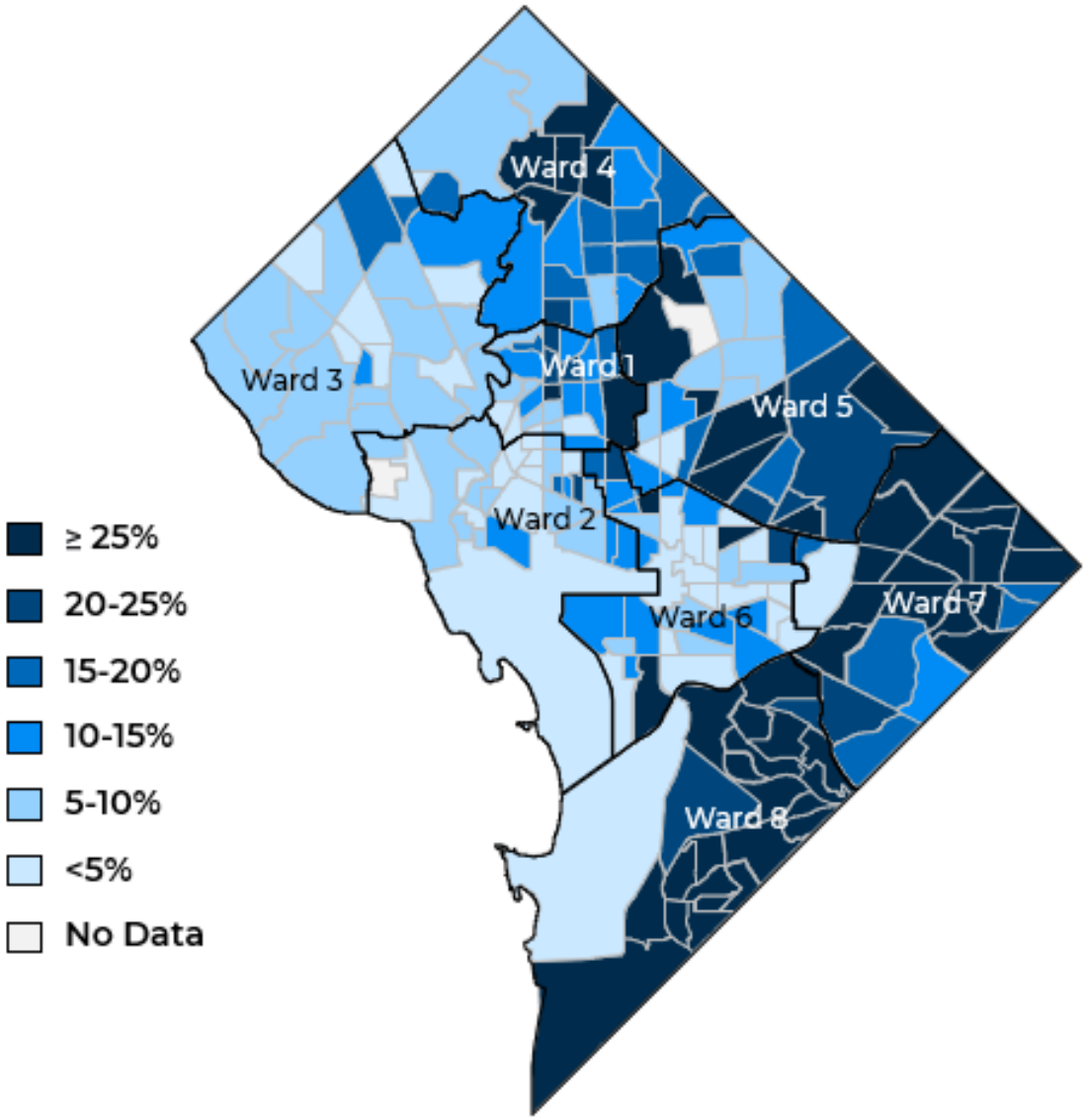
Device access in households in DC

A total of 83 percent of DC households have access to an internet-connected device (desktop or laptop computer), compared to 79 percent of households nationally.[108] Five out of eight Wards have a device adoption rate of at least 80 percent.[109] However, the Wards that are not in line with this average reveal the disparities in DC. In Ward 7, for instance, 68 percent of households do not have access to a device.[110] In Ward 8, the device access rate is 61 percent.[111] By contrast, in Wards 1 through 6, 88 percent of households have access to a device.[112]

See Figure 11 below for a mapped view of rates of access to internet-enabled devices (defined as laptop or desktop) across DC. As with gaps in subscription adoption rates, the largest gaps in access to devices are in the lowest-income parts of DC, which are in Wards 5, 7 and 8.

[106] A Closer Look at Indiana's Digital Equity: Mobile-Only, Purdue University.
[107] Ward 6 Internet Safety Workshop, September 2023 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[108] American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2801?q=broadband%20adoption].
[109] American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2801?q=broadband%20adoption].
[110] American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2801?q=broadband%20adoption].
[111] American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2801?q=broadband%20adoption].
[112] American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2801?q=broadband%20adoption].

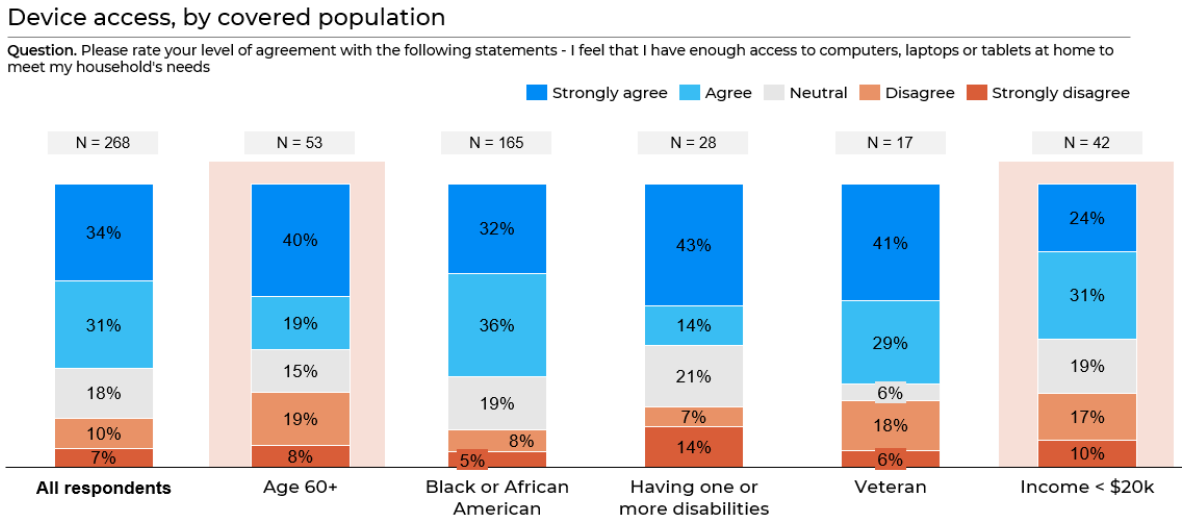
Figure 11. Percentage of DC households without access to internet-enabled devices, either a desktop or a laptop computer, by Ward.[113]



[113] Ibid.

- **The DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey**, residents were asked to "rate their level of agreement with the following statement: 'I feel that I have enough access to computers, laptops or tablets at home to meet my household's need.'" The results shows that only 67 percent of residents in DC have enough access to internet-connected computers, laptops, or tablets at home to meet their household's needs (Figure 12).[114] Access to internet-connected devices (desktops or laptops) varies by covered population status. For instance, low-income respondents and Black or African American respondents are less likely than peers to say they have sufficient access to internet-connected devices in their household.[115,116] Only 24 percent of low-income respondents and 32 percent of Black or African American respondents strongly agree that they lack sufficient access to devices in their household, while 34 percent of all survey respondents report having enough access to such devices .[117,118]

Figure 12. Device access, by covered populations. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey results, August 2023– January 2024.[119]



[114] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey. "Strongly agree" answers to question, "Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements – I feel that I have enough access to computers, laptops or tablets at home to meet my household's needs."
[115] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, low income is defined as having an annual income below $20,000. In the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO, individuals living in a covered household is defined as having an income 150% of the FPL. In 2024, FPL for an individual is $15,060 ($1,255 / month), and for a married couple is $20,440 ($1,703 / month). 150% of the FPL is 22,590. The definition of low income in the DC SBDEO survey approximates the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO definition but does not match it exactly. The NOFO definition is being used for the operationalization of the plan.
[116] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey. "Strongly agree" answers to question, "Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements – I feel that I have enough access to computers, laptops or tablets at home to meet my household's needs."
[117] Ibid.
[118] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey. "Strongly agree" answers to question, "Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements – I feel that I have enough access to computers, laptops or tablets at home to meet my household's needs."

[119] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.

Device access-related needs and barriers

In listening sessions across the District,[120] the need for access to affordable devices and tech support was a common theme:

- **High cost as a barrier to device access:** Many participants reported reliance on smartphones due to limited access to laptops or tablets largely due to the cost.[121] [122] Homeless individuals and tech-deficient residents face significant hurdles in [123]
- **Gaps in public device access:** Residents also highlighted gaps in device access in public spaces. While some reported access to devices in local libraries, other residents highlighted an unmet need for essential equipment like reliable laptops and phones in accessible locations.[124]
- **Accessibility challenges for individuals with disabilities:** Individuals living with disabilities experience accessibility barriers to device use. For example, one resident reported, "Online platforms and new devices need to better support individuals who may be visually impaired or with a loss of sight."[125] There's a need for greater device support on new devices and more inclusive software updates for people with disabilities.[126]

3.2.1.3 Improved digital literacy

Current state of digital literacy in DC

According to UNESCO, digital skills include the ability to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information for creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities at large[127]. These skills are on a spectrum. At the beginning of the spectrum is basic digital literacy, which includes the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.[128] At the opposite end of the spectrum are abilities that allow users to make use of digital technologies in empowering and transformative ways, such as working in information and communications technology (ICT).[129] Digital equity itself is a lifelong learning experience, as digital skills are constantly evolving along with technology.[130]

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[120] Summary of listening sessions and stakeholder engagement events in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[121] OCTO Listening Session, November 2023. [Summary in Section 4.1]. As explained in Section 3.2.1.1 mobile phone use at home is not a meaningful replacement for a computer and home internet access. Many mobile phones, while in-use indoors, experience difficulty connecting to outdoor mobile wireless networks.
[122] CFSA Lived Experience, September 2023. Section 4.1 summarizes stakeholder engagement events.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Insight from community engagement / stakeholder engagement session. Summarized in Section 4.1.
[125] Department of Disability Services, October 2023. Section 4.1 summarizes community/stakeholder engagement sessions.
[126] Ibid.
[127] https://en.unesco.org/news/digital-skills-critical-jobs-and-social-inclusion.
[128] https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/.
[129] https://en.unesco.org/news/digital-skills-critical-jobs-and-social-inclusion.
[130] Public comment received from Digitunity. Summary of public comments included in the Appendix, Section 7.3.

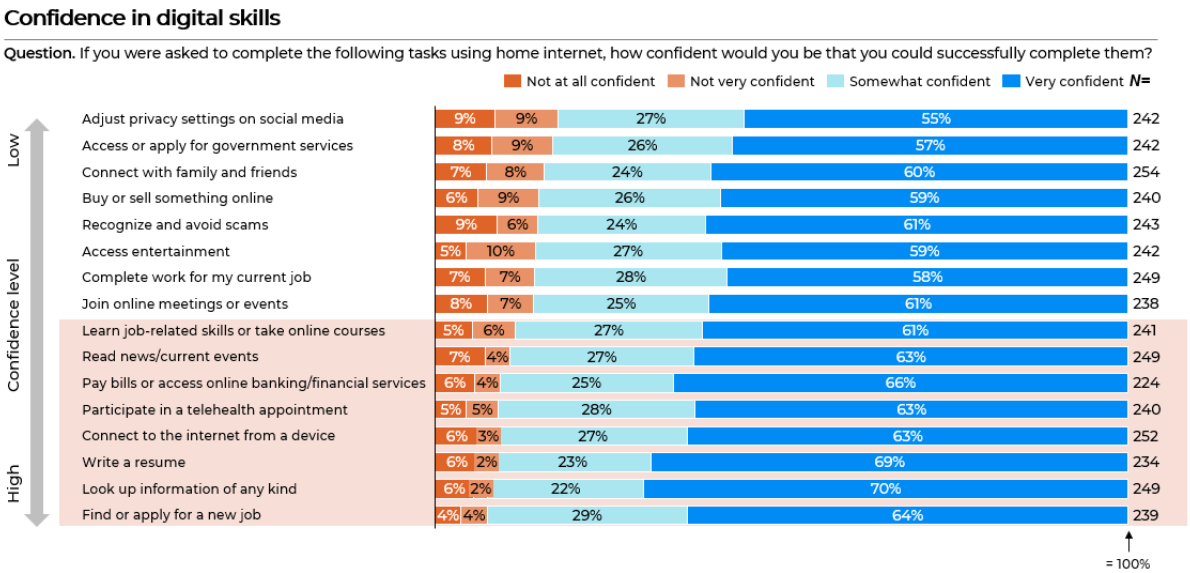
Results from the DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey[131] (see Figure 13) showed that 8 – 15 percent of respondents were "not at all confident" or "not very confident" in their ability to successfully complete basic tasks on the internet such as:

- Connecting with family and friends (15 percent).
- Connecting to the internet from a device (9 percent).
- Looking up information of any kind (8 percent).
- Completing work for a current job (14 percent).
- Learning job-related skills or attend online courses (11 percent).
- Accessing entertainment (15 percent).

For other digital skills that are a necessary for participation in society—such as writing a resume, accessing, or applying for government services, or reading news and current events—8 to 17 percent of respondents were not at all confident or not very confident in their ability to successfully complete these tasks online and/or using a computer.[132]

With respect to online privacy and cyber security tasks, such as recognizing and avoiding scams and adjusting privacy settings on social media—15 to 18 percent of respondents are not at all confident or not very confident in their ability to successfully complete these tasks.[133]

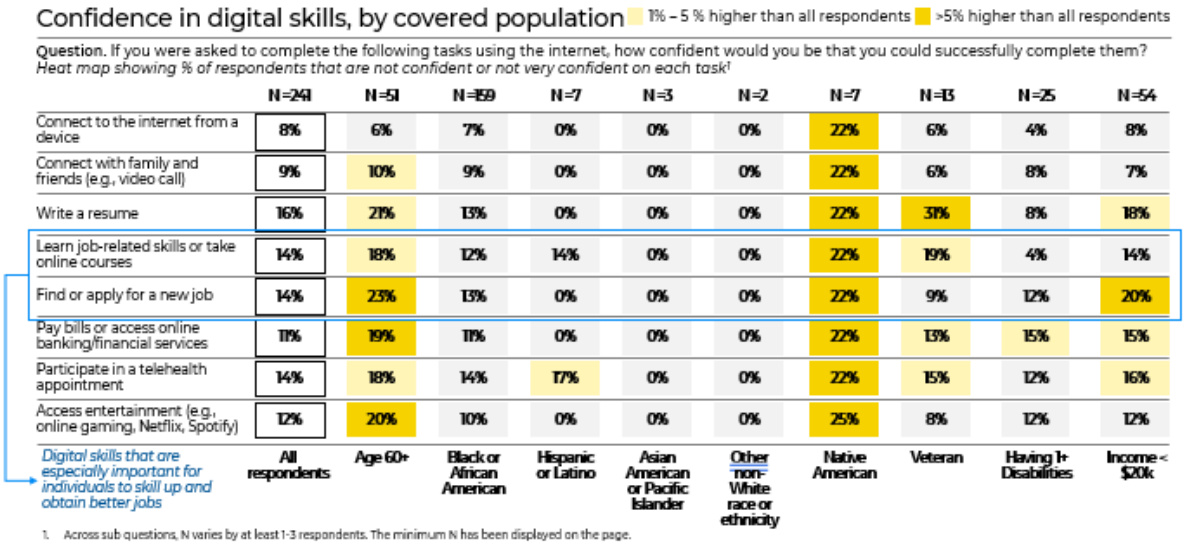
Figure 13. Confidence in digital skills, all respondents. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey results, August 2023 – January 2024.[134]



[131] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[132] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.

Examining preliminary survey results by covered population shows that 25 percent of aging DC residents (60+ years) are not confident or not very confident in their ability to adjust privacy settings on social media, compared to only 18 percent of all respondents (see Figure 14).[135] And with respect to cyber security, 14 percent of Native American residents are not confident or not very confident in their ability to recognize and avoid scams, while 7 percent of all respondents are not confident or not very confident about this ability.[136]

Figure 14. Confidence in digital skills, by covered populations. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey results, August 2023– January 2024.[137]



Confidence in digital skills, by covered population

1% – 5 % higher than all respondents >5% higher than all respondents

Question. If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them?
Heat map showing % of respondents that are not confident or not very confident on each task[1]

	All respondents N=241	Age 60+ N=51	Black or African American N=159	Hispanic or Latino N=7	Asian American or Pacific Islander N=3	Other non-White race or ethnicity N=2	Native American N=7	Veteran N=13	Having 1+ Disabilities N=25	Income < $20k N=54
Connect to the internet from a device	8%	6%	7%	0%	0%	0%	22%	6%	4%	8%
Connect with family and friends (e.g., video call)	9%	10%	9%	0%	0%	0%	22%	6%	8%	7%
Write a resume	16%	21%	13%	0%	0%	0%	22%	31%	8%	18%
Learn job-related skills or take online courses	14%	18%	12%	14%	0%	0%	22%	19%	4%	14%
Find or apply for a new job	14%	23%	13%	0%	0%	0%	22%	9%	12%	20%
Pay bills or access online banking/financial services	11%	19%	11%	0%	0%	0%	22%	13%	15%	15%
Participate in a telehealth appointment	14%	18%	14%	17%	0%	0%	22%	15%	12%	16%
Access entertainment (e.g., online gaming, Netflix, Spotify)	12%	20%	10%	0%	0%	0%	25%	8%	12%	12%

Digital skills that are especially important for individuals to skill up and obtain better jobs

1. Across sub questions, N varies by at least 1-3 respondents. The minimum N has been displayed on the page.

[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

Confidence in digital skills, by covered population

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Complete work for my current job	9%	12%	8%	0%	0%	0%	33%	19%	0%	7%
Join online meetings or events	15%	26%	16%	14%	0%	0%	25%	21%	15%	13%
Buy or sell something online	8%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	14%	7%	0%	12%
Look up information of any kind	9%	6%	7%	0%	0%	0%	22%	36%	0%	7%
Read news/current events	15%	18%	15%	29%	0%	0%	22%	31%	8%	13%
Access or apply for government services	17%	31%	18%	14%	0%	0%	22%	36%	11%	14%
Adjust privacy settings on social media	18%	35%	17%	29%	0%	0%	22%	27%	11%	12%
Recognize and avoid scams	7%	6%	7%	0%	0%	0%	14%	8%	0%	7%

1. Across sub questions, N varies by at least 1-3 respondents. The minimum N has been displayed on the page.

Digital literacy-related needs and barriers

In 2023, Mayor Bowser's inauguration address unveiled DC's 5-year strategy to add 35,000 new jobs to the local economy.[138] These jobs will be created in targeted industries such as education, communications and design, consulting, hospitality and tourism, life sciences, and technology.[139]
Research from the National Skills Coalition[140] shows that many of these jobs require "definitely digital" skills, such as using a named software product, and "likely digital" skills such survey design and bookkeeping. For example, the coalition's analysis of 43 million online job postings shows that:

- In education: 45 percent of postings require "definitely digital skills".[141]
- In professional services: 73 percent of postings require "definitely digital skills".[142]

A significant barrier to improving digital literacy could be that DC digital learning programs may not have sufficient capacity and may not be accessible enough to meet the need. Residents and digital equity practitioners highlight the need for programs to be accessible to the target population, and thus:

- Located near where residents live;
- Accessible by public transportation;
- Held at times that are suitable for working people (e.g., with options after business hours, on the weekends);
- Offered in multiple different languages; and,
- Provisions made for child-care options.[143]

In addition, programs that feed into digital jobs were mentioned as particularly effective.[144]

In BEAD and Digital Equity stakeholder engagement events,[145] the following themes emerged from discussions on barriers to digital literacy and skills:

- **Insufficient training programs:** Listening session participants highlighted the challenge of not having sufficient, readily available support and resources in locations like libraries, churches, and parent centers to address connectivity gaps.[146]
- **Lack of tailored digital education programs that align with the specific needs and abilities of participants:** There is a need for targeted programming and training

[138] Mayor Bowser Sworn in for Historic Third Term, Delivers Third Inaugural Address [https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-sworn-historic-third-term-delivers-third-inaugural-address#:~:text=And%20what%20is%20it%20they,to%20win%20for%20Washington%2C%20DC.].
[139] https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/01/09/bowser-dc-economy-growth-equity/.
[140] https://nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NSC-DigitalDivide_report_Feb2023.pdf.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Community/stakeholder engagement sessions. Summary in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[144] Community/stakeholder engagement sessions. Summary in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.

in technology, especially for members of covered populations. In listening sessions with seniors, some individuals reported being unaware of basic concepts like connecting phones to Wi-Fi or understanding megabytes and highlighted the need for capability-specific training.[147]

- **Need for additional in-person support and interactive learning opportunities to support building their digital skills:** Participants in listening sessions mentioned that while tech support over the phone is appreciated, there's a strong desire for in-person support and hands-on learning opportunities.[148] Since digital skills support is distinct from technical support, offering two different delivery modes could be helpful.[149]
- **Limited Awareness of Digital Programs:** A common theme among participants is their limited awareness of digital programs and support services available in their communities. Several community members did not know specific programs or support systems designed to help them improve their digital skills or support them through acute internet use challenges.[150]
- **Challenges in Internet Usage and Security.** Many listening session participants expressed needing training support with safe navigation of the internet, from cybersecurity concerns like phishing emails, to difficulties with setting up software and programs.[151] Additionally, phone security is often a challenge for aging individuals, with individuals expressing the need for support in navigating these issues through tech support and local programming.[152]

3.2.1.4 Increased emphasis on multi-sector strategies for broadband adoption

Broadband-related needs and barriers in different sectors

Studies show that access to broadband and internet-connected devices can potentially have a measurable impact on socio-economic outcomes,[153] including:

- **Jobs**: A 10 percent increase in broadband adoption could lead to an annual increase of ~269,000 jobs across the US.[154]

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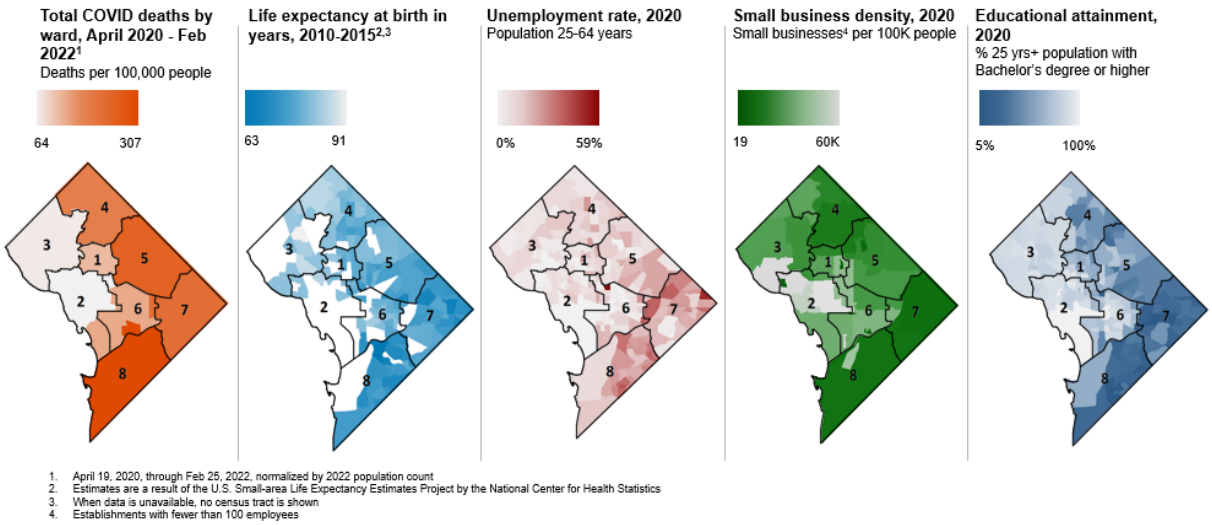
[147] Ward 6 Internet Safety Workshop, September 14, 2023. Summary in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[148] Hattie Holmes Wellness Center, October 10, 2023. Summary in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[149] Public comment received from Digitunity. Summary in Appendix, Section 7.3 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].
[150] Community/stakeholder engagement sessions. Summary in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[151] Ibid.
[152] Commission on Aging Listening Session, October 25, 2023.Summary of stakeholder/community engagement sessions in Section 4.1.
[153] https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/press-releases/quantifying-the-economic-impact-of-closing-the-digital-divide.html; https://www.forbes.com/sites/glebtsipursky/2023/01/27/new-research-shows-remote-work-essential-for-caregivers/?sh=23ab15104331; https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20190648; https://www.brookings.edu/articles/washington-may-be-about-to-take-a-giant-step-backward-in-closing-the-digital-divide/.
[154] https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/press-releases/quantifying-the-economic-impact-of-closing-the-digital-divide.html.

- **Income**: Access to high-speed broadband could result in a $2,000 Increase in household income among low-income families.[155]
- **Job satisfaction**: 73 percent of caregivers use the time they save from working from home to care for their children.[156]
- **Health**: Patients save an average of $93 when using non-urgent virtual care instead of an in-person visit.[157]
- **Productivity**: Workers reported that their productivity improved by 87 percent when working remotely according to an IBM study.[158]
- **Community engagement**: A Spanish town of 3,500 residents saved $380,000 annually by running most of the town's communication through social media.[159]

In several parts of DC, investments in digital equity could meaningfully shrink gaps in socio-economic outcomes. As shown below in Figure 15, in DC, socio-economic outcome metrics related to COVID deaths, life expectancy at birth, unemployment rate, small business density and educational attainment follow the same deficit pattern as broadband and affordability gaps, as they more starkly affect Wards 5, 7, and 8.[160]

Figure 15. Outcome statistics for key areas that can be impacted by broadband equity, access, and adoption, by Ward.[161]



[155] George W. Zuo, Wired and Hired: Employment Effects of Subsidized Broadband Internet for Low-Income Americans, 2021 [https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20190648].
[156] https://www.forbes.com/sites/glebtsipursky/2023/01/27/new-research-shows-remote-work-essential-for-caregivers/?sh=23ab15104331.
[157] https://www.brookings.edu/articles/washington-may-be-about-to-take-a-giant-step-backward-in-closing-the-digital-divide/.
[158] Bailey, D. E., & Kurland, N. B. (2002). A review of telework research: findings, new directions, and lessons for the study of modern work. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23, pp. 383-400.
[159] https://medium.com/@socialmachines/the-incredible-jun-a-town-that-runs-on-social-media-49d3d0d4590.
[160] DC COVID-19 Surveillance data; National Center for Health Statistics, US Census, DC Open Data.
[161] Ibid.

In COVID deaths, life expectancy, unemployment rate, small business density, and educational attainment, Wards 5, 7 and 8 are more adversely affected.[162] These outcomes are similar to the geographical distribution of gaps in broadband adoption and device access in both the disparity across wards, and highlight the clear deficits in Wards 5, 7 and 8.[163]

By expanding access to broadband service and devices, as well as partnering with agencies and organizations focused on leveraging broadband and devices as tools within initiatives to drive health and economic equity, DC SBDEO hopes to affect the lives and livelihoods of all DC residents.

Examples of current DC initiatives focused on these areas include:

- ***Addressing barriers to internet access:*** Ensure that all DC residents have equitable access to affordable, high-speed, and reliable internet service, including by:
    - Improving information technology systems within schools
    - Identifying "racial equity indicators" that measure progress toward a more racially equitable DC
    - Reaching communities that experience barriers to online access by bridging the digital divide
    - *Efforts are being conducted in partnership with:*
        - Office of the Mayor
        - Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED)
        - Office of Racial Equity
        - DC Department of Employment Services
- ***Addressing barriers to device access:*** Empower all DC residents with the devices, including by:
    - Deploying various plans designed to support seniors (e.g., $340,500 to distribute tablet devices to them)
    - *Efforts are being conducted in partnership with:*
        - Office of the Mayor
        - Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED)
- ***Supporting digital literacy:*** Offer digital learning curriculum that incorporates current business internet trends, including by:

[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.

- Deploying a training session that teaches businesses how to market their products through online social networking sites.
- *Efforts are being conducted in partnership with:*
  - Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD)

- ***Enabling digital technology knowledge-sharing:*** Investing $5 million in efforts to make the District a world destination for uniting digital technology with public policy, equity, and social impact.
  - Efforts are being conducted in partnership with:
    - Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development

For further detail on these initiatives, see Section 2.2 "Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes" of this document.

3.2.2 Broadband Affordability

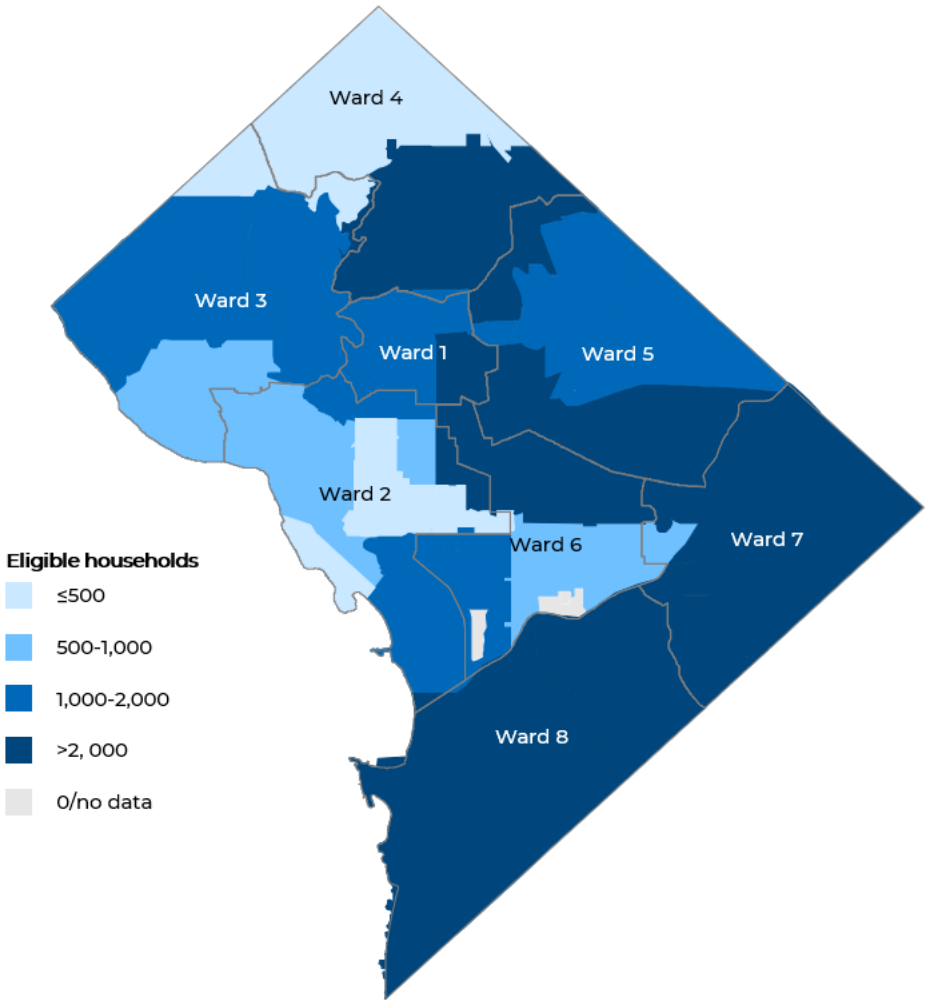
3.2.2.1. Increased support for enrollment in assistance programs for low-income consumers

ACP-eligible population in DC

A household is ACP-eligible if its household income is at or below 200 percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines, or if a member of the household has received a Pell Grant during the current award year, meets eligibility criteria for a provider's existing low income internet program, participates in an assistance program such as SNAP or Medicaid, or participates in an assistance program and lives on Qualifying Tribal lands.[164] **Approximately 105,000 households are eligible for ACP in the District.** As shown in Figure 16, these households are concentrated in Wards 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

[164] https://www.fcc.gov/acp.

Figure 16. ACP Eligible Households in DC, by zip code.

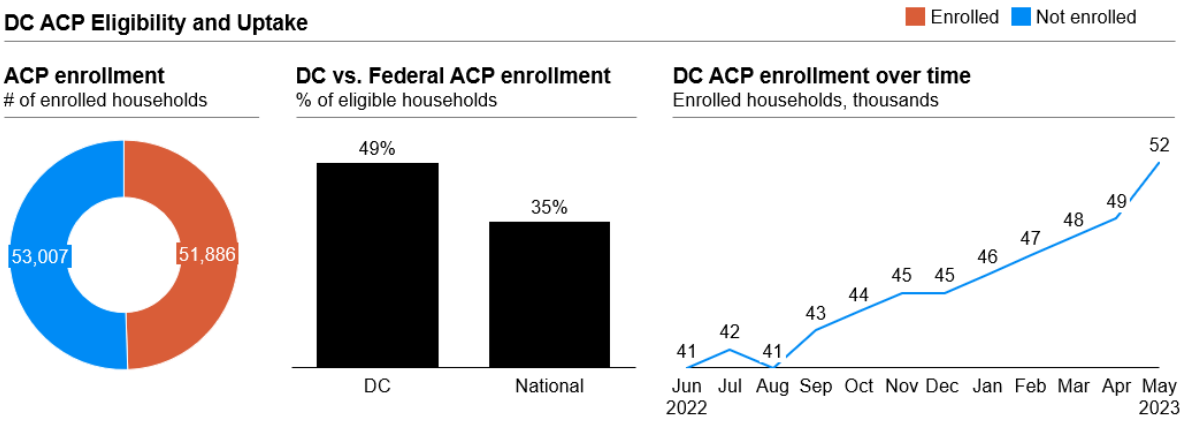


Current ACP adoption in DC

Among eligible households, 49 percent are enrolled in ACP, as compared to the national average of 35 percent.[165] DC ACP enrollment has increased over time, rising from some 41,000 in June 2022, to about 53,000 as of May 2023 (Figure 17).[166]

[165] EducationSuperHighway.org, as of July 2023.
[166] Ibid.

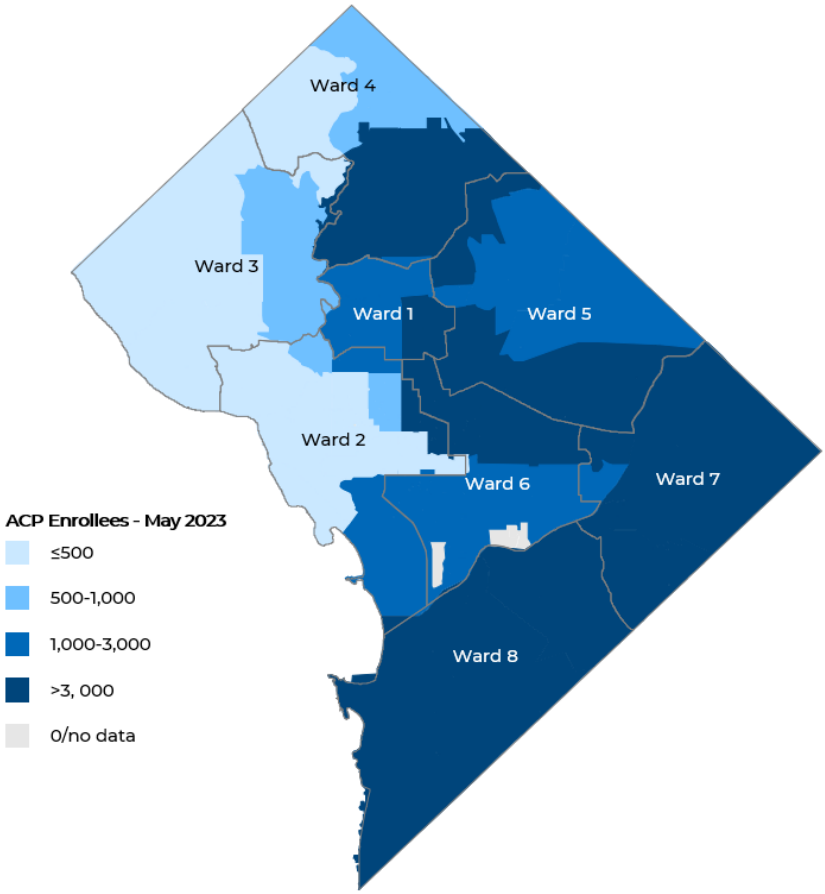
Figure 17. ACP enrolment statistics for DC, including eligibility and enrolment rate.[167]



As shown in Figure 18, the number of households enrolled in ACP is highest in Wards 4,5, 7 and 8, which are the areas with highest eligibility.

[167] Ibid.

Figure 18. ACP enrollment statistics for DC, including eligibility and enrollment rate.[168]



Although DC's 49 percent ACP enrollment rate is above the national average, over 50,000 households are eligible but not enrolled (Figure 17). Should the ACP program continue, DC SBDEO aims to achieve an 80 percent ACP adoption rate before 2028. Should the program continue in the long term, DC SBDEO considers continuing outreach essential to getting to 100 percent ACP enrollment.

Needs and barriers to ACP enrollment

ACP enrollment in DC may be impacted by lack of awareness of ACP and myriad barriers to ACP enrollment even when awareness exists. The DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey results and community partners[169] that have been engaged in efforts to drive ACP uptake have highlighted the following insights about enrollment gaps:

[168] Ibid.
[169] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.

- **ACP awareness is low**: 62 percent of survey respondents report being unaware that ACP exists (Figure 19).[170] Of respondents who do report being aware of ACP, the strongest ACP awareness is found in low-income households [171], as 50 percent of respondents from these households report being aware of ACP.[172]
- **Residents who are aware of ACP face enrollment barriers**. Even when aware of ACP, only 30 percent of DC residents are enrolled in the program, showing that many residents are not eligible to enroll, or—if eligible—are otherwise unable to enroll in the program (Figure 20).[173] Some view the enrollment process as long and confusing, as seen by 8 percent of survey respondents who find the process difficult and may benefit from being walked through it.[174] Providing application support may make it more likely for DC residents to complete the application process.
- **Residents may have unknowingly received ACP benefits**. Some listening session participants noted that when some residents attempt to sign up for ACP for their home internet subscription, they find out that they have already been enrolled in ACP and that the subsidy has been applied to their mobile phone plan after they received a free phone or wired device.[175]

[170] Ibid.
[171] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, low income is defined as having an annual income below $20,000. In the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO, individuals living in a covered household is defined as having an income 150% of the FPL. In 2024, FPL for an individual is $15,060 ($1,255 / month), and for a married couple is $20,440 ($1,703 / month). 150% of the FPL is 22,590. The definition of low income in the DC SBDEO survey approximates the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO definition but does not match it exactly. The NOFO definition is being used for the operationalization of the plan.
[172] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.

Figure 19. ACP awareness and enrollment, all respondents and covered population. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey results, August 2023 – January 2024.[176]

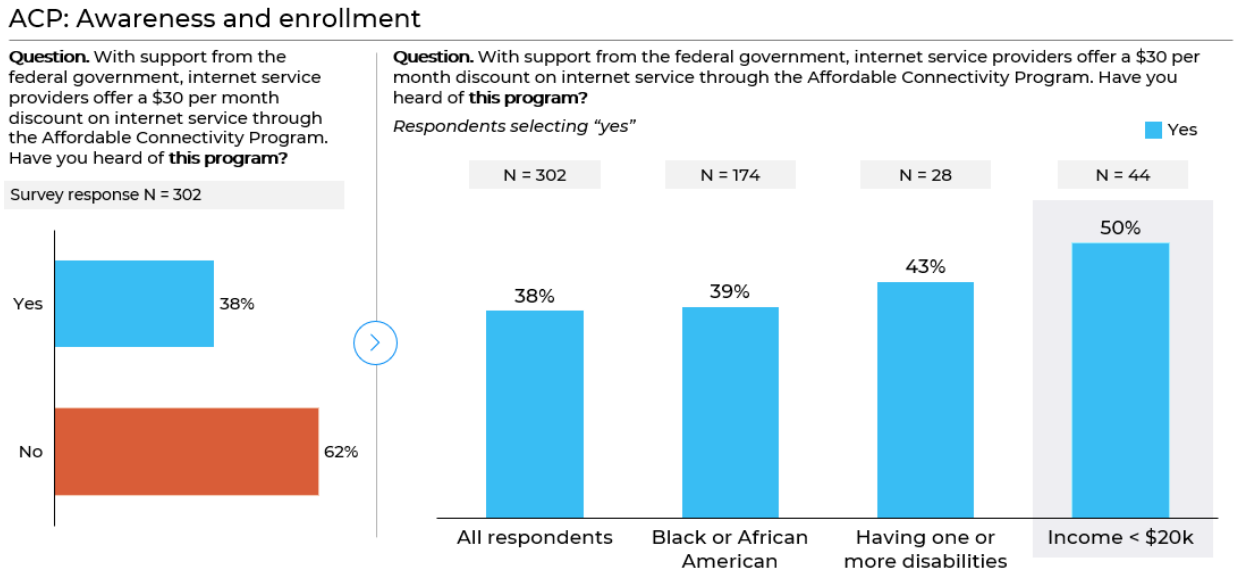
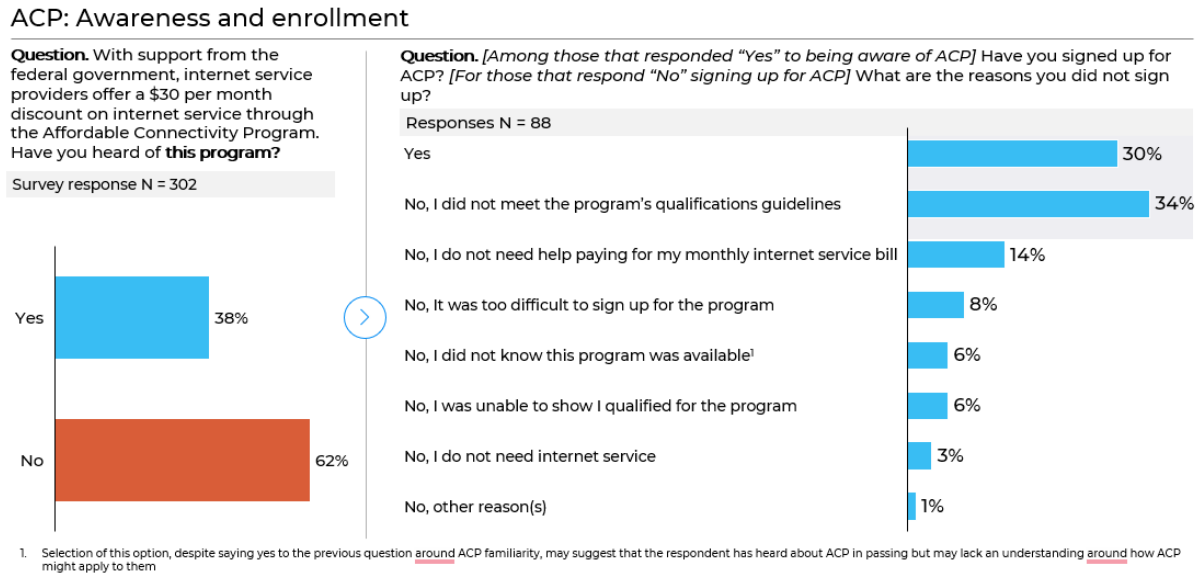


Figure 20. ACP awareness and enrollment, all respondents. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey results, August 2023 – January 2024.[177]



[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.

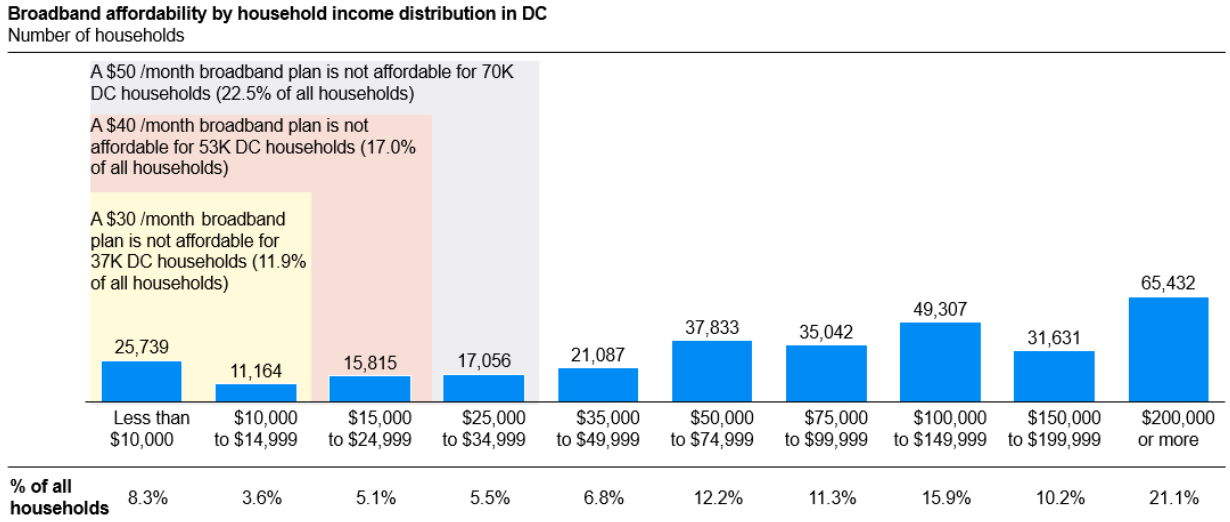
3.2.2.2 Increased financial assistance for low-income consumers

Need of financial assistance

The National Governor's Association and the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development set a threshold of 2 percent of monthly income to consider a broadband plan affordable.[178] And in the NTIA guidance for the BEAD Initial Proposal, the recommended cost of the low-cost service option is a cost of no more than $30 per month.[179] For 11.9 percent of DC households, which is approximately 37,000 households, a $30 per month plan is above the affordability threshold.[180]

For 17 percent of all DC households, which is about 53,000 households, a $40 per month plan is above the affordability threshold, and for 22.5 percent of households, or about 70,000 households, a $50 per month plan is above the affordability thresholds (Figure 21).[181]

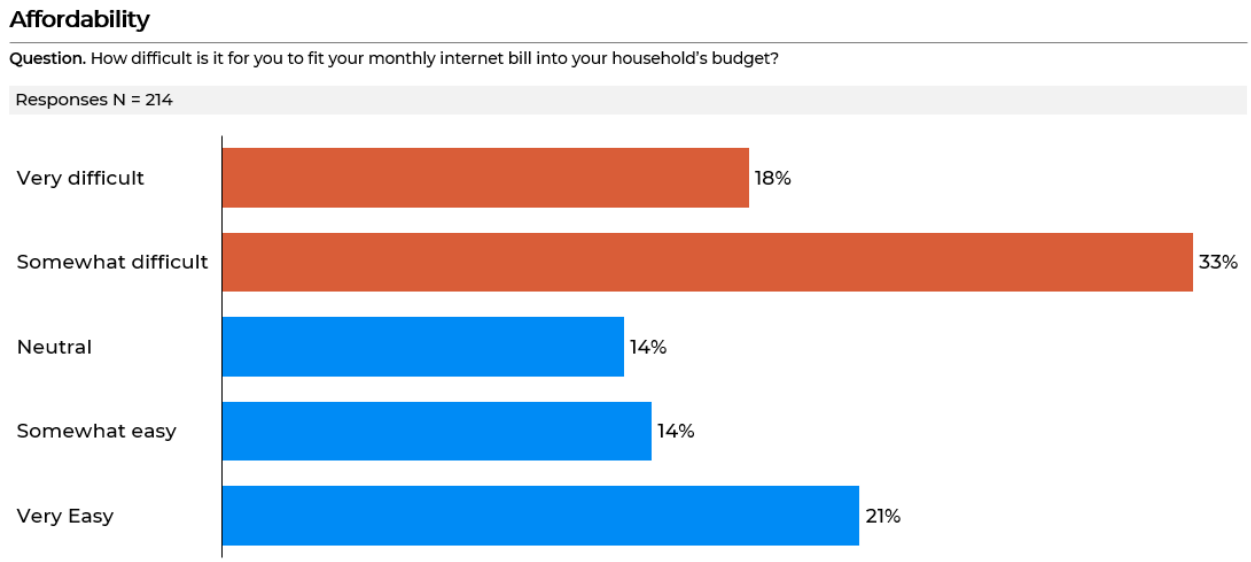
Figure 21. Broadband affordability by household income in DC.[182]



[178] https://www.nga.org/publications/broadband-affordability-resources/.
[179] https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/BEAD_Initial_Proposal_Guidance_Volumes_I_II.pdf.
[180] 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs]; https://www.nga.org/publications/broadband-affordability-resources/.
[181] 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs]; https://www.nga.org/publications/broadband-affordability-resources/.
[182] Ibid.

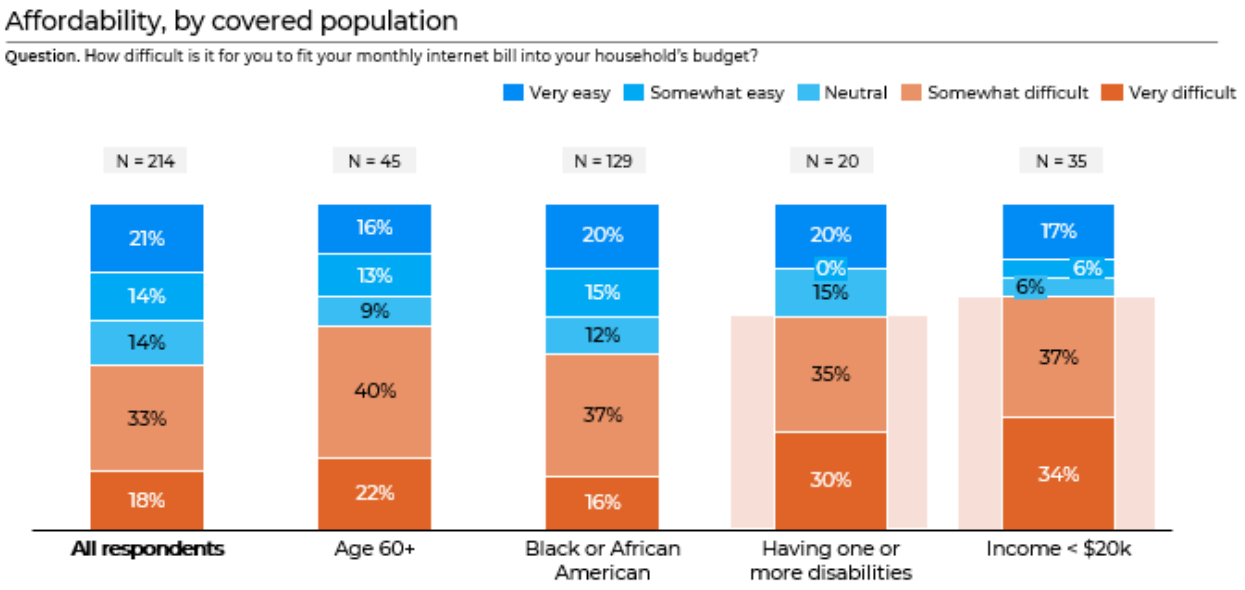
Based on feedback in the DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey, 51 percent of respondents said they found it difficult or somewhat difficult to fit their monthly internet bill into their budget (see Figure 22).[183] And examining the survey results by covered population shows that 53 percent of respondents with one or more disabilities, and 71 percent of low-income respondents[184] and 65 percent of individuals having one or more disabilities found it difficult or somewhat difficult to fit their monthly internet bill into their budgets (see Figure 23).[185]

Figure 22. Affordability, all respondents. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey, August 2023 – January 2024.[186]



[183] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[184] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, low income is defined as having an annual income below $20,000. In the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO, individuals living in a covered household is defined as having an income 150% of the FPL. In 2024, FPL for an individual is $15,060 ($1,255 / month), and for a married couple is $20,440 ($1,703 / month). 150% of the FPL is 22,590. The definition of low income in the DC SBDEO survey approximates the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO definition but does not match it exactly. The NOFO definition is being used for the operationalization of the plan.
[185] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[186] Ibid.

Figure 23. Affordability, by covered populations. Ease of fitting monthly internet bill into the household budget. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey, August 2023 – January 2024.[187]



3.2.2.3 Increased options for broadband services, including a wider range of low-cost services

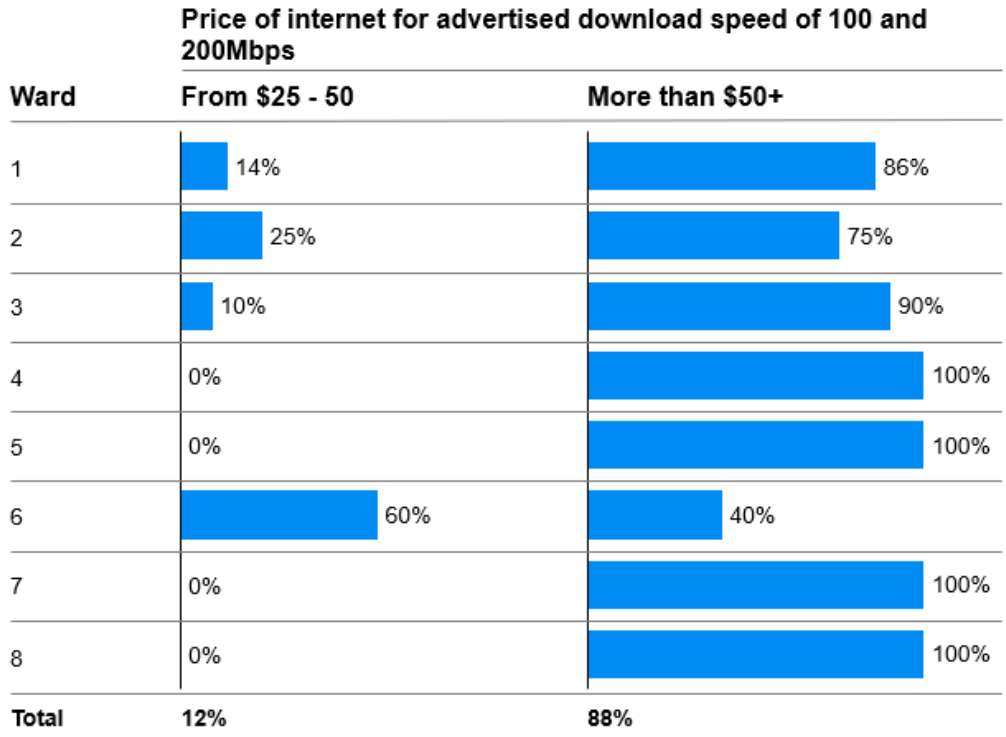
Current broadband pricing in DC

Using the July and August 2023 pricing available on DC providers' websites for the available speeds, the SBDEO found that for 300 Mbps[188] download speed plans, the maximum price for non-promotional service is $60/month, while the minimum non-promotional pricing is $25/month.[189] Based on analysis of a representative sample of 203 BSLs, 61 percent of BSLs do not have access to 300 Mbps service for $30 or less. This is because the minimum price in Wards 2, 5, 7, and 8 is $50, and those Wards represent 61 percent of BSLs (see Figure 25).[190]

Figure 24 shows the price of internet for 100 and 200 Mbps plans.[191] For all Wards other than Ward 6, most of these plans are more than $50 per month. In Ward 6, 60 percent of these plans are available for $25 – $50 per month.

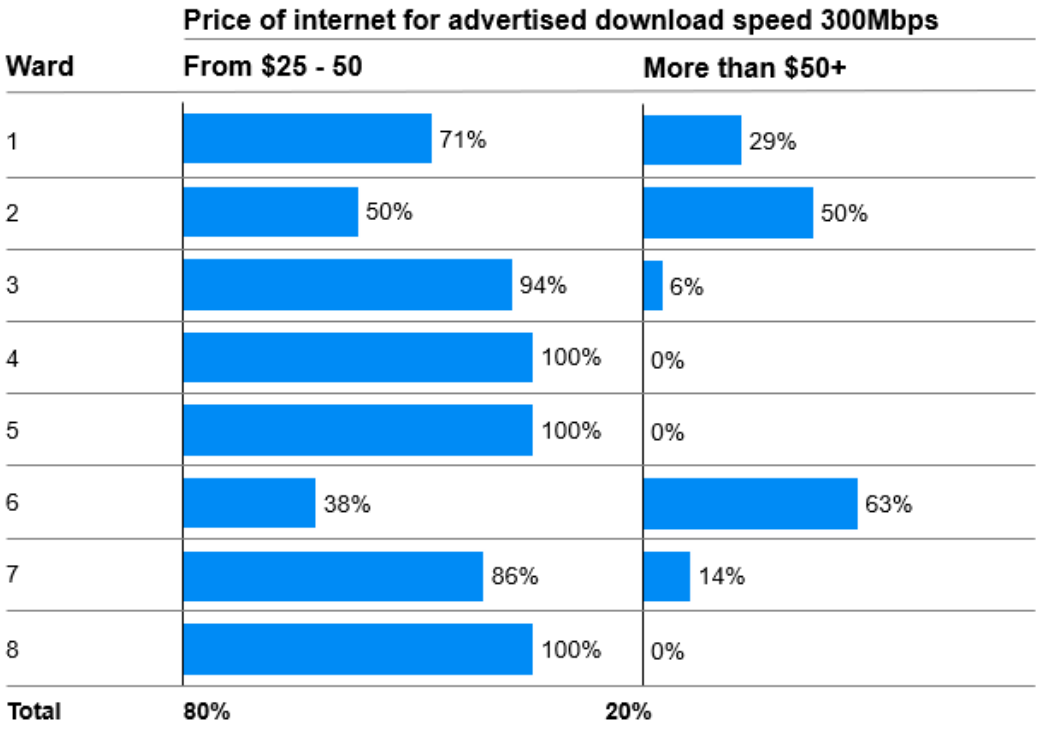
[187] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[188] Landscape of broadband subscription prices for 300 Mbps download speed to understand availability of affordable, reliable service.
[189] Provider websites, pricing data accessed July 27, 2023. Internet price based on team research.
[190] Provider distribution based on FCC Data Maps, July 2023. Internet price based on team research.
[191] FCC National Broadband Map, data as of Dec 31, 2022, Various ISP websites.

Figure 24. Analysis of landscape of broadband subscription prices for 100 and 200 Mbps download speed to understand availability of affordable, reliable service.[192]



[192] Ibid.

Figure 25. Analysis of landscape of broadband subscription prices for 300 Mbps download speed to understand availability of affordable, reliable service.[193]



This analysis, however, may not be consistent with the experience of many District residents. The SBDEO received feedback from digital equity practitioners and residents that residents face challenges with affordability of plans in DC.[194] If there are legacy plans that new customers are signed up for, those plans would not be reflected in the analysis above of the prices advertised on provider websites. DC SBDEO plans to gain additional feedback on this barrier through additional engagement and feedback from residents and service providers.

DC residents' willingness to pay for internet service

In the DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey, respondents were asked how much they were willing to pay monthly for internet.[195] The results showed that only 29 percent of respondents are willing to pay more than $50 monthly for internet (Figure 26).[196] Approximately 55 percent are willing to pay more than $30 monthly, and approximately 20 percent of respondents are willing to pay at most $10 monthly.[197]

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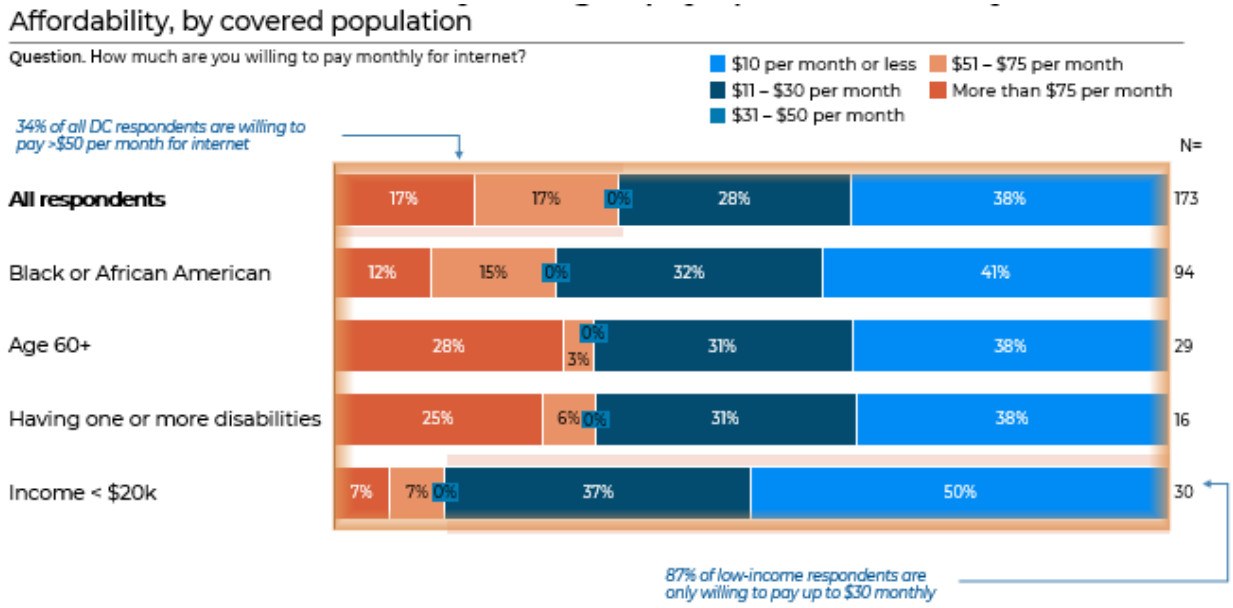
[193] FCC National Broadband Map, data as of Dec 31, 2022, various ISP websites.
[194] Stakeholder/community engagement sessions, Summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[195] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[196] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[197] Ibid.

An examination of the preliminary survey results by covered populations showed that low-income respondents, aging respondents, and respondents with a disability are willing to pay less for the internet.[198] For these groups only 14 percent, 31 percent and 31 percent respectively were willing to spend more than $50 monthly.[199] Among low-income survey respondents[200], 50 percent are willing to spend at most $10 monthly.[201]

Figure 26. Affordability, by covered populations. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey, August 2023–January 2024.[202]



3.2.3 Covered Population Needs Assessment

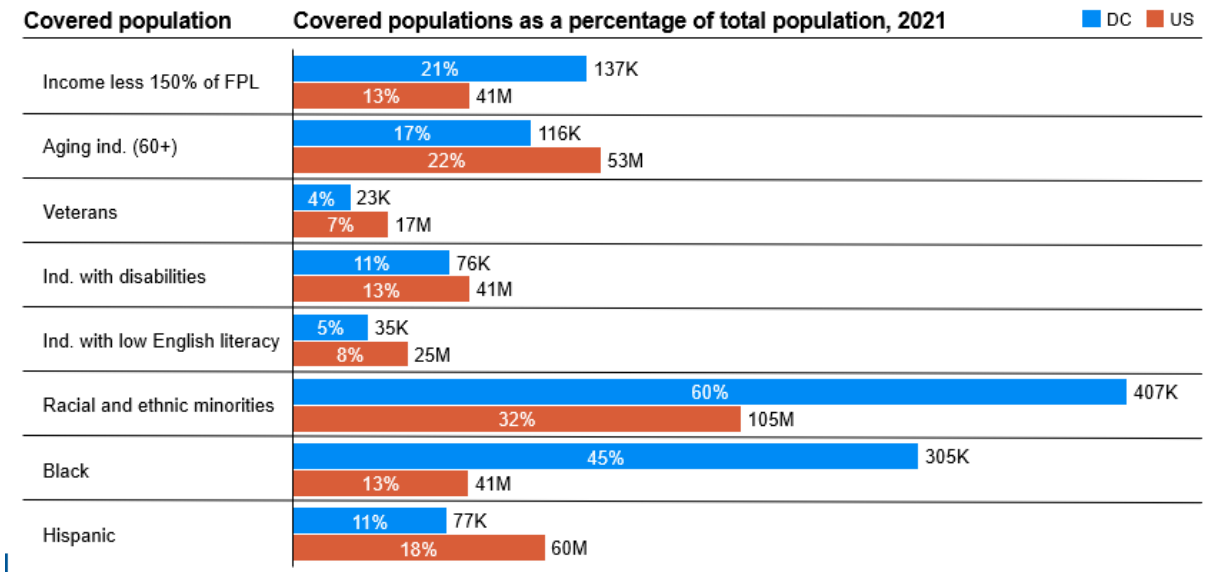
This section provides the landscape of covered populations in DC, broadband adoption and device access per covered population, an assessment of barriers by covered population, and a summary of the adoption and affordability analyses, per each covered population. For the purposes of the analysis described below, "communities traditionally disengaged" was interpreted to mean covered population.

[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.
[200] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, low income is defined as having an annual income below $20,000. In the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO, individuals living in a covered household is defined as having an income 150% of the FPL. In 2024, FPL for an individual is $15,060 ($1,255 / month), and for a married couple is $20,440 ($1,703 / month). 150% of the FPL is 22,590. The definition of low income in the DC SBDEO survey approximates the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO definition but does not match it exactly. The NOFO definition is being used for the operationalization of the plan.
[201] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[202] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.

3.2.1.1 Landscape of covered populations in DC

Based on data from the Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, 74 percent of DC's residents belong to a covered population compared to the US overall of 81 percent.[203] However, DC has a smaller share of veterans and aging individuals (60+ years) compared to all the US (Figure 27).[204] (See Appendix 7.1 for a covered population breakdown based on the Digital Equity Act Population Viewer.)

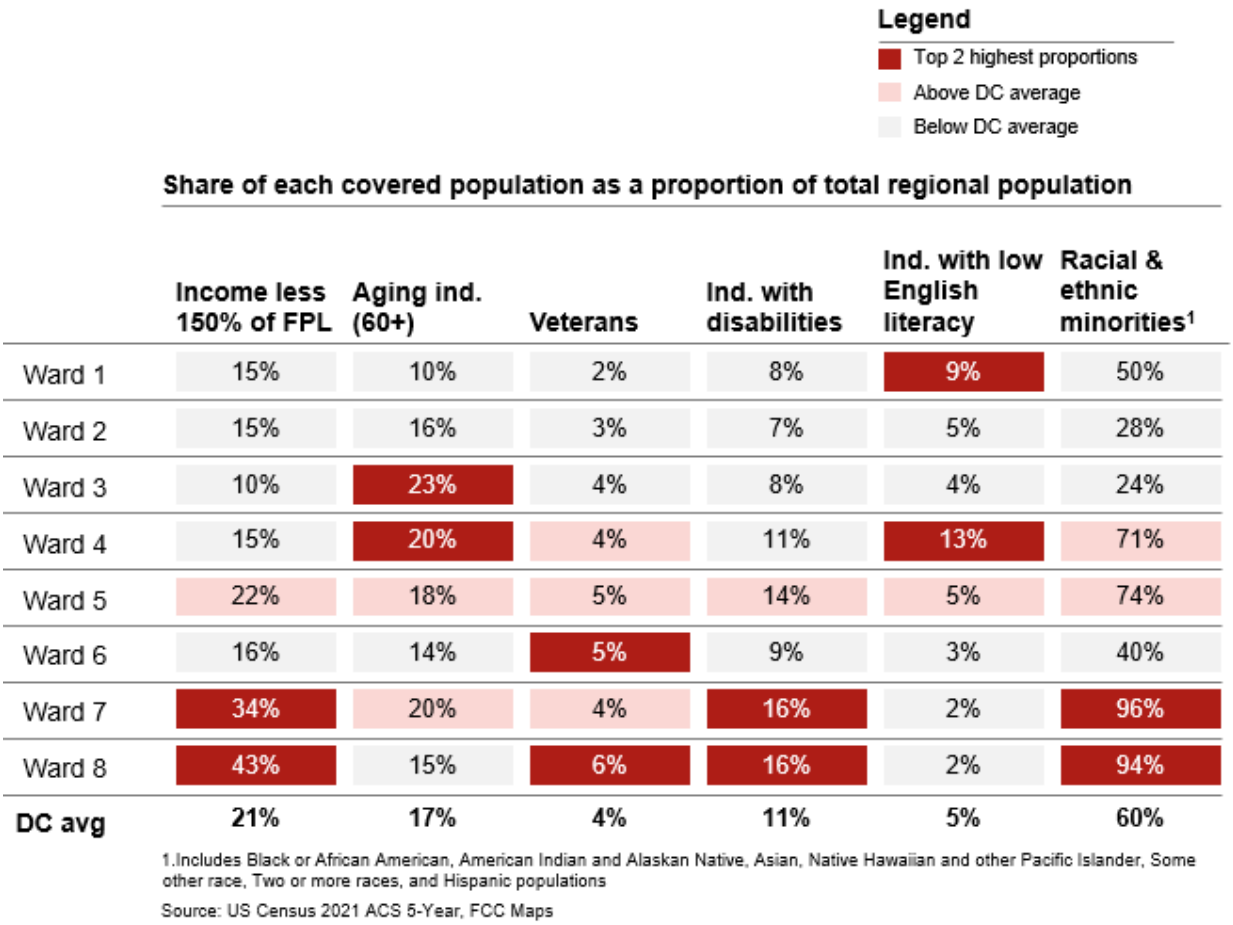
Figure 27. Covered population as a percentage of the total population for DC vs. the US.[205]



With regard to the geographic areas where covered populations reside in DC, people living below 150 percent of the federal poverty line, individuals with disabilities, and racial and ethnic minorities are concentrated in Wards 7 and 8.[206] Wards 3 and 4 have a high population of aging individuals, and individuals with low English literacy are concentrated in Wards 1 and 4 (Figure 28).[207]

[203] Digital Equity Act of 2021, US Census Bureau.
[204] Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau.
[205] 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.

Figure 28. Covered populations, by Ward.[208]



Share of each covered population as a proportion of total regional population

	Income less 150% of FPL	Aging ind. (60+)	Veterans	Ind. with disabilities	Ind. with low English literacy	Racial & ethnic minorities[1]
Ward 1	15%	10%	2%	8%	9%	50%
Ward 2	15%	16%	3%	7%	5%	28%
Ward 3	10%	23%	4%	8%	4%	24%
Ward 4	15%	20%	4%	11%	13%	71%
Ward 5	22%	18%	5%	14%	5%	74%
Ward 6	16%	14%	5%	9%	3%	40%
Ward 7	34%	20%	4%	16%	2%	96%
Ward 8	43%	15%	6%	16%	2%	94%
DC avg	**21%**	**17%**	**4%**	**11%**	**5%**	**60%**

1.Includes Black or African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, Some other race, Two or more races, and Hispanic populations

Source: US Census 2021 ACS 5-Year, FCC Maps

[208] Ibid.

3.2.3.2 Broadband adoption and device access by covered population

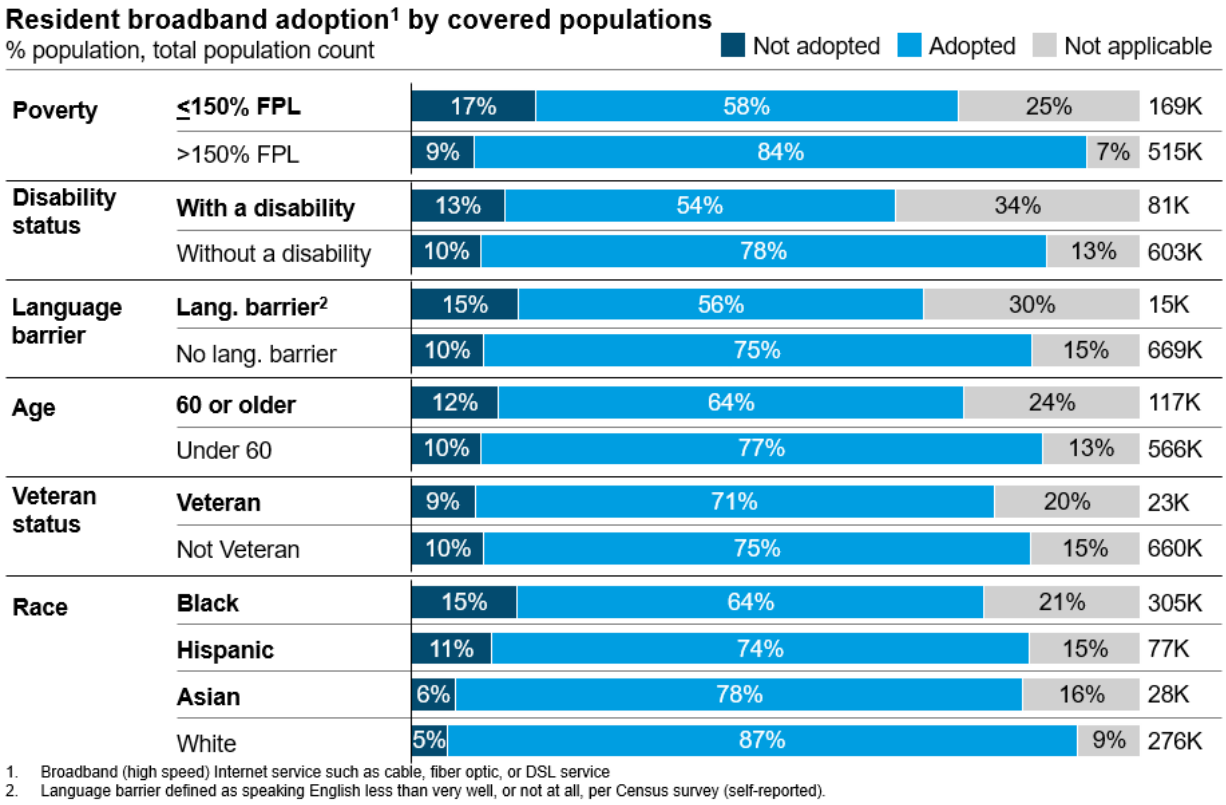
Using ACS data, the District compared the broadband adoption rate for each covered population with the District's average. **Covered populations tend to have lower rates of broadband adoption than populations that are not covered.**[209] As shown in Figure 29, every covered population in DC except veterans has lower broadband adoption rates than those not in that population.[210] In other words, the percentage of a covered population that lacks access to broadband service such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL service nearly always exceeds the percentage for the corresponding non-covered population.[211] For instance, 17 percent of those earning under 150 percent of the federal poverty rate are not connected, while just 9 percent of those earning over 150 percent of the federal poverty rate are not connected.[212]

The broadband adoption gap is largest between individuals with household income below and above 150 percent of the federal poverty line (a difference of 26 percentage points), followed by individuals with and without a disability (a difference of 24 percentage points), individuals with and without a language barrier (a difference of 19 percentage points), individuals older and younger than 60 years of age (a difference of 13 percentage points), and veterans and non-veterans (a difference of 4 percentage points).[213]

When looking at race, the broadband adoption rate among Black or African American populations (64 percent), is lower than the rates among Hispanic (74 percent) and Asian populations (78 percent).[214] White populations have the highest broadband adoption rate among the racial groups (87 percent).[215]

[209] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS USA) [https://usa.ipums.org/usa/].
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.

Figure 29. DC broadband adoption by covered population.[216]



Device access

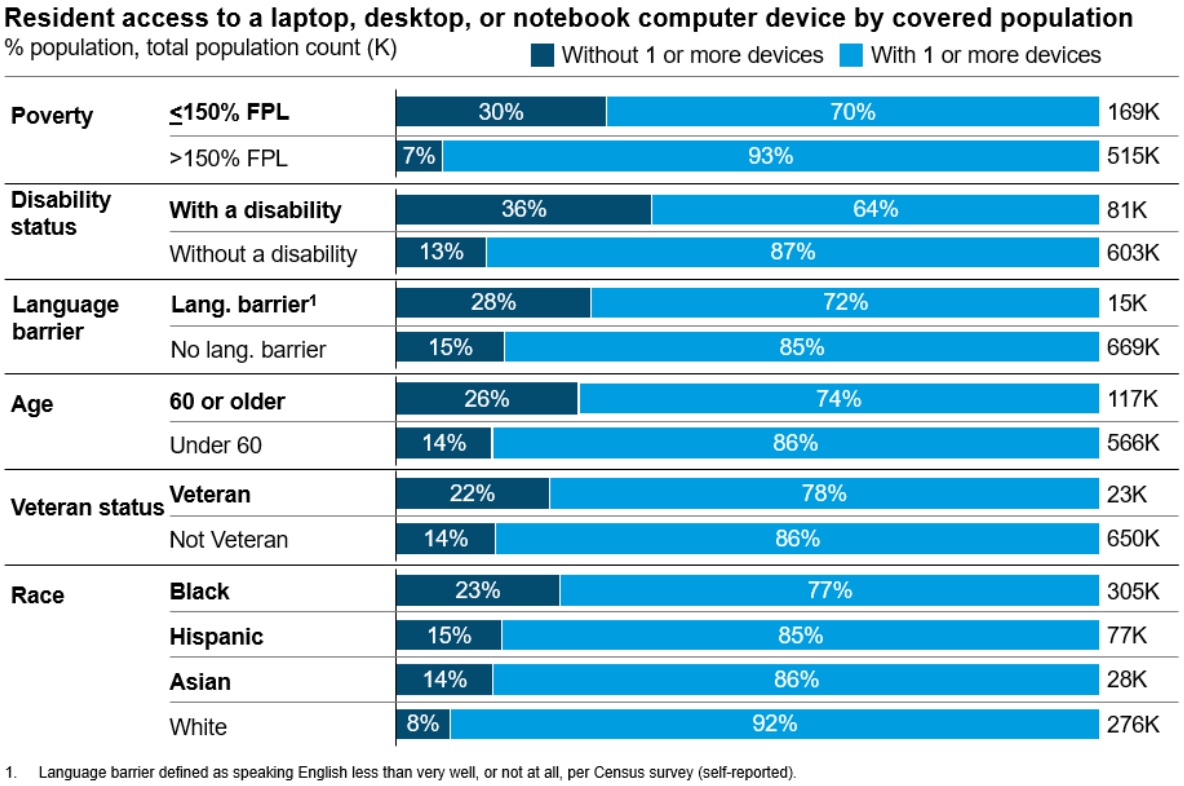
The same trend is true for device access across all covered populations, including veterans (Figure 30). **All members of covered populations have lower device access rates than members of populations that are not covered.**[217] The largest device access gap is observed between individuals with household incomes below 150 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL), and those *above* 150 percent and between individuals with and without a disability (a 23-percentage point difference in both instances).[218] The device access gap between individuals with and without a language barrier (a 13-percentage point difference), followed by the gap between individuals older and younger than 60 years of age is next (a 12-percentage point difference), and veterans and non-veterans (an 8-percentage point difference).[219]

When examining the data by racial or ethnic groups, the device access rate among Black or African American populations is startling. Seventy-seven percent is lower than

[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.

rates among Hispanic (85 percent) and Asian populations (86 percent).[220] White populations have the highest device access rate among the racial groups (92 percent).[221]

Figure 30. DC device access by covered population.[222]



1. Language barrier defined as speaking English less than very well, or not at all, per Census survey (self-reported).

3.2.3.3 Barriers to digital inclusion faced by covered populations

In the DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey questions related to barriers to internet use, respondents were asked "How often, if at all, have you ever experienced any of the following?"[223] Residents were asked how frequently they experienced any of the following:[224]

- I have worried about the privacy and security of my personal data.
- I have been concerned about online fraud or phishing directed at me.
- I have worried about being able to pay my internet bill.
- I wish I knew more about how to use computers and the internet.
- I have discontinued services because it is too expensive.

[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid.
[223] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[224] Ibid.

- My computer has been broken so I could not use the home internet service.
- I have felt that having internet is not worth the trouble.
- I could not get internet service installed at my residence.

As shown in Figure 32, respondents most frequently worry about their digital safety at least once a week.[225] Respondents specifically expressed concern regarding the privacy and security of their personal data at 34 percent as well as concern about online fraud and phishing at 30 percent (Figure 31).[226] Only after concerns for digital safety, are residents then concerned about their ability to pay for their internet services—20 percent of respondents worry weekly or more.[227]

Both Black/African American respondents and low-income respondents[228] in DC experience these barriers at higher rates than their peers do.[229] For example, Black or African American residents report being concerned about paying their internet bill at almost double the rate of their peers, with 19 percent worrying one or more times a day (Figure 32).[230] Veterans and aging individuals also experience these barriers at higher rates than their peers as shown in Figure 32.[231]

[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] In the 2023 District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, low income is defined as having an annual income below $20,000. In the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO, individuals living in a covered household is defined as having an income 150% of the FPL. In 2024, FPL for an individual is $15,060 ($1,255 / month), and for a married couple is $20,440 ($1,703 / month). 150% of the FPL is 22,590. The definition of low income in the DC SBDEO survey approximates the State Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO definition but does not match it exactly. The NOFO definition is being used for the operationalization of the plan.
[229] District of Columbia Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey, conducted from August 2023 to January 2024.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid.

Figure 31. Barriers to internet use, all respondents. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey, August 2023 – January 2024.[232]

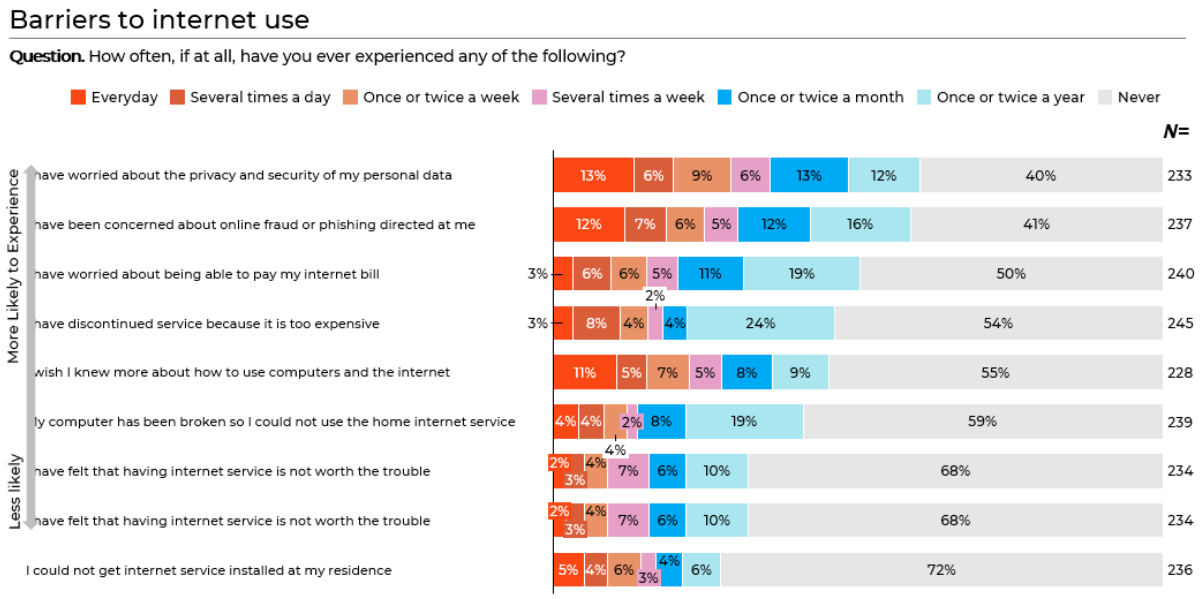
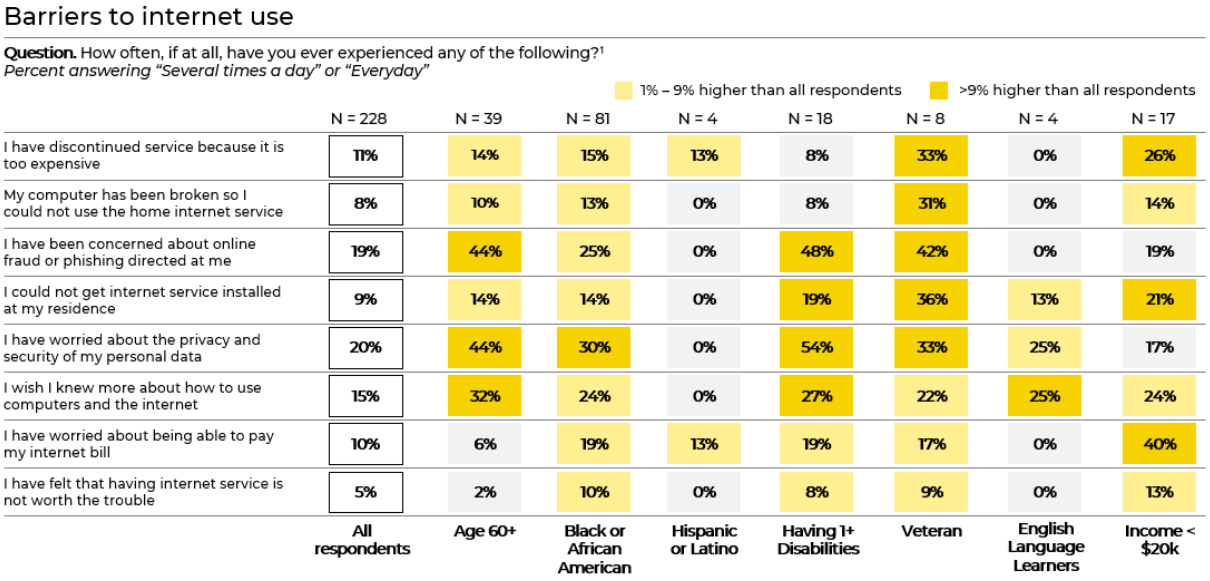


Figure 32. Barriers to internet use, by covered populations. DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity survey, August 2023 – January 2024.[233]



[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.

3.2.3.4 Summary of findings by covered population

In this section, we summarize all insights related to covered populations' needs and the barriers they face. The information in this section draws from the ACS data, the DC survey, and feedback from multiple listening sessions and state agency interviews.[234] Note that DC does not have residents who reside in rural areas.[235]

[234] Stakeholder/community engagement sessions summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[235] Digital Equity Act Population View, U.S. Census Bureau [https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c5e6cf675865464a90ff1573c5072b42].

Black/African Americans

Covered population: Black/African Americans		
Demographic information		
Size of covered population	305,000 (ACS 5-year data, 2021[236])	
Wards with high share (50%+) of covered population	Ward 5, Ward 7, Ward 8 (ACS 5-year data, 2021)	
Digital equity baseline data (ACS 5-year data, 2021)		
	Covered population only	State-wide
Broadband adoption	64%	77%
Device access	77%	83%
Needs and barriers assessment		

Listening Sessions with Black and African American residents highlighted several themes:[237]

Lower broadband adoption and access to devices: The 2021 American Community Survey indicates that Wards 7 and 8, which are predominantly inhabited by Black and low-income residents, experience significantly lower broadband adoption (63 percent and 61 percent respectively, compared to 77 percent in the rest of the District)[238] and access to broadband devices (68 percent and 61 percent respectively, compared to 83 percent in the rest of the District).[239] A listening session participant noted: *"I am a student at Georgetown. I typically like to work outdoors, but not many places outdoor allow you to have reliable broadband, unless I am on campus"* (Hattie Holmes Wellness Center, October 10, 2023).[240]

More likely to experience a disruption in broadband access due to affordability challenges: The lower broadband adoption and access rates in predominantly low-income Black areas suggest affordability challenges are significant barriers.[241] Many families rely on mobile phones for internet access due to the high cost of home internet and challenges with data plans.[242] Affordable and accessible internet options are crucial for these families.

Insufficient access to internet programs and resources: In addition to barriers like infrastructure constraints and high costs, Black or African American residents face the challenge of not having sufficient, readily available support and resources in locations like libraries, churches, and parent centers to address the fundamental connectivity gaps.[243] Additionally, even where programs exist, there is a lack of awareness about those programs, creating a need to deploy tactics that drive awareness about support resources.[244]

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[236] The Digital Equity Act Population Viewer does not break down racial and ethnic minorities into subgroups.
[237] Listening session details are summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[238] 2021 5-year American Community Survey [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[239] Ibid.
[240] Listening session details are summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Listening session details are summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions]. There are more such locations in Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 compared to the number of locations in Wards 5, 7, and 8.
[244] Listening session details are summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].

Region-specific insights captured in listening sessions and local government digital equity plans

Local government digital equity plans: The **DC Pathways to Inclusion Report** notes that black communities have low broadband adoption rates compared to other race and age demographics and have the greatest concentration of available computers without broadband access.[245]

Listening sessions:

- An Anacostia library listening session attendee expressed the lack of quality broadband service from wireless internet access in Ward 8: "*Anytime I am in Anacostia [Ward 8] I can never get good service.*"[246]
- A Hattie Holmes Wellness Center listening session participant expressed similar sentiment on the quality of home internet services: "*You can't ever go to Ward 7 or 8 and get good service.*"[247]
- A participant of the Tech 101 Model Cities session highlighted not only the lack of quality service, but also the absence of broadband service in certain areas: "*In many poor Black communities, many people are either lacking or have outdated internet and they just can't connect good.*"[248]

[245] DC Pathways to Inclusion Report, 2016.
[246] Anacostia Library listening session, September 2023. Listening session details are summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[247] Hattie Holmes Wellness Center listening session, October 2023. Listening session details are summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[248] Tech 101 Model Cities session, September 2023. Listening session details are summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].

Hispanic

Covered population: Hispanic		
Demographic information		
Size of covered population	77,000 (ACS 5-year data, 2021[249])	
Wards with high share (10%+) of covered population	Ward 1, Ward 2, Ward 4, Ward 5 (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[250]	
Digital equity baseline data (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[251]		
	Covered population only	State-wide
Broadband adoption	74%	77%
Device access	85%	83%
Needs and barriers assessment		

Listening Sessions with Hispanic residents highlighted several themes:

Internet Accessibility and Affordability: Hispanic participants face challenges related to the accessibility and affordability of the internet. Spanish-speaking participants noted that most do not have a reliable and fast internet connection at home, with limited and often phone-based internet service.[252] Additionally, the cost of internet services is a significant barrier for community members, impacting their ability to access the internet effectively.[253] Some participants found it unaffordable, while others considered it within their budget.[254]

Reliability and Connectivity Issues: Hispanic participants also reported issues related to the reliability and connectivity of their internet service.[255] Recurring challenges for community members included interruptions while using streaming services like Netflix and slow internet speeds.[256]

Limited Awareness of Digital Programs: A common theme among Hispanic participants is their limited awareness of digital programs and support services available in their communities.[257] Members of the community are not always able to identify specific programs or support systems designed to help them improve their digital skills or access affordable internet options.[258]

[249] The NTIA Digital Equity Act Population Viewer does not break down racial and ethnic minorities into subgroups. 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[250] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[251] Ibid.
[252] Listening session details are summarized in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid.

Region-specific insights captured in listening sessions and local government digital equity plans

Local government digital equity plans

The **DC Pathways to Inclusion Report** notes that Hispanic communities have low broadband adoption rates compared to White and Asian communities even after adjusting for socioeconomic factors.[259]

[259] DC Pathways to Inclusion Report, 2016.

Individuals with disabilities

Covered population: Individuals with disabilities		
Demographic information		
Size of covered population	81,930 (Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau)[260]	
Wards with high share (10%+) of covered population	Ward 4, Ward 5, Ward 7, Ward 8 (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[261]	
Digital equity baseline data (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[262]		
	Covered population only	State-wide
Broadband adoption	54%	77%
Device access	64%	83%
Needs and barriers assessment		

The **Disability Tech Summit**[263] highlighted two themes:

Digital Accessibility and Inclusivity for Disabled Populations: Learning to use new technology, especially for disabled individuals, poses a significant challenge.[264] There is a need for more support, inclusive devices and software updates, and increased internet speeds to accommodate people with disabilities.

Varied Internet Usage Among Disabled Individuals: Internet usage among disabled individuals varies; some rely on it for essential functions such as assisted living technologies, while some use it for online meetings, telehealth, and staying up to date.[265]

[260] Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau [https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c5e6cf675865464a90ff1573c5072b42].
[261] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[262] Ibid.
[263] Mayor Bowser Presents the 2023 Disability Tech Summit [https://dds.dc.gov/page/mayor-bowser-presents-2023-disability-tech-summit].
[264] Ibid.
[265] Stakeholder engagement in-person and virtual programming.

Region-specific insights captured in listening sessions and local government digital equity plans

Listening sessions: Many participants of the Disability Tech Summit hosted by the DC Department of Disability[266] expressed the need for better support for disabled populations:

"*Online platforms and new devices need to better support individuals who may be visual impaired or with a loss of sight.*"[267]

"*We need to have more support for disabled populations and teaching them how to use new technology and programming.*"[268]

Attendees of the Ward 7 & 8 Faith Leaders echoed similar insights*:*

"Internet and all the new technology needs to be accessible for everyone."[269]

[266] Mayor Bowser Presents the 2023 Disability Tech Summit.
[267] Disability Tech Summit, October 2023.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Wards 7 & 8 Faith Leaders Meeting, September 2023 during stakeholder engagement efforts.

Aging individuals

Covered population: Aging individuals		
Demographic information		
Size of covered population	120,007 (Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau)[270]	
Wards with high share (20%+) of covered population	Ward 3, Ward 4, Ward 7 (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[271]	
Digital equity baseline data (ACS 5-year data, 2021)		
	Covered population only	State-wide
Broadband adoption	64%	77%
Device access	74%	83%
Needs and barriers assessment		

Forums dedicated to senior individuals (incl. the **Commission on Aging**, **Washington Senior Wellness Center)** highlighted the following core themes.[272]

Diverse needs: Aging individuals are using a wide variety of tech-enabled devices, including phones, laptops, tablets, and smart home appliances, for various purposes (such as streaming, communication, news, and media), all of which contribute to their daily routines, but require a bit more tech support.[273]

Caregivers: Public comments noted that caregivers may lack the skills and confidence needed to facilitate aging individuals' digital connections (e.g., videoconferencing with their grandchildren, getting remote health care, watching a movie).[274] Even with training, not all aging individuals will be able to navigate internet-based applications on their own,[275] but they can still benefit from having access to internet-based applications. With adequate training, their caregivers can facilitate this access in real time.[276]

Challenges in broadband access: Aging individuals experience a spectrum of challenges with respect to reliable internet access, including but not limited to:

- Limited awareness about available programs and the need for assistance in setting up Wi-Fi.[277]
- Struggles with limited bandwidth, leading to slower connectivity when using multiple devices.[278]
- High internet service costs, often acting as a barrier to access.[279]

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[270] Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau.
[271] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[272] Stakeholder/community engagement sessions. Detailed in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].
[273] Ibid.
[274] Ibid.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) during the DC SDEP public comment period. Public comments are summarized in Section 7.3 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].
[277] Stakeholder/community engagement sessions. Detailed in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment].
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid.

- Lack of technical knowledge and understanding of internet-related terminology.[280]
- Difficulties in connecting phones to Wi-Fi, or lack of knowledge on the need of connecting to Wi-Fi.[281]

Desire for Convenient and Accessible Internet Locations: Aging individuals expressed a citywide need for having convenient access to internet services from various locations in the district, such as parks, buildings, libraries, and Senior Wellness Centers.[282]

Region-specific insights captured in listening sessions and local government digital equity plans

Local government digital equity plans:

The **DC Pathways to Inclusion Report** notes that senior individuals of the District have significantly lower broadband adoption and access rates.[283] The report suggests that seniors on fixed income cannot afford the cost of in-home broadband access.[284] It further indicates that older adults are often intimidated by broadband and digital technologies, and learning how to use them is often overwhelming.[285] Additionally, dangers such as identity theft, predatory advertising, and viruses, are common concerns.[286]

Listening sessions:

A participant of a city internet safely listening session expressed the need for better awareness and learning on broadband access and technologies: "*I don't know anything about new technology and I don't know anything about programs that help access internet.*"[287]

An attendee of a CFSA Lived Experience listening session expressed similar needs: "*As a senior, [the city] needs to create opportunities for intergenerational learning.*"[288]

[280] Ibid.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.
[283] DC Pathways to Inclusion Report, https://dmped.dc.gov/page/pathways-inclusion-dc-tech-report#:~:text=This%202023%20report%20by%20DMPED,equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20tech.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.
[286]Ibid.
[287] Ward 6 Internet Safety Workshop, September 2023. Additional details in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].
[288] CFSA Lived Experience, September 2023. Additional details in Section 4.1 [https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions].

Veterans

Covered population: Veterans		
Demographic information		
Size of covered population	24,580 (Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau)[289]	
Wards with high share (5%+) of covered population	Ward 5, Ward 6, Ward 8 (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[290]	
Digital equity baseline data (ACS 5-year data, 2021)		
	Covered population only	State-wide
Broadband adoption	71%	77%
Device access	78%	83%
Needs and barriers assessment		

An interview with the Mayor's Office of Veteran Affairs revealed the needs and barriers of the veteran population in the District intersect with covered households (low income), low literacy, senior and disabled populations.[291]

Affordability barrier: Veterans with fixed have difficulty purchasing technology devices and broadband access.[292]

Age barrier: Digital literacy amongst older vets is much lower compared to younger veterans.[293]

Barriers to broadband access disrupts veterans' ability to register and manage their VA benefits, schedule, and attend medical appointments, or register for medical insurance.[294]

[289] Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau.
[290] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[291] Stakeholder/community engagement interviews. Additional details in Section 4.1.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid.

Low-income individuals

Covered population: Low-income individuals		
Demographic information		
Size of covered population	123,700 (Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau)[295]	
Wards with high share (20%+) of covered population	Ward 5, Ward 7, Ward 8 (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[296]	
Digital equity baseline data (ACS 5-year data, 2021)		
	Covered population only	State-wide
Broadband adoption	58%	77%
Device access	70%	83%
Needs and barriers assessment		

Low income levels, especially in Wards 5, 7 and 8 may hinder many underserved DC residents—who are disproportionately members of covered populations—from being able to afford a broadband subscription.[297] Across DC, 21 percent of people are below 150 percent of the federal poverty line, with some wards well above this number.[298] For instance, Ward 5 has 22 percent population below 150 percent, while Ward 7 has 34 percent and Ward 8 has 43 percent.[299]

This disparity is apparent across many areas of DC with 72,000 households recorded as having rent burden (defined as is spending more than 30 percent of household income on rent).[300] Although this is observable across various parts of the District, the most impacted areas are in Black and Brown communities such as Wards 5, 7, and 8 (Figure 18, above).[301] Ward 8 shows the largest disparity with a recorded rent burden of 58 percent compared to the DC average of 44 percent.[302] In fact, 36,000 DC households are recorded having a "severe" rent burden (spending more than 50 percent of household income on rent), with Wards 5, 7 and 8 again having the highest rent burden, ranging from 4,600-to-8,300 households affected.[303]

The distribution of affordable housing in DC reflects a legacy of racially discriminatory policies, and is the long-term result of decades of redlining, according to Kathryn Zickuhr. Zickuhr's 2018 article, "Discriminatory Housing Practices in The District: A Brief History,"[304] was published by the DC Policy Center. Zickuhr wrote that jurisdictions had historically used zoning and other tools to keep certain neighborhoods comprised of low-density, single-family homes while concentrating apartment buildings in low-income areas.[305]

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[295] Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau.
[296] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs].
[297] Stakeholder/community engagement sessions are detailed in Section 4.1 (https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions).
[298] Ibid.
[299] American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).
[300] Ibid.
[301] Ibid.
[302] 2019 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).
[303] Ibid.
[304] https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/discriminatory-housing-practices-in-the-district-a-brief-history/.
[305] Ibid.

In communities where the effects of redlining and rent burden are most felt, residents often struggle to afford other essentials, such as broadband. For instance, at Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School, over 90 percent of students live below the federal poverty level and experience challenges like language barriers and limited resources as they strive to advance their careers – often while balancing the responsibilities of parenthood.[306] Economic disparity in these areas may contribute to broadband adoption in these Wards being the lowest in the District.[307] Adoption is 77 percent District-wide, but just 73 percent in Ward 5, 63 percent in Ward 7, and 61 percent in Ward 8.[308] As of 2021, 14.4 percent of all DC residents said they had no home internet use by anyone in the home.[309] Of these, 24 percent cited the internet being too expensive as their main reason.[310]

Region-specific insights captured in listening sessions and local government digital equity plans

Local government digital equity plans

The **State of the Digital Divide Report** indicates affordability continues to be a leading obstacle for people without home broadband service.[311] Available home broadband and wireless solutions are cost prohibitive for many low-income families.[312] As a result, the digital divide is particularly stark amongst the District's low-income, working poor, and unemployed populations.[313] According to OCTO's Broadband Adoption Survey, low-income Internet users are significantly more likely to use Internet somewhere other than home.[314]

Listening sessions

A CFSA Live Experiences session highlighted infrastructure and governmental Challenges, emphasizing infrastructure development should consider connectivity for low-income communities because streamlining processes to access the internet is necessary for widespread access.[315]

An OCTO listening session highlighted barriers to internet access and digital literacy, particularly for low-income communities in DC, include limited tech training for seniors, a lack of awareness about reliable internet access points, and affordability issues. Collaborative efforts are needed to address these barriers and improve digital literacy, especially among those with limited literacy skills.[316]

[306] Submitted by Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School during the DC SDEP public comment period. Public comments are detailed in Section 7.3.
[307] American Community Survey 5 2021 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).
[308] Ibid.
[309] 2021 NTIA internet use survey.
[310] Ibid.
[311] State of the Digital Divide Report (https://www.digitalinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/State-of-the-Digital-Divide-Report.pdf).
[312] Ibid.
[313] Ibid.
[314] Ibid.
[315] Stakeholder/community engagement sessions are detailed in Section 4.1 (https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions).
[316] Ibid.

Individuals with a language barrier and low levels of literacy

Covered population: Individuals with a language barrier		
Demographic information		
Size of covered population	Individuals with a language barrier: 133,400 (Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau)[317] Individuals who speak a language other than English at home and speak English less than "very well": 34,180 (Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau)[318]	
Wards with high share (5%+) of covered population	Ward 1, Ward 2, Ward 4, Ward 5 (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[319]	
Digital equity baseline data (ACS 5-year data, 2021)		
	Covered population only	State-wide
Broadband adoption	56%	77%
Device access	72%	83%
Needs and barriers assessment		

Communities with language barriers (including Spanish, Amharic, and French-speaking communities) faced the following challenges related to internet access and usage:

Internet affordability and accessibility: Members of these communities often do not have reliable, fast internet connections at home, with some relying on limited, phone-based services.[320] The cost of internet services is a significant barrier for community members, impacting their ability to access the internet effectively.

Limited awareness of digital programs: Community members might not be aware of existing programs that aim to improve digital skills or provide affordable internet access.

Limited access to digital literacy and skills training programs in their native languages: Residents represent over eighty different countries and speak over forty different languages. (The three most common languages are Spanish, Amharic, and French.)[321]

Reliability and connectivity issues: Community members experience reliability and connectivity problems with their internet services, affecting their ability to access online content.[322]

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[317] Speaks English less than "very well" or has low level of literacy. Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau.
[318] Percentage of population that is five years old or older, speaks a language other than English at home, and speaks English less than "very well." Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau.
[319] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).
[320] Stakeholder/community engagement sessions are detailed in Section 4.1 (https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions).
[321] Public comment received from the Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School. Public comments are detailed in Section 7.3.
[322] Stakeholder/community engagement sessions are detailed in Section 4.1 (https://www.techtogetherdc.com/communityengagmentsessions).

Region-specific insights captured in listening sessions and local government digital equity plans

Listening sessions[323]

Many members of these communities highlighted the affordability barrier:

"*Do not have fast or reliable internet at home…internet's price is the biggest challenge.*"[324]

"*Everything is expensive; however, I do have a personal plan on my* phone."[325]

"*Yes, I have internet, but it is not fast. It might be because of the money I pay. In Ethiopia, if you pay more, your internet is faster and vice versa.*"[326]

[323] Ibid.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Ibid.

Incarcerated individuals (justice-impacted individuals)

Covered population: Incarcerated individuals (justice-impacted individuals)		
Demographic information		
Size of covered population	~1,600 in DC Jail; ~ 9,000-person parole population (ACS 5-year data, 2021)[327] Population incarcerated: ~2,823 (Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau)[328]	
Wards with high share (5%+) of covered population	n/a	
Digital equity baseline data (ACS 5-year data, 2021)		
	Covered population only	State-wide
Broadband adoption	n/a	77%
Device access	DC Jail provides incarcerated individuals with some access to tablets and limited access to an intra-net (with very limited content)	83%
Needs and barriers assessment		

Insights from DC Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens:

Significant intersection between the incarcerated (justice-impacted) and returning citizen populations with low income, racial and ethnic minorities, disabled individuals.[329]

While incarcerated (justice-impacted), individuals need both devices and digital skills training to improve readiness for accessing and applying for jobs, job skills, accessing essential government services, basic life skills upon release.[330]

Over 90 percent of returning citizens return to someone else's home, and typically those homes are also underserved and may not have home internet access due to affordability challenges, and digital skills gaps.[331]

A barrier for incarcerated (justice-impacted) populations to gaining digital skills is the low-level of skills they may have as a result of how quickly technology evolved during the time when they were incarcerated; and lower confidence / embarrassment in the depth of the need.[332]

Digital skill needs range from the very basic, to digital skills that can improve the job readiness of formerly incarcerated (justice-impacted) individuals:[333]

- Focus on the basic: how to work their phones, save documents, attach documents; set passwords (basic digital literacy training)

[327] 2021 American Community Survey 5-year data (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).
[328] Excluding individuals who are incarcerated in a federal facility. Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau.
[329] DC Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens, Stakeholder engagement interviews are detailed in Section 4.1.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Ibid.
[333] Ibid.

- Website development classes
- Coding; app dev
- Digital marketing
- Social media training
- Graphics

Training for the families of returning citizens is also highly valuable and would increase the ability of the formerly incarcerated individual and his/her entire family to succeed.[334]

Region-specific insights captured in listening sessions and local government digital equity plans

Local government digital equity plans

The **State of the Digital Divide Report** states citizens returning from incarcerations typically are given very limited, if any, exposure to advanced forms of technology.[335] They are faced with a rapidly changing, technology-dependent society with advanced, high-tech tools and applications that are vital to today's competitive economy are completely foreign and unfamiliar to some.[336] As a result, they face obstacles to find employment, housing, and access to social services.[337]

[334] Ibid.
[335] State of the Digital Divide, 2015 (https://www.digitalinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/State-of-the-Digital-Divide-Report.pdf).
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid.

4 Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy

This section identifies the key external stakeholders and outlines how the District plans to collaborate with them.

4.1.1 Key external collaborators

This section summarizes (Table 8) the partners that are engaged in the development and/or the implementation of the broadband plan, including district wide organizations and state agencies, non-profits, industry partners, and academic institutions.

Tech Together DC plays a critical role in engaging key external collaborators and constituencies in developing this State Digital Equity Plan. The Tech Together DC Partnership works with the DC government, the non-profit community, academia, and industry organizations to achieve three goals: (1) increasing access to internet service, (2) increasing access to internet-enabled devices and IT support, and (3) demystifying technology by raising awareness and providing training and access to opportunities in the digital economy.[338] By taking the Tech Together pledge, members of the partnership commit to creating opportunities for everyone by lowering the barriers to technology and internet access.[339] The pledge expresses a shared set of goals, benefits, and principles that signal a new way of working together. [340]It sets out actions, commitments, resources, and ways in which partners can support Bridging the Digital Divide.[341] Throughout 2023, the Tech Together DC partnership met regularly. Some pledge partners also held stakeholder engagement events and conducted one-on-one interviews to develop this Plan. These activities are detailed in Section 4.1.2.

Section 5.1.4 of this plan describes opportunities for ongoing engagement to achieve DC's digital equity goals and objectives. It also explains how DC plans to implement its strategy by partnering with workforce agencies, labor organizations, and institutions of higher learning. Tech Together DC pledge partners who plan to support the implementation of DC's strategy are listed in Table 8, along with the initiatives they intend to continue in support of DC's digital equity goals and objectives. The Tech Together DC partners met in June and July 2023 to provide input into the development of this Plan.

[338] TechTogether DC (https://www.techtogetherdc.com/).
[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Ibid.

Table 8. Partners.

Partners	Description of current or planned role in broadband deployment and adoption
Tech Together DC (TTDC)	Tech Together DC is a values-led partnership among DC government, the non-profit community, academia, and industry working to bridge the digital divide through access, training, and opportunity. The Tech Together group has been a pillar of the stakeholder engagement process for the BEAD 5 Year Action Plan and the State Digital Equity Plan (three meetings - including an ISP summit - planned for May-Sept 2023).
Starry (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Starry is conducting the following initiative: • Starry Connect Program: help increase broadband adoption and usage for residents in public and affordable housing and support digital literacy and device access.
Ward 6 Mutual Aid (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Ward 6 Mutual Aid is conducting the following initiatives: • Serve Your City / Ward 6 Mutual Aid Digital Liberations Program: provide families with high-speed internet for the 2020-2021 school year in Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8. • Train Black organizers to procure, refurbish and distribute devices, and to provide technical support in Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8. • Provide DC students with digital devices in Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8.
Connected DMV (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Connected DMV is conducting the following initiative: • Connected DMV: Increase awareness of Emergency Broadband Benefit.
District Department of Transportation (DDT) (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, DDT is conducting the following initiative: • Smart Street Lighting: install wireless access points and lights in streets, alleys, and other public spaces in DC.
District Department of Lighting (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, District Department of Lighting is conducting the following initiative: • Internet First: brings affordable, high-speed Internet to covered households (low income). Provides service at $9.95 with 2 months free.

Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, RCN is conducting the following initiative: • Internet First: brings affordable, high-speed Internet to covered households (low income). Provides service at $9.95 and 2 months free provided.
Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, OSSE is conducting the following initiative: • Internet for all: provide internet access for DC residents.
ETTE (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, ETTE is conducting the following initiative: • Pilot Projects in Public Housing: deploy indoor Wi-Fi, accessible in-unit, for public housing residents at two public housing locations in Ward 6.
DC Housing Authority (DCHA) (TTDC pledge partner)	• As part of the TTDC program, DCHA is conducting the following initiatives: • Pilot Projects in Public Housing: deploy indoor Wi-Fi, accessible in-unit, for public housing residents at 2 public housing locations in Ward 6. • Resident Education and Training: provide digital literacy workshops, introductory computer skills training, workforce development, STEM/STEAM learning, workplace development and placement in Ward 6. • EnVision Center Training: provide basic digital literacy training workshops for residents in DCHA managed facilities in Ward 6.
Latino Economic Development Center (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, the Latino Economic Development Center is conducting the following initiative: • Online Business Bootcamp: boost online presence for business owners, leveraging technology offered by Google.

Comcast (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Comcast is conducting the following initiatives: • Internet Essentials: brings affordable, high-speed Internet to covered households (low income). • Free Xfinity public Wi-Fi hotspots: increase access to free internet. • Lift Zones: create Wi-Fi enabled zones for students from covered households (low income) and for residents in homeless shelters. • Affordable computers program: offering an opportunity to purchase affordable devices. • Digital skill training program: provide digital skill training online and in-person. • Participated in ACP sign-up events at the Mayor's Annual Senior Symposium, Ward 7 Back-to-School Giveaway, Emery Heights Day, and various National Night Out neighborhood events. Our community organizations – such as the Washington Literacy Center, Sasha Bruce Youthworks, and Catholic Charities DC – also hosted ACP awareness and enrollment events.
Gensler (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Gensler is conducting the following initiative: • Ending the Digital Divide in DC: increase access to devices for covered households (low income), with focus on Wards 5, 7, and 8.
Wilderness Technology Alliance (WTA/WildTech) (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, WildTech is conducting the following initiatives in partnership with the Department of Aging and Community Living: • Senior iPad Project: provide over 500 iPads to seniors with training and support needs across district, with focus on Wards 5, 7, and 8. • AFTRR AT&T grant: provide 2,000 computers to residents across the District, with a focus on Wards 5, 7, and 8.
Crown Castle (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Crown Castle is conducting the following initiatives: • Contribution to the DC Education Equity Fund: fund the purchase of laptops and hotspots for public school students. • Crown Castle contribution to LGBT Tech: provide information, education, strategic outreach and job training to LGBT communities. • Crown Castle partnership with UrbanEd: provide a paid virtual job training focused on certified IT support (cloud computing, network engineering and cybersecurity) in Wards 5, 7 and 8.

DC Public Library (DCPL) (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, DCPL is conducting the following initiatives: • DCPL-ECF (Emergency Connectivity Fund) program: providing devices to DC residents, leveraging ECF funding for device procurement and distribution. • Digital Navigators: helping DC Public Library customers find solutions to their technology needs through focused classes and onsite and virtual help. • The Anacostia Library hosted a listening session in September 2023 to capture local residents' insights on the quality of broadband service.
Department of Human Services (DHS) (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, DHS is conducting the following initiative: • USDA funds, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) workforce program: Provides laptops and job readiness training to program participants.
Byteback (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Byteback is conducting the following initiatives: • USDA funds (TANF) workforce program: Provides laptops and job readiness training to program participants. • Free Digital Literacy and IT training: provide free digital literacy training to DC residents, especially Black and Brown communities.
Department of Corrections (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, the Department of Corrections is conducting the following initiative: • Department of Corrections device program.
Department on Disability Services (DDS) (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, DDS is conducting the following initiative: • DDS device project: provide devices to DC residents with disabilities.
Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, MORCA is conducting the following initiative: • Basic to Intermediate Computer and Software Training: provide in-person and online training for underemployed adults ages 35-60 in Wards 6, 7, and 8. • Distributed Chromebooks in partnership with DC Public Library.
Tech Turn Up (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Tech Turn Up is conducting the following initiative:

	• InteracTech Summer Camp: provide DCPS students in Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8 with a five-week digital literacy summer camp.
Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) (TTDC pledge partner)	The Commission on Aging, which advised the DACL, hosted a listening session focused on BEAD, digital equity funding, and covered populations on October 25, 2023, with 15 attendees.[342] As part of the TTDC program, DACL is conducting the following initiatives: • Senior Wellness Center Trainings: conduct trainings at the 6 wellness centers in the District in Wards 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. • Distributed iPads and 100 Chromebooks
DC Infrastructure Academy (DCIA) (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, DCIA is conducting the following initiative: • Cisco Networking Academy: provides learning programs ranging from exploratory IT courses to career networking and programming courses in Wards 7 and 8.
Cisco (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, Cisco is conducting the following initiative: • Cisco Networking Academy: provides curriculum programs ranging from exploratory IT courses to career networking and programming courses in Wards 7 and 9.
University of DC Community College (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, University of DC Community College is conducting the following initiative: • DC Broadband Education, Training and Adoption (DC-BETA): provide computer skills and education program targeted to underserved individuals.
The Washington Home (TTDC pledge partner)	As part of the TTDC program, The Washington Home is a DC-based foundation that seeks to improve the lives of the elderly. It is conducting the following initiative: • Expanding Seniors' Tech Skills: understand technological needs and challenges of DC's older adult communities and provide training.
Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School is a recognized national model with over 50 years of service to adult immigrants, having received the prestigious E Pluribus Unum Award, UnidosUS affiliate of the year award, and recognition by the US Department of Education among other awards. It is conducting the following initiative:

[342] The Commission on Aging's purpose is to advise the Mayor, the director of the Department of Aging and Community Living, the Council of the District of Columbia, and the public about the views and needs of the aged in the District of Columbia, https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/code/titles/7/chapters/5/subchapters/I/parts/D.

	• Hosted a listening session with 70 attendees on October 23, 2023, in four languages (English, Spanish, Amharic, and French), focusing on BEAD and Digital Equity planning around the covered population. • Actively supported English language learner community engagement in the Digital Equity Plan development process through supporting completion of the survey.
DC Assistive Technology Program (DCATP)	The DC Assistive Technology Program (DCATP) is a city-wide program whose goal is to enhance independence, productivity and inclusion for all District residents with disabilities. The DCATP is conducting the following initiative: • The DC Assistive Technology Device Loan Program: provides free loan of devices for people with disabilities, service providers working with persons with disabilities such as occupational, speech and physical therapists and AT specialists. The DC Assistive Technology Program was involved in community outreach for the development of this State Digital Equity Plan.
Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center	The Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center offers a gamut of health and social services tailored to DC residents 60+. It hosted a listening session on BEAD, digital equity funding, and covered populations on October 24, 2023, with six attendees.
Model Cities Senior Wellness Center	Model Cities Senior Wellness Center offers a variety of comprehensive programs, classes, and activities designed to educate and promote active and healthy aging for older adults in DC. It hosted two listening sessions on BEAD, digital equity funding, and covered populations on September 27 and October 11, 2023, for 11 attendees. It is conducting the following initiative: • Tech 101 Workshops: hosting free digital training sessions for all DC residents.
Washington Seniors Wellness Center	The Washington Seniors Wellness Center focuses on health education services for persons over 60 years and older by providing activities delivered through classes in nutrition, exercise, health dialogues, seminars, support groups, creative arts, international programs, and Peer Leader Training. It hosted two listening sessions on BEAD and Digital Equity funding and covered populations on September 28 and October 12, 2023, for 21 attendees. It is conducting the following initiative: • Tech 101 Workshops: hosts free digital training sessions for all DC residents.

Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)	The DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) is the public child welfare agency in the District of Columbia. It is responsible for protecting child victims and those at risk of abuse and neglect and assisting their families. It held an introductory meeting to discuss BEAD and digital equity planning and to connect with covered populations on August 17, 2023, with two attendees. On September 12, 2023, the CFSA Lived Experience Advisory Council held a listening session on BEAD, digital equity funding, and covered populations with 20 attendees.
Digital Equity in DC Education	A District-wide coalition of parents advocating for reliable technology access for all students in DC public schools, Digital Equity in DC Education is conducting the following initiative: • Research and advocacy for policy changes on technology, resources, and digital literacy education for K-12 students. Digital Equity in DC Education was involved in community outreach for the development of this State Digital Equity Plan.
Families First DC (FFDC)	Families First DC (FFDC) provides critical community-based, neighborhood-driven support to families in the most under-resourced neighborhoods of Washington, DC. FFDC hosted a listening session on BEAD, digital equity funding, and covered populations on September 20, 2023, with 12 attendees.
National Collaboration for Digital Equity (NCDE)	As a federally tax-exempt nonprofit, NCDE provides free dissemination and policy education as well as comprehensive, fee-based consulting services to facilitate digital equity in support of economic and educational inclusion. It is conducting the following initiative: • One Percent for Digital Equity: encourages and assists the nation's federally insured banks to voluntarily commit 1% of their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) funds to digital equity. • Refurbished Laptop and Financial Inclusion Program for Low- and Moderate-Income Learners NCDE was involved in community outreach for the development of this State Digital Equity Plan.
Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition	The SHLB Coalition strives to close the digital divide by promoting high-quality broadband for anchor institutions and their communities through policy research and advocacy. SHLB Coalition was involved in community outreach for the development of this State Digital Equity Plan.

UnidosUS	UnidosUS serves the Hispanic community through research, policy analysis, and state and national advocacy efforts. It received an ACP outreach grant to advocate awareness of, and participation in, the ACP. UnidosUS was involved in community outreach for the development of this State Digital Equity Plan.
DC Workforce Investment Council	The DC Workforce Investment Council (WIC) serves as the pivotal workforce policy and investment board for the District of Columbia. It is dedicated to fostering connections between businesses, community-based organizations, and a skilled workforce. Through strategic initiatives and targeted training programs, it empowers businesses to thrive, succeed, and contribute to the overall growth of the District. The DC WIC was engaged in developing this State Digital Equity Plan and the SBDEO held a follow-up meeting with DC WIC to workforce development training.
Office of Racial Equity	Established by Mayor Bowser in 2021, the Office of Racial Equity focuses on developing an infrastructure to ensure policy decisions and District programs are evaluated through a racial equity lens. The Chief Equity Officer reports to the City Administrator and is responsible for collaborating with District agencies, residents, and external stakeholders to make meaningful progress toward a more equitable city. As an organization representing covered populations, the Office of Racial Equity was engaged in developing this State Digital Equity Plan through a one-on-one interview.

DC plans to work with and engage key partners to accomplish this implementation strategy:

- **Workforce agencies**: The Department of Employment Services' (DOES) patrons can use resources such as career planning and counseling, resumé assistance, direct job placement, on-the-job training, and computer training.[343] DC residents can also access more advanced technical training through DOES, including Microsoft, A+, and Cisco certifications.[344] These services are designated as a workforce development assets in the District, along with the Strategic Digital Alliance partnership that works with Microsoft to identify gaps in digital literacy. This work can help the SBDEO to refine efforts to develop residents' digital literacy skills so that the skills in highest demand can be addressed. DC will continue to mitigate barriers to internet access through state-led partnerships with workforce agencies, including the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and DOES.
- **Labor organizations:** The SBDEO expects an updated DC Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan to be released in Spring 2024 to engage labor organizations.[345] The SBDEO will support this plan's efforts to target the digital literacy of DC's residents in alignment with the implementation of this State Digital Equity Plan. Labor organizations in DC are welcome to participate in ongoing stakeholder engagement efforts to learn about the needed digital skills for laborers in DC. To date, the SBDEO has engaged the DC Workforce Investment Council (WIC), which serves as a workforce policy and investment board for the District of Columbia.[346] The DC WIC Board includes representatives from organized labor organizations, with private-sector officials making up the majority of members.[347] Its recent meeting provided information about the development of this plan and served as a brainstorming session for future initiatives and programs that would support the implementation of the DC State Digital Equity Plan. Potential initiatives include creating channels for connecting with potential new partners (e.g., American Job Centers).
- **Community-based organizations:** The SBDEO will continue to engage community-based organizations through the Tech Together DC partnership, where non-profit and community organizations undertake digital equity initiatives that serve the residents of DC. In the implementation of this State Digital Equity Plan, community-based organizations can apply to receive DC digital equity grants that will support programming for the communities they serve. The programming these community-based organizations propose for DC digital equity grants will likely be based on the

[343] DC Department of Employment Services (https://does.dc.gov/).
[344] DC Department of Employment Services Eligible Training Providers, https://does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/does/service_content/attachments/Eligible-Training-Provider-List-PUBLIC-9-5-17.pdf.
[345] Department of Education (https://rsa.ed.gov/wioa-resources/wioa-state-plans).
[346] DC Workforce Investment Council (https://dcworks.dc.gov/).
[347] DC WIC Board (https://dcworks.dc.gov/page/wic-board).

unique knowledge these organizations have as trusted community hubs for DC residents, especially those in covered populations.

- **Institutions of higher learning:** The SBDEO will continue to engage institutions of higher education through the Tech Together DC partnership, where academic and education organizations undertake digital equity initiatives that serve the residents of DC. The University of DC Community College is a partner in developing this Plan and will continue to support its implementation through the DC Broadband Education, Training, and Adoption (DC-BETA) program, which provides computer skills and education to underserved individuals.[348] Other institutions of higher learning in DC may offer public-private partnership programming and are welcome to apply to the DC digital equity grant program.

4.1.2 Stakeholder engagement plan

The DC SBDEO is executing a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to ensure a holistic and inclusive BEAD-SDEP process. A list of the stakeholder engagement events can be found below in Table 9.

[348] DC-BETA (https://dcnet.dc.gov/page/dc-can-faqs).

Table 9. Events in the BEAD-SDEP Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

Type of event	Events
In person	1. Anacostia Library 2. Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School 3. Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School – Amharic 4. Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School – French 5. Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School – Spanish 6. Commission on Aging 7. DC Assistive Technology Program 8. DC Dept of Disability Services 9. Digital Literacy Class 10. Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center 11. Tech 101: Model Cities 12. Ward 6 Internet Safety Workshop 13. Ward 7 Faith Leaders 14. Ward 8 Faith Leaders 15. Washington Seniors Wellness Center
Virtual	1. Byte Back Introductory meeting 2. Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) Lived Experience Advisory Council 3. Cornell Wise & Associates 4. DC Dept of Health Care Finance 5. DC Infrastructure Academy 6. Digital Equity in DC Education 7. Families First DC Leaders 8. Golden Triangle Business Improvement District (BID) 9. National Collaboration for Digital Equity 10. Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition 11. Unidos DMV
Survey Informational Sessions	1. DC State Fair 2. Maternal Health Summit 3. Internet Safety Workshop
One-on-one interviews	1. DC Dept of Disability Services (x2) 2. DC Dept of Employment Services (DOES) 3. DC Dept of Veterans Affairs 4. DC Public Library 5. DC Workforce Investment Council (1/2) 6. Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) 7. Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA) 8. Office of Racial Equity 9. Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) 10. Ward 7 Councilmember 11. Ward 8 Councilmember

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed with these considerations:

1. Meaningfully **engaging under-represented groups and covered populations**: Stakeholders relevant to all under-represented, covered populations were included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Figure 33 and Figure 34 demonstrate how each event and interview in the plan are tied to a covered population. Ultimately, there will be at least three touchpoints with each covered population.

Figure 33. Stakeholder engagement events aligned to DC covered populations.

		Covered population						
Type	**Event**	Covered household	Aging (60+)	Incarcerated	Veterans	Individuals with disabilities	Language barrier	Racial / ethnic minorities
In-person Sessions	Anacostia Library	✓		✓	✓			✓
	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School	✓						✓
	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School – Amharic	✓					✓	✓
	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School – French	✓					✓	✓
	Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School – Spanish	✓					✓	✓
	Commission on Aging	✓	✓					✓
	DC Assistive Technology Program		✓			✓		✓
	Dept of Disability Services		✓			✓		✓
	Digital Literacy Class		✓					✓
	Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center				✓	✓		✓
	Tech 101: Model Cities		✓					✓
	Ward 6 Internet Safety Workshop		✓					✓
	Ward 7 Faith Leaders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Ward 8 Faith Leaders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Washington Seniors Wellness Center		✓		✓			✓

		Covered population						
Type	**Event**	Covered household	Aging (60+)	Incarcerated	Veterans	Individuals with disabilities	Language barrier	Racial / ethnic minorities
Virtual Sessions	Byte Back Introductory meeting	✓						
	Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) Lived Experience Advisory Council	✓	✓					✓
	Cornell Wise & Associates					✓		
	DC Dept of Health Care Finance	✓	✓					✓
	DC Infrastructure Academy	✓						✓
	Digital Equity in DC Education	✓						✓
	Family First DC Leaders							✓
	Golden Triangle Business Improvement District (BID)							✓
	National Collaboration for Digital Equity							
	Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition							
	Unidos DMV						✓	✓
Survey Informational Sessions	DC State Fair						✓	✓
	Maternal Health Summit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Internet Safety Workshop		✓					✓

Figure 34. One-on-one interviews aligned to DC covered populations.

		Covered population						
Type	**Event**	Covered household	Aging (60+)	Incarcerated	Veterans	Individuals with disabilities	Language barrier	Racial / ethnic minorities
One on One Inter-views	DC Dept of Disability Services (x2)		✓			✓		✓
	DC Dept of Employment Services (DOES)							
	DC Dept of Veterans Affairs				✓			
	DC Public Library	✓						✓
	DC Workforce Investment Council (1/2)	✓						✓
	Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED)							
	Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA)							
	Office of Racial Equity							
	Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)	✓						✓
	Ward 7 Councilmember							
	Ward 8 Councilmember							

2. **Engaging with diverse stakeholder groups**: Stakeholders from different types of entities were included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (e.g., government entities, internet service providers, other private companies, residents, non-profits, and community organizations). Government agencies were prioritized if they directly engage with covered populations (e.g., Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs) or if they have stated broadband priorities and initiatives (e.g., DC Public Library). These agencies are included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan:

    a. DC Public Library
    b. DC Dept of Disability Services (x2)
    c. DC Dept of Employment Services (DOES)
    d. DC Dept of Veterans Affairs
    e. DC Public Library
    f. DC Workforce Investment Council
    g. Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED)
    h. Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA)
    i. Office of Racial Equity
    j. Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)
    k. Ward 7 Councilmember
    l. Ward 8 Councilmember

Figure 35 and Figure 36 demonstrate how each stakeholder engagement group is to be reached via multiple touchpoints.

Figure 35. Summarized engagement plan for government entities.

Figure 36. Summarized engagement plan for service providers, other private companies, residents, and organizations that serve them, and non-profits and community organizations.

Stakeholder group	Engagement methods	Volume of activities
Government entities	• In-person Sessions	• 1 session with Commission on Aging • 1 session with DC Assistive Technology Program • 1 session with DC Dept of Disability Services
	• Virtual Sessions	• 1 session with Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) • 1 session with DC Dept of Health Care Finance • 1 session with DC Infrastructure Academy • 1 session with Digital Equity in DC Education • 1 session with Golden Triangle Business Improvement District (BID) • 1 session with Family First DC Leaders • 1 session with National Collaboration for Digital Equity • 1 session with Unidos DMV
	• Survey Informational Sessions	• 1 survey in collaboration with DC State Fair • 1 survey in collaboration with DC Maternal Health Summit
	• One-on-one Interviews	• 2 interviews with DC Dept of Disability Services • 1 interview with DC Dept of Employment Services (DOES) • 1 interview with DC Dept of Veterans Affairs • 1 interview with DC Public Library • 1 interview with DC Workforce Investment Council • 1 interview with Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) • 1 interview with Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA) • 1 interview with Office of Racial Equity • 1 interview with Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) • 1 interview with Ward 7 Councilmember • 1 interview with Ward 8 Councilmember

3. **Using multiple awareness and participation mechanisms**: To drive awareness, stakeholders are being engaged through several modes of communication (e.g., online, and written surveys, in-person forums, live virtual webinars, and one-on-one

Stakeholder group	Engagement methods	Volume of activities
Service providers	• Survey Informational Sessions	• 1 workshop focused on Internet Safety
Other private companies	• Virtual Sessions	• 1 session with Cornell Wise & Associates
Residents and organizations that serve them	• In-person Sessions	• 1 workshop with Ward 6 leaders focused on internet safety • 2 sessions with Wards 7 & 8 Faith Leaders
Non-profits and community organizations	• In-person Sessions	• 1 session with Anacostia Library • 1 session with Byte Back • 4 sessions with Carol Rosario International Schools • 1 class focused on digital literacy • 1 session with Hattie Holmes Wellness Center • 1 session with Washington Senior Wellness Center • 1 session with Tech 101 focused on model cities
	• Virtual Sessions	• 1 session with Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition

interviews with government leaders). The DC SBDEO is also using posters in local CAIs, emails from trusted community leaders and organizations, social media, and press releases. See Appendix 7.2 for a full list of questions asked in the stakeholder engagement survey.

4. **Full geographic coverage, addressing all Wards, with a priority on Wards with broadband and digital equity gaps**: All Wards are being invited to attend in-person and virtual sessions. Wards with a high concentration of covered populations, or with low broadband adoption and device access (e.g., Wards 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8) have multiple in person events, planned with local community partners.
5. **Transparency of the processes**: An overview of all opportunities to engage is being published on the DC SBDEO website and is being shared in paper formats in local CAIs.
6. **Public comment period:** The DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer's (OCTO) State Broadband and Digital Equity Office (SBDEO) opened the public comment period for the Draft Digital Equity Plan on November 16, 2023, and closed it on December 19, 2023. The public comment period was publicized via the DC Register, emails to the Tech Together DC mailing list, postings to the District's official social media channels, and made available on the Tech Together DC website. Public comments were submitted to the SBDEO via email. The SBDEO considered the submitted comments and revised the DE Plan as appropriate.[349] A written response to each comment and any resulting changes to the plan are included in the summary table in Appendix Section 7.3.

[349] Tech Together DC Public Comments (https://www.techtogetherdc.com/bead-de-publiccomment).

5 Implementation

5.1 Implementation Strategy and Key Activities

Core implementation activities have been determined based on the vision, goals, and objectives outlined in Section 2 and the needs and gaps highlighted by the needs assessment, which is outlined in Section 3.2. These activities will address existing digital equity gaps within the District and include:

1. **State-led programming** such as a telehealth pilot program, Tech 101 workshops, a digital navigators program, and Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) outreach.

2. **Public-private partnerships** such as DC Tech Hubs, omni-channel tech support and a break/fix ecosystem, and device-lending and distribution programs.
3. **Digital Equity Grant program.**
4. **Stakeholder engagement.**

These core activities are detailed in the following sections and directly relate to the needs identified for covered populations, as described in Section 3.2.3.

The SBDEO plans to use its implementation strategies to address needs and gaps among all of the covered populations. Non-exhaustive examples of the SBDEO's implementation strategies are listed below.

The barriers outlined in the section below are based on the SBDEO's research and stakeholder engagement. Also referenced are the barriers detailed in Section 3.2.3.4, "Summary of findings by covered population."

Individuals who live in covered households:

- 1A strategy
  - The Community Internet Program will provide ISPs with free access to the roofs of DC-owned buildings to offer high-speed connections at reduced or no cost to households that are eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The provided antennas will serve as neighborhood hubs that will feed internet service to residential properties.
- 1B strategy
  - Expanding the footprint of DCNet to reach DC CAIs that serve Wards 5, 7 and 8, which are the DC areas with the greatest broadband needs and gaps.
- 2A strategies
  - Continuing or growing device distribution programs with the DC Public Library system, DACL, and device-lending programs.

Individuals in covered households currently face high barriers to device use and internet access due to lack of affordability. Strategies 1A and 1B benefit all DC residents, but the provision of low-cost internet service especially benefits those who live in covered households. The unserved and underserved BSLs are concentrated in Wards 5, 7, and 8, which have a disproportionate number of households with income below 150 percent of the FPL.[350] Strategy 2A supports low-income residents by making

[350] Community Internet Program, Tech Together DC.

device access, a key barrier for covered households, more accessible. Loaner devices also give people more consistent device access compared to devices that must be used on-site.

Aging individuals

- 2A Strategies
    - (Potentially) expanding funding for DC Navigators in partnership with local stakeholders.
    - Continuing or growing device distribution programs with the DC Public Library system, DACL, and device loaner programs.

Aging individuals' device access, digital skills, and ability to use devices or internet services effectively are often limited. Expanding the DC Navigators program would help aging individuals to receive support and guidance in using their devices and enable them to troubleshoot issues live, further enabling them to engage with social networks, access telehealth appointments, and conduct other vital activities. The expansion of device lending programs will also afford more access to devices to aging individuals; placing them in libraries in particular for these individuals to get support in accessing the appropriate devices, relevant accessories, and needed software.

Veterans

- 1A strategy
    - The Community Internet Program will provide ISPs with free access to the roofs of DC-owned buildings to provide high-speed connections at reduced or no cost to households that are eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The provided antennas will serve as neighborhood hubs that will feed internet service to residential properties.
- 1B strategy
    - Expanding the footprint of DCNet to reach DC CAIs that serve Wards 5, 7 and 8, which are the areas of DC with the greatest broadband needs and gaps.
- 1G Strategies
    - Executing targeted adoption drives and an ACP knowledge campaign with trusted community partners that focus on each high-priority population.

The needs and barriers of the veteran population in the District strongly correspond with the needs of covered households, and veterans have lower rates of adoption than their non-veteran counterparts in DC. The strategies listed above target individuals who meet the criteria of the ACP, including individuals who live in covered households and veterans.

Individuals with disabilities

- 2A Strategies
    - (Potentially) expanding funding for DC Digital Navigators in partnership with local stakeholders.
    - Continuing or growing device distribution programs with the DC Public Library system, DACL, and device lending programs.

The Disability Tech Summit, which was hosted by DC, revealed two key barriers to broadband access for individuals with disabilities.[351] The first is digital accessibility and inclusivity for disabled populations; the second is varied internet usage among disabled individuals, as outlined in Section 2.3.2.4. Strategy 2A helps to close the gap between disabled and non-disabled residents, as digital navigators can help disabled residents to learn how to use new technology in a way that is personalized to each resident's

[351] Mayor Bowser Presents the 2023 Disability Tech Summit [https://dds.dc.gov/page/mayor-bowser-presents-2023-disability-tech-summit].

circumstances. Digital navigators and residents can then troubleshoot issues together, and disabled individuals will receive more detailed support—which DC's disabled community has expressed the need for. The increase in loaner devices will further enable residents with disabilities to access devices and equipment that suit the needs of their disability. Those who rely on devices for essential functions, such as assisted living technologies, will have more opportunity to use these devices for longer and to renew their rental devices when needed. Those who require devices for online meetings, telehealth, and staying up to date will be able to access loaner devices as needed and to return them when they are no longer required.

Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group

- 1D Strategies
    - Conducting targeted adoption drives with trusted community partners that focus on each high-priority population.
    - Conducting a digital equity grant program to co-invest in top programs that demonstrate results in digital learning, expanding adoption, and improving online privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and inclusivity.
    - (Potentially) expanding funding for DC Digital Navigators in partnership with local stakeholders.
    - Mobilizing community organizations to increase broadband adoption.
    - Expanding the Tech Together DC partnership among the DC government, non-profit community, academia, and industry to continue progress toward closing the digital divide through access, training, and opportunity.

As outlined in Section 3.2.3.4, Black and African American residents and Hispanic residents are likely to face challenges in internet accessibility and affordability, as well as reliability and connectivity issues. These are all key focuses of the SBDEO's aim to deploy BEAD funding via the SDEP and Initial Proposal. The SBDEO plans to conduct key programming—such as ACP awareness programs—to ensure that all residents can access affordable internet services. However, an important issue reported by Black and African American residents and Hispanic residents is insufficient access to or awareness of internet/digital programs and resources.

The strategies listed above will utilize existing community organizations that are best positioned to serve ethnic minority groups in D.C and to spread awareness of BEAD-funded programs. Existing organizations have a nuanced understanding of the intersections of race/ethnic and digital access within DC for the ethnic groups that they serve; supporting these organizations will enable the SBDEO to take a more targeted approach to serving this covered population. Furthermore, these community partners have already earned the trust of the community and local members of the

minority groups they serve. The community's trust in these organizations and their investments will likely help them to conduct more effective, targeted advertising of BEAD-funded programming. Attendance at sessions and adoption drives hosted by these organizations will likely increase—ultimately expanding participation in digital equity programs for this covered population in DC.

Individuals with a language barrier

Communities with language barriers (including Spanish, Amharic, and French-speaking communities) have limited awareness of digital programs. The strategies for 1D listed above will benefit not only the covered populations comprising members of racial/ethnic minorities, but also individuals with a language barrier. These individuals are likely to be immigrants or to come from a family of immigrants, and these communities are more apt to trust and participate in programming offered by community organizations they are familiar with. Additionally, community organizations that are well-versed in a specific language are better equipped to share information, answer questions, and receive feedback from residents with a language barrier.

- 1D strategies: See above 1D strategies.

Incarcerated individuals

- 3D strategies:
    - Conducting a digital equity grant program to co-invest in top programs that demonstrate results in enhancing well-being and expanding health access.
    - Assessing residents' satisfaction and perspectives on well-being through a periodic survey.
    - Continuing to host Tech 101 workshops, which provide free technology training to residents seeking to build the basic skills needed to succeed in a digitally connected world. The goal is to help residents navigate the digital landscape and make technology relevant in their daily lives. These classes help to establish a solid technology foundation for residents who may be interested in more advanced digital literacy classes in the future.
    - DC Tech Locator: Enabling residents to find public computer access, free Wi-Fi, and technology training locations in DC.

There is a significant intersection between incarcerated (justice-impacted) and returning citizens and covered households, racial and ethnic minorities, and disabled individuals; therefore, the strategies listed above will also benefit incarcerated individuals. However, this covered population typically faces the additional challenge of reintegration into society and need social engagement and civic participation.

Strategy 3C will likely improve these individuals' connectedness and well-being by providing them with active programming and support in using digital skills to improve their personal and social welfare.

Specific implementation strategies and the associated measurable objectives are detailed in Table 2 in Section 2.3.

As required by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this State Digital Equity Plan will be evaluated and updated by leveraging, analyzing, and synthesizing the tracking and reporting described in the sections below.

5.1.1 State-led programming

The DC State Broadband and Digital Equity Office (SBDEO) currently runs multiple programs to advance digital equity in the District, including partnerships with other state agencies. As part of the implementation strategy, the DC SBDEO may use funds to implement the State Digital Equity Plan, to scale existing programming (e.g., Tech 101 workshops, ACP outreach, and other programs described in the asset inventory in Section 3.1), and to collaborate with other state agencies including universities on new programming and research (e.g., a telehealth pilot program and a digital navigators program, longitudinal research on impact of programming). The continuation of these programs could assist in increasing ACP adoption (should the ACP program, or an ACP-like program continue), offer more in-person digital literacy courses, and support broader efforts by DC agencies to improve the delivery of essential services.

To ensure that these activities are sustainable and effective, the DC SBDEO will:

- Secure additional sources of federal or local funding to maintain current programs.
- Select partners with expertise and community knowledge to share resources and to deliver programs effectively.

To ensure that these activities are regularly evaluated and updated, the DC SBDEO plans to:

- Define and regularly track KPIs for each program and tie them to the KPIs defined for the DC State Digital Equity Plan.
- Periodically survey program participants for feedback and suggestions on program improvement.

5.1.1.1 Telehealth pilot program

Research suggests that telehealth can be equivalent to, or more clinically effective than, in-person care.[352] The benefits of telehealth include increased patient satisfaction, efficient and high-quality care, and lower costs.[353]

The DC SBDEO aims to support programs that can improve outcomes for covered populations by partnering with DC's Department of Health (DC Health), and potentially, with local universities, to expand access to telehealth across the District in a telehealth pilot program. Given the two agencies' common focus on increasing healthcare opportunities and achieving health equity in DC, the proposed partnership would ideally provide additional healthcare options to historically disadvantaged communities with limited access to adequate health insurance and medical care.[354] The options included in the state-led telehealth pilot could range from primary care to expanded treatment opportunities in areas such as mental health.

Pilot objectives may include:

- Providing equipment for telehealth services and facilities.
- Ensuring access to reliable devices and internet service with the bandwidth necessary for real-time interaction between patients and healthcare professionals.
- Providing digital learning and/or digital navigator support to help participants use new devices and applications.
- Increasing the use of, and satisfaction with, remote healthcare among covered populations through awareness and education programs.
- Providing real-time access to mental health counselors for K-12 students in the school district.

5.1.1.2 Tech 101 workshops

The DC SBDEO plans to continue its current Tech 101 workshops. These digital skills workshops are free for DC residents and hosted across the District. The DC SBDEO currently estimates that 120,000-130,000 DC workers may have at most "limited" digital literacy skills,[355] but a 2021 assessment of the number, type, and capacity of digital skills programs in DC showed a capacity of just 34,000. Skills programming is clearly needed, particularly in Wards 5, 7, and 8.[356]

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[352] https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34184580/.
[353] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7577680/.
[354] Health Equity Report for the District of Columbia (DC HER) 20181.
[355] https://nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Digital-Skills-Racial-Equity-Final.pdf.
[356] Tech Together DC 2021 analysis of digital skills training capacity by Ward.

Current workshop topics include:[357]

- **Smartphone 101**: This workshop helps participants to develop a basic understanding of web-enabled mobile devices. Topics include text messaging, downloading apps, accessing the internet, and setting privacy restrictions.
- **Social Media 101:** This workshop teaches participants how to use social media. Topics include common uses of social media, popular platforms, frequently used terms, and other useful instruction.
- **Cybersecurity Awareness:** This workshop teaches participants how to stay safe online. Topics include important definitions, protecting personal information, tips for browsing safely, and advice for parents who want to protect their children online.

In addition to the above sessions, specialized training sessions for small and large groups are available throughout DC.[358] These sessions give residents an opportunity to ask for help with specific topics that may be unique to them and their community. If ongoing funding is secured for this program, and it is scaled up as part of the implementation of the State Digital Equity Program (SDEP), workshops could be held more frequently, the topics covered could be expanded, and specialized training could be developed for small and large groups.

5.1.1.3 Digital navigators program with DC public libraries

Digital navigators are trusted community resources who help to resolve basic technology issues. The DC public library system has a digital navigator program at four libraries (Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Anacostia Library, Mt. Pleasant Library, and Shaw/Watha T. Daniel Library).[359] The program offers support for computers, laptops, tablets, and phones, as well as for email and internet use, online applications and forms, PDFs and printing, and other topics.[360]

In partnership with the DC SBDEO, this program could expand to additional library locations, including a call center where residents could talk to digital navigators from their homes rather than visiting a library in person. Support could be offered in multiple languages.

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[357] https://octo.dc.gov/page/technology-training.
[358] Tech Together DC Tech 101 (https://www.techtogetherdc.com/tech101).
[359] DC Public Libraries, Digital Navigators (https://www.dclibrary.org/using-the-library/digital-navigators#:~:text=Digital%20Navigators%20at%20DC%20Public,Email%20and%20internet).
[360] Ibid.

5.1.1.4 ACP outreach

The DC SBDEO has an existing ACP strategy that is funded by the ACP Outreach Grant Program and entails hosting in-person enrollment events, digital and print advertisements, and using residents' benefits portal homepage (the page residents use to apply for TANF and other essential benefits). The plan includes offering in-person enrollment assistance in targeted neighborhoods to reach residents in covered households (low income), minority residents, and other hard-to-reach groups. All local internet service providers and relevant community-based organizations will be present to simplify the sign-up process.

The program's goal is to increase ACP sign-ups for the following groups:

- Individuals who received devices through a library partnership.
- Youths and members of covered populations who are residents of Wards 5, 7, and 8.

Scaling and continuing this program could involve increasing the number of events as well as increasing the volume and frequency of digital and print advertisements.

5.1.2 Public-private partnerships

Through stakeholder engagement efforts, multiple innovative ideas for:

- Increasing digital literacy, digital skills, online privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility, and inclusivity.
- Expanding access to devices and broadband and giving residents easy access to resources that would allow them to better engage in digital life.

To make these ideas a reality, the DC SBDEO plans to work through public-private partnerships, including but not limited to:

1. DC Tech Hubs
2. Omni-channel tech support and break/fix ecosystem
3. Device-lending and distribution program

To ensure that these activities are sustainable and effective, the DC SBDEO plans to:

- Select public and private partners who have the expertise and community knowledge to share resources and to deliver programs effectively. Public sector partners may include other DC agencies and universities.
- Collaborate with partners who can contribute resources (financial and otherwise) to continued efforts.

To ensure that these activities are regularly evaluated and updated, the DC SBDEO will:

- Define and regularly track KPIs for each program and tie those KPIs to the KPIs defined for the DC State Digital Equity Plan.
- Periodically survey program participants for feedback and program iteration.

These public-private partnership programs could support DC's efforts to increase device access and digital equity services in the three of eight wards that have a device adoption rate of less than 80 percent.

5.1.2.1 DC Tech Hubs

"DC Tech Hubs" could serve as accessible, welcoming spaces that meet DC residents' broadband and digital inclusion needs. Tech hubs are physical, public spaces that would be primarily located in Wards 5, 7, and 8 (the areas of highest need with the lowest broadband adoption rates and the lowest rate of access to devices) and would serve covered populations.[361] Tech hubs present a great opportunity to partner or co-invest with a private company.

The physical spaces would include:

- Small study rooms and workspaces equipped with internet-connected devices and multi-media technology for remote learning.
- Private call areas that are suitable for telehealth appointments or other private conversations.
- Large-group training rooms outfitted for in-person and virtual skills development courses for adults.
- Collaborative community and event space.
- High-speed Wi-Fi.
- Hours allowing for community use.

Programming may include:

- Training for staff/volunteers to become digital navigators who could assist community members in internet adoption, device use, software use, applications, and the internet.
- Broadband sign-up assistance and programs that provide technology support.
- Multi-lingual outreach to support adoption and digital literacy.
- User training in cybersecurity, privacy, and other digital safety matters.
- Digital literacy/upskilling (from beginner-level to advanced).

[361] 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).

- Computer science, coding, and cybersecurity education programs.
- A device-lending library and device demonstrations.
- Resources and courses for small businesses (with topics such as "how to build a website" and "how to grow a social media presence").

5.1.2.2 Omni-channel tech support and break/fix ecosystem

In partnership with the District of Columbia and private organizations, a responsive, omni-channel customer service center could be set up to serve as a "one-stop shop" for all residents. This program would be a step toward a mature ecosystem in DC for affordable tech repair and refurbishing services. Participants would better understand how to *use, trouble-shoot,* and *fix* their devices, and residents would have a way to maintain and service their devices – especially devices distributed through the device-lending and distribution program described in Section 5.1.2.3. This solution is "omni-channel" because residents would be able to get live help in person or by phone, and they could drop off their devices for repair.

5.1.2.3 Device loan/distribution programs

DC has existing device distribution and lending programs, such as the recently piloted DC Public Library device distribution program, which has distributed over 8,000 Chromebooks to residents, and the Department of Aging and Community Living's Senior iPad program.[362] (See Section 3.1.4 for a full list.) In cooperation with private partners, DC could assist the 17 percent of residents without access to a device, particularly those who belong to covered populations.[363]

In one potential model for this program, companies and residents could donate their old devices. In partnership with sponsoring companies and non-profits, the devices could be refurbished and lent or distributed to residents in need.

Due to the cost of devices, private partnership, and guidelines for determining residents' qualifications would be necessary. Devices could be distributed through an online ordering system, through non-profits and other partners, or through tech hubs (Section 5.1.2.1). To ensure sustainability, devices could also be offered at low cost, and subsidized repairs would be available. Residents could choose the type of device they

[362] DC Senior iPad Program (https://cyberseniors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/DACL-Project-info.pdf).
[363] 2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).

would like to use (e.g., an iPad or a Chromebook), and devices could come pre-loaded with relevant apps and bookmarks (such as a bookmark for DC's essential services).

5.1.3 DC digital equity grant program

The DC SBDEO recognizes that many local and community organizations are already actively engaged in digital equity work with various covered populations throughout DC. To support and enable DC residents to further benefit from the work already underway, the SBDEO will use a portion of BEAD funding to launch a Digital Equity Grant Program. Each community and Ward have distinct needs, as identified in the needs assessment outlined in Section 3.2. The DC digital equity grant program offers organizations the opportunity to provide solutions that are tailored to the needs of specific covered populations and DC Wards.

To ensure an effective program, the SBDEO will conduct a fair, open, equitable, and competitive selection process that prioritizes the programming most needed by DC's covered populations and that has stated community support. While each sub-grantee's approach and focus may differ, the program's outcomes are intended to support and expand digital equity initiatives across the District.

Eligible sub-grantees may include (but are not limited to) community and economic development agencies, educational institutions and programs, and nonprofit organizations. Both new and existing partners are encouraged to participate. The selection process will encourage the participation of minority-owned businesses and other socially or economically disadvantaged, individually owned businesses.

To qualify for a grant, potential sub-grantees should:

- Have a clear plan for measurable impact, and the data and metrics they will track to show the program's progress.
- Demonstrate relevant experience and expertise through proven success in broadband and digital equity programs or through innovative ideas.
- Have a community presence – with strong relationships in the population they intend to serve – and community support for the application.
- Have access to funding outside DC digital equity grant programs to ensure sustainability, and/or have a plan to achieve sustainability.

Potential programming that may be funded includes:

- User training in cybersecurity, privacy, and other digital safety matters.
- Remote learning or telehealth services/facilities.
- Digital literacy/upskilling (from beginner-level to advanced).
- Computer science, coding, and cybersecurity education programs.
- Broadband sign-up assistance and programs that provide technology support.
- Multi-lingual outreach to support adoption and digital literacy.
- Prisoner education to promote pre-release digital literacy, job skills, online job acquisition skills, etc.
- Digital navigators.

To ensure that subgrantees' activities are sustainable and effective, the DC SBDEO plans to take the following measures:

- Require sub-grantees to demonstrate their qualifications for digital equity funding, including:
    - The ability to carry out activities funded by the subgrant competently and in compliance with all applicable federal, Eligible Entity, and local laws.
    - The financial and managerial capacity to meet the subgrantee's commitments under the subgrant and the requirements of the program.
    - The technical and operational capability to provide the services promised in the subgrant in the manner contemplated by the subgrant award.
- Provide technical assistance to potential sub-grantees.

To ensure that subgrantees' activities are regularly evaluated and updated, the DC SBDEO plans to adopt the following mechanisms:

- Require potential subgrantees to define and regularly track KPIs for each program and tie them to the KPIs defined for the DC State Digital Equity Plan.
- Oversee and regularly audit sub-grantees' activities (e.g., require reports from grant awardees on their program's progress and success).
- Require sub-grantees to collect feedback from program participants and incorporate the feedback into their reporting.

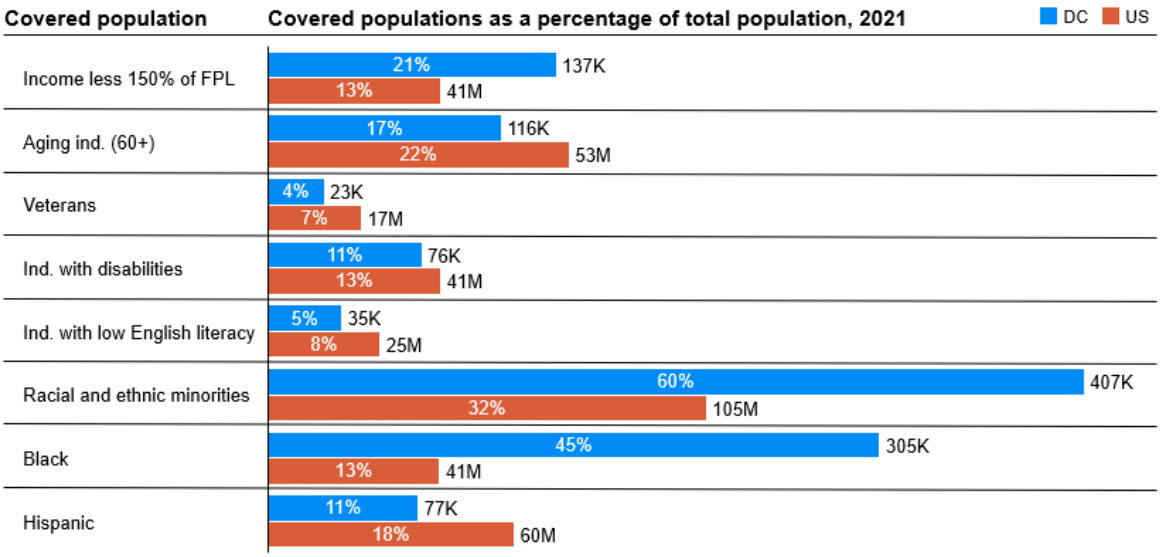
The DC SBDEO may conduct site visits and supplemental interviews and surveys of participants to further assess programs' impact.

5.1.4 Stakeholder engagement

Critical to designing, executing, refining, and improving an effective digital equity program is feedback from stakeholders. This feedback must first come from the residents whom the SBDEO seeks to enable, especially covered populations; of its total population, DC has higher percentages of low-income residents, racial and ethnic

minorities, and Black individuals than the overall US does (**Figure 37**[364]). Feedback should also be gathered from the multiple resident groups, non-profits, and other

Figure 37. Covered populations as a percent of DC population vs. US population, 2021.



community organizations whose priorities align with the DC SBDEO's vision for broadband access and digital equity, as well as from government agencies, ISPs, private businesses, and academic institutions. To ensure that all core activities and strategies are implemented with a holistic view of the community and stakeholders, the DC SBDEO will continue to engage stakeholders throughout the implementation period.

Stakeholders will be engaged through the following channels during the implementation process:

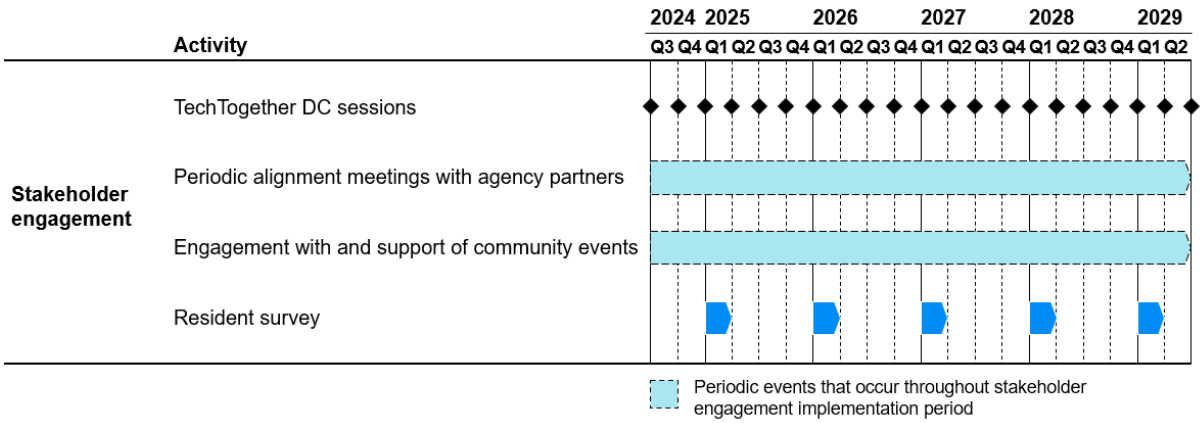
1. **Tech Together DC:** Tech Together DC is a values-led partnership among the DC government, non-profits, academia, and the broadband industry. The partnership works to bridge the digital divide by offering access, training, and opportunity. Tech Together has been a pillar of the stakeholder engagement process for the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan and the State Digital Equity Plan. As shown in Figure 38

[364] 2021 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs).

below, the SBDEO plans to host bi-monthly Tech Together DC meetings through the end of 2024.

2. **DC SBDEO engagement with and support of community events:** As implementation proceeds, the SBDEO will actively engage with the community and provide opportunities for live feedback.
3. **Periodic alignment meetings with agency partners:** The SBDEO will have regular touchpoints with government agencies that have aligned priorities or serve as partners on initiatives.
4. **Regular resident surveys, with a focus on covered populations:** The SBDEO will regularly survey residents, targeting covered populations and Wards 5,7, and 8. This survey will measure residents' satisfaction with programs (in alignment with Goal #2 and subsequent objectives) and explore digital literacy topics.

Figure 38. BEAD and SDEP stakeholder engagement implementation timeline.



To ensure that this activity is sustainable and regularly evaluated, the DC SBDEO will adhere to the above calendar (Figure 38), which incorporates regular evaluations. Effectiveness will be measured by regular survey results.

5.1.5 Sustainability measures

DC aspires to establish a sustainable, effective digital equity plan that achieves its goals and measurable objectives. The DC SBDEO will take the following measures to ensure the DC State Digital Equity Plan's sustainability and effectiveness across DC communities, especially covered populations:

- Secure additional sources of federal or local funding to maintain current programs.

- Select public and private partners with expertise and community knowledge to share resources and deliver programs effectively. Public-sector partners may include other DC agencies.
- Collaborate with partners who can contribute resources (financial, experience, and etc.) to continue efforts.
- Require that sub-grantees demonstrate their qualifications for digital equity funding, including: (1) the ability to carry out activities funded by the subgrant competently and in compliance with all applicable laws, (2) the financial and managerial capacity to meet the subgrantee's commitments under the subgrant and the requirements of the program, and (3) the technical and operational capability to provide the services promised in the subgrant in the manner contemplated by the subgrant award.
- Provide technical assistance to potential sub-grantees.

The SBDEO plans to regularly engage agency partners and the broader community through the Tech Together DC sessions outlined in Figure 38. The SBDEO also plans to support and participate in community events that provide opportunities for live feedback and touchpoints with partners.

5.1.6 Evaluation mechanisms

To understand DC's progress toward its goals and measurable objectives, the SBDEO will regularly evaluate the progress, outcomes, and impact of programming associated with this State Digital Equity Plan. This activity will inform updates to programming and the Plan itself. The DC SBDEO plans to adopt the following mechanisms to ensure that this Digital Equity Plan is regularly evaluated and updated:

- Define and regularly track key performance indicators (KPIs) for each state-led and public-private partnership program and tie those KPIs to the KPIs defined in this State Digital Equity Plan.
- Periodically survey state-led and public-private partnership program participants for feedback and program iteration.
- Require potential subgrantees to define and regularly track KPIs for each program and tie them to the KPIs defined for the DC State Digital Equity Plan.
- Oversee and regularly audit sub-grantees' activities (e.g., require reports from grant awardees on their program's progress and success).
- Require sub-grantees to collect feedback from program participants and incorporate the feedback into their reporting.

The DC SBDEO may conduct site visits and supplemental interviews and surveys of program participants to further assess the impact of specific programs. SDEP resident surveys will be conducted based on the calendar in Figure 38. Through these surveys, the SBDEO will regularly evaluate residents' satisfaction with programming (aligned to Goal #2 and associated objectives) and explore new or current digital literacy topics.

5.2 Timeline

The SBDEO has designed an execution timeline that includes milestones for each goal and objective/KPI in the SDEP. Figure 39 below shows the proposed overall timeline of the BEAD Program and the State Digital Equity Plan.

Figure 39. BEAD and SDEP 2023-2029 timelines

Figure 39.A: Timeline of proposed path to delivering state-led programming and forming effective public-private partnerships

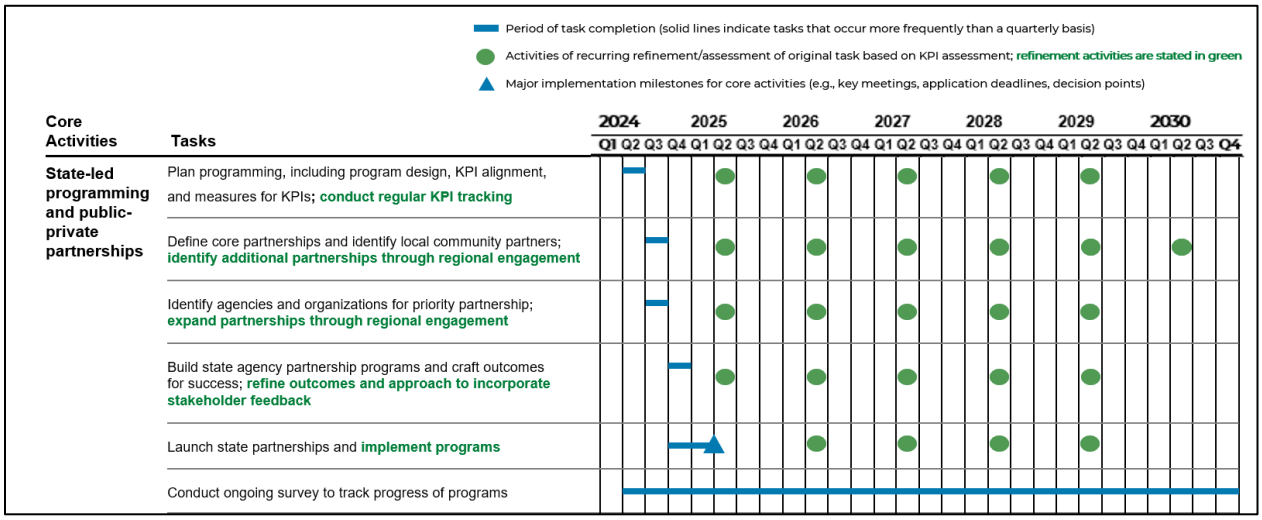


Figure 39.B: Timeline of proposed path to delivering the grant program

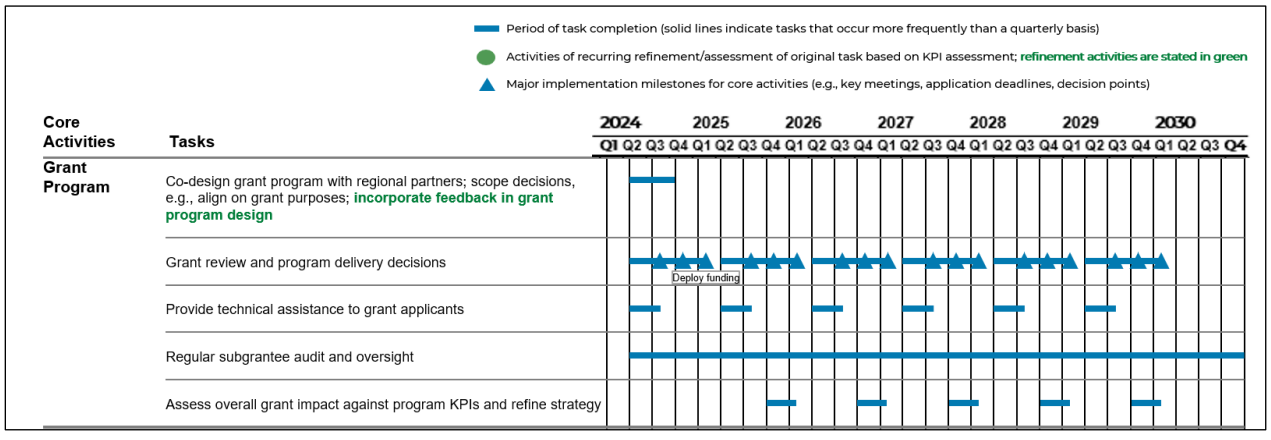


Figure 39.C: Timeline of proposed path for effective stakeholder engagement

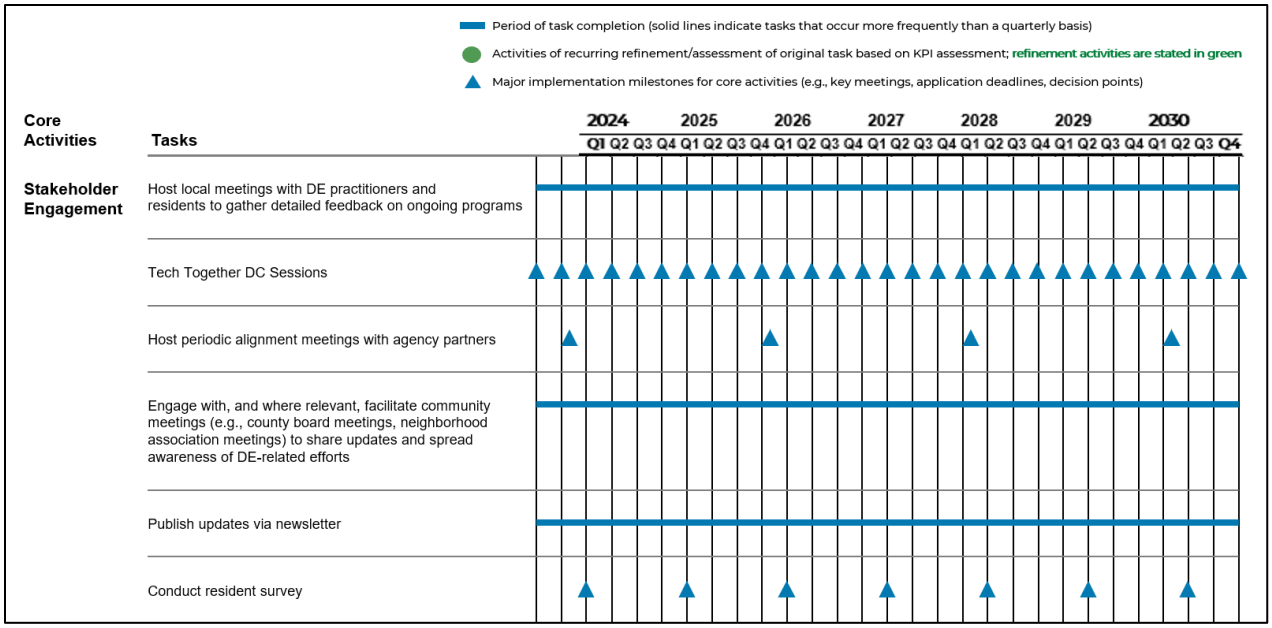
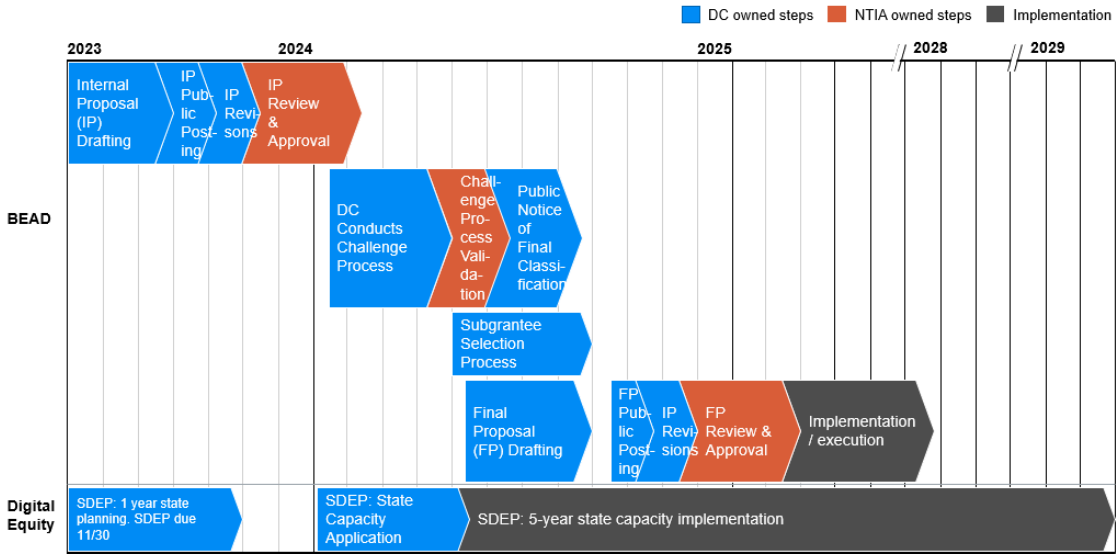


Figure 40 below shows the proposed timeline for implementing key activities in the State Digital Equity Plan.

Figure 40. Timeline for implementing key activities



6 Conclusion

The District of Columbia's State Digital Equity Plan has an ambitious vision, strategy, and objectives for ensuring that every resident and every business, in every corner of DC, can live, work, and thrive in the digital age – without bias or barriers. To implement this plan, the District has a broad and diverse set of digital inclusion-focused programs and other assets, broadband infrastructure, and multiple broadband and digital equity partners. This document identifies the current needs of today, the barriers to digital equity that must be overcome to achieve the Plan's vision, and an implementation strategy and plan.

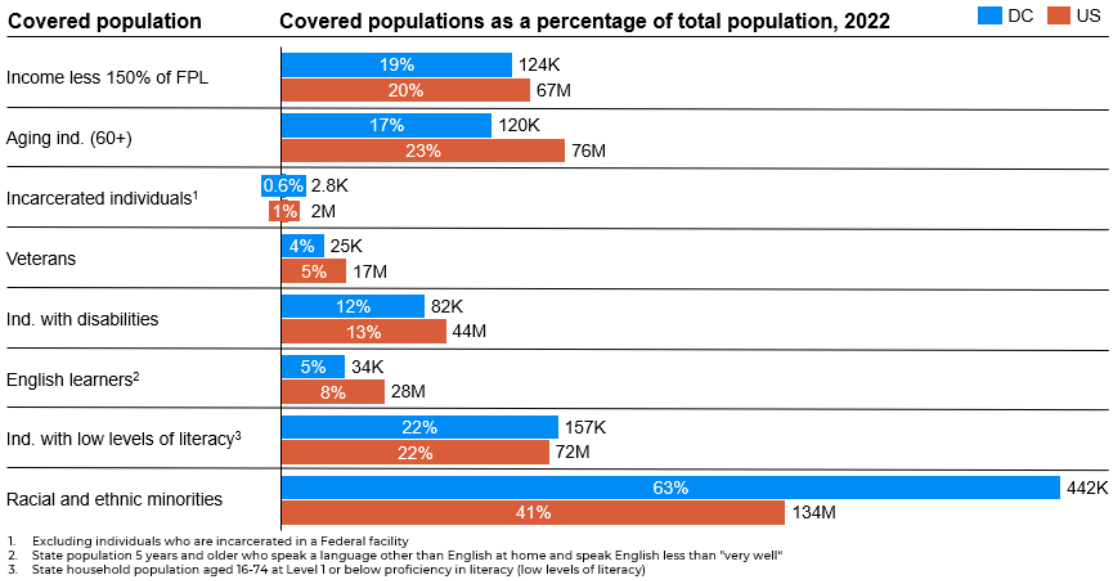
By leveraging the findings in this plan, DC's broad asset base, and partnerships with broadband and digital inclusion stakeholders, the DC SBDEO will achieve its vision of bringing digital equity to everyone in the District of Columbia.

7 Appendix

7.1 Digital Equity Act Covered Population Viewer

To fully understand the covered population landscape in DC, and in addition to using the American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, the SBDEO leveraged the Digital Equity Act Covered Population Viewer.[365] The Digital Equity Covered Population Viewer was created by the Census Bureau and NTIA to identify and quantify the eight different "covered populations" defined by the Digital Equity Act of 2021, which overall have historically experienced lower rates of computer and internet use.[366] Figure 42 below shows the viewer's breakdown of covered populations in DC compared to the US – a breakdown that is also reflected in American Community Survey data.

Figure 41. Covered population breakdown based on the Digital Equity Covered Population Viewer.



7.2 Stakeholder Engagement Survey

In total, the DC SBDEO received 319 DC resident survey responses. Of the 319 responses, 109 were submitted online and 210 were submitted via mail or at a stakeholder engagement event. None of the survey questions were required and

[365] Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, US Census Bureau (https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c5e6cf675865464a90ff1573c5072b42).
[366] Digital Equity Act of 2021, US Census Bureau.

partial answers were accepted. These residents represent a variety of Wards as shown in the table below. These residents also represent a diverse group of covered populations and income levels as shown in the tables below. See Figure 42 below for the list of questions asked in the resident survey. **Table 10.** Breakdown of Ward representation of survey respondents (n = 314).

Ward	Number of responses (% of responses)
Ward 1	28 (9%)
Ward 2	13 (4%)
Ward 3	8 (3%)
Ward 4	42 (13%)
Ward 5	38 (12%)
Ward 6	35 (11%)
Ward 7	67 (21%)
Ward 8	83 (26%)

Table 11. Breakdown of covered population representation (n =325).[367]

Covered Population	Number of responses
60 years of age or older	60 (19%)
Having one or more disabilities	29 (9%)
English Language Learners	8 (3%)
Veteran	17 (5%)
Black or African American	181 (56%)
Hispanic or Latino	9 (3%)
Native American	11 (3%)
Asian American or Pacific Islander	3 (1%)
Other non-White race or ethnicity	2 (1%)

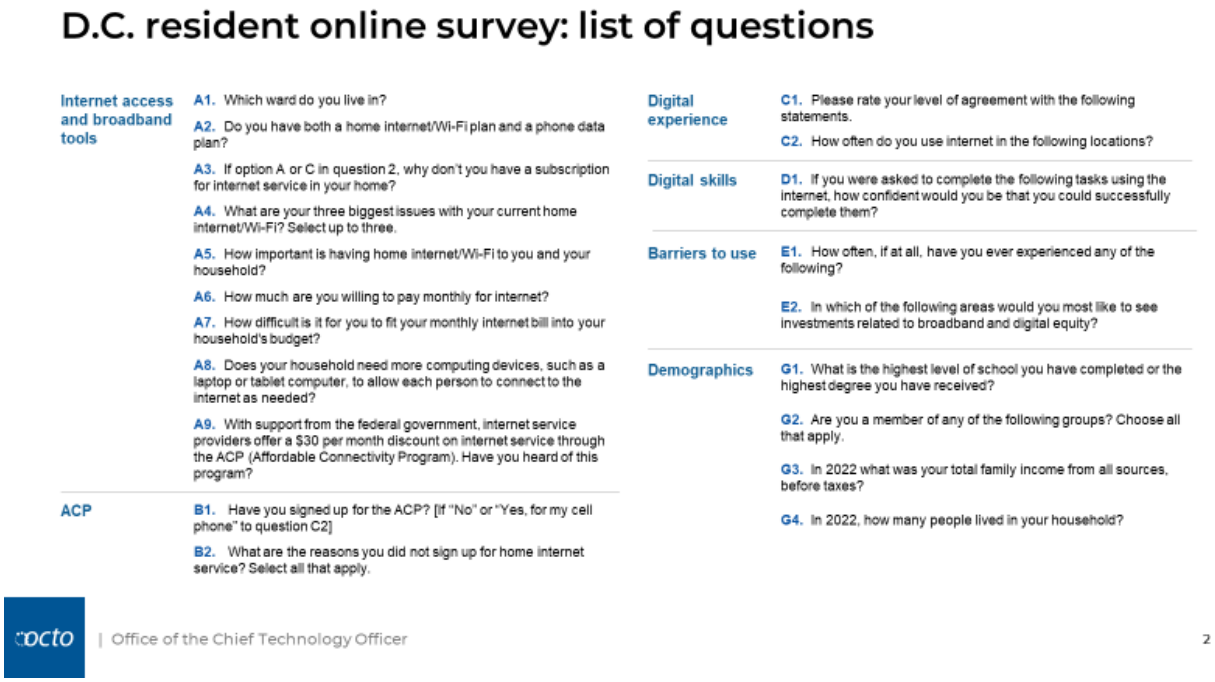
Table 12. Breakdown of responses by income level (n = 264).

Income level	Number of responses (% of responses)
Less than $10,000	18 (7%)
$10,001 to under $20,000	27 (10%)
$20,001 to under $30,000	21 (8%)
$30,001 to under $40,000	29 (11%)
$40,001 to under $50,000	20 (8%)
$50,001 to under $75,000	34 (13%)
$75,001 or more	69 (26%)
Don't know	16 (6%)

[367] Note: Individuals can belong to more than one covered population.

Prefer not to say	30 (11%)

Figure 42. DC Broadband and Digital Equity Survey – residents' questions.



D.C. resident online survey: list of questions

Internet access and broadband tools

- **A1.** Which ward do you live in?
- **A2.** Do you have both a home internet/Wi-Fi plan and a phone data plan?
- **A3.** If option A or C in question 2, why don't you have a subscription for internet service in your home?
- **A4.** What are your three biggest issues with your current home internet/Wi-Fi? Select up to three.
- **A5.** How important is having home internet/Wi-Fi to you and your household?
- **A6.** How much are you willing to pay monthly for internet?
- **A7.** How difficult is it for you to fit your monthly internet bill into your household's budget?
- **A8.** Does your household need more computing devices, such as a laptop or tablet computer, to allow each person to connect to the internet as needed?
- **A9.** With support from the federal government, internet service providers offer a $30 per month discount on internet service through the ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program). Have you heard of this program?

ACP

- **B1.** Have you signed up for the ACP? [If "No" or "Yes, for my cell phone" to question C2]
- **B2.** What are the reasons you did not sign up for home internet service? Select all that apply.

Digital experience

- **C1.** Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.
- **C2.** How often do you use internet in the following locations?

Digital skills

- **D1.** If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them?

Barriers to use

- **E1.** How often, if at all, have you ever experienced any of the following?
- **E2.** In which of the following areas would you most like to see investments related to broadband and digital equity?

Demographics

- **G1.** What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
- **G2.** Are you a member of any of the following groups? Choose all that apply.
- **G3.** In 2022 what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes?
- **G4.** In 2022, how many people lived in your household?

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2

7.3 Public Comment Summary

Twenty-four organizations and individuals submitted public comments during the DC State Broadband and Digital Equity Office's public comment period for the **District of Columbia (DC) State Digital Equity Plan.** A high-level summary of the comments and a draft of the DC State Broadband and Digital Equity Office's (SBDEO) responses are provided below.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
2.1 Vision		
Vision	*1.* Clarify the definition of "device" when used throughout the plan (*e.g.*, type of device, distinction between smartphones and large-screen computers). *(Digitunity)* *2.* These 10 principles for Digital Equity Visions and A Checklist for Evaluating Digital Equity Visions can be applied when evaluating the plan. *(Benton Institute)*	1. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) draft. The 2.1 Vision section has been updated to include a detailed definition of "device." The District of Columbia prioritizes computers, laptops, and tablets when referring to "device access" throughout the plan. 2. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDDEO shares many of these same principles, as reflected in the objectives and strategies included in the DC State Digital Equity Plan.
2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes		
DC Agency Efforts	*1.* Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School collaborates with multiple DC agencies (*e.g.,* Mayor's Office for Latino Affairs, DC Department of Health, DC Health Link) as a trusted community hub. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School x 10, DC Resident, UnidosUS)*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC SDEP draft and your participation in DC state agencies' current efforts to improve digital equity outcomes across DC. A reference to this work has been included in the SDEP. The SBDEO hopes that the Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School continues to serve as a trusted community hub. 2. SBDEO appreciates your engagement on DC's IP Volume II. The language of the Age-Friendly DC Strategic Plan has been updated to say "2028."

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	2. Replace "2023" with "2028" in "Age-Friendly DC 2023." (*DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services)*	
Coordinated Use of Funds	1. Prioritize the use of Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD) resources on programs and partnerships addressing adoption and affordability challenges. *(Greater Washington Partnership)*	1. Thank you for your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The DC SBDEO supports the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and hopes that it continues. The DC SBDEO plans to use broadband funding for sustainable solutions to close the digital divide.
2.3 Strategy and Objectives		
Goals	1. Correct a mistake in the "Goals" introductory paragraph (*i.e.,* change "defined three goals" to "defined four goals"). *(AARP)*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan draft. Section 2.3 has been updated to read "defined four goals."
Objectives	1. Clarify which type(s) of devices are referred to in Objective 2B. *(AARP, Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE))* 2. A goal of 100% ACP participation is mentioned later in the plan. *(AARP)* 3. Add language that indicates an increase or decrease in "confidence" to the definitions of Objective 2D and 3A. *(AARP)* 4. Update the baseline in Objective 3A upon receiving additional data. *(AARP)* 5. Incorporate a measurable objective and KPI for digital-skills	1. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The 2.1 Vision section has been updated to include a detailed definition of "device." The District of Columbia prioritizes computers, laptops, and tablets when referring to "device access" throughout the plan. 2. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The draft has been updated to refer to the 2028 target of 80% ACP adoption throughout. 3. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The recommended language has been added to Objectives 2D and 3A. 4. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan draft. During the public comment period, the SBDEO was still in the process of collecting survey responses. The SBDEO will update the survey analysis throughout the DC SDEP before final submission. 5. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO plans to consider including additional, measurable objectives in future updates to the SDEP.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	training of older adults that addresses privacy and cybersecurity. *(AARP)* *6.* Add two KPIs for affordability on the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD) recipients' efforts to publicize affordable services and offer unbundled high-speed access. *(AARP)* *7.* Tie survey questions to two objectives: ensuring that no District resident pays more than two percent of their income for high-speed internet and determining approaches to support communities with broadband access. *(LCE)* *8.* Percentages that refer to older adults who already have devices and access seem high. *(AARP)*	6. Thank you for sharing your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. The SBDEO plans to consider including additional measurable objectives in future updates to the SDEP. 7. Thank you for sharing your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. The affordability objective has been updated to align with the definition of Covered Populations provided by the NTIA. 8. Thank you for sharing your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. The percentages are based on data from the 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates analyzed with microdata from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). The American Community Survey is a robust, reliable, and accurate survey administered by the Census Bureau annually.
Strategies	*1.* Explain the strategy to "determine custom approaches to support the community with broadband access." *(AARP)* *2.* Consider how covered populations will access the "DC Tech Locator" and incorporate a tech assistance program. *(AARP)* *3.* Conduct a pilot program with targeted community partners to incorporate best practices and lessons learned in the "executed	1. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO plans to work with various stakeholders to implement tailored solutions that meet the needs of covered populations. 2. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO plans to consider covered populations in the implementation of all strategies and hopes to ensure that the necessary technical assistance is available for accessing services. 3. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO will consider funding pilot programs within the digital equity grant program.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	targeted adoption drives" strategy. *(AARP)*	
3.1 Asset Inventory		
Digital Inclusion Assets by Covered Populations	*1.* Add Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School Charter School's Workforce Development Programs. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School)* *2.* Add the WildTech Help Desk that provides free help desk support to seniors in the DC Senior iPad program. *(Wilderness Technology Alliance (WTA))*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. Section 3.1.3 has been updated to include the asset listed. 2. Same response as (1) above.
Existing Digital Equity Plans	*1.* Include the DC Digital Equity Coalition 5-Year Digital Equity Plan for reference and recommendations. *(DC Digital Equity Coalition (DCDEC), Greater Washington Partnership)*	1. Thank you for sharing your suggestion with SBDEO. Section 3.1.2 has been updated to include the asset listed. The SBDEO thanks the DCDEC for this work to close the digital divide in DC.
Existing Digital Equity Programs	*1.* Add Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School's existing digital equity programming through the school's digital onboarding, digital literacy, IC3, and IT Fundamentals workforce development programs. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School x 11, DC resident, UnidosUS)*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. Section 3.1.3 has been updated to include the asset listed. 2. Same response as (1) above. 3. Same response as (1) above.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	2. Add Comcast's Lift Zones (Wi-Fi enabled zones). *(Comcast)* 3. Add Project UP, a $1 billion initiative to advance digital equity and economic mobility. *(Comcast)*	
Broadband Adoption	1. Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School has a laptop lending program. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School x 10, DC resident, UnidosUS)* 2. Update the P-20 School System asset type language to P-Adult. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School)* 3. Add the Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School's Hybrid Instructional Model. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School)* 4. Add Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School's Computer Basics 1 &2, IC3, and IT Fundamentals. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School)* 5. Update language referring to Digitunity as "an instant video messaging company." *(Digitunity)* 6. Add Easterseals DC MD VA, which recently received a grant to expand digital literacy training for	1. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. Section 3.1.4 of the asset inventory has been updated to include the asset listed. 2. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. The asset type name has been updated in Section 3.1.4. 3. Same response as (1) above. 4. Same response as (1) above. 5. Thank you for sharing your comment with the SBDEO. The language referring to Digitunity has been revised to "a national non-profit organization with a mission of device ownership for all." 6. Same response as (1) above. 7. Same response as (1) above. 8. Same response as (1) above. 9. Thank you for sharing your comment with the SBDEO. "Technical support" is included within the common understanding of "Technical assistance to support digital inclusion" in Section 3.1.1. 10. Same response as (1) above. 11. Same response as (1) above. 12. Same response as (1) above.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	young adults with disabilities. *(Comcast)* *7.* Add Comcast's IE Learning Center: Internet Essentials, which offers free digital skills training. *(Comcast)* *8.* Add the SYC/W6MA and Comcast digital navigator program. *(Comcast)* *9.* Add "technical support" to the types of broadband adoption assets. *(WTA)* *10.* Add WildTech's program for refurbishing donated computers. *(WTA)* *11.* Add WildTech's Senior iPad Program. *(WTA)* *12.* Add WildTech's Training Program. *(WTA)*	
Broadband Affordability	*1.* Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School offers one-on-one support for ACP enrollment. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School x 11, Individual x 2)* *2.* Comcast participated in ACP sign-up events at the mayor's annual Senior Symposium, Ward 7 Back-to-School Giveaway, Emery Heights Day, and various National Night Out neighborhood events. *(Comcast)*	1. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. The asset inventory has been updated to include the program listed. 2. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment on the State Digital Equity Plan draft. The asset inventory has been updated to include the service listed.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
3.2 Needs Assessment		
Overall	*1.* Survey results cited have a low response rate, with data for certain covered populations missing. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School)* *2.* Conduct a needs assessment to determine the most effective way to distribute the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program's (BEAD) assets and programs. *(LCE)*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan draft. During the public comment period, the SBDEO was still in the process of collecting survey responses. The SBDEO will update the survey analysis throughout the DC SDEP before final submission. 2. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan draft. The draft includes a needs assessment (see section 3.2) that will help to determine how broadband and digital equity funds will be utilized in DC.
Broadband Adoption	*1.* Census data underrepresents English Language Learner populations in Figure 7. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School)* 2. Figure 27 undercounts Hispanics as a smaller percentage than in the U.S. overall, which may skew the perception of English Language Learners. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School)* *3.* Include the "Device Essentials" graphic that shows additional supports needed for device access beyond computers. *(Digitunity)* 4. Note that tech literacy is a lifelong learning process. *(DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services)*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment with the SBDEO. The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey was a recommended data source in the NTIA Digital Equity Plan Guidance. The US Census and the data it provides through surveys like the American Community Survey are a statistically significant data source. As a proxy for English Language Learner, English Proficiency rated lower than "very well" was used. 2. The source data for Figure 27 is the American Community Survey, which is a US Census product. The US Census and the data it provides through surveys like the American Community Survey are a statistically significant data source. To understand the number of English language learners in DC, the number of Hispanic individuals was not used but rather as a proxy for English language learners, English Proficiency rated lower than "very well" was used. 3. Thank you for sharing your comment with the SBDEO. The current DC SDEP draft reflects DC's digital equity priorities. Some of the additional supports mentioned in the graphics (*e.g.,* tech support, cybersecurity, broadband access) are addressed throughout the plan. 4. Thank you for sharing your comment with the SBDEO. Section 3.1.2.3 has been updated to acknowledge that digital literacy is a "lifelong learning experience."

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	5. Distinguish technical support from digital skills support. *(Digitunity)*	5. Thank you for sharing your comment with the SBDEO. Section 3.1.2.3 has been updated to acknowledge the distinction between technical and digital skills support.
Covered Population Needs Assessment	*1.* Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE) recommends that the SBDEO conduct a needs assessment to determine the most effective way to distribute BEAD assets and programs. *(LCE)* *2.* Our students represent over 80 countries and speak over 40 languages. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School x 10, DC resident, UnidosUS)* *3.* Our students live below the federal poverty level (FPL) and face resulting challenges. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School x 10, DC resident, UnidosUS)* *4.* Digital equity programming for aging individuals should include caregivers due to their varying range of abilities. *(AARP)*	1. The SBDEO thanks you for your comments on the DC SDEP draft. This draft includes a needs assessment in Section 3.2 that helps to inform how funding can be distributed. The SBDEO plans to explore how funding for broadband and digital equity can be utilized based on insights gained from ongoing stakeholder engagement. 2. The SBDEO thanks you for your comments on the DC SDEP draft. Recognition that schools are diverse places with many individuals who have language barriers has been added to Section 3.2.3.4. 3. The SBDEO thanks you for your comments on the DC SDEP draft. Recognition of the challenges facing students who live below the FPL has been added to Section 3.2.3.4. 4. The SBDEO thanks you for your comments on the DC SDEP draft. The potential need to provide caregivers with digital literacy training has been added as a stakeholder engagement insight to Section 3.2.3.4.
4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy		
Key External Collaborators	*1.* Broaden the lens to include recognition of more community organizations that are working hand-in-hand with DC government to address tech literacy and connectivity. *(DC Office of the*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC SDEP draft. Section 4.1.1 includes partners that participated in the stakeholder engagement process for the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO recognizes that the array of community organizations in DC is vast and diverse, and that many have engaged with the DC government to address tech literacy and connectivity.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services) *2.* Comcast participated in various ACP sign-up events. *(Comcast)*	2. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC SDEP draft and for taking the Tech Together pledge. Section 4.1.1 has been updated to reflect Comcast's participation in various DC ACP sign-up events.
Stakeholder Engagement Plan	*1.* Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School supported English Language Learner community engagement in the Digital Equity Plan development process. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School x 10, DC Resident, UnidosUS)* *2.* Provide links on the SBDEO website to languages in addition to English to engage all stakeholders. *(AARP)* *3.* Include measures to determine not only customer satisfaction, but also consumers' confidence in their use of technology, programs, and services. *(LCE)* *4.* Incorporate questions related to social connectedness outcomes into the DC Digital Equity Survey to identify areas that individuals may wish to pursue with digital skills (*e.g.,* eHealth, social connections). *(AARP)* *5.* Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School is a recognized national model with over 50 years of service to adult immigrants. *(Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School x 10, DC Resident, UnidosUS)*	1. The SBDEO appreciates your comments on the DC SDEP draft and thanks Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School for your continued active engagement in the DC SDEP drafting process. Section 4.1.2 recognizes that Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School hosted four in-person stakeholder engagement events. 2. Thank you for sharing your comment on the SDEP draft. Our website, Tech Together DC: techtogether.dc.gov, is currently available for translation into additional languages, including Spanish and Amharic. 3. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan draft. The DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey has already been completed. The SBDEO will consider this recommendation for future surveys. 4. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan draft. The DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey has already been completed. The SBDEO will consider this recommendation for future surveys. 5. The SBDEO appreciates your comments on the DC SDEP draft and thanks Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School for your continued active engagement in the DC SDEP drafting process. Section 4.1.2 has been updated to recognize that key community-based organizations with knowledge of DC's covered populations participated in stakeholder engagement events.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
5.1 Implementation Strategy and Key Activities		
Overall	*1.* Deploy both education and assets in the neighborhoods with the greatest need. *(LCE)*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan draft. The SBDEO plans to use the findings described in Section 3.2 – Needs Assessment – to prioritize funding from the Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, with a focus on covered populations.
State-Led Programming	*1.* Support the development of a standardized digital navigator curriculum, expand digital navigator capacity with funding, and support digital navigator knowledge-sharing. *(Lead for America)* *2.* Develop a technical support deployment network through community-based organizations beyond libraries. *(Digitunity)*	1. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. We invite you to apply for the DC Digital Equity Grant to increase digital navigator capacity in the District. 2. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. While the District plans to lead a technical support network through the DC public library system's digital navigator program, community-based organizations are invited to apply for the DC Digital Equity Grant once it is launched.
Public-Private Partnerships	*1.* Allocate resources to offer low-income families access to free or low-cost computers or tablets. *(DCDEC)* *2.* Include the role of the DC government (*e.g.*, advocacy for donations of supplies, technology, and off-lease equipment from computer manufacturers). *(WTA)* *3.* Generate a robust, ongoing supply of technology to be refurbished for a sustainable device ecosystem. *(Digitunity)* *4.* Avoid identifying any single vendor – whether nonprofit or for-profit –	1. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. Device access is a priority for the SBDEO. We invite those interested in device loan/distribution programs to apply to the DC Digital Equity Grant Program. 2. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. Section 5.1.2.3 has been updated to include the role of the DC government in the potential model for the device loan/distribution program. 3. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. The SBDEO agrees that supply is important to the success of a device loan/distribution program and welcomes organizations to apply to the DC Digital Equity Grant Program. 4. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. The SBDEO agrees that engaging a variety of stakeholders is important to the success of a device loan/distribution program. We invite potential sub-grantees to apply to our DC Digital Equity Grant Program once it is launched.

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	as the statewide refurbishing solution. *(Digitunity)* *5.* Digitunity can share information about the online technology donation-matching platform. *(Digitunity)* *6.* Offer support in a culturally competent manner, understanding that different populations have different needs, speak different languages, and learn in different ways. *(AARP)*	5. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. The SBDEO encourages you to apply to the DC Digital Equity Grant Program to support the device loan/distribution programming and share best practices. 6. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. In implementing the DC SDEP, the SBDEO plans to prioritize cultural competency, inclusivity, and accessibility.
DC Digital Equity Grant Program	*1.* Provide funding for digital skills training programs aimed at enhancing online capabilities. *(DCDEC)* *2.* Direct resources toward outreach and enrollment campaigns for the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). *(ACDEC)* *3.* Allocate funds to hire and train digital navigators. *(DCDEC)* *4.* Add "computer refurbishing" and "technical (help desk) support" as potential programming. *(WTA)* *5.* Create a state-wide, ACP-focused cohort to enable outreach to and support for unconnected households. *(EducationSuperHighway)* *6.* Develop a new program to train personnel in technical and refurbishment skills or integrate	1. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. Digital skills training programs fall under the DC Digital Equity Grant Program as a digital literacy/skills development program. We invite potential sub-grantees to apply to our DC Digital Equity Grant Program once it is launched. 2. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. The DC SBDEO supports the ACP and hopes that it continues. We invite potential sub-grantees to apply to our DC Digital Equity Grant Program once it is launched. 3. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. The DC SBDEO supports digital navigators programs and hopes that digital navigator capacity in DC increases. We invite community partners and other potential sub-grantees to apply to our DC Digital Equity Grant Program. 4. "Computer refurbishing" and "technical (help desk) support" could be funded by the DC Digital Equity Grant Program under programs that provide technology support. 5. See response to Comment 2. 6. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. Workforce development programming falls under the DC Digital Equity Grant Program as a computer science, coding, and cybersecurity education program. We invite potential sub-grantees to apply to our DC Digital Equity Grant Program once it is launched. 7. The SBDEO thanks you for your comment. We invite potential sub-grantees – including senior centers and organizations that work with

Category	Summary of public comments with source	SBDEO response
	such a program into an existing refurbishment program. *(Digitunity)* *7.* Provide sufficient resources to senior centers and to organizations that work with aging individuals. *(AARP)*	aging individuals, a covered population – to apply to our DC Digital Equity Grant Program once it is launched to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to address age-based gaps in digital equity.
Stakeholder Engagement	*1.* Incorporate qualitative questions into the DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey to identify areas that individuals wish to pursue with digital skills (*e.g.,* entrepreneurial endeavors, telehealth, social engagement and connectedness). *(AARP)* *2.* Continue to hold annual "Digital Community Summits" to engage all interested parties and collect grassroots input. *(DCDEC)* *3.* Continue quarterly meetings of the Digital Advisory Community group to engage community members in implementing the plan. *(DCDEC)* *4.* Leverage the support of outside entities that could help speed and inform the implementation process and enhance capacity investments. *(Digitunity)* *5.* Have Tech Together host meetings beyond the end of 2024. *(AARP)* *6.* Commit to a public forum to share the results of resident surveys. *(AARP)*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC State Digital Equity Plan draft. The DC Broadband Access and Digital Equity Survey has already been completed. The SBDEO will consider this recommendation for future surveys. 2. The SBDEO thanks you for your comments. The SBDEO plans to continue to hold stakeholder engagement events that are open to all communities. Event information will be posted on the TechTogetherDC website. 3. Same response as (2) above. 4. The SBDEO thanks you for your comments and agrees that all stakeholders should work together to close the digital divide. This view was a guiding principle in creating the DC Tech Together program. In addition to participating in that program, stakeholders can apply for a subgrant to support digital equity programs. 5. Same response as (2) above. 6. Same response as (2) above.

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Measures to Ensure Sustainability and Effectiveness	*1.* Support the development of digital navigators by funding local, "boots-on-the-ground" support. (For example, American Connection can be a resource for expanding capacity.) *(Lead for America)* *2.* Emphasize that partner organizations can help to build capacity. *(Lead for America)*	1. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO recommends reaching out directly to potential sub-grantees and community organizations to offer local support. The District of Columbia always welcomes such support, and we invite you to apply to our DC Digital Equity Grant Program once it is launched. 2. The SBDEO appreciates your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO agrees that partner organizations can help build capacity.
Mechanisms to Regularly Evaluate and Update Plan	*1.* Include a commitment to update DC's inventory of assets. *(AARP)* *2.* Invest in research and evaluation to improve existing program design and closely measure impacts. *(Lead for America)* *3.* Seek legislative authority to require providers to submit data that will assist in implementing and assessing the progress of the Digital Equity Plan (regarding deployment, prices, adoption, speeds, and technology, for example). *(AARP)* *4.* Include a commitment to track ACP participation. *(AARP)* *5.* Commit to gathering, analyzing, and reporting data. Use educational institutions' expertise to bring GIS, statistical capabilities, digital literacy, and other skills into efforts to identify and close gaps in digital equity. Monitor success in closing those gaps. *(AARP)*	1. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO plans to update the asset inventory when it periodically updates the DC SDEP. 2. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC SDEP draft. Section 5.1 has been updated with details on the mechanisms that the SBDEO plans to use to regularly evaluate and update the DC SDEP. 3. Same response as (2) above. 4. Thank you for sharing your comment on the DC SDEP draft. The SBDEO plans to track and analyze data related to the measurable objectives listed in Section 2.3. 5. Same response as (4) above. 6. Same response as (4) above. 7. Same response as (4) above.

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	6. Monitor ACP participants' form of high-speed internet access. *(AARP)* 7. Commit to regularly collect, analyze, and report internet access adoption and deployment rates by technology and speed. *(AARP)*	